

**An investigation of the relationship between the Grade 7 English Second  
Language curriculum expectations and learners English literacy  
Life histories.**

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**By**

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## **Abstract**

Drawing from Pinar's Curriculum Theory and Hallidayan Systematic Functional Linguistics theory respectively, this study investigates the relationship between Namibia's Grade 7 English Second Language's curriculum expectations and learners' English literacy life histories. Located within the qualitative interpretive paradigm and life history research, this study uses learners' written autobiographical narratives and spoken stories from narrative interviews with participants to generate data. The research site and participants were purposively selected, from the Grade 7 rural combined school classroom where many learners perform poorly as no learner in the research population at this research site performed successfully in English Second Language examinations. The study investigated whether the Grade 7 curriculum expectations 'speak' to the Grade 7 learners' English literacy life histories in order to establish whether there is a correlation between the formal education English Second Language curriculum expectations and learners' English literacy life histories. The findings for this study revealed that formal education curriculum designers and policy makers do not consider the cultural identities and backgrounds that learners bring to the classrooms. There are very few language activities, events both at home, school, and within the literate community necessary, to develop communicative competencies in these rural combined school learners. The interpersonal relationship between parents and child; learner and teacher; and children to community members do not provide favourable conditions for effective English language learning. There are very limited teaching and learning resources both at home; school; and within the immediate community to nurture and meet English curriculum demands. A further factor is that English usage is disregarded in all three contexts. Very alarming is the fact that, if the Namibian government continues to fail to put interventions in places where, schoolteachers are educated on their required role in helping to ameliorate negative learning conditions in rural school, then the education outcomes for Namibian learners specifically in English Second Language will be severely affected. This in turn makes the government aspirations towards Accessible; Equitable; Qualitative; and Democratic Education for all learners hard to accomplish.

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First, thank you to my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ from whom all blessings flow. “O lord, you are my God; I will exalt you and praise your name, for in perfect faithfulness you have done marvellous things, things planned long ago”. (Isaiah 25: 1). Thank God, for the courage, perseverance and wisdom you afforded me throughout my graduate studies. Lord You sustained me in this long and most challenging journey. Glory be to Him!

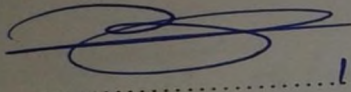
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**DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY**

I BARAKIAS BABY BENITA SHIMBUDHI, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and has not been previously submitted for the degree in any other university. Where I have drawn on the words or ideas of others, these have been acknowledged using complete references according to Department Guidelines.



19/10/2016

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## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my two children: Twapewa – Oshali and Shatimwene who could not live long enough to witness their daddy's success. May the Heavenly Father continue resting their souls in eternal peace. Children, you are still more than the word can reveal.

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## **List of Acronyms**

ESL = English Second Language

LoTL = Language of Teaching and Learning

SES = Socio Economic Status

MoI = Medium of Instruction

DNEA = Directorate of National Examination and Assessment

NSAT = National Standardised Achievement Tests

SACMEQ = Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality

SFL = Systemic Functional Linguistic theory

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **The context of the study**

In all public schools in Namibia, English functions as Language of Teaching and Learning (LoLT) from Grade 4-12 and a compulsory language subject from Grade 1 – 12. English serves a dual purpose – as a Medium of Assessment as well as the means through which one has access to the international community and worldwide information network. Given the proclamation of the centrality of English in Namibia’s school curriculum, it is disappointing that the observation of English Second Language as a medium of learning in classrooms demonstrates that learners show low proficiency levels in the language (Makuwa, 2010; Namibia. Directorate of National Examination and Assessment (DNEA) 2010, 2012; Nkandi, 2015). This may be due to reasons that include the quality of teachers, inadequate learning materials and limited opportunities to use English inside and outside the classroom.

Ever since Namibia attained its independence from South Africa in 1990, and declared, English an official language. English must be taught from grade 1-12 as a compulsory subject. Additionally, English is used as the Language of Teaching and Learning (LoLT) from grade 4-12. Several studies (Benjamin, 2004, Harris, 2011; Kisting, 2011; Ipinge, 2013 ; ) indicate that learners are not achieving the required linguistic skills because of the incompetency displayed by the teachers. Learners graduate from one level of teaching to the next, for example from the Upper Primary phase to Junior Secondary phase, without having mastered the expectations of the specific phase’s English curriculum. There is also a concern about learners entering tertiary education and

job market lacking the necessary ESL linguistic expertise (Shipanga, 2012; Otaala & Platter, 2013; Ngwaru, 2014).

Specifically, the Grade 7 results for the Onankali Circuit of Namibia's Oshikoto Directorate of Education have been poor, a below 50% average pass rate (Circuit Report on Term One Examinations Results analysis for the year 2014; 2015;2016). This poor performance is attributed to learners' abysmal competence levels in all English Second Language skills: listening; speaking; reading and writing. As a result, the learners' lower levels of English proficiency negatively permeate down to all of the areas of the learners' academic performance (April tests' circuit's analysis, 2016).

The Grade 7 learners at Tegameno Combined School (pseudonym) of Onankali Circuit, where this study was conducted are not spared in this predicament as they have manifested a lower standard of English Second Language across all skills. Only 26, 8% of Grade 7 learners obtained symbols between A-D in English Second Language (ESL) during the 2016 April Examinations. This is despite the fact that the teachers teaching ESL at the selected school hold the Basic Education Teacher Diploma, which is the recognised entrance qualification apart from Bachelor of Education. The former Colleges of Education in order to provide quality ESL teaching and learning offered these qualifications. However, learners' ESL outcomes in classwork; homework; and internal and external examinations continue to reveal inadequate levels of functional English literacy (UNICEF, 2013; Directorate of National Examination and Assessment (DNEA) report on school's National Standardised Achievement Tests (NSAT) performance during (2010; 2012; 2014). Most learners from this school who proceed from Grade 7 into the Junior Secondary phase find it hard to excel in national grade 10 examinations. This results in most of the learners from

this school to become either grade 10 dropouts or failures. This phenomenon is baffling and needs urgent interventions.

This study is designed to investigate the relationship between the assumptions underpinning Namibia's Upper Primary phase English Second Language curriculum expectations and the Grade Seven (7) learners' English Second Language literacy life histories. (Namibia Ministry of Education, National Curriculum for Basic Education, 2010, p. 21) spells out clearly the English Second Language curriculum expectations for the Upper Primary phase:

On completion of the Upper Primary phase, learners listen for information and enjoyment to texts appropriate for non-mother tongue speakers, express ideas, opinions and feelings adequately, read and understand easy children's literature and texts about everyday issues, and write short factual and imaginative texts in which language errors do not confuse meaning. They use English adequately for official purposes.

Despite these commendable expectations, several studies seem to suggest a degree of ambivalence about these laudable expectations (Marope, 2005; Ninnes, 2011; Ngololo, 2012).

According to the Directorate of National Examination and Assessment, (DNEA) report (2014), the learners' progress for this specific school – Tegameno Combined School (pseudonym), in the National Standardised Achievement Tests for Grade 5 English Second Language, which tests about 80% of the grade specific curriculum competencies, indicated no improvement in the English Second Language results of Grade 5 learners during the 2009, 2011 and 2013 periods. This is because only a 44% National average score was obtained in 2013 compared to a 46% average score in 2011. That means that of all Namibian learners, 45% of the Grade 5 learners were classified as Below Basic Achievement category - the lowest of the four categories. This indicates that learners demonstrated insufficient knowledge and skills across all themes in the English Second Language syllabus.

In terms of the DNEA's (2013) school report, the specific results for the combined school used in this study as the research site reveals a 37% English average score for Grade 5 learners in the English's Standardised Achievement Tests. This ranks just below the Regional average score of 39% and far below the National average score of 44%. Since 2009, a Grade 5 learner from this particular school has never managed to perform to an Excellent Achievement category. The Excellent Achievement category includes learners who demonstrate excellent knowledge and advanced skills in the Upper Primary English Second Language syllabus.

I reflect with much interest my own learning journey in English as a Second Language and with English as a compulsory language subject from Grade 1-12 and as Language of Teaching and Learning (LoTL) from Grade 4-12 in the Namibia Education System. Despite the effort invested in teaching and learning, and how I taught, the level of functional illiteracy was and is still worrying. Moreover, given that I am also a candidate for the Master's degree in English Language Teaching for Rhodes University with an interest in how to teach English Second Language to bilingual learners, I felt it was necessary to investigate how Namibian rural school learners are experiencing learning English at home, school and in their immediate community.

The Oshikoto Educational Region continues to outperform other regions in the Grade 10 national examinations and (Namwandi, 2014) in her academic year message to schools (S. Frederieks, personal communication, February 19, 2016) in Onankali Circuit where the research school is located asserted that perhaps due to circumstances within its own schools, the circuit continues to be ranked last in the region in the Grade 10 national examination performance. The reasons may be that, most learners at Tegameno Combined are from working class families, in a poorly resourced school, (Sparkes, 1999; Schmid, 2001; Altschul, 2012; Vallymalay, 2012). The lack of ESL resources is observed in the learners' poor written and spoken English. They demonstrate

how they have mastered ESL competencies within their learning community through this means. This phenomenon casts blight on the country's aspirations for declaring English an official language; and LoTL in public schools to unite Namibians and counteract linguistic isolation from international communities that according to the Prime Minister and then the current president (Dr Hage Geingob quoted in Murray, 2007). The learners' lack of ESL competencies at primary school level is a major setback to the country's desire for learners to be proficient in English, which is the official language. (Namibia. Ministry of Basic Education Sports and Culture, 2003).

The need to interrogate how these learners' experience learning English challenged me. I thought it worthy to investigate these rural school learners' English literacy life histories using their written autobiographical narratives and follow-up narrative interviews. This is because written autobiographical narratives and spoken accounts during narrative interviews allow the participants to elicit and articulate how they experience learning English in their homes, schools and literate communities rather than using standardised tests to measure how far they have mastered curriculum expectations. The study considered dynamic factors such as learners families' socio-economic and educational backgrounds, ESL activities and events at home; the school environment—teaching and learning resources, teachers' and learners' attitudes toward ESL, ESL activities and events at school; and the community environment – ESL learning resources, community attitudes toward ESL. The examination of these factors aimed at interrogating how the external factors positively and negatively influenced learners' ESL literacy journeys right from the start. The aim was to establish whether the assumptions underpinning ESL curriculum expectations, which outline what English language skills at each level of education learners should have developed, considered or took into account the cultural identities and socio-economic and educational backgrounds that learners bring into their classrooms.

Furthermore, regional governments, central government and other education stakeholders often express dissatisfaction in school learners' attainment of functional literacy and concomitantly blame learners for a lack of commitment towards achieving the expected English Second Language's curriculum outcomes (Circular DNEA 14/2000: JSE: Examiners' Reports; Namibia. Ministry of Basic Education and Culture, 2002; Harris, 2011). The blame is also levelled against teachers for their poor implementation of the ESL curriculum in attaining expected outcomes, (Harlech-Jones, 1998; Namibia. Ministry of Education, 2012) as well as endlessly attributing all current inequalities to the former colonial South African apartheid government (Katjavivi, 2016). I was fascinated to find out that there is a correlation between what the English Second Language curriculum expects the learners to demonstrate at the end of the Upper Primary phase and the dynamics at school(s), home and within the literate community.

Moreover, yearly the Government of the Republic of Namibia commits a lion's share approximately above 20% of its annual expenditure budget to education with the aim of improving learning outcomes by investing in human capital. However, Namibia learners' functional literacy has improved compared to functional numeracy as established in SACMEQ III, the country's average score in reading remains below SACMEQ average. This attributes to inadequate reading resources in Namibian's schools (Spaull, 2011). Most studies conducted in Namibia, have tended to concentrate on measuring how learners performed in certain English Second Language skills, particularly reading, compared to other learners in specific regions within Namibia, and those learners in different African countries to measure how learners have mastered skills in the formal curriculum. These studies ignored investigating learners' narratives of learning English, with English, through English at school, home and in their immediate community. (Marope, 2005; Hungi, Makuwa, Ross, Saito, Dolata, Cappelle, Paviot, & Vellien 2010; Southern and Eastern

African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ III, 2005-2010; Miranda, Amadhila, Dengeinge and Shikongo, 2011; Ninnes, 2011) analysis of the trends and gaps in academic achievements of Grade 6 learners in Namibia, all measure and analyse in some detail the extent to which aspects of the curriculum expectations were met by the learners.

Despite these excellent studies, there has been no specific research carried out with a focus on the relationship between the Grade 7 (Upper Primary phase) English Second Language curriculum expectations and the Grade 7 learners' English literacy life histories in Namibia and specifically in the rural Oshikoto Education Region. The focus of my study is to investigate how the dynamics of learners' home backgrounds, their communities that mould the Grade 7 learners' ESL literacy life histories contribute to their educational advancement. How do their homes; school(s) and immediate communities speak to the Namibia National Curriculum for Basic Education, - the Upper Primary phase's ESL curriculum expectations?

It is against this background that the learners' voices were central to this study for them to make known their experiences. The following questions were used to generate data.

- How do the families with whom the learners spend most of their time and who are the driving force behind their attitudes towards learning English in English: the family's socio-economic and educational background as well as the language spoken at home dictate the kind of learners they are?
- What are the learners' stories regarding how they learned English at school? Are the teachers the Significant Other in helping learners to learn; what language learning events significantly assisted them in learning English at school? What is the place of English in their school(s)?

- How did the community from which these learners come contribute to their English learning journeys? What role does English play in the community? Which transactions is English used? What are the socio-economic and education backgrounds of the participants' community? Are there information centres and information media such as newspapers, radio, TV and Internet at their disposal?

This study could make educators aware that there is an urgent need to consider the curriculum consumers' voice in order for educators to employ congruent pedagogical approaches to ameliorate the realities that learners bring into their classrooms. It offers insights into different factors that shape English Second Language learners' literacy journeys. The autobiographical narratives could provide ways to understand how ESL learners negotiate their English literacy within their immediate Communities of Practices.

The study could also inform policy makers that disregarding learners' needs and designing a curriculum that assumes that all learners would acquire the same English skills and insights equally despite different learning environments does not work. The socio-economic status and educational backgrounds of their families and teachers need to be consideration. Also the fact that not all learners receive necessary English literacy support from their homes, and immediate communities.

Regardless of having many studies in Namibia investigating how teachers view the use of English in English Second Language classes (Harris, 2011; Garrouste, 2011; Simasiku, Kasanda & Smit, 2015), it is hoped that this study will generate insights into how Namibia's choice of making English the language of learning will prove to be successful. This is achieved when it incorporates learners' narratives during the process of devising and implementing the curriculum. Ignoring this

aspect of learners' education would result in a disjuncture between what the curriculum designers want the curriculum to produce and what the learners are able to achieve.

Furthermore, in the context of Namibia, English is the Language of Teaching and Learning from Grade 4-12; a compulsory subject from grade 1-12; a language of business, politics and diplomacy; a language of leadership development and a language of trade, which links us to the rest of the world. However, if learners' level of English proficiency remains low, the subsequent implications for Namibia might result in a lack of eloquence in speaking and writing which causes one to appear less English literate in the eyes of the world. It is therefore essential to learn from learners themselves as to how they experience learning ESL. This would contribute to the advancement of the strategic goals of Vision 2030; one that is, improved literacy through education. The learners' voice might inform the government where to direct funds and what kind of resources and support is needed in schools.

This study provides insights to teachers, parents and immediate communities by revealing the linguistic roles they can contribute into learners' English literacy journeys. This commitment is potent in empowering learners from disempowering environments to succeed in English education and contribute toward good citizenry.

The findings generated by this study may also be used by the Namibia's Central and Regional governments to strengthen existing efforts to ensure accessible; equitable; qualitative; and democratic education for all public school learners that the Government of the Republic of Namibia strives to accomplish through the medium of English (Namibia. Ministry of Education and Culture, 2000). Moreover, policy makers and curriculum designers are made aware of the persistent challenges faced by most if not all ESL learners in attaining English functional literacy.

This would enable policy designers in education to consider the key factors when designing policies. They have to come up with policies that provide linguistic support to English Second Language learners. This discussed facts resulted in the formulation of the research question below:

**What is the relationship between the Grade 7 English Second Language curriculum assumptions and the Grade 7 learners' English literacy life histories?**

The main research question is supported by three sub-questions for the purposes of data generation.

- 1.1. What language activities and events occur at home; school; and within the immediate literate community that characterize the Grade 7 learners' English literacy life histories?
- 1.2. What are the interpersonal relationships between the participants and their homes; participants and their school; and participants and their literate communities that shape their English literacy histories?
- 1.3. What is the role played by ESL during literacy activities and events at home; school; and within their literate community as well as the degree of interactions between the participants and their families; participants and their school; and participants and their literate community that shaped their English literacy?

The following section is a summary of the whole write up according to the order of the different chapters.

Chapter one explains the motivation for the research, discusses the research goals, and provides a description of the research site.

Chapter Two of this thesis describes the literature engaged around this issue both locally and internationally. It includes literature on factors influencing English Second Language learning both

at home, school and within literate communities. The study engages with literature that discusses home backgrounds and parents' characteristics - beliefs toward ESL, their support of children in learning ESL, the level of parents' education and their socioeconomic status; school's environment; the resources at school, and teachers' characteristics and beliefs toward ESL. Chapter Two informs readers on perspectives of the ESL issues that are investigated in this study and the theoretical lenses employed in those studies. An example is Ngwaru (2014) who used Hallidayan theory of communicative competencies and Cumming's theory of academic proficiencies to analyse data, and my study used curriculum theory as metatheory and systemic functional linguistic (SFL) theory as conceptual framework.

Chapter Three defines and discusses the curriculum theory as a metatheory for this study. The chapter explicitly presents the relevance of curriculum theory to this study. It briefly engages readers with the history of the Systemic Functional Linguistic theory before it hones in on the relevance of SFL theory to this study. The chapter ends with the discussion of how data was conceptualised and organised using the context of situation concepts of Field, Tenor, and Mode. Chapter Four discusses the methodology utilised for this study. It also presents various reasons why choices such as an interpretive research paradigm, qualitative research methodology, life history research method as well as the research instruments - written autobiographical narratives and follow-up narrative interviews and data collection procedures were selected and employed in this investigation. While it is important to get valuable data from the population concerned, in many cases it is only possible to select a sample of participants from the whole population. The research population and sampling techniques used, the research piloting and ethical procedures observed from the alpha to the omega of the study all are explicitly presented to the readers in this chapter.

Using data generated from the two research instruments revealed in the previous chapter, Chapter Five analyses learners' stories to generate insight into English learning activities and events. It also discusses the steps and processes learners' report having observed while learning ESL at home, school, and in their immediate literate communities. The focus of analysis was to gain insight into the existing English Second Language fields; the tenor and mode that characterise ESL learning in these three contexts in order to juxtapose them with the Grade 7 curriculum expectations. Chapter Six offers the study's conclusions, implications, limitations, reflections and recommendations for further studies.

## CHAPTER TWO

### PERSPECTIVES ON THE ISSUE

#### 2.1 Introduction

The literature on life histories has been examined from several different perspectives. Literature reveals that there is recognition of the complexity of the teaching-learning process and the need to situate home and classroom events within specific socio-cultural contexts and examine them from the perspectives of participants themselves in order to begin to understand them (Tudor, 2001; Hayes, 2005). However, most life history researchers in education have tended to concentrate on studying pre-service teachers' life histories to examine categories of positive and negative influences of various contexts on their English literacy development (Pereira-Mendoza, 1988; Rosenthal, 1991; Sharkey, 2004; Bryan & Tippins, 2005; Steinman, 2007; Samuel, 2009; Zhang, 2012). Some of these influences include significant others - primarily family members, immediate communities, schools, and access to reading materials.

While it is not surprising that the English literacy life histories of pre-service teachers dominated ESL learning studies globally, there is a need for investigations to focus on how primary school learners experience learning English literacy. There is a lack of research in both Namibia and elsewhere on how primary school learners reflexively narrated their experiences of learning English in their homes, schools and within their communities. Shifting the focus from how pre-service educators' beliefs and identities were crafted to what primary school learners are reflexively narrating regarding their ESL learning experiences both in their homes, schools and within their immediate literate communities, seems an important step to fill a vacuum of scholastic knowledge in this area.

This chapter engages readers with literature that discusses home backgrounds and parents' characteristics, schools' and immediate literate community environments that influence learners' English Second Language learning trajectories. This includes factors influencing learners' ESL learning both at home, school and within their immediate literate communities. Literature was consulted to identify what studies have been conducted, where they took place, what methodology was employed, what were the findings, from which theoretical point of views were the findings located, and what is missing from the literature hence this new study.

In the first section, I present references of schooled literacy life histories of English Second Language learners and educators. In section two I discuss prior studies about home backgrounds and parents' characteristics; schools and literate community environmental factors influencing English Second language learning and teaching.

## **2.2 Schooled literacy and English literacy life histories.**

In Western literate societies and other parts of the world, English literacy development begins well before formal education. Children are exposed to an with environment with print in the form of road signs, billboards, and announcements in malls' murals, store windows and magazines just to name a few Fleish (2008). This is different for less English literate or illiterate societies where, one can hardly find road signs, newspapers, announcements and advertisements. Literature (Barton, 2008) holds that poor families and other minority groups neither interact in reading and writing at home and do not value education in general, the beliefs which (Peregoy & Boyle, 2008) refute.

While it is true that families differ in the ways children are involved in literacy behaviours at home, this literacy nevertheless serves numerous functions in homes including those living in abject

poverty. The children from families where English is not their primary language, and whose parents have lower education levels, brings inadequate levels of English literacy to their classroom.

Evans (1993) conducted an autobiographical narrative study with mainstream college students writers and readers in the United States of America, to explore the literacy life histories of these upper middle-class homogeneous groups, whose parents experienced educational success. Using participants' sociological parameters and their autobiographical narratives before conducting narrative interviews with participants, the study revealed experiences of parents' support. Mother reading the children stories or having children reading stories to parents before they begin school. School writing and reading experiences where learners checked out library books to read at home, or having teachers and parents assisting them during their reading and writing processes. The findings reveal that language learning relate to the context within which that language is learned and used, and the experiences one has of learning and using that language. Hence particular participants' structure or specific ways of interacting within a context, do contribute to language learners' understanding of their own language learning and experiences.

Evans (1993) further revealed that literacy is a communicative competency enabling individuals to participate as a community member possessing several context-bound literacies in the use of written language such as story reading; school reading and leisure reading. According to Canale and Swain (1987), communicative competencies comprise four components namely: grammatical competence; discourse competence; sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence. Thus, language communicative competence is through classroom goals focused on all four components. This is not restricted to grammatical or linguistic competence. Language techniques are structured to engage learners in authentic use of language for meaningful purposes, while fluency and accuracy are treated as complementary principles underlying communicative techniques.

Therefore, learners have to use language productively and receptively, in natural contexts (Brown 2007, p. 241). In addition, Evans (1993) informs that schooled literacy is an understanding of what one is expected to demonstrate in school is shared knowledge, a common capability with essential values that are instrumental.

While there are existing universally acknowledged correct and incorrect ways to read and write beyond a particular context and that one can be a good or bad reader and writer, this whole notion cements Cook-Gumperz's (1986, pp. 41-44) reiteration that "schooling mainly has been and still is, to transform "commonplace literacy" the reading and writing activities of everyday lives into 'schooled literacy' a system of decontextualized knowledge validated through tests performance".

Because Evans' (1993) participants were from homogenous homes with privileges to succeed in formal education, much needed English literacy development support was cultivated from various literate communities - their homes, schools and peer communities. My investigation primarily focused on how the Grade 7 learners' working-class homes; rural school environment and their poverty-stricken communities - the contexts that may not necessarily be enabling them to succeed in formal education contribute into their English literacy journeys. Walberg and Paik's (2000) argument that, home background characteristics have a strong influence on learners' education outcomes support my understanding. The home characteristics may help in creating either enabling or constraining conditions for learning.

Nkandi (2015) used mixed research methods to investigate factors influencing Grade 12 learners' performance in English Second Language (ESL) National Senior Secondary Education Examinations in one poorly and one better performing school in Namibia's Omusati Directorate of Education. He explored views, beliefs and experiences of teachers, learners, and school

principals on internal and external environmental factors that influence learners' performance in ESL. The findings revealed that learners' beliefs and attitudes toward English directly influence their performance poor learners' ESL backgrounds negatively affect their understanding of curriculum content. Nkandi (2015) further revealed that, a lack of ESL resources at school that could help to mitigate the negative impact caused by the unavailability of ESL resources at home and in their immediate communities contributes to poor performance in ESL. The findings confirmed (Anderson & Cheung, 2003; Hungi & Thuku, 2010; El-Omari, 2016) conclusions that families socioeconomic factors and lack of parental involvement in their children's ESL learning negatively affected their performance.

Although Nkandi (2015) generated data using autobiographical questionnaires and interviews and analysed data quantitatively and qualitatively, the findings may not entirely be representative of the actual factors influencing learners experiences of learning ESL at home; school and in their communities due to close ended questions that were used in an autobiographical questionnaire. Written autobiographical narratives and narrative interviews in this study filled the gap by generating objective narratives representative of what experiences learners themselves tell of learning English in their homes, schools and their literate community. Some researchers argue that "education is the construction and reconstruction of personal and social stories since learners live "storied lives" which are ways of making sense of the world in which they live" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2). Other studies around schooled literacy attempted to represent wide diversity in their participants.

Samuel's (2009) study 'On becoming a teacher' investigated pre-educators who share diverse unfavourable ESL literacy life histories and seems to indicate the fundamental role literacy life histories can play in curriculum design and the sphere of language policymaking. His study of pre-

service educators enrolled for the Special Methods English Course with the University of KwaZulu Natal South Africa reveals the role played by participants' own literacy life histories in learning English and through English. In this regard, Samuel (2009) propounds how the geographical location of the study participants during their childhood; early playmates and the language they spoke; early experience of parents with literacy activities (reading and writing); the use of home languages experiences of learning English at primary and secondary school; and critical incidents during the learning of English both at school and home contributed into their journey (pp. 3-17). The student educators found themselves pushed and pulled by different competing, contradictory and complementary forces as they tried to negotiate their identities as professional educators in post-apartheid South Africa.

While it is believed that acquiring and learning of English Second Language guarantees better life opportunities, the South African pre-educators concomitantly anticipated the subversion of their own linguistic heritages in their homes. Data from this study highlights insights into how racial, biological and class positions of different participants manifest unique individual interpretations of what it is to learn English in relation to the culture of the homes and schools.

Taking into account revelations by South African pre-educators' and Thai practicing teacher life histories (Samuel, 2009; Hayes 2009), it seems that the quality of teaching and learning of English is strongly dependent on the school teachers' conception of what language is and how it should be learned. My study intends to establish how Namibian rural homes, schools and their immediate literate communities conceive what English learning is. Furthermore, how it should be learned by studying English literacy activities and events (field) in homes, schools and in the community. My study attempts to establish the interrelationships (tenor) existing between participants and their home members, their schoolteachers and peers as well as their communities during English

learning process. The study, further intends to establish channels of communication used to realise field and tenor during the learning process.

### **2.3. Prior studies on home backgrounds and parents' characteristics; schools' and literate community environmental factors influencing ESL learning**

Various factors such as home, school and immediate community's backgrounds and parents' characteristics (Aduwa-Ogiebaen & Iyamu, 2006; Small, 2010), can influence school learners' English Second Language learning. This includes homes and school socioeconomic status (SES); parents' and teachers' characteristics; parents' indirect and direct behaviours, reading habits, attitude towards ESL learning, medium of instruction and content-subject teachers.

Considine & Zappala (2002), explored factors influencing the educational performance of over three thousand Australian students from disadvantaged backgrounds to estimate the extent of SES, family, individual and contextual factors on school educational performance. The result indicated that sex, truancy, ethnicity, parental educational attainment, housing type and student age were all statistically significant factors and predictors of academic performance. Considine & Zappala (2002) revealed that even within a group with considerable financial disadvantages, socioeconomic status as reflected by level of parental education was a key predictor of student academic achievement. This finding supports the notion that the social and economic components of the socio-economic status equation may have a distinct and separate influence on learners' education outcomes. While both components are important, social factors, such as parents' educational attainment, have been more significant than economic factors in explaining children's educational outcomes (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). This is because higher status families (Williams et al., 1993) foster a higher level of achievement and provide higher levels of psychological support for their children. This kind of support however is (Considine & Zappala,

2002) even within financially disadvantaged families. The level of parental education (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000) is strongly associated with home literacy environment, parents' teaching style and investing in resources that promote learning. Other studies elsewhere illuminate the effects of home backgrounds on English learning achievement.

Butler's (2013) case study explored: (1) the relationships between parental socioeconomic status (SES) background and their behaviours and beliefs about their children's English language learning; (2) the relationships between parental SES and their children's English learning as well as (3) how do the parents' behaviours, beliefs and SES status influence their children's English learning? The study intended to examine how such relationships may differ across the fourth, sixth and eighth graders and their parents in the Midland Chinese medium-size city. The study was primarily centred parents' characteristics including SES. Their indirect behaviours (home literacy and language environment), the parents' direct behaviours such as parents' direct assistance in helping children to learn English, with homework; and providing English resources and private English lessons after schools. Again, the parents' general beliefs about English education and their beliefs and expectations regarding their children abilities in acquiring English.

Although Butler (2013) indicated that parental beliefs about English education and their beliefs about their children's success in acquiring English did not differ between different SES groups, parent direct behaviours (such as provision of direct assistance for their children to learn English) and their indirect behaviours (such as home literacy, language environment and indirect modelling they provided) showed significant differences by the fourth grade level.

The study further revealed that parental beliefs about English education and their beliefs about their child's abilities in acquiring English showed no relationships with their SES nor with their

behavioural variables at the fourth grade level. While for some parents, the responsibility of learning English was left to the school, it turned out that the Chinese parents in Butler's (2013) regardless of their SES background and their children's grade levels all believed that effort should account for 70 - 71% of their children's English learning. This agrees with Stevenson and Stigler's (1992) classic study that indicates strong beliefs about one's effort in attaining high academic achievement among Asian mothers.

In the same breath, the context of learning a language is considerable because a learning environment will enable individuals to learn how to learn and develop as fully integrated learners Pishghadam (2011). Learners' access to different cultural capital such as paintings, books, dictionaries and learners' relationships with teachers, parents, siblings (social capital) may have a profound influence on how individual learn a language. There is a recognisable structure of relations among social and educational institution that examines how individuals' different social and cultural experiences affect educational outcomes hence the belief that teachers need to consider the different extents of cultural and linguistic competence possessed by different learners with different social backgrounds (Pishghadam, 2011). The social capital that surrounds ESL learning includes the number of friends, extracurricular activities, church attendance, and the parents' involvement and monitoring of children education. All these sources are in charge of providing the essential inputs learners need for academic achievement (Pishghadam, 2011) who believes that learners with high cultural goods and who have access to wider social network of friends and institutions are guaranteed greater success in education. Hence, ESL learners may present different degrees for eagerness to learn English. This will depend on the cultural and social background (Pavlenko, 2002, cited in Pishghadam, 2011).

Similarly, Wikan and Moster (2011) explored the extent to which home environmental factors and language background may influence performance and progress of primary school learners in a Namibian urban context. They examined how learners' socioeconomic backgrounds, parental involvement with children's education, language of instruction and the role played by the home language of learners affected learning progress. Surveying 120 Windhoek working-class, middle-class and wealthy households using structured interviews and questionnaires, the data revealed that learners from poor households typically have lower educational levels than better off households whose parents invest more time and resources in their children's education. This is contrary to McTavish's (2007) findings that SES or residential location does not determine a child's literacy background and that great variation exists in diverse families. Wikan & Mostert (2011) study further contradicts (Simasiku, Kasanda & Smit, 2015; Murray, 2007) findings that medium of instructions has no significance influence on learners' grade repetition. These findings in turn contradict Cummins's (2000) assertion that learning home language concepts is a prerequisite for second language learning.

Moreover, Wikan, Mostert, Danbolt, Nes, Nyathi & Hengari (2007) investigated reading habits and attitudes of grade six learners in Namibia's Khomas and Oshana Regions in comparison to the Hedmark region of Norway. The qualitative non-experimental design used to survey background of learners' schools, their biological information, and learners' habits and attitudes toward reading, enabled the study to reveal that more learners from homes that lacked reading materials did not read to improve their homework. They also did not spend time reading for pleasure, never borrowed books from a library, avoided reading novels and viewed themselves as poor readers. Wikan et al, (2007), concur with (Needham, 2004; Rippel, 2006; Gibson, Akimi, Gold, Judith, Sgouros, & Charissa, 2007) who all assert that reading aloud to children is important in promoting

the fun in reading. They further pointed out that reading aloud help keep interest high, help children with reading difficulties, build listening skills and vocabulary. Telling stories aloud builds imaginations and helps teach character. While learning about many topics, children also absorb proper grammar and word usage. Reading aloud to children at home and school model reading skills, exposes learners to various writing style and structures and helps them explore social and moral issues and behaviours. Reading aloud to learners develops their reading comprehension and motivates them to read on their own. Parents talk thus important Henok (2014) to children in extended and elaborated ways in language they know best as oral language helps young children build knowledge of the world that will serve them in school with extremely limited literacy experiences (p. 33). According to Primamore (1994), learners benefit when they are read to, because they often enter school lacking the necessary tools to literacy and may be at risk in developing their reading skills.

While learners' biographies provide language-learning activities at participants' homes, the findings do not reveal any interrelationship existing between parents and their children at home nor do they reveal interrelationship between learners and their immediate communities that influence learners' reading habits and their attitudes toward English reading.

Although most findings confirm Marope's (2005) report on Namibian learners' reading ability, it appears as though learners may have misinterpreted the questions. Worse still, there was no provision for follow up questions on participants' responses. Therefore, these research findings seem to have disputable validity, an issue I addressed using follow-up narrative interviews.

EL-Omari (2016), used questionnaires to investigate how factors such as attitudinal, socioeconomic, social, and extracurricular factors affect Jordanian's secondary school learners'

achievement in English language learning. El-Omari's (2016) study revealed that a positive attitude towards English learning has a positive effect on learners' achievement in English learning. With regard to social factors, El-Omari (2016) revealed that, learners with parents who are proficient in English achieve more than learners with parents who are poor at English. Learners from homes and schools that have English newspapers and English magazines available, read books other than textbooks e.g. dictionaries, listen to English radio programs and watch English TV programs at home and at school, achieve more English learning than those from schools and homes that provide less or none of those.

Similarly, Tuan and Mai (2015), employed questionnaires and class observations to investigate the problems faced in English speaking by students at Le Thanh High School in Vietnam and factors affecting their speaking performance. As earlier highlighted by (Feyten, 1991; MacIntyre, Clement, Dörnyei & Noel, 1998; Park & Lee, 2005; Tanveer, 2007, & Bozorgian, 2012), Tuan & Mai (2015) study revealed that students are faced with many problems that affect their English speaking performance. They could not think of anything to say in English and reverted to using Vietnamese instead of English when discussing in groups or in pairs. They were not motivated to express themselves. Additionally, they were fearful of criticism or losing face. Again, they were in the habit of translating the information in the textbooks into Vietnamese before they spoke and they looked at their textbook when speaking. Tuan and Mai (2015) also revealed that students' English speaking performance is affected by factors such as topical knowledge; listening ability; motivation to speak; teachers' feedback during speaking activities; student's confidence, pressure to perform well; and time for preparation.

The Professional Development and Research Unit of the National Institute for Educational Development - NIED (Namibia. Ministry of Education. [NIED], 2012) investigated literacy skills

at lower primary phase in Namibian schools. The NIED (2012) study aimed at investigating, the identification of problems and discovering the main factors that influence learners' results and achievement in literacy; compare the best practices vis-à-vis the poor practices in teaching literacy in Namibian schools as well as making appropriate and practical recommendations on the best practical approaches to literacy and numeracy teaching and learning. The study employed mixed research methods to investigate the views of long serving and novice lower primary teachers; principals; lower primary Heads of Departments; lower primary advisory teachers; University of Namibia lower primary lecturers and learners and parents on the root causes of inferior levels of literacy among learners.

Observing the grade 1 literacy test scores, learners generally performed below the benchmark of 25/50 in all three tests although some regions scored above the national average with learners from urban schools outperforming those from rural and semi-urban schools. The grade 4 literacy outcomes show that 60% of learners performed above national average score of 57% compared to 40% of those below the national average – an implication that close to a half of learners experience difficulties in reading accurately and fluently. Furthermore, NIED's (2012) study revealed that learners from urban schools were competent in literacy compared to rural and semi-rural schools.

The findings further revealed that, poor performance in literacy is attributed to some teachers' incompetence in teaching the mother tongue (L1) effectively or their ability to use the first language medium of instruction as a tool to develop the English literacy. It is a belief that developing literacy skills in a learners' primary language enables them to transfer these skills into English at the appropriate time (Cummins, 1988; Krashen, 2004 & Guvercin, 2012). Although, learners can simultaneously learn to read in first and ESL, it is the teacher's responsibility to use strategies that mutually reinforce and provide vocabulary instruction in both languages (Gonzales,

1994; Brisbois, 1995). According to William, Webb-Johnson and Tlusty (2000) literacy skills can be developed when “learners are assisted to become familiar with letter names, associate pictures visually with their naming words, recognise and produce rhyming words and learn and use a limited number of sight words” (p. 9). The literacy experiences to develop language are achieved using predictable reading materials. These can be (Norton, 1995), patterned books of stories with predictable features such as rhyming and repeated phrases.

Another stumbling block in literacy skills acquisition was that “learners did not have a culture of reading and that schools did not promote a reading culture” (NIED, p. 11). Although a few schools encouraged learners to use English on school grounds, most schools did not promote reading which would allow sufficient contact time for English and promote English literacy development. The NIED noted, “learners need to be exposed to print (posters, charts and others) to be able to acquire English literacy competencies” (2012, p. 12).

Of equal importance to ESL, teachers are content-subject teachers. Teachers of English, says Arkoudis, (2003) are generally accepted as playing a leading role in providing learners with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to read, write, speak, and listen effectively. The subject content teachers also have a stake in ESL learners’ attainment of effective English literacy. This is because learners may fail to understand academic concepts presented in English due to a communication barrier (Good-wyn & Findlay, 2003).

A situational analysis conducted by Uys, van der Walt, van den Berg and Botha (2007), examined the extent to which subject - content teachers in Southern Africa took responsibility for the teaching of language skills in the content-subject classrooms as well as the reasons for not doing so.

Uys, et al. (2007) revealed alarming insights regarding Namibia's content-subject teachers' contribution to enabling ESL learners to acquire functional literacy. Content-subject teachers' in Namibia appeared to ignore teaching ESL learners any writing skills due to the belief that ESL skills teaching rests with the ESL teachers alone.

Given the fact that every teacher is a language teacher, and that the teachers' characteristics are a factor that may positively or negatively contribute to ESL literacy learning in their school, the study reveals that none of the Namibian content subject teachers in the study reported or was observed attempting to identify specific grammatical structure. This confirms Otaala and Platter's (2013) findings that, "lecturers applying Namibia English/Namlish themselves are unable to detect and correct language errors in students assignments", and those who are aware of their limited English language competencies intentionally pay no attention to students' English competencies but focus on the content of the subject they teach" (p. 124). In this regard, my study investigates how school dynamics including how content subject teachers are narrated as contributing to rural school learners' ESL literacy-learning journeys in relation to Grade 7 ESL curriculum expectations.

Learners' narrative accounts of how they learn ESL at school and through the medium of English (MoE) provides awareness of competing factors that shape their ESL literacy. The use of the learners' voice as the basis for this study is an attempt to indicate the extent to which their life experiences shape their identities as ESL learners. Hartshorne (cited in Mgqwashu, 2009, p. 4) asserts: 'each of us is shaped by all the influences exerted upon us, by the way in which we have responded to them, and by what we as individuals decided to do as a result'. The participants' autobiographies present experiences of childhood ESL learning with families, and literate communities before starting schooling and carry on to when they begin school. Their stories

connect their first experiences of learning ESL and their responses. The persistent experience of the lack of English Second Language skills among learners is the reason why this study originated to generate an understanding that would be used to counteract the current phenomenon. Considering the dismal lack of English language competencies that Namibian learners seem to have accumulated during their first twelve plus years of primary education, Namibian students in tertiary education are reported perpetuating inadequate ESL skills, perhaps due to several factors experienced in home, schools and their immediate community.

Ngwaru's (2014) qualitative case study employed documents analysis; personal narrative accounts; and active participants' observation to investigate the challenges in academic writing and speaking encountered by forty-two prospective undergraduate Namibian students undertaking the English as a Second Language (ELS) bridging course at Great Zimbabwe University. The study aimed at generating insights into the types of errors Namibian students make in written assignments as well as the difficulties they experience in classroom participation.

Ngwaru's (2014) study based on communicative competencies and Cummings's views on academic proficiencies established historical, political and pedagogic reasons had bearing on Namibian students' academic writing and speaking.

Ngwaru's (2014) study examined students' oral narrative accounts; written assignments; lectures' participations, their interaction with fellow students in groups, class observations, and their seminal presentations to generate data on their communicative competencies and academic performance. This life history research used senior primary learners' written autobiographical narratives and follow up narrative interviews to generate awareness of ESL activities and events that characterised participants ESL learning trajectories both in their homes, school and within

their immediate literate communities. My study further intends to establish the interpersonal relationships between participants and their families, teachers, fellow learners and their immediate community during ESL activities and events and the mode thereof. The main aim of my study is to elicit whether homes, communities and mostly the schools as societal institutions of these rural school learners have required faculties to meet the National Curriculum for Basic Education Upper Primary phase's ESL literacy expectations.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed literature dealing with different perspectives regarding English literacy learning and the factors that influence English Second Language learning in homes, school(s) and within the immediate community. In section, one the chapter commenced the discussion with reference to schooled literacy and life histories of English Second Language learners and educators. In section two, I discussed the research that dealt with home backgrounds and parents characteristics, schools and literate community environmental factors that influence English Second Language learning. The next chapter, - Chapter Three discusses curriculum theory and the Systemic Functional Linguistic theory which are respectively provide the theoretical and conceptual framework for this study.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

#### 3.1. Introduction

Theoretically, this study is placed within the framework of curriculum theory as metatheory, and systemic functional linguistics theory (SFL). Curriculum theory offered this study tools to understand and comment on the Namibia National Curriculum for Basic Education (2010) Upper Primary phase's assumptions and expectations, which state:

On completion of the Upper Primary phase, learners listen for information and enjoyment to texts appropriate for non-Mother Tongue speakers, express ideas, opinions and feelings adequately, read and understand easy children's literature and texts about everyday issues, and write short factual and imaginative texts in which language errors do not confuse meaning. They use English adequately for official purposes. (p. 21).

Systemic Functional Linguistic theory offered this study the lenses through which data from the participants' written autobiographical narratives and follow-up interviews were conceptualized and analyzed. Data generated by the participants' written autobiographical narratives and follow-up interviews were conceptualized and analysed using the SFL's context of situation namely: FIELD, TENOR and MODE. According to (O'Donnell, 2011) "SFL explores how language is used in social contexts to achieve particular goals", hence placing more importance on language functions than on language structure – how language is composed (2011, p. 2).

#### 3.1.1. The Definition of Curriculum Theory

While there are many models of curriculum theories such as, Social Meriorism, Dowey's theory, Social Efficiency and Developmentalism theory, curriculum theory that is foregrounding this study

is informed by Dewey's experiential theory which calls for education to focus on the learners' quality experiences which have continuity with their past, and future experiences and the interaction between the students' individual perceptions and their lessons' environments.

According to Dasplet & Weaver (2000), curriculum theory is a matter of enabling learners to employ academic knowledge to understand their own self-formation within society and the world. This understanding as Pinar (2004) states is both individual and social and historical and futurity. Curriculum theory Pinar (2004) insisted, requires situating learners' academic knowledge historically, socially, and autobiographically – in terms of life history (p. 20). Curriculum theory acknowledges learners as thinking; choosing; and maturing beings with already learned values, and lessons who need to integrate that with newly learned attitudes, skills and understandings.

Curriculum theory, “is then, about discovering and articulating for oneself and with others, the educational significance of the school subjects for self and society in the ever changing historical moment” (p. 16). It is an interdisciplinary field committed to the study of educational experience, especially (but not only) as that experience is encoded in the school curriculum, itself a highly symbolic as well as institutional structuration of educational experience (Pinar, 2004, p.20). Curriculum theory embraces transformation of all multiple commonplace literacy into schooled literacy that an individual requires to function well in the society. This definition challenges Horace Mann's educational theory assumption that “education takes place only in schools”.

Grumet (1988) observed that, curriculum is what the older generation chooses to tell the younger generations. The school curriculum communicates what we choose to remember about our past, what we believe about the present and what we hope for the future (Pinar, 2004, p. 20). It is then

a complex field of scholarly inquiry within broad field of education that endeavours to understand curriculum across the school subjects and academic disciplines (Pinar, 2004, p. 21).

Given that subject specializations, for example teaching of English, tend to focus on teaching strategies, curriculum theory aspiration is to understand the overall educational significance of specific curriculum, focusing upon interdisciplinarity themes such as multiculturalism ... as well as relations among the curriculum, the individual, society and history (Pinar, 2004, p. 21). Therefore, curriculum theory endeavours to understand curriculum across school subjects and academic disciplines in order to understand the overall educational significance of the curriculum through focusing upon interdisciplinary themes and relations among the curriculum, the individual, society, and histories. The English curriculum specialization can be educated through the teaching of academic knowledge configured around learners' faculties and interests addressed to pressing social concerns. Through English learning and teaching activities, Pinar (2004) the English curriculum introduces children to popular culture to enable them to connect to their lived experience with academic knowledge to foster student's intellectual development, and critical thinking.

Curriculum theory is a form of autobiographical and theoretical truth – telling that articulates the educational experience of learners as lived, since it speaks from subjective experience of history and society, the inextricable relationships among which structure educational experiences (Pinar, 2004).

### **3.1.2. The Relevance of Curriculum Theory to this Study.**

The relevance of curriculum theory to my study was necessitated by the fact that, it embraces “autobiographies in education” where participants “reconstruct themselves through academic

knowledge, knowledge self-reflexively studied and dialogical encountered” (Pinar, 2004, p. 21). Pinar (2004) continues that: Curriculum Theory is a form of autobiographical and theoretical truth-telling that articulates the educational experience of learners as lived”, it also “speaks from the subjective experience of history and society, the inextricable interrelationships among which structure educational experience. (p. 25) Curriculum Theory “provides a strategy for the curriculum researcher to “study the relationship between academic knowledge and life histories in the interest of understanding learners and social reconstruction” (Pinar, 2004, p. 35).

While the English Second Language curriculum intends for skills development to occur among learners, through autobiographies one can be informed of how institutions such as schools, homes, and community(s) are shaping social practices and cultural resources; as well as introducing the current generation into English dominated social institutions.

Curriculum theory allowed me to conduct research using autobiographic narratives and narrative interviews, which make available ESL activities and events; the interpersonal relationships between participants and their family members, teachers, other learners and literate community as well as the role played by language during ESL activities and events that underpin the literacy life history of Grade 7 learners. Grumet (1990) states that, autobiography becomes a medium for both teaching and researching because each entry expresses the particular peace its author has made between the individuality of his or her subjectivity and the intersubjective and public character of meaning (p. 324). Meanwhile “our experience is influenced by our past as it interacts with the present” (Eisner, 1985, p. 26).

Curriculum Theory as a metatheory provides the framework through which the researcher could sketch the relations among the school knowledge and English literacy life histories of the

participants. Pinar & Grumet (1976) introduced an autobiographical theory of curriculum and elaborate a method by means of which educationists could sketch the relations among school knowledge, life history and intellectual development in ways that might function self – transformative.

Curriculum Theory embraces participants’ tendency of bending their thoughts backward so that what they tell in their narratives is of their own volition. Through written autobiographical and narrative interviews learners are directors of their own stories rather than pandering to the expectations of the researcher. This theory (Pinar, 1972), allows research participants to self – reflexively draw from their inner source of insight, interpretation and imagination.

In terms of this study, the End of Phase - Upper Primary phase’s English Second Language expectations were investigated and juxtaposed with data generated by participants’ written autobiographical narratives and spoken accounts during follow-up narrative interviews. This was done in order to illuminate the existing relationship between the Upper Primary English Second Language curriculum expectations and the Grade 7 learners’ English Second Language literate life histories. The Grade 7 learners are expected to demonstrate the English Second Language End of Phase expectations before they graduate into the Junior Secondary phase. The learners’ ability to exhibit correct English Second Language usage is dictated by the context where language is used to perform an intended function for example to respond to information heard.

### **3.2 Conceptual Framework**

Systemic Functional Linguistic theory: A conceptual framework for the study.

### 3.2.1 The History of the Systemic Functional Linguistic theory

The Systemic Functional Linguistic theory originated from Saussure's (1916) view that language should be observed from the inside, as a system (*langue*). Saussure looked at the system as a property of the whole community of speakers, independent of what any particular speaker actually says (*parole*).

Linguists asserts that, "meaning is the function of language - what people do in their use of language" (Firth, 1957, p. 182). Firth saw the function of language as the relationship between context and the particular choices that are made in a system that result in particular linguistic behaviours in a context. Firth (1957), referred to the broader context as context of culture and to the specific context as context of situation. Using the latter context, this study interrogates the Grade 7 learners' English Second Language literacy life histories against the Grade 7 English curriculum expectations. Firth (1957), indicated that language is social in nature not because language is shared by a social group, but because language is used within social contexts, and is used to perform particular things in those contexts.

Halliday (1985) inherited this understanding of system from which Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) derives its name. Halliday, McIntosh, & Stevens (1964), basing their discussion on teaching English, argued for more imaginative practice in teaching English in schools. They identified "three types of language teaching: prescriptive; descriptive and productive" (Halliday, et al., 1964, p. 226). Prescriptive language teaching focused on preferred language patterns such as subject verb agreement - for example, you are ... and not you is. Productive language teaching according to Halliday, et al. (1964) aimed to extend learners' resources in using language to expand their capacities in making meaning in many ways such as register and dialect. The descriptive

language teaching “intended to examine native language to develop enhanced awareness of the language, its character and power” (Christie, 2004, p.15).

Halliday (1978) presented a model of language development in a tripartite sense – Learning language; Learning through language; and Learning about language. Learning language referred to learning basic resources of one’s first language: material skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Learning through language referred to important activities of learning about one’s world through the resource of language, shaping and articulating a sense of relationships and awareness to express experience. Learning about language is a conscious learning of such matter as phonology, the spelling system; grammar and registers as part of the activities of school learning.

Halliday, et al. (1964) proposed the importance of a theory of language in which register and register variation had a control role. Halliday and Hasan (1989) discussed “register in terms of field of discourse; mode of discourse and the style of discourse” (pp. 29-43). The notion of metafunction emerged in late 1960s got clearly stated in Halliday (1970) when it was argued that, all natural languages have three functional metafunctions, that reflect the fundamental purpose for which language has evolved.

The claims for the presence of metafunction in language that relate register variables of context of situation i.e. field; tenor and mode, language as a social semantic - Halliday and Hasan (1989), represent an important step in the development of Systemic Functional Linguistic Theory. This is because this development brought together a theory about both register and metafunction and proved useful in educational theory and an understanding different from Saussure’s notion of langue.

The English Second Language curriculum for Grade 7 concerns itself with prescriptive nature of language in spoken, written and visual text and social identity as represented through textuality; descriptive nature of language as well as less focuses on the productive nature of language. This focus warrants the question: If languages operate on systemic and functional characteristics, what is the relationship between what the Grade 7 English Second Language curriculum expects learners to demonstrate and assumes learners are already able to demonstrate and the learners' English Second Language literacy life histories?

In order to answer this question, this study draws on Systemic Functional Linguistic theory's context of situation to be able to analyse the register variables of field, tenor and mode and juxtapose those with the curriculum expectations. In terms of this theory, the question of function draws our attention to the purposes for which language is used in different social contexts while a systemic approach seeks to reveal language in terms of the choices it makes available to those who use it ("how language is structured for use?"). Halliday (1978) points out that:

In order to understand linguistic structures in functional terms, we have to proceed from outside inwards, interpreting language by reference to its place in the social process (p. 4).

The SFL gives this study a framework within which the context of situation reveals the social discursive practice that characterises English language learning practices in Grade 7 learners' homes, school(s) and immediate literate community. This theory views language as systems of meaning potential in human interaction that are realised by various structures. Halliday (1978) asserts:

With the notion of system, we can represent language as a resource, in terms of the choices that are available, the interconnection of these choices and the conditions affecting their access. We can then relate these choices to recognisable significant social context ... The data are the observed facts of "text-in-situation". What people say in real life. (p. 192)

### **3.2.2 The relevance of Systemic Functional Linguistic theory to this study**

The relevance of SFL to this study arose from the fact that it is a theory with a focus on language use as it serves function within, and as dictated by context of situation and culture/register (Coffin, Donohue & North, 2009). Systemic Functional Linguistic theory “explores how language is used in social contexts to achieve particular goals” (O’Donnell, 2011, p. 2). The importance is placed more on language function than on language structure - how language is composed.

The SFL theory was used as a theoretical and conceptual framework for this study, due to its semantic components, “metafunction” of the ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunction. These metafunction(s) reveal the relatedness to the context of situation of language learning process that is used in the unit of analysis of this study, Halliday, (1978). What do the participants reveal as field – English language activities in their homes; school(s) and immediate literate community contexts, what kind of interpersonal relationships exist between participants and their immediate home; school(s) and literate community during English literacy activities and events? What is the mode of communication?

The purpose for which we use language is to accomplish certain things and because of this, humans constantly enact social roles and relationships through language, so language remains a form of interaction between people. This is the second and equally important metafunction of language. It is given that when we use language to perform semantic process/to mean or to interact, we engage in language activities of exchange through either giving or demanding different “commodities” (either goods and service or information) for instance, writing a warning sign on the danger of HIV/AIDS. This gives rise to the four basic speech functions: statements; questions; offers; and commands (Martin, 1989, cited in Mgqwashu, 2007).

When language is used to mean or to perform a function, usually it is impossible to make meanings needed simultaneously. The textual metafunction (mode) of SFL refers us to the unfolding of the act of meaning, that is, to the organisation of ideational and interpersonal meaning as language unfolds in time. Language can represent the reality outside itself as well as the semantic reality that it creates as it unfolds. Martin (1989) summarises the three metafunctions: “Interpersonal meaning negotiates social relationships, ideational meanings construe the picture of the world around us that we see as natural and textual meaning places these together into consumable package of information” (p. 21).

Furthermore, it should be emphasised that, “the three metafunctions of language occur simultaneously when language is used to mean. Language construes experience, enacts relations and composes itself in a particular fashion simultaneously” (Mgqwashu, 2009, p. 66).

This particular aspect of SFL made it possible for the study to engage with processes, steps and events that marked the English literacy journeys that participants revealed through written autobiographical narratives and follow-up narrative interviews.

### **3.2.3 Data conceptualisation and organisation in this study**

SFL is both a theory of language and a methodology for analysing texts and their contexts of use namely (a) Cultural Context in which people in the culture share particular social purpose using the language; and b) Situational Context which is a theoretical construct for explaining how a text relates to the social process and consisting of three components chiefly: FIELD; TENOR; and MODE. It was these concepts (field, tenor and mode) that provided a framework through which data collected from learners’ written autobiographical narratives and narrated accounts during follow-up interviews were conceptualised and analysed to present evidence: (1) Of English

language learning activities in participants' homes, school(s) and their immediate literate communities. (2) The interrelationships existed between participants and their teachers, participants and their immediate homes as well as interrelationships between participants and their immediate literate communities. (3) The channel of communication and media used to nurture English language literacy for the participants (Hyland 2007; Martin & Rose 2007; Halliday & Hasan 1989).

FIELD is defined in Systemic Functional Linguistics as “what is happening to the nature of social action that is taking place and it answers questions such as what it is that the participants engage in, in which the language figures as some essential component” (Jordens, 2002). The concept FIELD was used in this study to reveal and analyse English language learning activities that participants presented in their written autobiographical narratives; and spoke about during interviews. As an element of experiential metafunction of SFL, field reveals the domain of English literacy learning experience of participants. This SFL component offered a framework to analyse the steps, processes and events that have taken and are taking place at the participants' homes, school(s) and in their communities, which shaped English literacy these participants are. What is being done in English language learning activities by those obligatory participants involved in those language learning activities; as well as to the learners to whom the goal of English learning activities are directed? The analysis was done of the English language learning actions by looking at the physical actions in the language learning process and experiences of participants at homes, school and in the communities.

In addition, Eggins (1994) defines field as what the language is being used to talk about (p. 52). This made the topic an important aspect of the context of situation. As people write or talk with a certain degree of specialisation or generality, they produce texts. Field is more than what people

are talking or writing about the topic. It includes what is going on with reference to what (Gerot, 1995, p. 39). The purpose of analysing the experiential meanings of the learners' written autobiographical narratives and spoken stories was to determine how the aspect of situation of context - field is reflected in their written and their spoken stories.

Jordens (2002), TENOR refers to who is taking part in the social action, the nature of these participants, their status and role; what kind of role relationships of one kind or another, both the types of speech role that they are taking on in the dialogue and the whole cluster of socially significant relationships in which they are involved.

Moreover, tenor was used to analyse data encompassing negotiation of the social relationships existing between participants and their family members at home; between participants and their teachers at school and between participants and their immediate literate communities during the English Second Language learning process. This was done because, according to Poynton, (1985; Eggins, 2004), three continua characterise tenor: power/status; contact and affective. The power/status continuum positions situations in terms of the roles played by or the degree to which participants in social exchange/action are equal or unequal (hierarchical) in power. The contact continuum positions situations in terms of whether the roles played bring the participants in frequent or infrequent contact. For this study contacts between participants and their homes, their school and immediate communities was measured on a continuum between the extremes of frequent and occasional contact. Lastly, the affective involvement continuum positions the situation in terms of whether the emotional involvement between participants was higher or lower. These were degrees of affects between participants during English language learning activities that were measured on two independent clines: high to low and positive to negative. It was these aspects of tenor that provided this study, with the essential tools to analyse social relationships between

participants and their homes, schools and their literate communities in order to establish relationships that characterised participants' English literate life histories.

Mode (Halliday & Hasan, 1989; Hu, 2010) refers to what part the language is playing, what is it the participants are expecting the language to perform for them in the particular situation; the symbolic organisation of text, the status that it has and its functions in the context, including the channel and also the rhetorical mode, what is being achieved by the text in terms of such categories as narrative, expository and the like.

For this study, the concept of mode was used to offer an analysis of the “role played by language on a continuum from accompanying to constituting social activity” in relation to field as well as to analyse “the degree of interaction” between participants and their homes; school(s) and literate communities in the use of English Second Language “on a continuum from a high degree of aural and visual contact and immediate feedback to no aural and visual contact and no immediate feedback” (Eggins, 1994, p. 54). The mode aspect was used to analyse the participants' written autobiographical narratives (written texts) and spoken stories from participants' narrative interviews to obtain a degree of interactions between participants and their homes, school and communities as well as the role language played in the English learning activities.

Employing Systemic Functional Linguistics theory made it possible for this study to engage with processes, steps and English Second Language activities at home, school and in the communities by looking at what exactly participants are narrating that shapes their ESL identities, how the people involved in the ESL activities interrelate to one another and what modes of ESL learning are at use in homes; school and the community.

### **3.2.4 Data analysing approaches**

In consideration of the research question, theoretical and conceptual framework, and the research instruments, data in this study were analysed using the deductive approach instead of inductive approach. This was done to ensure that the findings presented in this study reveal the conceptual framework for this study - Field, Tenor and Mode characterising ESL learning of learners in their three contexts.

The deductive approach is the analysis method used by researchers who have a clear theoretical framework and conceptual framework to analyse their data. While the inductive data analysis approach McMillan & Schumacher (2001) “organise(s) data into categories, themes and pattern that emerge from the data generated in order to develop general conclusions or theory” (p. 479). To sum up the difference between the two approaches, one may say, in inductive reasoning, the categories emerge from the data generated by the instruments used, while in deductive reasoning the researcher starts with a set of categories, which are then used to categorise and organise data. The Systemic Functional Linguistics theory - the context of situation concepts of Field, Mode, and Tenor inform this study and data generated were deductively analysed with the focus on the emergence of these three concepts from learners’ autobiographies and narrative interviews. The researcher used these concepts as the way of describing what respondents reflexively narrated about their ESL literacy journeys in their homes; school; and in their immediate communities.

I designed the following table using Jordans, (2002) definition of field discourse, Gerot, (1995) dimension of mode dimension related to degree of interaction of phonic vs graphic and medium of spoken vs written. I also used Gerot, (1995) interpersonal relationship terms: status - equal and unequal status; contact - frequent and occasional contact; and affects - higher to lower cline and

positive to negative cline, to illustrate the concepts/categories that characterise language-learning processes that this study attempted to analyse.

SFL context of situation concepts/ categories	Description of the categories
Field discourse	ESL language activities, events, steps and processes that characterise participants' ESL journeys in their homes, school, and in their immediate literate communities. What is the ESL used to talk about in participants home, school, and immediate literate communities
Tenor discourse	<p>The role social relationships existing between participants and family members characterising ESL learning steps and processes at home.</p> <p>The social relationships existing between participants and teachers; other learners characterising ESL learning steps and processes at school.</p> <p>The role relationships existing between participants and other literate communities that characterise ESL learning steps and processes within the immediate environment of the participants. Is the power status between participants of equal or unequal status during social exchanges? What kind of contact between participants in ESL learning activities – does it bring participants in frequent contact or infrequent contact with each other?</p> <p>What kind of affection existed between participants in ESL learning and teaching activities i.e. is the emotional involvement high or low and positive or negative.</p>
Mode discourse	<p>The degree of interaction between participants' and families, school(s), and literate community in the use of ESL on continuum from high degree of aural and visual contact and immediate feedback to no aural and visual contact and no immediate feedback.</p> <p>What role language plays in ESL learning activities? What accompanying role the language plays in situations of language use/social activity? What degree of interaction between participants in a situation of language use both home, school and in the community ?</p>

Table 1 Data analysis table.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the methodology employed in this study. It outlines the research paradigm, research methodology, research method, the research instruments and data collection procedures adopted as well as describing the piloting of the research instruments. The chapter further presents the research population and sampling techniques used. Lastly, the considerations of ethical issues are presented in this chapter.

#### **4.2 The Research Paradigm**

This qualitative life history research is located within the interpretive research paradigm with the aim of interpreting Grade 7 learners' English Second Language literacy life histories. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) postulate that the "interpretive perspective engages the phenomenon from the participants' viewpoints considering social, cultural and political context" (p. 26). This approach embraces the idea that people's behaviour is context developed which is in line with the (Husserl, 1965; Maree, 2011) assertion that interpretivists assume that human life (Grade 7 English literacy life histories in the case of this study) can only be understood from within, and that human life is a distinctively human product; that human mind is purposive of meaning; their behaviour is affected by knowledge of the social world and that social world does not exist independently of human knowledge. Richards (2003) comments that qualitative enquiry is 'above all else a person-centred enterprise' and the research approach is predicated on the belief that the deeply personal, contextualised stories individuals tell about their lived experience comprise a narrative identity.

Halliday's (1978) explanation of language as a social semiotic - meaning making system whereby language is not just a neutral conduit of meaning, rather language is part of the conveying and forming of "shared systems of value and knowledge" warranted the use of the qualitative interpretivist paradigm to inform this study.

Qualitative interpretivism, employing life history research possesses the value of sponsoring the voice of the other who do not have access to making their own voice heard. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) for instance declare:

Action-oriented and clinically oriented qualitative researchers can also create spaces where those who are studied (the other) can speak. The researcher becomes the conduit for making such voice heard. (p. 26).

This research observed the interpretive (naturalist) paradigm (Maree, 2011) to enable data for this study to be analysed deductively. The interpretivist paradigm is based on assumptions that there is not only one reality, so this study was carried out in natural context to reach the best understanding of the relationships between the specific Upper Primary phase English Second Language curriculum expectations and the Grade 7 learners' English literacy life histories. Lincoln and Guba (1985) posit, "Reality is in essence complete aspects that cannot be understood in isolation from their contexts".

### **4.3 Research Methodology**

The study used qualitative research methodology because, according to Maree (2011), it is concerned with understanding the social and cultural context which underlie various behavioural patterns and is mostly concerned with exploring the 'why' questions of research. Qualitative methodology fits this study as it allows the researcher to look at human events. In the context of

this study, the steps, processes and events that comprised the Grade 7 learners' English Second Language literacy experience could be examined in a more holistic way.

Moreover, the qualitative approach was deemed suitable for this study because, very few studies exist in Namibia or elsewhere that investigate the relationships between English Second Language curricula expectations and primary school learners' literacy life histories. Most studies conducted in the Namibian context concentrate on measuring how much learners have mastered certain curriculum components for example reading comprehension and they quantified their findings. Curriculum theory and Systemic Functional Linguistics theory used as a metatheory and conceptual framework respectively for this study, are mostly used in studies involving in-service or pre-service educators in tertiary institutions outside Namibia. Here I apply them to a study on the Upper Primary learners in a Namibian rural combined school.

#### **4.4 Research Method**

The investigation employed the life history research method. Life history research, "aims to interpret how people understand and make meaning of their world and experiences" (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014, p. 45). Bertram and Christiansen (2014) as an account of a person's life or of particular aspects of people's life, which allows the voice of the subject to be heard, define life history research. Lieblich and Josselson, (1994) and Middleton (1992) define life history as a theoretical and methodological research frame while Butler and Bentley (1992) define it as a pedagogical approach drawing on life experiences. Delamont (1992) defines life history as a type of social interview. Both these definitions speak to the focus of this investigation since life history research collects life stories and affords individual learners' the opportunity of understanding their

literate learning experiences over the phenomenon itself. This allows Grade 7 learners to recollect events that have had a substantial impact on their English Second Language literacy development journeys. Life history research has the advantage over other research methods because it focuses on individuals' understanding and recollection of events that have had a substantial impact on their development (Kouritzin, 2000). Therefore, in life history research, it is not the events themselves that are of greatest importance, but the participants' understanding of the events and their later impact on, or resolution in, the participants' lives.

Measor and Sikes (1992) assert that the truth that participants tell can be quite different from the 'historical truth' of what happened in their lives, but it has a force in their attitudes and action (p. 224). This methodology possesses the ability to ensure that life histories of others are recorded and that these histories inform the policy and practices as one's life history could be used to add depth of knowledge to the understanding of social changes. This makes the voice of even marginalised individuals like those of Grade 7 learners heard.

Another reason why life history research was utilised in this study is its data comprehensiveness. It allows life histories to be interpreted by the researcher in many ways at different times in the light of new theory and new insights (Kouritzin, 2000). Life history research provides access to real-lived experience, which is essential knowledge for teachers and policy-makers as it gives problems a human.

Using life history research allowed me to ground the existing academic theory within the lives of Grade 7 learners. This assertion is supported by Middleton's (1992) opinion that studies that rely too heavily on academics' readings of texts can "bracket out" that is, render invisible – the everyday conversations, experiences, and perspectives of people in schools (p. 302).

#### **4.5 Research instruments and data collection procedures**

To generate data in relation to the research question, learners' written autobiographical narratives, and the follow-up narrative interviews were used. It comprised the collection of steps, processes and events that characterise how the Grade 7 learners learn English in their homes before and after schooling began. The follow-up narrative interviews and written autobiographical narratives were conducted in vernacular Oshindonga. This was done to enable participants to articulate their narratives. Learners' interviews were audio recorded and lasted a maximum of thirty minutes long each carrying five-interview questions that were followed by prompts. The autobiographical narratives and narrative interviews were transcribed into English the medium of communication for this study. The specific Upper Primary phase's English Second Language curriculum (documentary evidence) was used to establish whether the phase specific expectations are achievable given the experiences of the learners' English Second language literacy life histories gleaned from the autobiographical narratives, and the follow-up interviews.

The questions in the interviews, and those that guided the writing of learners' autobiographical narratives intended to generate data for three sub-research questions in order to answer the main research question:

- 1.1. What language activities and events at homes, school and within the immediate literate community characterize the Grade 7 learners' English literacy life histories?
- 1.2. What interpersonal relationships exist between the participants and their homes; participants and their school; and between participants and their literate communities during English literacy activities and events?

1.3. What is the role-played by ESL during language activities and events at homes, school, and in the literate community as well as the degree of interactions between the participants and their family members; participants and their school; and participants and their literate community?

At first participants wrote the autobiographical narratives in which they presented their English Second Language learning journey. The writing of the autobiographical narratives begun with the invitational statement: “write me the story of your life in which you outline steps, processes and events that shape the journey of learning English at home, school and in your immediate communities”. The participants were required to reflexively recount their journeys of learning English Second Language in these contexts. The written autobiographical narratives were transcribed from the Oshindonga language into English. See Appendix C1-C6.

The autobiographical narratives were important in this study because stories are important in terms of our literate identities, defining where we come from, who we are in the present and what we hope for the future as well as assisting to sort and understand experience (Bruner, 1990). Although no literature indicates the use of autobiography with primary school learners learning a second language, literature indicated its use in preservice teachers’ education (Samuel, 2009; Steinman, 2007; Bryan & Tippins, 2005; Sharkey, 2004; Rosenthal 1991 & Pereira-Mendoza 1988). Pinar (1975, 2004) and Grumet (1990) all had used the autobiography method successfully.

The follow-up narrative interviews were conducted after the participants had written their autobiographies of their ESL life histories. This enabled the researcher the opportunity to capitalise on some aspects possibly omitted or touched on peripherally by the participant in the written autobiographical narratives. In fact, the written autobiographical narrative served as the follow-up narrative interview schedule in accordance with what Sharkey (2004) noted that often experiences

not included in the written autobiographical narratives are shared in conversation. Gratch (2000) signalled the difficulties of critically examining one's own experience without talking about them with others.

The narrative interview was a conversation between the researcher and the respondent where the researcher introduced the interview with a leading statement “you have written an autobiography in which you narrated the steps, process, activities and events that characterise your ESL learning journey”, tell me about your English learning journey at home, school and in the community.

Five interview questions including probing questions were asked to generate ESL activities and events as well as the kind of interpersonal relationships between participants and their homes, their school, and literate community. See Appendix B1 and B2. The narrative interviews were done in vernacular Oshindonga and were transcribed. See Appendix D1-D6.

#### **4.6 Research population and Sampling techniques**

This interpretive life history research adopted a purposive sampling technique to select participants for the study. From the total number of 22 Grade 7 learners in this particular combined school, a sample of only 27 percent of participants – six learners was drawn. Only six learners participated due to time constraints as learners were interviewed after school. Written autobiographical narratives and narrative interviews generate a large volume of data, which requires adequate time to transcribe and analyse. The purposive sampling technique was primarily chosen because, it allows the research to, “display specific findings that represent only the specific group of participants even though these finding cannot be generalised beyond the sampled group” (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014, p. 60). The written autobiographical narratives and narrative accounts during follow-up interviews present English literacy life histories of the research participants that

cannot be generalised however, they may encapsulate a number of issues, which exist in the population. Three Grade 7 learners of average performance in ESL skills since their Lower Primary years and three that were categorised as poor in English were purposefully selected as study participants for this study. It is important to note that not a single learner in the research site under investigation was considered successful in ESL according to the Grade 4 and Grade 6 year-end examinations. This peculiar case was the reason why the learners who participated in this study fell into the average and unsuccessful categories.

The selection criteria used for this study were the overall ESL performance in both Grade 4 and Grade 6 year-end examinations. Grade 4 English results were used because they reflect the participants' competencies at the end of the former Lower Primary phase. The Grade 6 results were used because they were the highest Senior Primary phase results available. Grade 7 is the last grade in the Namibia's Upper Primary phase and the study was carried out during the first term of the school calendar when no examination had been written. Another criterion was that three of the participants must have repeated a grade between grades 1-7 and three did not repeat a grade between grades 1-7. This was because many learners in grade 7 were overage. However, gender was not used as criterion when recruiting participants as the number of repeaters equals that of non-repeaters and participants were recruited not considering their socioeconomic status.

The theoretical framework - curriculum theory and the autobiographical narrative as a research instrument both call for subjectivity in research. Therefore, this made purposive sampling fit for this study. This concurs with Grumet's (1981) assertion that, "curriculum and autobiography are an attempt to reveal the ways that histories of self and others and hope suffuse our moments and we study them through telling our educational experience" (p. 118).

#### **4.7. Piloting of Research**

I piloted the study as part of a preliminary round as recommended by (Cohen, Manion, & Marrison, 2001; de Vos, Strydom, Fouche, & Delport, 2005; Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). They posit that it is a good idea for the researcher to trial or test the research instrument(s) with people or documentary evidence similar to the actual study participants or documentary evidence in order to identify possible problems and risks. In this study, the Grade 8 learners and the English Second Language curriculum expectations for Junior Secondary phase were used. This process served as a “valuable avenue to gain practical knowledge and insights into the research areas” (Cohen, et al., 2001, p. 56). This is because during piloting process I discovered that writing autobiographical narratives require ample time and that participants needed to know that their life histories should be on how they acquired English literacy at home, school and in their community. This concurs with De Vos, et al. (2005), whereby piloting informed me of “possible unforeseen problems which were to emerge during the main investigation hence prepared me for possible errors that may have occurred” (p. 208).

During piloting, I discovered that two interview questions were irrelevant to the three sub-research questions. This finding is confirmed by Cohen, et al. (2001) argument that the “reliability of the instruments can be enhanced by careful piloting” (p. 121).

Although the pilot study proved costly in terms of time and effort, it emerged as cost-effective because it “allowed the researcher to know well in advance aspects that needed to be investigated” in documentary evidence - the specific Upper Primary phase’s English Second Language curriculum expectations; aspects of Field, Tenor and Mode in the learners’ written autobiographical narratives and follow up narrative interviews, before the actual study (Leedy &

Ormrod, 2001, p. 116). The piloting with the Grade 8 learners also helped to determine competencies in individuals and informed the researcher when to modify the content of the research instruments to enhance the validity of the study process (Creswell, 2008).

#### **4.8. Ethical Issues**

The whole endeavour of undertaking a study requires observing the ethical issues of social research. Adhering to the tenets of ethics (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014), is paramount because educational research intrudes into people private lives, thereby requiring them to reveal personal information to strangers.

Data collection for this study was therefore preceded by the researcher having obtained permission from the Director of Education, Arts and Culture in Oshikoto Directorate of Education and from the School principal, Appendices E1& E2 and ethical clearance from Rhodes University's Department of Education, Appendix G. A letter outlining the research topic and purpose and requesting consent was read, dated and signed by participants and their parents/guardians, Appendix E3 and E4. The consent letters to participants and parents/guardians were presented to them in vernacular Oshindonga to enhance the understanding of the purpose and objectives of the research.

The researcher "seeks and obtained consent" from the school principal since the research participants were minors - appendix E6 (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010, pp. 101-103).

Although the researched/participants were/are unaware of research ethics (Neumann, 2011), the researcher is required by the ethical-moral dimension to observe and maintain this moral and professional obligation.

Primary principles of ethics in research devolve this responsibility to the researcher to protect the participants from any harm. This is why issues of non-maleficence to participants, voluntary participation, right to participate and withdraw, privacy, anonymity and confidentiality (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010, Bertram and Christiansen 2014) were addressed in the letter to participants and the letter to participants' parents/guardians. This was done to ensure that respondents and their parents/guardians were comfortable with being participants in this educational research.

Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured by the use of pseudonyms and the researcher protects the identities of participants when publishing the results of the study, (Cohen et al., 2001; Leedy & Ormrod, 2010; Bertram & Christiansen, 2014 ;).

Writers of the autobiographical narratives and respondents of follow-up narrative interviews were requested to fill in their names to sign consent letters for easy control in data collection and verification purposes. However, all identification information was removed soon after verification was completed and replaced with pseudonyms - Earth; Mercury; Jupiter; Uranus; Mars; and Venus (names of planets) (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010, p. 103).The school was given a pseudonyms (Tegameno).

Data collection only commenced once permission was obtained from the Directorate of Education, Arts and Culture of Namibia's Oshikoto Education Region.

#### **4.9. Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the methodology employed in this study. It outlined the research paradigm; research methodology; research method; the research instruments and data collection procedures

adopted as well as the piloting of the research instruments. The chapter further presented the research population and sampling techniques used. Lastly, ethical issues were addressed in this chapter. Chapter Five presents the generated data, data analysis and discussion of findings from both participants' written autobiographies and the narrative interviews.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **PRESENTATION OF DATA GENERATED; DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the generated data, data analysis and discussion of findings from both transcribed written autobiographies, and narrative interviews. Three concepts of the Systemic Functional Linguistic theory context of situation namely Field, Tenor and Mode are used to address the main research question through the following sub-research questions:

1. What language activities and events at home, school, and within immediate literate community characterize the Grade 7 learners' English literacy life histories?
2. What interpersonal relationships exist between the participants and their homes; participants and their school; and between participants and their literate communities during their English literacy life histories?
3. What are the roles played by ESL during literacy activities and events at homes; school; and in their literate community as well as the degree of interaction between the participants and their family members; participants and their school; and participants and their literate community that shaped their English literacy?

The aim of the chapter is to establish whether there is a correlation between what the Namibia National Curriculum for Basic Education expects learners to have mastered at the end of the Upper Primary phase and the realities learners bring into the classrooms.

## **5.2 Presentation of generated data and their analysis from both autobiographies and narrative interviews.**

This section presents the findings of the study based on the documentary evidence that consisted of - transcribed written autobiographical narratives and interviews. We can see that each participant's autobiography and interview verbalise steps, processes and events in their ESL literacy-learning journey in detail. Considering the confidentiality of participants' identities, the names have been replaced with pseudonyms (planets' names) to avoid any tracing of participants.

### **1. Earth**

#### **1.1 Earth's English literacy journey**

Earth grew up with his family in a village and was introduced to English and Oshindonga literacy simultaneously. His mother made him reading in his vernacular at a table before starting kindergarten and formal school. As he indicated in his autobiography, the story reading in English was translated into Oshindonga by his mother so he could better understand the content and he had problems following and understanding stories in English. His cousin also played a big role in his English learning because he taught him names of different body parts in English while they sat around the fire or herded farm animals.

As his autobiography and interview show, his family made reading materials such as alphabetical letters models, posters with different animals; fruit; vegetables; professional people; colours; shapes all written in English available to him at home. Reading books borrowed from school by his cousin and those bought by his parents interested him at first but later became boring, as there were hardly any new books.

Mother made him read English words scribed on a small chalkboard or point at things on posters or read them out aloud. He was made to recite alphabetical letters and numbers in both English and Oshindonga. As his autobiography shows, he learned his alphabet in the vernacular first and then in English later in Grade 1 but had already mastered it at home. Most books in Grade 1 were familiar to him. Although they were encouraged to learn English words by their parents, they did not speak English at home, as family communicated in vernacular.

English usage became compulsory in Grade 4 and most learners struggled with speaking English in the class. The use of corporal punishment alarmed him in Grade 4; however, he believes that the classroom ground rule that prohibited learners from communicating in their vernacular assisted him to learn English although at some point they experienced a lot of ridicules and being laughed at by others. His parents bought him a dictionary and assisted him with dictionary usage. His mother assisted him with homework, poster designing and wording, so he enjoyed his assessment tasks.

Earth attended Grade 5 in an urban private school where English was compulsory allowing him to learn English from day to day conversations, class discussions and at sports events at school as he mixed with learners from different cultures and languages. He used the school library during BIS lessons and whenever he had homework. Earth favourite National Radio programme - Witani Child-Line radio contributed immensely to his English learning journey. He found listening to young people on radio fun and he and his cousin and friends acted speaking on radio to improve their language skills.

English is used less both in his home, current school and his immediate community. People who spoke English instead of vernacular were ridiculed by the elders and by others in his farm area. It

is only in town where you find people speaking English, in their homes, shopping malls, offices and playgrounds.

## **2. Mercury**

### **2.1 Mercury's English literacy journey**

Mercury lived with her parents and a cousin in a farmhouse. Her cousin used to translate English songs and stories that she read into Oshindonga, their vernacular. This gave Mercury a keen interest in singing and story reading. She learned alphabetical letters in her vernacular, how to write her name and surname from her mother while they used to sit under a tree. She was not introduced to attentive English from family members before she began formal school.

As her autobiography shows, she was introduced to English phonics at school, which she mastered easily because she already knew the Oshindonga version. She sat with family around the fire in the evening to read different storybooks written either in English or in Oshindonga that were brought home from school. Sometimes she had to read aloud and family members listened to her. Her pronunciation problems were corrected before she was permitted to continue.

Mercury recounted her Grade 4 teacher reading activities where they were tasked to read and write or talk about what they read. Speaking or writing about what you read in the storybook was difficult due to her lack of understanding of what the stories were about. Therefore, she and others either copied or memorised the entire story. They were forced to write friendly letters in English and were made to stand up in front of the class to tell a story in English. Whenever they failed to write or tell a story, the teacher used to punish them, for instance, they had to clean the whole classroom alone or they were smacked. Because she did not know English, she used to keep quiet during English classes or else were punished as Grade 4 language of communication was English and

learners were compelled to avoid using their vernacular. Mercury indicates in her autobiography that she got sweaty hands during English classes and whenever she had to speak in the class because she was always not sure of what to say in English.

In her story, Mercury indicates that English has no place in her community and home, as very few people in her community, home and school frequently use English due to the lower level of English literacy.

### **3. Venus**

#### **3.1 Venus's English literacy journey**

As her interview transcript shows in Appendix C, Venus started learning English attentively in Grade 3, where their teacher used to scribe English sentences on the chalkboard and translate them into the learners' vernacular to help them understand.

Apart from that, she used to listen to older cousins in upper grades speaking English, which encouraged her try to learn the language. Although her cousins used to speak English, her home made no adequate English available, except during play activities where they sometimes use some English words mixed up with their vernacular. Parents sometimes asked them simple questions e.g. "who has done what?" and they had to try answer in their poor English.

In the interview, Venus indicated that her parents motivated her to learn English at school by reminding her of the importance of learning English - the official language. The English usage was poor in their community compared to their vernacular although she pointed out activities such as games playing, watching of TV with neighbouring children at their home that helped her to learn English. While she noticed the usage of English in Grade 4 to have contributed into her journey, she also acknowledged in both her autobiography and interview that her interactions during school

holidays with neighbouring children that were schooled in other parts of the country contributed a lot to her English learning journey.

## **4. JUPITER**

### **4.1 Jupiter's English literacy journey**

As per her interview transcript, Jupiter began learning English at kindergarten through singing, so she was taught English through songs translation. She was inspired to learn English by her elder siblings who used to read books at home that they brought with them from school. She listened to them learning from information books and whenever she caught, a word from what they were reading aloud, Jupiter used to ask her kindergarten teacher what the words mean when she transferred from town to a rural kindergarten.

In her autobiography and interview transcripts, she showed that she rarely had relevant resources despite her strong interest in learn English. At kindergarten up to Grade1, teachers made them to sing songs that they had to memorise and at some point, teachers and family members were harsh on her.

With her keen interest, Jupiter learned English through game activities and other learning materials e.g. name tags. She experienced teasing from other learners because of her strong interest in speaking English. However, she always found the courage to challenge these peers by enlightening them that she found it enjoyable practicing English because she is not from an English home. She needed to learn English because of the centrality of English in her access to education. She communicated to her parents in her vernacular but with her siblings in English to practice.

In the interview transcript, she indicated the school's attempt to compel learners to communicate in English at all times except during Oshindonga 1<sup>st</sup> Language classes. She regarded this as a vital

step to get learners use English to communicate and eventually learn the language. She however, noticed a lack of commitment from both learners and teachers to embrace the school's policy. She indicated the teachers' use code switching when teaching different content subjects.

Although English is her favourite language as her autobiography shows, she used to hide away from school due to her English teacher administering corporal punishment whenever learners failed to perform well in English assessment tasks.

As her autobiography and interview transcripts show, Jupiter values English in that it is an official language and is used to teach other content subjects, a language of development and communication with the outside world.

Other language events that cultivated English learning were her participation in the Window of Hope Club activities at school in which learners were encouraged to talk about their feelings in English. They learned a lot of stories and information, which were presented in English. The Window of Hope Club was a school's club intended to inform young learners of the danger of the HIV pandemic.

## **5. Mars**

### **5.1. Mars's English literacy journey**

Although his home lacked adequate English resources, Mars's English learning journey began early before he started formal education. There were few reading materials and his guardians lacked the adequate English language skills. He was introduced to English before attending kindergarten. His family - an aunt and older cousins, played a major role in his English journey.

As the interview transcript shows, his family showed sufficient interest to make him learn English although that was sometimes enforced with the use of smacking. Extract 1 “my mother showed interest to have us learning English ... while we were made to read to our elder cousins, mother bought us storybooks where the elder cousins used to read us from and give us multiple choice quizzes on chalkboard”.

Mars believes that his standard of English is low and would like to improve to be able to communicate well. He does believe that his former school’s initiative to compel learners to compulsory English usage except on Wednesdays, largely contributed into his learning of English.

However, he strongly believes that the meagre use of English in both school, home and the community negatively affected his English learning. His community prefers using the vernacular whenever they communicate and English is regarded as the language children use at school.

He also believes that, his use of gadgets such as cell phones, laptops, radio as well as printed media such as newspapers and oral stories told both at home contributed to his English learning journey.

Mars furthermore believes that, while there is a library at school, the lack of a community library negatively affected the English learning process among learners and other community members.

He asserts that the community members, who are English illiterate, should enrol in adult literacy programmes to enable them to use English to communicate among themselves.

## **6. Uranus**

### **6.1. Uranus’s English literacy journey**

Uranus’s English learning began at home when her family members, especially her older siblings and her mother taught her English phonics. While she indicated how her home struggled to acquire

learning resources, she noted in her autobiography and interview transcripts that her family awareness of the importance of English in her education made it possible for her to learn some English words before she begun formal education. As a second language learner, she indicates in her autobiography transcript: Extract 2: “Though writing alphabetical letters in the sand was difficult to, my mother did not give up on me” (Uranus’s autobiography, April 2016).

She learned names of objects in English in Grade 1 e.g. animal names, plant names that she did not learn at home. Knowing a few things in English assisted her in speaking English because the teacher at school used her to help other learners out during classes.

In her autobiography and interview, she pointed out family members, the teachers making use of her to teach other learners, the use of information books from school, the listening to English on National Radio at home as resources which aided her in learning English.

She indicated that very few people know and use English in their community and this lower English usage limits her English knowledge as people mostly converse using their vernacular.

### **5.3 Analysis of data generated from both research instruments.**

Table 2.1 gives an analysis of the six participants’ language activities and events at homes; school and within their respective literate community.

Research Question	What is the relationship between the Grade 7 English Second Language curriculum assumptions and learners' English literacy life histories?			
Sub-research question 1	What language activities and events at homes, school, and within literate community that characterise the Grade 7 learners' English literacy life histories?			
Participants	Language activities and events			Research Instruments
1. Earth	<u>Home</u> Reading bedtime stories; reciting alphabetical letters and numbers. Counting from 1-10 and spelling names using letters models. Repeating after brother to learn human body parts in English. Reading and writing of nouns, shapes, colours on chalkboard. Pointing to corresponding pictures on poster for names on chalkboard. Poster designing and wording with help of mother. Listening to young children discussing issues on national radio. Acting out speaking on radio programmes with cousin at home. Assistance with dictionary usage.	<u>School</u> Grade 1 throwing game with other learners. Day to day English usage in classroom especially in Grade four.  Acted speaking on radio programme with fellow learners at school. Checking out books from library.  English usage during sports events and to communicate with others at private school etc.	<u>Literate community</u> English usage during sports events and to communicate with others in town.	Written autobiography and narrative interview
2. Mercury	Singing songs both in English and Oshindonga. Learned alphabetical letters in vernacular. English reading aloud to family members.	Grade 4 story reading and narrating what they read. Writing of friendly letters	English has no prominent place in the community.	Written autobiography and narrative interview
3. Venus	Listening to older cousins speaking English at home. Usage of English mixed with vernacular during game playing at home. Parents' playful asking of questions in English to children.	English to Oshindonga sentences translation in Grade 3.	Learned English during game playing, watching TV at neighbour's home. Interacting with visiting children from neighbourhood s.	Written autobiography and narrative interview
4. Jupiter	Singing songs in English. English songs translation. Listening to older siblings reading English storybooks and information books from school while at home.	Learned English, through game activities and word tags reading at school. Communicating with other learners in English as per classroom policy. Learned English through teacher code switching. Participation in the Window of Hope Club activities such as information sharing and story reading.	No activities	Written autobiography and narrative interview
5. Mars	Reciting numbers and counting in both vernacular and English before kindergarten. Identify and recite alphabetical letters from the models in both vernacular and English.	Essay and letters writing in English while in Grade three. Speak English a language of communication all school days except on Wednesdays during	Speaking English during casual conversations with friends and other schoolmates	Written autobiography and narrative interview

	<p>Learned English words from storybooks that were used to read aloud to aunt or aunt read to them before they began school.</p> <p>Learned English from older cousins who used to reading from books they obtained from school and translated English stories or information into vernacular.</p> <p>Observed older cousins reading stories. Given quizzes to test understanding.</p> <p>Usage of gadgets: phones, laptop, radio and printed media such as newspapers at home.</p> <p>Oral stories told in his vernacular.</p>	his stay at one of his previous schools.	whenever travelling to and from school.	
6. Uranus	<p>Learned English through songs from sister.</p> <p>Listened to National Radio programmes together with cousin.</p> <p>Learned meanings of ESL words from cousin after had listened to national Radio programmes.</p>	Learned all subjects in English except in Oshindonga lesson while in Grade 4, which exposed her to many English resources as learners were compelled to communicate in English.	Practiced speaking English with friends while receiving assistance from older woman.	Written autobiography and narrative interview

Table 2.2. An analysis of interpersonal relationships between the six learners during their ESL language activities and events in their respective homes, schools and literate community

Research Question	What is the relationship between Grade 7 English 2 <sup>nd</sup> language curriculum assumptions and learners' English literate life histories?			
Sub-research question 2	What are the interpersonal relationships between the participants and their homes; participants and their school; and between participants and their literate communities that shape their English literacy histories?			
Participants	Interpersonal relationships between participants			Research Instruments
1. Earth	<p><u>Home</u></p> <p>Parent-child reading frequent and positive relationship.</p> <p>Parent assisting with homework – frequent contact, positive effects of unequal status.</p> <p>Parent reminding participant of the usefulness of learning English – unequal status, frequent contact and positive and higher emotional state.</p>	<p><u>School</u></p> <p>Compulsory English language usage in Grade 4 – unequal power status between teacher and learners; equal power between learner and other learners, hence frequent and positive.</p> <p>English usage at school, during sports events characterized by equal status infrequent contact and higher/positive effect.</p> <p>Positive relationship between Earth and friends while acting out practicing speaking English on radio representing equal status and immediate feedback.</p>	<p><u>Literate community</u></p> <p>Offensive to greet elders in English – unequal power, infrequent contact and lower and negative effects.</p> <p>Ridiculed whenever addressing elders in English – no equal power between young ones and elders, negative relationship with negative effect.</p>	Written autobiography and narrative interview
2. Mercury	Family member listening to her reading positive relationship of unequal status and infrequent contact.	Learner - teacher relationship positive with unequal status, and infrequent contact during story telling sessions.	No contact at all.	Written autobiography and narrative interview

3. Venus	Parent - child reading session characterised by unequal status, infrequent occurrence. Corporal punishment by elders carrying unequal status, frequent contact and negative effects. Relationship during home reading were positive, infrequent and of unequal status.	Teachers borrow books from library for learners to read in classes. Unequal status, frequent contact, lower, and negative effects between teachers and learners.	Interaction in English with visiting neighbouring children characterized by equal status, frequent contact and positive effects.	Written autobiography and narrative interview
4. Jupiter	Had strong interest in learning English but lacked necessary learning resources. Unequal status between Jupiter and parents characterised by infrequent contact and negative affect.	Ridiculed by peers due to her keen interest in speaking English. Lower commitment by teachers and other learners toward English classroom policy. Equal power status between teachers and learners, with infrequent contact and negative affect. Nervous with English due to corporal punishment by English teacher shows unequal power status between teachers & learner, infrequent contacts and negative effects. Expression of own feelings during the Window of Hope activities shows equal power status; frequent contact and positive effects.	No contact observed.	Written autobiography and narrative interview
5. Mars	English learning at home characterised by equal power status between siblings and Mars but unequal status between Mars and aunt, yet both bore frequent contact and positive affective.	Unequal status between kindergarten teacher and learners during the reciting of alphabetical letters; counting in English and writing of numbers on sand bringing teacher and learners in frequent contact of unequal status. Relationship of unequal status and infrequent contact between older cousins and Mars during reading sessions and conducting of quiz competitions.	Relationship of equal status and frequent contact between fellow learners at current school to commit themselves to practicing speaking English.	Written autobiography and narrative interview
6. Uranus	Uranus's interpersonal relationship with older siblings during reading sessions was of equal status and frequent contact. Interpersonal relationship between her and mother during reading activities were of unequal status and infrequent contact. Her tenor with visiting cousin while listening to National Radio programmes and learning of meaning for various ESL words bore	Interpersonal relationship between friends while practicing speaking English at neighbouring house were of equal status and frequent contact and natural affects. The tenor between Uranus's friends and the elder woman was unequal and of infrequent contact. Teacher - learners' relationships during teaching and learning of various content subjects and English lessons in Grade 4 is of unequal status and infrequent contact since the teacher used to demand they practice speaking English. Teacher offer service from position of high status	Tenor between community members and English users is of unequal status, with infrequent contact and negative effects.	

	equal status, frequent contact and positive affect.	with frequent contact with Grade 4 learners.		
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Table 2.3. An analysis of the role played by ESL and the degree of interaction between participants during language activities and events at home, school, and within their literate community.

Research Question	What is the relationship between Grade 7 English 2 <sup>nd</sup> language curriculum assumption and learners English literate life histories?			
Sub research question 3	What is the role-played by ESL during language activities and events at homes, school, and in the literate community as well as the degree of interaction between the participants and their family members; participants and their school; and participants and their literate community that shaped their English literacy?			
Participants	The role played by ESL during language activities, events, and degree of interaction between participants.			Research Instruments
1. Earth	<u>Home</u> Visual and aural mode of language usage during poster pointing and body parts pointing. Graphic narrative stories from bedtime stories, graphic/textual presentation of written alphabetical letters. Aural vernacular used to tell children that ESL is very important in their education.	<u>School</u> ESL aural mode playing accompanying role with lower degree of interaction during playing of game to teach ESL. Teachers' enforcement of compulsory English use (speaking) at school - aural and graphic usage as LoTL from grade 4. ESL playing accompanying role of compulsory means of communication with peers and everyone at private school, and in his Grade 4.	<u>Literate community</u> Aural vernacular ridicules by elders to young ones for using English to address them. National Radio usage of young people spoken English to educate others of issues affecting them. This bore the high degree of aural contact between participants and listeners with no immediate feedback.	Written autobiography and narrative interview
2. Mercury	Aural mode of language usage during singing of songs. Graphic mode with immediate feedback during alphabetical letters learning.	Accompanying role played by ESL language in constituting the telling of what learners learned from the stories they read.		Written Autobiography and narrative interview
3. Venus	Language usage of aural mode with accompanying role consisting of high degree of interaction between mother or grandmother and Venus as well as with siblings about the centrality of English to their education.	Sentence construction of graphic mode, which constitutes social activity of sentences writing with low interaction between Venus and mother, and Venus and the teacher. ESL speaking activities of introducing and greeting, ESL playing an accompanying role, allowing high degree of interaction between Venus and fellow learners and his English teacher.	Casual conversation of spoken mode where language played accompanying role with high degree of interaction between Venus and neighbouring children during social interactions and game playing during school holidays. Watching TV where spoken and visual language mode plays an accompanying role and the constitution of social activities where a degree of interaction was high & low.	Written autobiography and narrative interview
4. Jupiter	The accompanying role played by aural language during the seeking of various words meanings from the kindergarten	ESL aural communication during classroom interactions with peers and teachers as per Grade 4 classroom ground rule, consisting of high degree	No role played by the ESL in the community.	Written autobiography and narrative interview

	<p>teacher as well as during the listening to elder siblings reading from information books.</p>	<p>of aural and immediate feedback. Aural vernacular ridicules by fellow learners due to her high degree of ESL aural interaction. High degree of ESL aural interaction during the Window of Hope club social activities.</p>		
5. Mars	<p>A high degree of aural and visual mode of ESL and Oshindonga during alphabetical letters learning and reciting with immediate feedback from older cousins and aunt. Graphic and aural mode of ESL and vernacular during storybooks and information books reading aloud and quizzes with cousins with immediate feedback. Audio and visual mode of ESL during gadgets usage in ESL activities and events at home. Lower degree of interaction between participants and media of delayed or no feedback at all. High degree of aural interaction during oral stories telling in vernacular that bear immediate aural feedback.</p>	<p>Visual mode used to present English texts such as letters and essays with immediate feedback from teacher.  Lower degree of interaction during aural English usage to communicate at school every day except on Wednesdays. Aural mode of ESL with lower degree of interactions between learners during casual conversations with friends, and other schoolmates whenever travelling to and from school. This aural conversation bears immediate or no feedback at all.</p>	High degree of aural interaction in vernacular.	Written autobiography and narrative interview
6. Uranus	<p>High degree of interaction and immediate aural feedback between Uranus and cousin while listening to English radio programmes concurrently characterized by casual conversation where meanings of words were given.</p>	<p>ESL played accompanying role and constitutes the teaching of subject content to learners with high degree of interaction given the context of situation. High degree of aural communication to interact with other learners and teachers using ESL medium dictated by classroom language ground rule consisting of high degree of aural and immediate feedback.</p>	ESL accompanied social discussion between young people where interaction was lower and no immediate feedback after National radio programme.	Written autobiography and narrative interview

#### **5.4 Data interpretation and discussion of findings**

Written autobiographical and narrative interviews were analysed to offer a rich data resource that unpacked the six learners' English 2<sup>nd</sup> Language literacy journeys at home, school, and within their community. Analysing participants' autobiographies and interviews made their ESL learning journeys made visible as these tools helped to unpack how participants experienced the kinds of English language activities and events; the interpersonal relationships between participants during ESL learning activities and events; as well as the role played by ESL during English literacy activities and events.

The three major concepts – field, tenor, and mode that are used to analyse the findings made it possible for the researcher to understand the complex and dynamics experiences in the participants' ESL learning trajectories that are competing forces in shaping their English language identities.

The current findings from section 5.2 are mainly descriptive and not conclusive. In this section, I discuss the analysis of these findings from the theorized concepts referred to in Chapter Three.

The data analysed in this study shows the connection between findings and previous framework I presented in Chapter Two. Therefore, this section is presented around these concepts: Field – English literacy activities and events at home, school and in the community that characterize six learners' ESL learning journeys; Tenor - the interrelationships between participants in both their three contexts i.e. home, school, and literate community and Mode – the role played by ESL in literacy activities and the degree of interaction between participants in these three contexts.

#### **5.4.1 Participants' experiences of English literacy activities and events at home, school and in their communities that addresses sub-research question 1.**

Educators such as Dicknson and Neuman, (2006) and Maybin, (2007) view a home as an important foundation for later learning and as a place for the emergence of literacy and language development. Family involvement in children's education has become widely recognized as an important element for effective schooling (Hall, Larson, & Marsh, 2003). There is a strong relationship between language activities and events at home and language activities and events children might encounter at school and in the community. However, family and home characteristics such as income, parents' education level, parents' literacy habits and their engagement with literacy influences children language skills development (Burgess, Hech & Lonigan, 2002).

##### **5.4.1.1 Participants' experiences of English literacy activities and events at home.**

What emerged from the findings is that participants see themselves as insufficiently exposed to literacy practices essential to develop literacy both in primary and English language. Participants see their parents who are supposed to be their first teachers less involved with their literacy and language skills development. While language learning is related to the context within which the language is learned and used, and the experiences one has of learning and using that language, Evans (1993), four participants indicate little contribution by their homes into their ESL literacy learning. The participants feel that the less exposure to Oshindonga literacy at home marred their potential to learn English literacy to effectively communicate. The participants also see their lack of English communicative competencies characterised by a lack of grammatical competencies; discourse competencies; sociolinguistic competencies; and strategic competencies (Canale, and

Swain,1980), as limiting them to participate as community members (Evans. 1993), possessing English literacy.

The limited functional primary language and ESL literacies that participants reveal experienced with their families through non continuous family joint reading, recognising and recitation of alphabetical letters, numbers, shapes and colours before formal education are attributed by participants to their parents' characteristics (Aduwa-Ogiebaen, & Iyamu, 2006; Considine & Zappala, 2002). Participants further attribute their parents' socioeconomic status reflected by their level of education to have influenced the kind of literacy preparation (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000) they received. Except for high status families like Earth's family, which made alphabetical letters models; posters; radio, opportunity to study in private school in town etc. available - a good investment in resources that promotes English literacy through better teaching style (Shonkoff & Zappalo, 2000), fosters a higher level of achievement and psychological support (Williams, et al., 1993). Four participants reported being not read to by parents or other family members hence missing out on benefits of being read to such as reading together is fun; helps keep interest high; build vocabulary and listening skills; models reading skills (Needham, 2004; Rippel, 2006) due to the level of their parents education. "My father makes no effort to think how relevant it is to learn English". "This is because he refused to buy me reading books that I requested him to buy for me" - excerpts from Jupiter's written autobiographical narrative.

While developing basic literacy concepts in one's mother tongue is commendable for assisting with concepts transfer to English (Cummins, 2000), participants indicate engaged in literacy activities not beyond recognising and reciting of alphabetical letters at home except for Earth and Mars whom used various resources and had different literacy activities such as quizzes and matching activities. The participants indicated that their geographical locations – a rural area lack

environmental print in form of magazines, etc (Fleisch, 2008) which would ignite different literacy activities and events between them and their families. The participants' experience with early playmates and siblings speaking in their vernacular and occasionally English, and their early experience of parents with literacy activities (reading and writing) which is often non frequent (Samuel, 2009) affected their ability to develop English communicative competency.

The participants' experiences of limited or no reading and time resources available in their homes testify lack of commitment from parents/guardians. Even Earth, who is from middle class home, has reported reading from the same books home and at school, while the other five participants could only read books obtained from school. This indicates that learners from poor households typically have lower educational levels than better off households due to less investment of time and resources (Wikan & Mostert, 2011).

The learners' experiences reveal a difference between the academic support given to children from working-class homes and those from middle-class homes whose socioeconomic status is higher. There is a great variation in literacy practices within the families of the six learners in this study, such as parental attitudes toward English learning (El-Omari, 2016). This characterises the kind of support these children get from their families during joint reading and writing activities. Earth who in both his written autobiographies and follow-up interviews indicated that he is from a middle-class family showed that the parents made it their responsibility to make English available to him. This commitment is observed both from attitudes and number of resources made available such as time spent on language activities at home with parents or cousins, literacy activities such as listening to radio, parent-child reading sessions, homework assistance, dictionary usage support, and the availability of print in the form of newspapers etc. compared to other families. Here, only books obtained from school were available to the other five learners from working-class homes

(Nkandi, 2015; El-Omari, 2016). This contradicts Whitehurst et al. (1994) assertion that the SES of parents does not determine children's language development. According to Wikan and Mostert (2011), however a combination of lower SES and parents characteristics—their negative attitudes and lack of reading culture in their homes contribute to learners' lack of exposure to literacy activities and events necessary to cultivate improved English development.

Lack of a reading culture and reading resources, lack of motivation to speak English and parents' attitude towards reading made it impossible for homes to cultivate the necessary literacy activities for children to meet the expectations of the formal education curriculum. Exposing children to home environment rich in literacy opportunities and activities and events benefits children's language development (Gibson et al., 2007; Butler, 2013). The resources parents have at their disposal, the quality of literacy role models provided by parents and the types of language activities in which parents and children engage are directly related to their language abilities (Burgess et al., 2002).

While it is important to acknowledge parents' attempts to expose children to alphabetical scripts early before they begin formal education, less or no work was done by the parents to make these children aware of phonology and grapheme—the language skills needed in later word reading and spellings. Parents, just like teachers, need to create an environment that allows children to interact with written texts e.g. story plot and characters in order to make them realise the relationship between spoken and written language.

Parents reading and telling stories to their children is an integral cog of schooled literacy at home, school and in the community because telling stories to children in their early years cultivates reading habits at a later stage (Wikan et al., & Needham, 2004). During oral language use

accompanying story telling, parents talk to their children in extended and elaborated way in the language they know best. The oral language helps children build knowledge of the world that will serve them at school with their language literacy experiences (Henok, 2014).

#### **5.4.1.2 Participants' experiences of English literacy activities and events at school.**

Not only home environmental factors and parents' socioeconomic status influence learners' language learning journeys. Schooling has been and still is believed to mainly transform "commonplace literacy" the reading and writing activities of everyday lives into "schooled literacy" a system of decontextualized knowledge validated through tests performance (Cook-Gumperz, 1986). Moreover, at school learners need to be guided into multiple literacies to add to those learned at home. In formal education, regardless of whether children come from English literate or illiterate homes, reading and writing activities should aim learners to become aware and appreciate the variety of purposes reading and writing serve in everyday life; understand the relationship between print and oral language including alphabetic principles; the knowledge of print conventions such as writing runs from left to right and top to bottom in sequence; and the knowledge of specific sound/symbol correspondence or phonics and the ability to recognise a growing number of words on sight (Peregoy & Boyle, 2008). All these goals can be achieved through a teacher's holistic teaching approach through various language activities and events where classroom goals focus on all four components of communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980). The participants' autobiographical and narrative interviews revealed experiences of learning alphabetical letters and phonics in Grade 1 in both in vernacular and in English through letter recognition and recitation method. Their learning experience concurs with (Cummins, 1988 & Krashen, 1993) that developing literacy skills in the learners' primary language facilitates the transfer of these skills into English at the appropriate time. All children come to school equipped

with foundation in knowledge and learning from home. Development and learning begin in the first language, and it is this language that children begin to construct their knowledge and form meaningful communicative relationships. Therefore, while homes are responsible for equipping children with literacy in home language, English literacy teaching lies with the schools where learners experience developmentally appropriate instructional materials designed to meet their linguistic, cultural, cognitive and social needs. English literacy skills can be developed when learners are assisted to become familiar with letter names, associate pictures visually with naming words, recognise and producing rhyming words and learn and use a limited number of sight words (William et al., 2000).

Participants experienced English literacy through phonic and sight words by means of word tags and ball games especially in Grade one and three. This exercise was inadequate for learners to understand the relationship between print and oral language, which includes alphabetic principles. Learners did not indicate experiencing English activities where new words from stories, poems were learned because they did not write or spoke of them being read to from storybooks by the teacher, taught a song from where words were used to learn English. This goes against the fact that literacy experiences to develop language can be enhanced through predictable reading materials where patterned books of stories with predictable rhyming and repeated phrases are used (Norton, 1995).

Some of the English language activities and events from which learners experience English literacy were casual conversations between learners within the school grounds, during sport events at school and during classes activities especially from Grade four since teaching and learning is done through the medium of English from Grade 4-12 in Namibian public schools. The participants reported a paradoxical experience of them compelled to communicate among themselves and with

teachers in English while most content-subjects teachers often resorted to teach in the vernacular Oshindonga through direct translation and code switching with the view of helping learners to understand the content. Extract two Jupiter Interview:

“Some teachers’ strictly teach in English medium while others resort to switching between English and Oshindonga”.

Although learners concurrently experience learning Oshindonga and ESL literacy, it is the teachers’ primary responsibility to use strategies that mutually reinforce and provide vocabulary instruction in both languages (Gonzales, 1994; Brisbois, 1995). The learners reveal experienced little exposure to English literacy in their classrooms where English is supposed to occupy central stage and in order to transform commonplace literacy into schooled literacy. While primary language plays a major role in learning concept that should be transferred to English learning (Cummins, 2000), code switching and Oshindonga translation, which may facilitate further learning for bilingual learners, restrict –the level of English language development which learners are expected to realise before they exit the Upper Primary phase. Teachers’ code switching robs learners of English resources and encourage learners to use Oshindonga instead of English when discussing in groups or in pairs as they lack motivation to express themselves (Tuan and Mai, 2015) and some feared ridicules from fellow learners. (Uys, et al., 2007; Otaala and Platter, 2013) confirm this finding that content - subject teachers in Namibia do not make it their obligation to contribute to English language development in their teaching. Alarmingly, participants experience a school culture not promoting reading hence hampering learners’ contact time with English activities and events that promote English literacy development (NIED, 2012). Participants indicated ‘only teachers allowed to get books from the school library for their learners to read in their classrooms’. That made them read the same books repeatedly as there are hardly any more

new books. This in exception of Earth who reported having borrowing books from a private school library.

Learners experience learning English decoding skills than reading comprehension, which they got through reading aloud activities to teachers and family members whom focused reading on pronunciation, and intonation. While participants had this English literacy activities, they missed meaningful functional print experiences where they could gain awareness of why people read and write. Unlike learners reading to teacher, teachers' reading aloud to learners facilitate ESL learning because learners enjoy shared reading, acquire modelled reading skills, absorb grammar and language usage, and develop reading comprehension. Learners often enter school lacking the necessary tools to literacy and may be at risk in properly developing their reading skills (Primamore, 1994).

#### **5.4.1.3 Participants' experiences of English literacy activities and events within their literate community.**

Unlike urban areas where young people are exposed to printed media, the environment of rural learners' does not expose them to multiple media that invite language activities and events.

From their written autobiographical and narrative interviews, six learners indicated that they hardly used English in their community. It was only Venus who by chance encountered English during game playing, watching TV and interacting with neighbouring children who were only visiting relatives during the school holidays. Extract three from Venus's autobiography:

I learned English from my neighbour friends who schooled in town when we are playing together. When playing, they usually communicate in English. This made me eager to learn English and these friends assisted me because they have ever wanted to learn Oshindonga from me as well. They understand me and did not lough at me. I also learned

English from watching TV programs from the neighbouring homes. My parent usually lets us go watch TV.

Also on rare occasions, Earth used English while in town to ask for assistance from shop attendants, someone in an office or people in the streets. Extract 4 Earth's autobiography:

It is only when we visited relatives in towns or gone shopping in town that we meet people in streets, shops and private hospital conversing in English. In towns, for one to easily get assistance, he/she needs to speak in English because some of the people attending to you are not Oshindonga speakers.

The learners experience less English usage from their immediate environments as in most of their social institutions such as church, clinic and local mini-shops people converse in vernacular. The community converse in vernacular as most community members are English illiterate or only possess basic reading and writing skills. While it is evident that learners whose parents are good at English achieve more English language learning, (El-Omari, 2016), the community where most people are competent in English assist its young generation to achieve more English literacy by making available information learning centres such as a community library.

#### **5.4.2 Experiences of interpersonal relationships between the participants and their homes; participants and their school; and between participants and their literate communities that address the sub-research question 2?**

The discussion in this subsection explores the tenor- the interrelationships that participants experienced between themselves and their homes, schools, and immediate literate community during the English literacy activities and events. The status relation, level of expertise of interactants in the language activities and events and the frequency of language activities and events that occurred at home, school and within the literate community are investigated. The discussion also engages findings by exploring participants' feelings (affect) during the English literacy activities and events.

Using the experiences revealed by the six participants concerning language activities and events at home, school(s) and in the literate community that were discussed in section 5.4, one is informed of the kind of degree of status characterising power relations between children and parents, learners and teachers, learner and peers; and participants and their immediate literate community. Participants' experiences manifest the frequency with which the three contexts engage children in language activities and events. Furthermore, the effect of the interaction experienced between the participants and their families, school(s), and immediate literate community during literacy activities and events can be characterised in their English learning journeys.

#### **5.4.2.1 Experiences of interpersonal relationships between participants and home during English language activities and events**

Participants reported exposed to limited literacy skills development in English in their homes. Parents and older family members who possessed knowledge of the alphabet, numbers, parts of the body in English and vernacular dominated during the literacy activities and events while participants showed deferential status as they relied on family members to initiate these activities and events. Their written autobiographies and narrative interviews show interpersonal relationship such as *“mother made me write my name, recognise and recite alphabetical letters using letters’ models that were bought for me and my cousin”* in case of Earth and Mars respectively. See Appendices [C1 and D4] and [C4 and D3]. This tenor is of unequal status and occasional contact as it occurred whenever family members had chance to initiate these language activities and events. While this reading orientation generally indicate parental responsibility toward their children's literacy development the participants experienced deprivation of printed media such as logos;

symbols; signs etc. which were not available in their homes and surroundings to initiate language activities and events with their family members.

In case of Earth's experience with his cousin, who taught him names of different body parts, their interpersonal relationship was of an unequal status; no frequent contact between them however manifest positive affection between them. On several occasion, Earth was made to repeat after his cousin, the exercise characterised by the dominant power of his cousin and deferential responses from Earth himself, who further relied on his cousin for corrections. Not only unequal status and occasional contact characterised the participants' language learning and events, and it was only on very few occasions, participants experienced a shared equal status with family members during dictionary usage, listening to English programme on radio and acting out speaking on national radio with friends and cousins at home. These language activities bring about positive affect between participants however, not so frequent as to boost English literacy. Evans (1993) propounds that language learning is related to the context within which that language is learned and used, and the experiences one has of learning and using that language.

Although most participants' parent-child reading and writing activities and events were not so common in their homes, Mars's and Earth's parents' made available reading and writing resources at home. Therefore, parent or family member-child reading and writing activities occasionally took place. These relationships are of unequal status since parents and family members demand reading and writing from participants and this sometimes results into neutral affection between family members. This observation indicated a lack of literacy activities and events in homes to develop language skills children need to complement formal school efforts to meet curriculum expectations for Grade 7 in which learners are expected to "listen for information and enjoyment to texts appropriate for non-mother tongue speakers, express ideas, opinions and feelings adequately, read

and understand easy children's literature and texts about everyday issues, and write short factual and imaginative texts in which language errors do not confuse meaning.”

One-participant experiences parents' assistance with homework, while two reported to have limited literacy resources such as storybooks, radio, newspapers, posters etc. In the case of Earth and Mars, this commitment is nevertheless still characterised by unequal status between parents and children because parents only avail these materials or assist children with schoolwork when they choose to do so. This might be the reason that despite the fact that Earth is from Middle-Class family he still lack adequate English literacy skills. The children do not insist on assistance to be readily available. This could be attributed to home social factors such as parents' education levels and the level of socioeconomic status that participants revealed in their narratives. So in essence, the English literacy activities and events do not occur frequently and participants and their parents have neutral affection since neither feels obliged to initiate these language activities and events. Home as a primary social institution, is obliged to provide primary language literacy activities and materials so children can indulge in language activities and events where both parents and children participate in order to develop children's language skills. Literacy in first language can serve as the foundation for a new language (Cummins, 1991; Paez & Ranaldi, 2006). Literacy in a primary language (Cummins, 2000) acts as stepping-stone into second language literacy.

While parents may realise the need to make provision for children to attend special English classes, their socioeconomic status and the lack of opportunities to send learners for private English tutoring sessions, plus a negative belief about learning English they do not fulfil this commitment. This contradicts Butler (2013) finding that, regardless of their SES background and their children's grade levels, all Chinese parents believed that effort should account for 70 - 71% of their children's English learning. Most narratives revealed the participants were not read to or made to write with

assistance of parent/family members. This lack of literacy practices and events culminates in a subsequent lack of language activities and events. The absence of a reading culture in most homes is a missing cog in literacy development and adds to difficulties for parents to fast track their children's English language skills development. While it is teachers in formal education duties for learners to master grade specific English competencies, these shortcomings in literacy home preparedness result in children coming to school under prepared for formal education and thus preventing them from achieving phase specific English curriculum expectations. Namibian students in tertiary education (Otaala and Platter, 2013; Ngwaru, 2014) display inadequate proficiency levels in ESL which widens the gap between what the students are able to perform and the academic standards expected of them by University education.

Furthermore, some participants experienced corporal punishment at hands of family members while engaging in literacy activities. This unequal status, frequent contact of negative affections deters participants from initiating and enjoying learning activities and events due to fear of physical afflictions from dominant parents. This bred a sense of nervousness during ESL activities and events.

Two participants acknowledging some English literacy activities and events that were significant in their literacy histories, which were of equal status and positive affection between participants. These occurred frequently during school holidays when the rural participant engaged with children from different areas while they listened to National radio programmes, watched TV at a neighbour's home and discussed the meaning of some English words. While these were significant events and language activities, they were not sufficient to raise ESL levels to the standard assumed by curriculum designers and policy makers.

#### **5.4.2.2 Experiences of interpersonal relationships between six Participants and the school(s)**

English language is the compulsory LoTL from Grade 4-12. Participants experienced the teachers and learners' relationships characterised by unequal status whereby teachers compelled learners to communicate in English during classes and to use English to communicate while at school. Learners experience English as a forced language to use at school and were often only in occasional contact with spoken English in presence of teachers. Added to that was fear of corporal punishment and being mocked by others when they spoke (Park & Lee, 2005).

One participant experienced learning English literacy due to her keen interest with English. However, she is confronted with the challenge of derision from fellow learners. Jupiter's Interview Extract 5 shows appendix [D3]:

Some followed the teacher teaching and some did not. From grade one – six, learners have interest in learning English, but from Grade 7, learners are not enthusiastic in learning English as other learners ridicule most times learners who tried their best to communicate in English. We are always berated that we think we know English than others.

She endured this setback on her own as the school failed to keep emphasising the importance of practicing speaking in English. Teachers' administration of corporal and other kinds of punishment as well as learners use of ridicules to deride others for communicating in English characterise the teacher to learners and learner to learners' interpersonal relationships as one of negative effects that inhibits learners from initiating English language activities and events themselves for fear of victimisation by fellow learners and teachers. It is not a conducive relationship for language learning because all anxieties that learners experience with English learning diminishes their desire to try to learn English. While the government language policy for public schools pronounce English a medium of teaching and learning, teachers at all times should cultivate and encourage English literacy among learners.

Learners are not allowed to borrow books from under resourced libraries except via the teachers that show unequal status and frequent contact with lower and negative affects between teachers and learners. This exercise demotivates and limits learners from reading a variety of books for enjoyment, and to improve their homework. While it is known that children with a poor reading culture do not read for pleasure, and to improve their homework (Wikan, et al., 2007), the school is expected to stamp out this habit instead of encouraging it. Schools should possible play a major role in compensating for English literacy skills that learners did not develop from home and helping to prepare learners to function in a competitive society (Pishghadam 2011).

#### **5.4.2.3 The experiences of interpersonal relationships between the six participants and the literate community**

English literate communities that children may interact with can make a huge contribution to children language development by making various literacy activities and events that stimulate language activities and events available. An environment full of English printed media such as newspapers; magazines; and books, resource centres such as community libraries; and visual media such as road signs, posters, billboards along the roads etc. is a fertile ground for language learning and development (Fleisch. 2008).

In addition, different people within the community play an important role by engaging and assisting children in various language activities and events through positive interpersonal relationships. While it is worth acknowledging homes efforts to make their children learn English, learners from this rural combined school are from a community crippled by a lack of English activities and events to stimulate English language skills development. Learners who have more cultural capital and have access to a social network of friends and institutions are guaranteed more success in education (Pishghadam, 2011).

The community did not invest in its children's English education. None of the learners indicated engaging in community activities where they learned English except for the occasional sports and watching of TV in neighbourhood homes. Most learners indicated that the community did not approve of young people using English while not at school this observation is opposite in town where according to Earth, people mostly converse in English. Participants experience a notion of community members seeing English as a school language shows infrequent English usage characterised by unequal status and negative affection between children and their immediate community. Parents of children who do not speak English feel alienated from school and are unable to participate in school activities or help their children with homework (Asif, 2014). Participants reported being accused of swearing and being disrespectful of elders whenever they addressed them in English. This illustrates an alarming lack of community involvement in English language cultivation in their children due to their social backgrounds (Pishghadam, 2011). While community may show disinterest in English literacy of their future generation, a school should emphasise the centrality of English in the society by sponsoring learners with special English activities such as English Debating Society, Weekend reading adventures to complement normal English lessons.

**5.4.3 What is the role played by ESL during literacy activities and events at home, school, and in the literate community as well as the degree of interactions between the participants and their family members; participants and their school; and participants and their literate community? This addresses the sub-research question 3**

#### **5.4.3.1. The role played by ESL during language activities and events at home**

The language activities and events such as parent-child reading and writing activities at home are characterised by high visual and aural mode both in the vernacular, Oshindonga and English irrespective of what kind of socioeconomic status participants' homes enjoyed. There are also

graphic/textual presentations of bedtime stories in case of 'Earth' and alphabetical letters, which formed the basis for reading, and writing of all participants. Participants had visual contact with learning materials and less immediate feedback from parents/guardians or older sibling/cousins during literacy activities and events. This helps participants develop receptive skills. There is high aural mode playing accompanying role in most ESL activities and events at home that only enhance oral and social language proficiency than language literacy. Participants experience lower degree of interaction with parents/guardians as well as siblings/cousins during English learning activities to allow for English communicative competence.

There is lower degree of interactions between participants and media; and there is delayed or no feedback at all during reading aloud sessions etc. This delay of feedback seems to result from lower educational level of parents. Parents and siblings resort to English-Oshindonga translations to allow for concepts transferring from the primary to the second language. While parents may not be well vested in choosing culturally relevant texts, they can establish partnerships with school and teachers to enable teachers learn and understand children's educational needs. This communication may enable formal education to bridge gap between school-literacy and home-literacy.

#### **5.4.3.2 The role played by ESL during language activities and events at school**

For an individual to be well equipped with language skills, the receptive skills of reading and listening play a major role in enabling the development of production skills speaking and writing. This means that, one needs to be more exposed to a higher degree of aural and written materials during social activities to develop receptive skills during interactions. The participants in this study experience, lower degrees of interaction during language activities at school. The aural and

graphical modes of vernacular continued to prevail even during and after Grade 4. This is against the government policy for public schools in Namibia, which made English a medium of instructions from grade 4 – 12. At this level, learners are expected to read and write in English for meaning. While participants reported having experienced very little language activities and events from both home and school due to limited reading and writing materials, it is no surprise that most participants reported reading to parents or teachers and not parents or teachers reading to them. This lack of reading models at school and home produces learners with lower aural and graphical mode of language. Learners mostly do not communicate orally with others using the medium of English as per Namibia's Language Policy of 2003. This lower degree of aural communication when learners and teachers are interacting from Grade 4 upward is attributed to the fact that for all of these learners, English is only practically available at school. English deficit among learners is worsened by ridicule by peers. This interpersonal relationship demotivates ESL learning among their peer community. These aural ridicules need to be demotivated at school with some incentives such as prizes giving to those who observe language policy as from grade four upward.

Social activities at school were characterised by a high degree of aural interactions during social clubs and speaking activities. Lower interaction was experienced during reading storybooks and information books that demonstrates how the rural school learners' value oral language over graphic/visual language inherited in books an indicative of a poor reading culture.

Teachers are the driving force in English literacy activities at school and should enable learners from the disadvantaged communities to understand differences between English and Oshindonga and how the differences interfere with learning of English. While school need to encourage learners' development of their first language, teaching of concepts transfer from first language to second language, development of reading, writing, speaking and listening strategies for English

all rest on schools. Thus, the school should encourage cooperative learning groups and get support beyond the classroom. This however is only possible if learners experience language learning, which considers different amount of cultural and linguistic competence possessed by different learners (Pishghadam, 2011). This can be achieved by careful learning activities and with supportive interpersonal relationships between those involved in language activities and events. In addition, while home life plays an important role in helping young children become literate, in low-income rural families, this role is limited. Only one participant learnt English words from watching TV, or from their elder siblings. This challenge of family not speaking English is left to teachers to make these children literate in English by make available various literacy materials such as TV, newspapers, videotaped role-plays, class debates, video cartoons etc.

#### **5.4.3.3. The role played by ESL during language activities and events within the literate community**

The language plays a major role in literacy learning for the society it serves. The community, through various media, cultivate literacy skills within its people that serve cultural and political purposes. Language is a tool through which people communicate meaning roles like commanding, narrating, informing or demanding certain services. It is given that when we use language to perform semantic process/to mean or to interact, we engage in language activities of exchange. This gives rise to the four basic speech functions: statements; questions; offers; and commands (Martin, 1989, cited in Mgqwashu, 2007). While it is expected of Grade 7 learners to use English adequately for official purposes, participants reported experiencing little use of ESL to demand services from the offices in town while within the immediate community English is seldom used to inform, narrate, or provide service. This lack of English literacy that participants experienced within immediate community places pedagogic demand on teachers for participants to realise the

English's curriculum expectations before transiting to secondary education. This can be done through purposeful and routinely selection of books to share with children and engage them in discussions or instructional activities. Where there are no community libraries and other educational centres, where English literacy activities and events take place a functional school library can assist in literacy development.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **Conclusions and recommendations for further studies**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the conclusions reached in this study with regard to English Second Language curriculum expectations and the Grade 7 learners' literacy life histories. It also presents pedagogical implications for the study's findings. The chapter offers limitations of the study, recommendations for further study, personal reflections as well as the chapter conclusions.

#### **6.2 Conclusions**

It seems there is little literacy resources – cultural capital (Pishghadam, 2011) such as printed, audio and visual media; social capital such as extracurricular activities, parents involvement and monitoring of children education that usually ignite language activities and events at home which may assist with learners' acquiring and development of both English and Oshindonga literacy. Learners' English literacy development remains inadequate for them to effectively function in the English curriculum. All participants regardless of their socioeconomic statuses experienced inadequate language activities and events needed to develop language skills. This negatively affected their English decoding, reading comprehension and vocabulary building, which are so important in language education.

While participants' homes seem to have disregarded the fact that good English literacy is a result of home efforts in helping children with English (Stigler, 1992; Butler, 2013). The teachers also seem not providing these rural school learners with opportunities to speak or listen to English. This

finding is supported by Nkandi (2015), that lack of ESL resources learners experience at school worsen negative impact caused by unavailability of ESL resources at home

Not only did these learners encounter less spoken and written English texts. They also had no experience of graphical texts in their vernacular. This seems to mean that, despite the government's assumptions that all children are assisted to learn how to read, write and are exposed to multiple reading and writing activities, most children experience little or no assistance from their parents and even from their schools (Uys, et al 2007; Otaala & Platter 2013). This is because parents themselves lack the necessary literacy skills to cultivate language skills in their children through various parent-child or child-parent initiated language activities and events. This finding is confirmed by (Samuel, 2009; Hayes, 2009) conclusions that the quality of teaching and learning English is strongly dependent on the schoolteachers' conception of what language is and how it should be learned.

Learners' homes failed in their responsibility of availing reading materials as most participants indicated that they only read books from school. Parents, who are the primary teachers of their children, are reneging on this responsibility due to (William et al, 1993, Shonkoff & Phillips 2000; Wikan et al 2007; Wikan & Mostert, 2011) their inadequate level of education, lower socioeconomic status and poor reading habits. While it is important (Henok, 2014, p.33) for parents to talk to children in elaborated ways for them to build knowledge to serve them in school with limited literacy experiences, the fact participants did not observe much literacy activities such as newspaper reading by family members is an illustration of a poor reading culture and the level of commitment parents expended on their children's literacy development.

Most participants chose not specify the types of language activities they engaged in at school except for reading aloud to teachers, writing, and reciting of alphabetical letters. This however mean that, these participants may have engaged in language activities such as debating, discussions, narrating stories, essay writing and letter writing—the activities meant to turn commonplace knowledge (Cook-Gumperz, 1986, pp. 41-44) into schooled literacy.

While participants' homes lack adequate language activities and events, it is disappointing that, the findings reveal that even at school, learners do not have access to language resources required for them to unpack the knowledge that is hidden in printed media. As a result, learners are unable to meet grade specific competencies due to lack of literacy activities necessary to cultivate English language skills, hence become less competent compared to other learners in other parts of the country.

While the community where participants reside offer constraining conditions (Walberg and Paik 2000) for English literacy learning, due to (Samuel, 2009, NIED, 2012) its rural geographical location; (El-Omari, 2016) social factors such as parents' negative attitudes and lower English proficiency, and cultural factors – non-availability of print media and audio-visual media, the school put up no effective English literacy materials in order ameliorate constrains that learners experience from their community. English is mostly unavailable within the participants' literate community. The school is therefore obliged to effectively use learners' first language knowledge to teach English literacy. This (Krashen, 2004; Guvercin 2012) is believed that using learners' primary language skills enables them to transfer these skills into English. Given that, these learners concurrently experience learning to read in first and ESL, the teachers should (Brisbois, 1995) strategize their teaching to mutually reinforce and provide vocabulary instructions in both languages.

Participants revealed existing interpersonal relationships that characterise English literacy learning in the three contexts. While a positive interpersonal relationship exists during children-family language activities and events, such as that occurred between Earth and his family during story readings, writing and speaking activities, not enough of these activities occur at home to help children develop English literacy skills. Most participants chose not to indicate how they were assisted with homework at home, nor had they indicated parents' keen interest in their English literacy activities by making available audio-visual and printed media except for a dictionary, letter models and posters respectively bought for Earth and Mars by their parents, Appendix [C1, and C4]. This whole notion points to unequal power relation between participants and family that does reflect how families relatively see English literacy learning not that their responsibility. This is clearly different from Chinese parents (Butler, 2013) who believe that family effort should count for 70-71% for their children's English learning.

This situation illustrates that, teachers regardless of what subjects they teach have huge task of ensuring that the Grade 7 English curriculum expectations are met. The schoolteachers' negative attitudes regarding English usage inhibits language activities and events between teachers and learners at school. Corporal punishment and other forms of punishment create anxiety about English learning among the learners. These kind of interpersonal relationships lead to lack of English communicative competencies amongst these rural school learners because learners would not be learning English literacy in pragmatic, authentic and functional way.

While participants experienced ridicules from elders and fellow learners - Appendix [D2] for using English to communicate show negative interpersonal relationships, which inhibits English literacy for both community and school, the school as societal institution serving a cultural and political function of ensuring accessible, equitable, qualitative and democratic English literacy should

embrace its mandatory function of ensuring that all learners in Namibia develop a functional English literacy. This can be ensured when children are allowed constant contact with English through various developmental appropriate English literacy activities at school. Without qualitative, accessible, democratic and equitable learning of English literacy in schools – participants’ education outcomes will most likely take time to meet curriculum expectations due to slow transformation.

### **6.3 Pedagogical implications**

The findings that emerged from this study indicated that learners’ homes, schools and literate community inadequately introduced them into literacy practices essential to develop English communicative competencies to meet Grade 7 English curriculum expectations. The findings attribute this to the lower socioeconomic backgrounds of homes, schools and the community. The lower social capital - learners’ relationships with teachers, parents, siblings, peers at school and community members; the extracurricular activities engaged in at homes, school, and in the community; and parents’ involvement in and monitoring of children education as well as the cultural capital such as the lack of the availability of reading books, printed media, audio and visual media at homes, school, and in the community have substantial influence in limiting participants’ ESL literacy.

The present study made an important contribution by exposing how teachers at schools with lower socioeconomic backgrounds fail to consistently help low SES learners to bridge the achievement gap that an impoverished lifestyle and limited mainstream experience created for the learners. Teachers themselves require special pedagogic training in order to help learners who live in abject

poverty, as they are unable to provide the requisite strategies to deal with the low level of literacy learners bring into classrooms.

#### **6.4 Limitations of the study**

This study investigated the English literate life histories of the Grade 7 learners of only one rural combined school of Namibia's Oshikoto Directorate of Education. As this study was limited to six learners from one rural school, the question of the generalizability of these learners' life histories arises. Life histories for only six learners from a single rural school were insufficient to draw the applicability of these conclusions to other rural school learners. Yet, the uniqueness of rural socioeconomic status that exists in rural contexts, plus the time and other resource constraints warrant the value of these conclusions. Of the limited prior research on English literate life histories, most conclusions were conjecture with little data collected from ESL learners themselves.

Secondly, the use of primary school learners' written autobiographical narratives as an instrument limits the applicability of these conclusions. Since data was drawn from participant self-subjective reflections, then the observed outcomes, the conclusions may be influenced by participants' bias. However, the use of follow-up narrative interview where probing was done, reinforced the validity of these learners' English literate life histories.

Lastly, the study had geographic limitations that may have reduced the generalisability of its conclusions. All six learners' homes were located within 10 km radius from the school. This area all has the same socioeconomic backgrounds, which may have influenced the literacy journeys of these rural primary school learners. These influences may not be present in other geographical

areas. The future research will need to include geographically diverse rural areas to ensure that study outcomes are not unique to learners' in one specific rural area.

### **6.5 Recommendations for further study**

The study findings indicate a vast gap between what the curriculum expects learners to be able to do at the end of the Upper Primary phase, and the kind of literacy activities and events that characterised English literacy journeys for these rural primary school learners. The socioeconomic factors such as social capital: social networks, interpersonal relationships between learners and parents, siblings, teachers, peers, and community members do not nurture literacy development.

Regardless of any theory that could be applied to rural school English classes, inadequate English communicative competence can only be improved through increasing learners' confidence, English contacts, good English rapport between learners and teachers; timed and constructive teachers' feedback during reading and speaking activities, and encouraging learners to think and discuss in English during group and peer discussions.

Teachers need to understand that despite the lower socioeconomic status of learners' homes and community, learners want and need to learn English. Further studies should investigate teaching strategies that empower learners from socioeconomic disadvantaged homes with functional communicative competencies for learners to realise the envisioned curriculum expectations.

### **6.6 Personal reflections**

Being new at life history research myself, I entered this research believing that primary school learners' written autobiographical narratives and follow-up narrative interviews had the potentials to generate data for my study. During the data collection process, I realised that non-experimental

researches such as life history research have tremendous power to unpack illuminating experiences regarding how homes, schools, and literate communities contribute to the kind of literacy learners bring into the classrooms. Given my personal experience of learning English and using English to learn as well as the reason that I am an English teacher and researcher, my expectation was to generate data of mammoth English literacy journeys that participants accumulated during literacy activities with families, homes and community members. I also was sceptical that, participants might avoid sharing some of their English literacy experiences at school perhaps because they may fear being somewhat critical of teachers practices. Participants' socioeconomic backgrounds contributed to their ESL journeys as their homes, school, and community influenced the kind of ESL activities and events, and their interpersonal relationships. This finding led me to believe that, despite the commendable expectations of the government of the Republic of Namibia with regard to English communicative competencies attainment at the end of Upper Primary phase, the inequalities in socioeconomic status continues to be an obstacle for learners learning equally.

### **6.7 Conclusion of the chapter**

For equitable epistemological access to be realised by all, ESL teachers especially those teaching non-mainstream learners are obligated to draw up teaching strategies that assist Second Language learners develop English proficiency in order to function well in the community characterised by multiple schooled literacy. English Second Language communicative competencies must be taught to learners in a non-pragmatic way using authentic language practices.

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**Appendix B1 (Narrative Interview Schedule for participants/learners.)  
English Version**

The learners' narrative interviews began with the invitation that says, "You have written a story in which you gave the steps, processes and events that helped you to learn English, both at home, in the community and at school".

**Question 1**

Tell me – how did you learn English at home; from the time before and after you have begun school?

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

**Question 2**

Tell me - what language activities and events you engaged in and still do to learn English, at school?

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

**Question 3**

What language activities and events that you participated in in your community which cultivate into your English learning journey?

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Question 4**

How do your family members; school – teachers and fellow learners; and community members relate to you during English language activities and events?

Home	School	Community members

**Question 5**

Through what media, do you experience the language activities at home, school and in the community?

Home	School	Immediate literate community

**Appendix B2 (Interview Schedule for Participants/learners) Oshindonga Version**

Omapulo ngoka ga odhekelwa okugongela uuyelege pethimbo omupekaapeki ta ningi ointaviyu yopakana naakithimbinga mepekaapeko ndika. Omapulo ngoka oga pulwa melaka lyotango lyaakuthimbinga – Oshindonga.

Omulavalava waanasikola moka takupulwa ya hokolole oonkatu ndhoka ye enda, iinyangadhalwa mbyoka yakala nokulonga noshowo iiningwanima mbyoka yeya watela moku ilonga nokutseya elaka lyoOshiingilisa shikale omomagumbo, okosikola noshowo momidhingoloko dhomalukalwa gawo.

Omapulapulo ngano otaga tetekelwa keyindilofalomo ndyoka ta li pula ngeyi: “Ngoye owashanga ondjokonona yeyilongo lyoye okutseya Oshiingilisa moka wagandja oonkatu moka wa ende, iinyangadhalwa mbyoka wakutha ombinga muyo/walongo noshowo iiningwanima kamana yadhana onkandangala onene meyilongo lyoye lyelaka Oshiingilisa.

**Epulo 1.**

Lombwelandje nkene WA ilonga elaka lyoshiingilisa megumbo, manga ngoye ino ho Tameka osikola noshowo konima showuli omulongwa ho yi kosikola?

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Epulo 2**

Iinyangadhalwa yini walonga/wakuthombinga muyo noyakwathela mo ku ku longa Oshiingilisa showa tameke wu li omunasikola?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Epulo 3**

Iinyangadhalwa yini walonga/wakuthombinga muyo noyakwathela mo ku ku longa Oshiingilisa oku ziilila momudhingoloko gwoye gwomukunda noshotuu palwe?

.....

.....

.....

**Epulo 4**

Manga tokutha ombinga miinyangadhalwa yelaka lyOshiingilisa pamwe nakwanegumbo lyeni, naalongi noshowo aalongwa ooyakweni noshotuu aantu yomomudhingoloko gwomalikalwa moka ho zi, ombepo yekwatathano pokati keni ohayi kala yuukwatja welongelokumwe wuni?

Megumbo	Mosikola	Momudhingoloko gwegumboo

## Epulo 5

Okomikalo dhini onga omwiilongi gwelaka lyOshiingilisa wuli omo ho ilongele elaka ndika megumbo, kosikola noshotuu modhingoloko gwoye gwopopepi?

Megumbo lyeni	Momudhingoloko gwoyei	Mosikola yeni

**APPENDIX C (transcribed participant's written autobiographical narratives by six grade 7 learners. pseudonyms used – names of planets.)**

**APPENDIX C1 (Earth)**

**Name:** Earth

**Date:** 12 April 2016

I can clearly remember the time I was young and had not started school. My mother used to read me bedtime stories from storybooks that were bought for my elder brother and some for me. Some of the bedtime stories were written in Oshindonga and some in English. I used to listen to the stories attentively particularly those in Oshindonga storybooks because mother made me visualise in my head what was written. English stories were difficult to follow because mother had to translate these stories into Oshindonga for me to understand the stories. My father who stays at home when my mother goes to work at school as a teacher used to teach me the alphabetical letters and counting from one to five and then from one to ten in my home language – Oshindonga. I also learned how to write my first name and surname before I begun school. I was doing well and this made parents and me happy.

Mother bought me a box full of alphabetical letters models, storybooks with pictures of domestic and farm animals, and posters with pictures of fruit; vegetables; professional people and those of different clothes all with their names in English. There were posters with different shades of colours and their names. Posters with pictures of things painted in different colours, let's say a house with white walls; yellow doors; brown roof; green tree; blue car etc.; poster with different shapes like circle; triangle; oval; cube; rectangle etc. Mother taught me these shapes and colours in English. I used letters models to write my name, surname, and names of different things and animals most with the help of father and mother when she returned from work. My elder brother and I used to read together both Oshindonga and English storybooks, which we got from parents and those he, got from school. We did read while we were sitting around the fire before supper and sometimes while we were looking after cattle and goats in afternoon when he returned from school. I liked story reading but books became boring because they were the same book you read today and tomorrow, as there were no many different reading books at home. Housework also made parents allowed us less time of reading during afternoons because father kept us busy with farm work like mahangu field and, herding cows and goats in summer.

My brother who was then already going to school used to point at parts of his body and mention the name of these parts in English – this is my nose; this is my mouth; teeth; lips; head; neck; shoulders; chest; stomach etc. and I had to repeat after him. There were times when my mother had a small chalkboard where she used to write names of things and I had to point at those things in the posters or read them. In addition, we used to draw shapes on this blue chalkboard. I learned to read short word in storybooks with pictures on my own during the day and I learned English before I begun going to school. My favourite storybooks were my family, Holiday fun with Nangula; Mickey goes to town, and Four Little Kittens.

When I started school, I remember in our Grade 1, a teacher teaching us Phonics of alphabet letters in Oshindonga and in English. Many learners did not know them and it was few learners and I who were able to name the letters in both Oshindonga and English. It was fun because our teacher made us to sing phonetics in both English and Oshindonga. Most books in grade 1 were familiar because my mother had brought some home from school. My mother teaches grade one at a different school. My parents tried to teach us words in English but did not force or encourage us to start speaking English at home early then. We communicated in our vernacular. My father also knows less English than Afrikaans because he used to speak Afrikaans at work in Windhoek before an accident with his car that made him unable to continue to work before I was born. People that visit our family come in and speak the vernacular Oshindonga.

I started to speak English at school when I was in grade 4. From grade 1-3, we were taught all subjects in Oshindonga during classes and in grade 4 we were forced to speak English because we started learning subjects in English except Oshindonga subject. It was difficult because most learners did not know English that well. My parents bought me English storybooks without pictures and some information books and the English –Oshindonga dictionary when I was in grade 4. I got assistance from my family with my homework and they always encouraged me to learn how to use a dictionary to learn new words. One day I had homework in which I had to design a poster where I indicated four kinds of housework and label them. My mother watched me designing the poster and helped with design and wordings. Although the task was difficult, it was beautiful when all learners shared their work in with the class. I used to get fright of English when I was in grade four. The teacher who used to teach all subjects used to beat us with a flat ruler on our either cheeks or palms. Sometimes she made us to stand the entire remaining English lessons if one did not know something or did not bring in homework. In grade four, there was a classroom ground rule, which prohibited learners from speaking Oshindonga in the classroom. The classroom language was English. Most of learners used to be quiet because if they made mistake with speaking English, other learners laughed at them.

For grade 5, I was admitted in an urban private school with a hostel where English was compulsory. This was different from my rural Junior Primary school where we communicated most in Oshindonga and only in English when answering teachers' questions during classes. I learned English from my fellow learners during sport events, day-to-day conversations and class discussions. Learners in that school were from different tribes and different cultures and this forced every learner to learn English to practically communicate or engage with others' in conversations in hostel. This urban school has a huge school library. Like other learners, I used to check out books from the library during Basic Information Science classes and whenever one wishes to for me to read in free time with friends and to help with homework. Dictionaries were made available in the classroom-reading corner together with other different books. My favourite storybooks were the comic books, storybooks without pictures and mostly information books because they learn us a lot about the world.

Also listening to the National radio programme – Witani Child-line Radio is contributing a lot into my English learning journey. I am always listening and find difficult words in dictionary that children in the program used and I do not understand to learn what they mean. Some of the favourite topics on the Child-line radio were ‘Gender Roles and its stereotypes; and bullying in School’. Listening to young people saying their mind is fun and we always pretend speaking in the programme with my brother at home or acted out with friends at urban school. My mother then likes to remind us now that English is an important language not only at school but also everywhere in the world. In addition, that it is our country’s official language.

Although English is an official language, most people in our community do not know and use this language. Most people are less educated and some did not go to school at all. They only use our vernacular. Mostly, it is regarded offensive to address an elder in our village in English. People might think you are swearing them or something. Elders and some of those who do not cherish speaking English frequently scold at you saying there were no school to teach them English in old time.

It is only when we visited relatives in towns or gone shopping in town that we meet people in streets, shops and private hospital conversing in English. In towns, for one to easily get assistance, he/she needs to speak in English because some of the people attending to you are not Oshindonga speakers. During most of my visits to Ondangwa town, I observed young people speaking English when playing. I struggled to fit in with them during holidays stay in town particularly before my enrolment with my old private school. This made me eager to learn English to be like them because as a young person, or an adolescent, parents are always sending you to do something outside the house and sometimes you have to speak in English.

I think English should be made compulsory everywhere.

**APPENDIX C2 (The transcribed participants' written autobiographical narratives – English version.)**

**Name: Mercury**

**Date: 12 April 2016**

Before I started school, we lived with my cousin in our home because of the long distance from her parents' home and the school. She used to sing songs in English, read the English storybooks and translate what she sung and read in Oshindonga – my home language. I used to listen to her with keen interest to learn what she was singing and reading.

I stayed home with my mother while everyone went to school. Mother used to teach me how to spell my name and surname. I learnt alphabetical letters in Oshindonga while we sat under the tree or wherever my mother deemed necessary to teach me. When my sibling and the cousin return home from school, I learned from them how to read different short words. They were always happy to help me learn how to read short nouns' words in Oshindonga. I did not learn attentive English from my family before I begun school.

At school, our Grade 1 teacher taught us Oshindonga and English alphabetical letters phonics too. I learned them well because I was already introduced to Oshindonga version before then. The teacher used me to correct other learners when they made mistakes with letters' sounds.

After having started schooling, during the evening, we were always sitting around the fire after supper. My parents made us to read different old storybooks some in English and some in our vernacular that we brought from school. Sometimes I had to read and others had to listen. If I made reading mistakes, everyone is allowed to correct my mistakes before I proceeded.

Many people in our community do not use English. Only very few people use this language e.g. teachers at school. This is because many people did not go to school and there are very few schools in our area compared to schools in towns where almost every young person speaks, read and write in English.

My grade 4 teacher used to give English reading activities in which we read and tell/write about what we read. This was very difficult because most times I did not understand what I read. For me to write, I had to copy or memorize the entire story and tell it all word in word out. We do not speak English many times at school and at home, we communicate in our vernacular except when someone occasionally speaks English and request a response in English.

The grade 4 teacher used to force us to write letters to our friends in English and made us to stand up in the class and tell a story in English. When one failed to write the letter or tell the story in English, one was punished to clean the classroom alone. Because I did not understand or know English that well, I was always quiet in the classroom or were punished of have had spoken Oshindonga in the classroom. My hands got sweaty during English classes and whenever I had to speak, I became nervous.

**APPENDIX C3 (The transcribed participants' written autobiographical narratives – English version.)**

**Name: Jupiter**

**Date: 12 April 2016**

My parents sent me to school when I was 5. They sent me to school that age because, my parents were always busy with farm work and we were left to be on our own. My neighbour friend and age mate who was attending school used to show me how to write different alphabetical letters.

At school in grade 1, our teacher made us to sing a song of different names of people representing the alphabetical letters. We were also made to underline alphabetical letter in chronological order in given animals' names. E.g. A in ant; B in rabbit; C in cat etc. This was done in both vernacular and English. I enjoyed the Oshindonga version of the song and letters underlining because I knew many animals words in Oshindonga. The activities in grade 1 were very fun and enjoyable as we had many materials to use in the classroom. We draw our homes; farm animals; trees and our family members.

Some days we were given homework to do at home where parents have to help us when we are working on the work at home. I struggle with the work on my own because my parents hardly stayed home then. They stayed out most a time and they did not bother asking whether I have homework or not. The neighbour friend helped me with the homework because she was a grade ahead of me and their family supported her to study. She shared most of her storybooks, posters, colour pencils and abacus with me. I learned most things from her and from their radio, because the radio we had in our house was only used when parents were around if it was not off air due to battery weaknesses. I started to realise usefulness of learning English from the neighbour friend whose parents ensured that she got essential learning support from them. They taught her how to read and write both the English and Oshindonga.

One day we were playing outside, my friend's mother asked if she was not given any homework. She also asked if I had not been given homework. When both of us told her that we were given tasks to do at home, she called us in the house. I was sent home to collect my homework. When I returned, the woman sat me besides her and asked me what the teacher asked us to do as homework. She started to teach me how to write following a single line, how to separate words in one sentences and how to hold a pencil and the book. She assured me that, I was always welcomed to ask for assistance from her whenever I needed assistance. She never seemed tired when helping us doing our homework and was happy to see us trying. She commanded good English knowledge and the materials that were made available to us meant a lot in English learning journey. She showed us pictures of faces showing different emotional feeling like happiness; sadness; confusion; anger; horror; surprised etc. and she asked us to think of some days we had these feelings. We sat together talking and drawing these facial expressions and what they mean in daily life. The facial expressions were used to describe feelings.

Children in our farm areas are more on farming than schooling and most parents did help them less with their schoolwork. Our community do not speak English that much and only very few people teach their children how to read and write English. We do not speak English in our home at all, except only when one asks what a certain word means in English. My father makes no effort to think how relevant it is to learn English. This is because he refused to buy me reading books that I requested him to buy for me.

**APPENDIX C4 (The transcribed participants' written autobiographical narratives – English version.)**

**Name: Mars**

**Date: 12 April 2016**

Before beginning the formal school, I lived with my cousins in my aunt's house. My aunt began to teach us alphabetical letters in Oshindonga – my language. She used to scribe these letters on an old improvised cardboard/chalkboard. She taught us how to read simple words in Oshindonga and to count both in English and Oshindonga. We were bought - me and my cousin models of alphabetical letters and those of numbers. My aunt used to sit with us on an old blanket whenever she wishes in the day to help us name the numbers and alphabetical letters both in English and Oshindonga. We were later introduced to our names and surnames.

My aunt asked my mother to buy for us children's books. We read these storybooks but only understand when the story is translated into Oshindonga from English. We happened to learn some English words from the stories. At some point, we listened to English on National Radio.

My aunt used to force us to listen to her reading to us or us reading aloud to her. Whenever she realised that we made reading mistake(s), she could scold at us or beat us on buttocks with a fresh stick. I used to enjoy reading at first but later hated reading because of mother reading enforcement on us. Sometimes we were reading because we were told to read.

At home, my uncle told us oral stories from long time in our vernacular. This helped us to continue love-reading stories.

When we began kindergarten, we already know how to call out the alphabetical letters in both English and Oshindonga. My progress at kindergarten pleased my family and me.

In grade 1, my teacher was unfriendly. She used to beat learners who failed to learn what she was teaching. However, most grade one works were familiar to me except phonics in English. I was punished because I did not know that phonics.

English got difficult in grade 3 because our teacher made us to write essays and letter in English. I transferred to a school in town with different medium of instruction – Rukwangari. I started living with my parents. I tried my best and done well. I again relocated to a new area were my current school is found. The school where I schooled grade 7 allowed learners to speak English all school days except on Wednesdays. This helped me a lot to practice learning English.

One moment I have to learn English was when I visited my uncle in Otavi who seldom speak my vernacular. During the holiday, we used to communicate in English while playing with my cousins in Otavi.

**APPENDIX C5 (The transcribed participants' written autobiographical narratives – English version.)**

**Name: Uranus**

**Date: 12 April 2016**

I used to observe young children from neighbourhood and my own sister and cousin going to school long before I began school. This observation obsessed me very much and made me ask mother to let me start going to school as well.

My elder sister was in grade one then and used to sing songs she learned at school. She also used to tell me stories from storybooks she used at school. This got me fascinated with school and I was always attentive but when I tried to imitate my sister, it made her lough because I was always not good at it.

While my sister gone to school during the day, my mother who always was at home prepared me for school. She educated me how to spell my name while my father was looking after the farm animals – cows and goats. In summer, she taught me how to spell my name while we were sitting in a tree in the crop field. I learned to recite alphabetical letters in Oshindonga as well as the vowel letters. Though writing these letters was difficult to, mother did not give up on me. When my sister returned home from school, she was always reading from storybooks that she got from their school and she made me lough while she was reading the stories.

At kindergarten, the teacher taught poems which were mainly alphabetical letters and this helped us learn better. We learned to count from one to ten and sing the alphabetical letters in Oshindonga.

It was not only in grade one that I learned English. It was very confusing because I was only used to the vernacular. English is regarded as very difficult. I learn how to read English but did not understand what most words meant. My other sister who was then in grade five used to help me where I was stuck with reading English and with my homework. My mother also used to help me to learn less English words although she was also struggling with reading.

In Grade 3, we were three that understood better, and were used to help other learners with writing and reading during Oshindonga and English lessons. We already knew how to read and write some short English words. Our school is very far from my parents' house. This made me kind hate walking to school but my parents kept encouraging me to go to school. I eventually learned how to read English.

During short school holidays, a cousin of mine was always staying with us. She motivated me to learn English because she always encouraging me to listen to the National Radio programmes, where it is only English used. I used to listen to some words and ask what each mean. She then used to tell. My mother also made me read for her in some English textbooks from school to find out if I can read well. Although she could not speak English that well, she is always forcing me to read for her. When I stuck with reading, I can get help from my sister and not from parents.

I remember one day while we were playing with some friends at a neighbour's house. We were practicing speaking English with other children. There was only one child who knew how to speak English well because she schooled in town. We were just speaking though not well understandably. An elder woman was correcting us whenever we made language errors.

My community do not practically use English for communication. We use our vernacular Oshindonga. People sometimes got into trouble whenever they greeted someone especially the elder in English. They are always accused of swearing at someone because the other person did not understand.

I came to understand English better when I was in grade 4. This was because in grade four all subjects except Oshindonga were taught in English. This exposure to English made me want to learn the language because learners in that particular grade were forced to communicate in English through the classroom ground rule. English is such very difficult language that needs earnest participation and concentration. Our teacher used to encourage us to speak, read and write in English many times.

**APPENDIX C6 (The transcribed participants' written autobiographical narratives – English version.)**

**Name: VENUS**

**Date: 12 April 2016**

While I was young and have not yet started going to school, I never ever had knowledge of English. I used to live with my elder cousins who used to teach me alphabetical letters in vernacular Oshindonga. They used also to read many storybooks written in Oshindonga.

I grew in my Grandparent's house. I never attended kindergarten, Grandmother used to teach me how to count from one to ten on my fingers, how to write my name and surname. This made me happy as most a time Grandmother used to praise me for the efforts.

When I started formal education in grade one, our teacher used to teach us alphabetical letters and names of different things in English. The teacher used to name things in English and say them again in Oshindonga. We learn how to greet in English at different times of the day. Like good morning is used during morning; good afternoon is used from midday into late a day, etc.

Whenever, I come back from school, my family made it their task to teach me how to read. My grandparents cannot read English and depend on my elder cousin who dropped out of grade 10 to teach me how to read. I hated the reading sessions with my cousin because he made me reading repeating after her. Whenever, I made a mistake, she used to beat me up. Grandmother also supported her beating saying beating was going to make me learn fast. This made me fear speaking; reading and writing English whenever I have to.

English is a very important language but you do not find as many people using this language in our home and village. English is seldom used to communicate in most homes in our village. My mother made an effort to buy me learning materials including an Oshindonga-English dictionary where I learned what some of English words mean in Oshindonga. My mother informed me that English language opens many doors to everyone.

I used to feel bad that English is difficult to learn how to speak and read. During school holidays, I used to spend my afternoon times at a neighbour's house where my two friends who go to school in the south of the country live. We played together and mostly they communicate to me in English because they preferred using English than local language.

While I used to sometimes fear speaking English in company of my visiting friends due to poor vocabulary, I found courage to confide with them because they were friendly. I easily took note of most words usage because my desire kept me wanting and there were friendly support. The times I spent together with them were significant ones because I learned English differently from the teaching of my cousin.

In grade four, our teacher made us to write an English essay in which we tell how we spent our school holidays as homework. It was difficult to write because I never had written an essay before.

Nevertheless, the teacher informed us that, an essay follows the procedures of normal storytelling process. Essays have topic; an introduction; the main body; and the end. Moreover, that we write to tell a story in written form. I struggled with essay writing with no help at all. My grandmother does not understand English nor did my grandfather spare time to assist me with my homework. However, during oral presentation of our essays to the entire class, I discovered not only that essay writing is simply sort of speaking but I also learned that writing is an ideally fun exercise. Many learners though not entirely aware of the need to write, I got interested in reading and writing. Because reading and writing English was never easy as I resorted to Oshindonga reading and writing before attempting writing in English.

One day at school, a guest of our school made us introduce ourselves in English. I confidently introduced myself in front of entire school. Our grade four teacher speak English and Oshindonga during the classes. However, made effort possible to equip us with English vocabulary by taking us to the school library where were allowed to choose any book of our choice to read at home. We were forced to speak English in the class by the rule, which prohibit learners from using Oshindonga in the class. Whoever used Oshindonga was made to clean either the class or the schoolyard as a punishment.

While we have a library at school, no learner is allowed to take a book and read while inside because of space. My trip to the library made me to ready many storybooks including one about Nangy and Poppy. My mother used to read with me this storybook when I was in grade three. It was a very interesting book. My grandmother sometimes reminded me of the need to learn English. She encouraged me to seek help from the teacher.

My mother paid more attention on teaching me how to write in Oshindonga. She used to make me go seek help to put what we wrote in Oshindonga into English. This exercise was very difficult but has improved my English writing skills. My teacher of grade four was the best teacher ever because it was in this grade that I began to get rewards of learning English that I long started with visiting neighbouring friends.

## **APPENDIX D (Transcription of Narrative Interviews)**

### **APPENDIX D1 (Transcription of follow-up Narrative Interview – 068 voice)**

Name: Venus

Date: 13 June 2016

Barakias: Thank you in advance for taking part in this important study. You have written your autobiography in which you indicated steps, processes and events that shape your English literacy journey.

B: Tell me – how did you learn English at home; from the time before and after you have begun school?

V: I started learning English in grade 3.

B: while you were in grade 3

V: yeah!

B: how did you begin?

V: It is difficult learning English. Our teacher used to scribe for us sentences in English on chalkboard and translated those into Oshindonga.

B: the teacher first scribe English sentences on chalkboard and then the same ones in Oshindonga?

V: Yeah. For us to understand...

B: in your opinion, you think she/he did so to make you to understand English.

V. Yes

B: ok. The teacher begun teaching you English by writing English sentence on chalkboard, how did you feel then?

V: I used to be happy because I wanted to learn English.

B: how did you learn difference between English and other language?

V: while at home, I used to listen to my elder cousins speaking English, I always wanted to learn English. Therefore, I decided to follow them.

B: how did your family contribute into your English learning journey?

V: there were not really books. Except when during playing activities, that our parents request us to communicate in English than in Oshindonga. They most a time asked us to respond to them in English whenever they wished.

B: when did your parents usually requested you to respond to them in English.

V: When they are asking of who has done something... and if it is me then I had to answer them, it is I.

B: How do you see the value your parents make of English?

Do parents show interests in your path of learning English?

V: yeah. Parents tried to motivate us to try learning English. They even remind us that English is an official language.

B: English is said to be official language, how does one supposed to use it for?

V: It is official language and is used at school.

B: What language activities and events that you participated in in your community which cultivate into your English learning journey?

V: I learned English from my neighbour friends who schooled in town when we are playing together. When playing, they usually communicate in English. This made me eager to learn English and these friends assisted me because they have ever wanted to Oshindonga from me as well. They understand me and did not lough at me. I also learned English from watching TV programs from the neighbouring homes. My parent usually lets us go watch TV.

B: what other activities in your community apart from watching TV taught you English?

V: Kept quiet.

B: Ok. Apart from grade 3 teacher, tell me - what language activities and events you engaged in and still do to learn English, at school?

V; English demand increase from grade 4 and this make English hard.

B: how did the teachers help you with learning?

V: When you write something and made language errors, you find teacher's correction on how you have to write in your book.

## **APPENDIX D2 (Transcription of follow-up Narrative Interview – 069 Voice)**

Name: Jupiter

Date: 14 June 2016

Barakias: Thank you in advance for taking part in this important study. You have written your autobiography in which you indicated steps, processes and events that shape your English literacy journey.

B: Tell me – how did you learn English at home; school and within the community from the time before and after you have begun school?

J: My English journey begins in 2003 when I enrolled in a kindergarten at Groutfontein. My father bought me things to take to school. Our teacher taught us songs in Oshindonga and translated them into English with us following her. I relocated to my current school when I was still in kindergarten when my home relocated here. I supposed not to attend kindergarten, should it was not for my insistence to follow my elder siblings who attend school. My siblings used to learn English at home. This interested me to learn English. I used to repeat after them while they were reading English at home. I wanted to attend school to learn English like them.

B: What learning activities these elder siblings were doing then?

J: one of them was in grade 5. I remember listening to her reading – “what is skeleton?” Moreover, “what animal causes malaria?” I repeated after her like – mosquitoes. In addition, when I went to kindergarten class, I asked the teacher what mosquitoes were. I was told that mosquitoes were parasites that bite people to suck blood.

Also in kindergarten, our teacher used to teach us songs that one needs to take to parents to learn you. I used not to like that because whenever my parents/siblings asked me what I learned at school. I used to say, we only learned how to write. I did not like them teaching me the songs

because they used to beat me up except for my father. Whenever they sent to my school bag, I used to deceit them that my teacher gave this homework to do it for me. I grade one, I remember our teacher teaching us a song “There is no one like Jesus”. The song made me like English because I like singing.

B: Tell me – what other language activities and events you engaged in and still do to learn English, at school?

J: In grade 1, I remember learning alphabetical letters each with a suitable name of something e.g. A=ant, C=cat etc. The teacher used game activities e.g. using things in her hands and said to us: this is a ruler; this is a rubber etc. and put them away in the box. We were asked to find these items from the box on our own.

B: You enjoyed these English activities.

J: yes

B: How did other learners respond to language activities?

J: Some followed the teacher teaching and some did not. From grade one – six, learners have interest in learning English, but from grade 7, learners are not enthusiastic in learning English as other learners ridicule most times learners who tried their best to communicate in English. We are always berated that we think we know English than others.

B: How do you respond to these ridicules from fellow learners?

J: I get angry with them. I usually tell them, I was not born knowing how to use English, and that we all just need to practice.

B: Tell me again, how does the school assist with your English learning?

J: The school prohibits learners from communicating in Oshindonga except when they are in Oshindonga classes. The school tried its best but learners do not adhere to the language rule of the school.

B: How about teachers' usage of English at school?

J: Some teachers strictly teach in English medium while others resort to switching between English and Oshindonga.

B: In your written autobiographical narrative, you have indicated that you used to hide from school in the bush. What made you to?

J: My teachers used corporal punishment whenever we failed to do well in English activities at school.

B: How did you get to like the school again?

J: a story told to us by one of our teachers of learners who disliked school and who eventually were discouraged from absconding school inspired me. They ended up becoming good people in the society because they heeded teachers' advices.

B: What language activities and events that you participated in in your community which cultivate into your English learning journey?

J: English is less spoken in our community. People are rebuked and ridiculed whenever tried communicating in English to elders. People mostly converse in Oshindonga.

B: What other school activities again were significant in your English learning journey?

J: I participated in the Window of Hope Club activities, which were done in English medium. We were made to express our feelings through writing and speaking. We used also to read different stories during the club sessions.

B: Thank you very much for your participation in this interview.

### **APPENDIX D3 (Transcription of follow-up Narrative Interview – 073 Voice)**

Name: Mars

Date: 21<sup>st</sup> June 2016

B: I thank you for accepting my request to conduct the interview with you this afternoon.

You have written an autobiographical story in which you tell steps, processes and events that shape your English literacy journey. Tell me again how you learn English at home; school and within the community from the time before and after you have begun school?

M: We were two young ones in our family- my cousin and me. My aunt taught us how to write our first names and surnames. She used to teach us how to count and say alphabetical letters both in Oshindonga and English. From there, I started kindergarten where we first were learning things in Oshindonga and latter introduced to English phonics, counting in Oshindonga and English. When I got in grade 1, our hard working teacher taught us how to build words using syllables on chalkboard in both Oshindonga and English.

B: How was alphabet taught to you at school? Was it through singing?

M: Not through songs. While we were in kindergarten, my mother bought us letter models that we used to call out at home. Then in grade 1, we learned how to say these letters in English.

B: How did you learn English at home?

M: I had elder siblings that school at nearby secondary school. They used to borrow storybooks and read these to us. They also used to translate the stories into Oshindonga.

B: Did your Junior Primary School have a library?

M: I never knew because I transferred to another school, however the teachers used to bring reading books to our classroom.

B: Were you allowed to take some of these books home?

M: Yes. Whenever you wanted, the teacher lends you the book. However, had to write your name and tell you when to bring it back. I used to borrow these books to read them in classroom but never took them home as other learners did.

B: What activities you got involved into that helped you to learn English at home?

My mother showed interest in having us learning English. While we were made to read by and to our elder siblings from their borrowed storybooks, she bought us storybooks too, I do not remember the title – where the elder sisters used to read us from and they had to give us small multiple choice quizzes on the improvised chalkboard. We got correction were we made mistakes.

B: How do your family members; school – teachers and fellow learners; and community members relate to you during English language activities and events?

M: kept Quiet

B: How was the relationship between you and your family during language learning activities and events?

M: At first, I felt that my aunt was cruel to me because she used to beat me up or made me to miss meals when I did not do well. I felt bad.

B: How does the school assist you with English learning?

M: I had been to many schools. However, only my recent former school made us communicate in English all school days except on Wednesdays.

B: How does this benefit you?

M: It is advantageous because it enabled me to practice using English in our daily conversations at school. Let us say, mind you there is a sports competitions and one is selected to speak for the school contingent, it is embarrassing to your school when that person lack good English communication skills when that person is made to speak.

B: Through what media, do you experience the language activities at home, school and in the community?

M: I learned English though the use of gadgets such as laptop and radio; printed media such as newspapers and storybooks.

B: What is the place of English in your home; school; and the community?

M: We use English, let us say among ourselves for example while walking to and back home from school. My schoolmates and I decided to communicate in English. Also using cell phone sms service helped me learn to write and read English.

B: How do you want school, homes and community to help you with English learning?

M: The school should initiate policies that compel learners to communicate in English on school ground some days of the week. People who are illiterate must enrol in adult literacy program to fight the cycle of illiteracy. There must be community library where people go to access information.

#### **APPENDIX D4 (Transcription of follow-up Narrative Interview – 082 Voice)**

Name: Earth

Date: 21<sup>st</sup> June 2016

B: I would like to thank you for accepting my request to conduct the interview with you this afternoon. You have written an autobiographical story in which you tell steps, processes and events that shape your English literacy journey. This interview requires you to tell your story of how you learn English at home; school and within the community from the time before and after you have begun school. I will ask you questions of which you answer how you begin learning English – when, where, who played a significant role in you journey? What process and events you were involved in, what materials used to help with learning?

B: Tell me again how you learn English at home; school and within the community from the time before and after you have begun school?

E: I clearly can recall, the time I was young and did not begin school. I used to listen to people speaking English and then tried to decipher meaning from what people were saying.

B: Yeah!

E: When I begin my kindergarten, our teacher taught us English words e.g. a boy is like Omumati in our language. At home, my cousins used to speak English and I learned from them.

B: When is English used at home?

E: When we were playing

B: What activities and events assisted you to learn English at home?

E: My mother bought me English books and dictionary. She and my cousins taught me English. She used to call me at a table to teach me how to read from English storybooks late afternoon or evening before going to bed.

B: How did you feel during the learning process?

E: I felt good because my mother and cousins empathetically corrected me during the reading and writing activities. They were friendly during these language-learning activities.

B: How did you learn English at school?

E: In grade 1, our teacher taught us English. I used to speak broken English during break time with intention to get corrections from other learners. We learned introducing ourselves in English. We tell what our names were, where we live, our parents' names, our ages, and what we like/dislike.

B: Which other language activities taught you English language skills at school?

E: Our grade 1 teacher took us outside to play ball-throwing game – whereby you can only get a ball thrown to you if you made a call in English. We were also given reading books where we used to read and the teacher corrected us with pronunciation. The teacher used to us whether we understand what we were reading and we had to answer whether we understand or not then the teacher corrected us whenever we do not understand.

B: Have there been provision for learners to borrow books from school library?

E: No. It is only the teacher allowed to collect books from the library to take to classes for us to read inside the classroom. There were times when you have to tell the class how your holidays were.

B: which other activities and events helped you to learn English?

E: Borrowing books from library to read during the BIS classes when I was in grade 5.

B: How did borrowing books from the library help you like?

E: It helps teach me English and made me to be able to speak English wherever I am at school.

In grade 4, there was a classroom ground rule, which compelled us to learn and speak English. If one speaks Oshiwambo/Oshindonga in the class, then that person is punished. The school made reading books available in classrooms for learners to free read whenever they want to.

B: How did your community assist with learning English?

E: We mostly communicate with outsiders like cow herders who do not know local language in English. One moment during school holidays, I spent my holiday with young people who could only communicate to me in English. This forced me to resort to English as medium of communication and this has taught me many English.

B: What is the place of English in your community?

E: English is only used to communicate officially whenever people have to ask assistance from offices.

B: Thank you so much for participating in this interview.

## **APPENDIX D5 (Transcription of follow-up Narrative Interview – 077 Voice)**

Name: Uranus

Date: 21<sup>st</sup> June 2016

B: I would like to thank you for accepting my request to conduct the interview with you this afternoon. You have written an autobiographical story in which you tell steps, processes and events that shape your English literacy journey. This interview requires you to tell your story of how you learn English at home; school and within the community from the time before and after you have begun school. I will ask you questions of which you answer how you begin learning English – when, where, who played a significant role in your journey? What process and events you were involved in, what materials used to help with learning?

B: Tell me again how you learn English at home; school and within the community from the time before and after you have begun school?

U: I begin speaking English, mother used to teach me English at home while my siblings were at school. Mother taught me how to write and read my name. I was also taught how to recite alphabetical letters together with five vowel letters

B: Which language your mother used to teach you alphabetical letters and vowels?

U: She used Oshindonga –my home language. After mastering alphabet in Oshindonga, I was introduced to English version.

B: What processes your mother used to teach you that?

U: Mother scribed alphabetical letters on hardboard and asked me to read them in both English and Oshindonga.

B: When did she use to do that?

U: Whenever we were alone while other siblings were at school.

B: who else in your family contributed in you language learning?

U: My siblings usually taught me what they learned at school. They made me to read to them so that they can correct me.

B: How did your school help you learning English?

U: At school, we learned alphabet, but I was already familiar with them at home.

B: How does this assist you learning English because you already knew letters by then?

U: At school, we learned how to name things by then. For example, animals plants in English, which my home did not teach me.

B: How did you relate to other learners during language learning activities?

U: We assisted each other whenever we are stuck. Those who knew were made to help others by the teacher.

B: According to your autobiography, the teacher used you to assist other during English activities. How did it contributed into your language learning?

U: this helped me with speaking in the classroom and at home with others although less frequent.

B: Through what media, do you experience the language activities at home, school and in the community?

U: My English resources are my siblings who encouraged me to learn English because they told me that English is used in every high grade. My mother contributed a lot. She continues reminding me to courageously learn English due to its high status in education. English is used to communicate around Namibia and outside. It is a medium of instruction in Namibian schools.

B: What is the place of English in your home; school; and community?

U: only few people use English in our community while the majority continue using the vernacular for most communication. Only those that are educated are able to use English.

B: How does the community poor use of English affect your learning of English in general?

U: it negatively affect my learning because, English is not used everywhere.

B: Do you mean language is learnt through usage?

U: yeah.

B: How does English learning contributed into your learning in past, present and future?

U: English teaching is done at school very well. In grade 4, we used to communicate in English.

B: How did this help you?

U: It helped me learn to speak English because I used to know very few words. We used to keep quiet at the beginning of grade 4 academic year because we did not know how to communicate in English.

B: what are benefit of learning and using English at school and in the community?

U: Learning English makes communicate well everywhere. English is MoI from grade 4 – 12. Those adults who do not know English need to enrol with adult literacy programme to upgrade themselves.

B: What challenges you experience while learning English second language?

U: Disregarding the importance of English by family and community members. Lack of reading and writing materials at school. Teachers' failure to explicitly teach us what English words mean.

B: what language activities and events you engaged in and still do to learn English, at school and in the community?

U: The grade four-classroom ground rule that prohibit learners from speaking Oshindonga in the classroom and the medium of instruction from grade 4 upward.

B: Thank you very much for participating in this interview.

## **APPENDIX D6 (Transcription of follow-up Narrative Interview – 078 Voice)**

Name: Mercury

Date: 21<sup>st</sup> June 2016

B: I would like to thank you for accepting my request to conduct the interview with you this afternoon. You have written an autobiographical story in which you tell steps, processes and events that shape your English literacy journey. This interview requires you to tell your story of how you learn English at home; school and within the community from the time before and after you have begun school. I will ask you questions of which you answer how you begin learning English – when, where, who played a significant role in your journey? What process and events you were involved in, what materials used to help with learning?

B: Tell me again how you learn English at home; school and within the community from the time before and after you have begun school?

M: My siblings and mother are fundamental role players in my English journey. I did not just begin learning English then. I first learned to count and spell my name at home with the help of mother who stayed home while my siblings were gone to school. Because my mother's English is poor, and that her reading ability was poor, I used to wait for my siblings to return home from school. My mother specifically finds no time to teach me because of too much housework like looking after goats and doing other domestic works.

I used to protest against my stay at home, and when I started kindergarten, we used an old cardboard as chairs. Our teacher at kindergarten then begun to teach us how to read and write our names. I then was already knew how to read and write my name from home. We were taught how to count from one to ten and calling out vowel letters a, e, i, o, u in Oshindonga and then in English.

In grade 1, the teacher taught us how to say words in Oshindonga and English. What is this? This is broom. She then translated that into vernacular saying oshikombe. My friend from kindergarten continued to sit next to me and we assisted each other. Some English activities were done through songs and we continued to grade two where I struggled to read words with different syllables. Those in English but later succeeded. My mother is always reminding me to pay attention to English at school and to study English to void many bad things.

B: Who taught you how to read English word with two or three syllables?

M: My teacher taught us how to do that. She read the words to us and make us repeat after her.

B: How did you value this learning practice?

M: It is important to because if one does not know how to read different syllables, it will always be difficult to communicate hence reading words as they supposed to...

B: What language activities and events that characterises your English learning journey?

M: first learned to say alphabetical letters and reading short words and then short stories from storybooks at school. My siblings also were instrumental at helping me with words spellings and reading. My mother made it that one sister goes to look after goats while the other one remained at home assisting me with school work.

B: From where did your sister teach you?

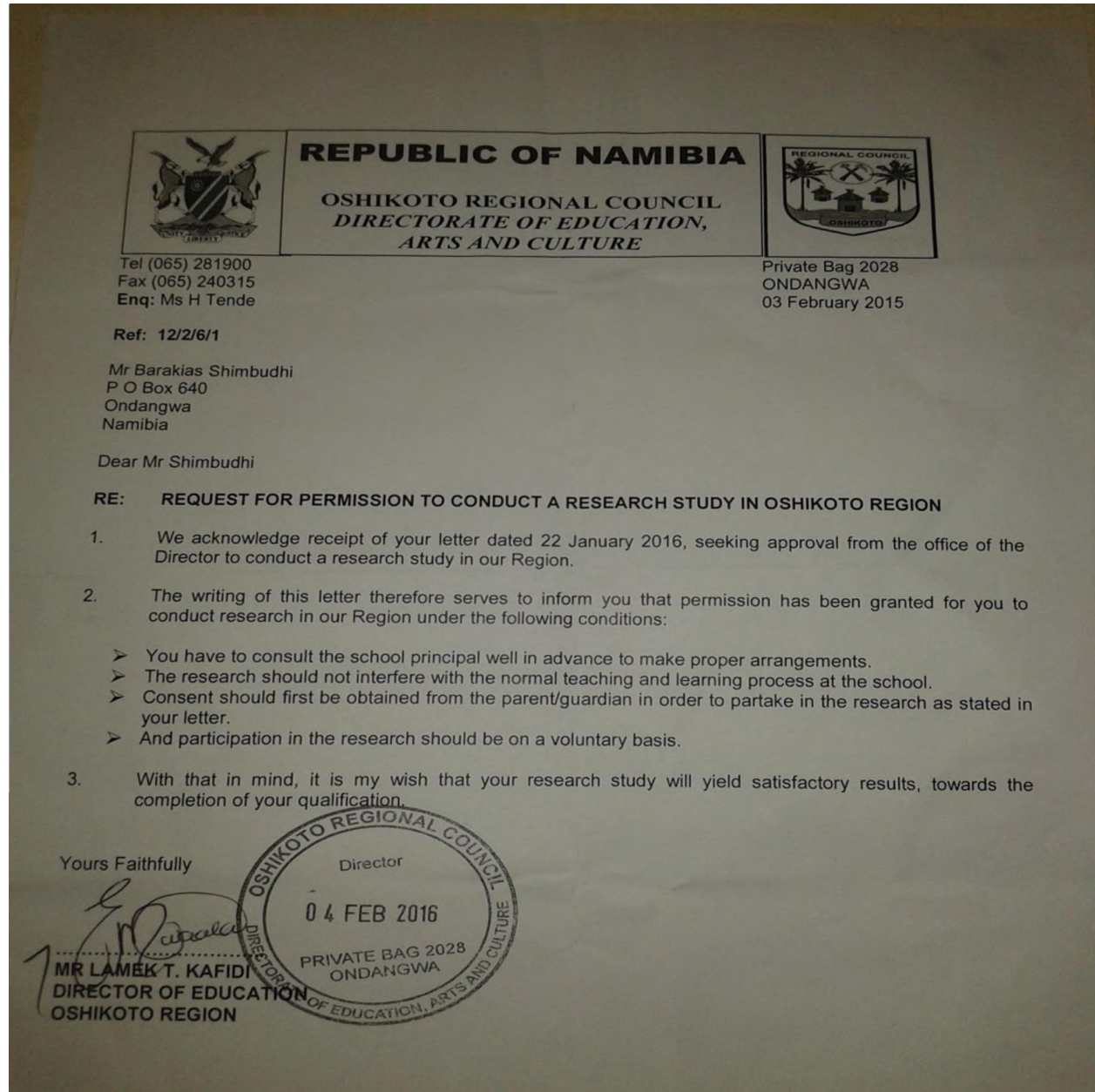
M: they used any book they sourced from school since they were in big classes. They used to help build my vocabulary by introducing to several new words and say, what they really mean.

B: What is the place of English at school and in the community?

M: we communicate in English during classes whenever we discuss subjects matter during classes. English does not necessarily look important in lives of many farmers and their households in this area. It is only when you go in town that you meet people using English. My community communicate in vernacular because many people do not know English at all, as they themselves never attended school. Elders do not understand English as most are less literate. While English is the language through which people are able to communicate with people from other different cultural groups, many in this community lack this important resource.

B: I would like to thank you for participating in this interview.

APPENDIX E1 (Acceptance letter from the Director of Education in Oshikoto Region.)



**APPENDIX E2 (Acceptance letter by the school principal to carry out the research study at the combined school.)**



### **APPENDIX E3 (The informed consent form for participants)**

The investigation of the relationship between the Grade 7 English 2<sup>nd</sup> Language Curriculum expectations and learners' literacy life histories.

You are being asked to participate in a study investigating the relationship between the Grade 7's English second Language Curriculum expectations and the Grade 7 learners' English literate life histories. The study is being carried out under the supervision of the Rhodes University, Grahamstown South Africa.

This study is interested in determining the extent to which the Grade 7 English 2<sup>nd</sup> language curriculum expectations speaks and relate to the learners' English literate life histories.

It is hoped that data from this study will generate insights to establish the extent to which formal education's conceptualization of education take into consideration what learners bring into the classroom as the stories from autobiographical narratives will be juxtaposed with curriculum assumptions about what knowledge is and how it should be realized in formal education and to find whether there is a correlation.

As a learner, learning English at school, you may likely have a story of how you become English literate at home, in the community and at school which consisting of steps, processes and events that helped you to learn English. However, relatively less you know what the Grade 7 English 2<sup>nd</sup> Language curriculum expectations are i.e. the language skills Grade 7 learners are expected to have developed before and during grade 7's curriculum. Your participation may help to bring to light the relationship between the two variables in order to help narrow the gap between curriculum and learners literate life histories.

If you agree to participate, you will complete two activities. In the first activity, you will be required to write down your English literate autobiography in which you give steps, processes and events that helped you to learn English at home, school and in the community. In the second activity, you will be interviewed between 14h30 and 15H10 on Wednesday or Friday between the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2016 and 26 April 2016 to shed more insights on aspects written in first activity. The interview takes 30 minutes and the autobiographical narrative will take two weeks of writing.

Although all studies have some degree of risks, the potential in this investigation is minimal. All activities are similar to normal classroom practices and all performance is anonymous, as you will be assigned the pseudonym – the name of one of the planets. No cost may be incurred because of your participation in this study.

Participation is voluntary. If at any moment during this study you wish to withdraw your participation, you are free to do so without prejudice.

If you have any questions prior to your participation or at any time during the study, please feel free to contact the researcher – Barakias BB Shimbudhi.

**Authorisation:** I have read the above, the above is read to me, and I understand the nature of the study. I understand that by agreeing to participate in a study I have not waived any legal or human right and that I may contact the researcher – Mr Barakias BB Shimbudhi – Rhodes University Student (+264812923713) at any time. I agree to participate in this study. I understand that I may refuse to participate or I may withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice. I also grant permission to the researcher to use any planet name as a pseudonym to refer to data or me from me.

Participant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Researcher's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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

#### **APPENDIX E4 (The informed consent form for participant's parent)**

The investigation of the relationship between the Grade 7 English 2<sup>nd</sup> Language Curriculum expectations and learners' literacy life histories.

Your child is being asked to participate in a study investigating the relationship between the Grade 7's English second Language Curriculum expectations and the Grade 7 learners' English literate life histories. The study is being carried out under the supervision of the Rhodes University, Grahamstown South Africa.

This study is interested in determining the extent to which the Grade 7 English 2<sup>nd</sup> language curriculum expectations speaks and relate to the learners' English literacy life histories.

It is hoped that data from this study will generate insights to establish the extent to which formal education's conceptualization of education take into consideration what learners bring into the classroom. The learner's stories from autobiographical narratives and interview will be juxtaposed with curriculum assumptions about what knowledge is and how it should be realized in formal education and to find whether there is a correlation.

As a learner, learning English at school, your child is likely to have a story of how he/she became English literate at home, in the community and at school which consisting of steps, processes and events that helped him/her to learn English. However, relatively less you and your child know what the Grade 7 English 2<sup>nd</sup> Language curriculum expectations are i.e. the language skills Grade 7 learners are expected to have developed before and during grade 7's curriculum. Your child's participation may help to bring to light the relationship between these two variables in order to help narrow the gap between curriculum and learners literate life histories.

If you agree the child to participate, he/she will complete two activities. In the first activity, he/she will be required to write down own English literate autobiography in which he/she gives steps, processes and events that helped him/her to learn English at home, school and in the community. In the second activity, the child will be interviewed between 14h30 and 15H10 on Wednesday or Friday between the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2016 and 26 April 2016 to shed more insights on aspects written in first activity. The interview takes 30 minutes and the autobiographical narrative will take two weeks of writing.

Although all studies have some degree of risks, the potential in this investigation is minimal. All activities are similar to normal classroom practices and all performance is anonymous, as the child will be assigned the pseudonym – the name of one of the planets. No cost may be incurred because of your child participation in this study.

Participation is voluntary. If at any moment during this study you wish you child to withdraw his/her participation, you are free to do so without prejudice.

If you have any questions prior to your child participation or at any time during the study, please feel free to contact the researcher – Barakias BB Shimbudhi.

**Authorisation:** I have read the above, the above was read to me, and I understand the nature of the study. I understand that by agreeing to participate in this study my child have not waived any legal or human right and that my child or I may contact the researcher – Mr Barakias BB Shimbudhi – Rhodes University Student (+264812923713) at any time. I agree him/her to participate in this study. I understand that I may refuse the child to participate or I may make him/her to withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice. I also grant permission to the researcher to use any planet name as a pseudonym to refer to my child or data from him/her.

Participant's parent signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX E5 (request to regional education director oshikoto regional council to conduct education research in the region)**



Inquiries: Barakias BB.Shimbudhi

P.O. Box 640

Email: [barakiasa2b@gmail.com](mailto:barakiasa2b@gmail.com)

Ondangwa

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The Director

22 January 2016

Oshikoto Directorate of Education

Private Bag 2028

Ondangwa

Dear Mr Kafidi

Subject: Request for permission to conduct a research study in Oshokoto Region

I am Barakias BB. Shimbudhi, a teacher in the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture based at Ambende Combined School requesting for permission to conduct a research study in Ambende Combined School from February 1<sup>st</sup> 2016 to April 26 2016. I am a Registered Part-Time student of Rhodes University, Grahamstown since January 2015 with a student number 15s7671 and pursuing a Master of Education specializing in English Language Teaching (ELT). Currently, I am busy with the Half-Thesis course's part and it is the course requirement for a student to conduct a research study in English language Teaching.

My research topic is "An investigation of the relationship between the Grade 7 English Second Language Curriculum expectations and the Grade 7 learners' English literacy life histories". I have identified six (6) learners in grade eight at the school as participants in the study who already

indicated their willingness. The school and participants will be assured of anonymity and the highest degree of confidentiality while the participation in the whole study remains voluntary.

The study involves documents analysis – the Grade 7 English 2<sup>nd</sup> Language Syllabus and learners’ written autobiographical narratives as well as data from learners’ interviews. The autobiographical narratives will be written by learners at their homes and interviews will be conducted in the afternoon of Wednesdays and Fridays between 14H30 and 15H10 to avoid classes and afternoon study sessions interruptions.

The insights that will be generated from this study will be published in the Half-Thesis and will be made accessible to decision makers; curriculum designers and developers; and educators as the findings will bear potential to strengthen government efforts to ensure Accessible; Equitable; Qualitative and Democratic Education for all learners that the government of the Republic of Namibia strives to accomplish.

Your anticipated positive and commendable response in this matter will be highly appreciated.

Sincerely yours

Barakias B.B. Shimbudhi

Date

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**APPENDIX E6 (request school principal to conduct research at the combined school)**



Inquiries: Barakias BB.Shimbudhi

P.O. Box 640

Email: [barakiasa2b@gmail.com](mailto:barakiasa2b@gmail.com)

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The School Principal

22 January 2016

Ambende Combined School

Onankali Circuit

Dear Mr Amashisha

Subject: Request for permission to conduct a research study at your School

I am Barakias BB. Shimbudhi, a teacher in the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture and based at your school requesting permission to conduct a research study at your school from February 1<sup>st</sup> 2016 to April 26 2016. I am a Registered Part-Time student of Rhodes University, Grahamstown since January 2015 with a student number 15s7671 and pursuing a Master of Education specializing in English Language Teaching (ELT). Currently, I am busy with the Half-Thesis course's part and it is the course requirement for a student to conduct a research study in English language Teaching.

My research topic is "An investigation of the relationship between the Grade 7 English Second Language Curriculum expectations and the Grade 7 learners' English literacy life histories". I have identified six (6) learners in grade seven at your school as participants in the study who already indicated their willingness. The study involves documents analysis – the Grade 7 English 2<sup>nd</sup> Language Syllabus and learners written autobiographical narratives as well as data from learners' interviews. The autobiographical narratives will be written by learners at their homes and

interviews will be conducted in the afternoon of Wednesdays and Fridays between 14H30 and 15H10 to avoid classes and afternoon study sessions interruptions.

The insights that will be generated from this study will be published in the Half-Thesis and will be made accessible to decision makers; curriculum designers, developers and educators as the findings will bear potential to strengthen government efforts to ensure Accessible; Equitable; Qualitative and Democratic Education for all learners that the government of the Republic of Namibia strives to accomplish.

The school and participants will be assured of anonymity and the highest degree of confidentiality while the participation in the whole study remains voluntary.

Your positive and commendable response will be highly appreciated.

Sincerely yours

Barakias B.B. Shimbudhi

Date

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## RHODES UNIVERSITY

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04 February 2016

To Whom It May Concern

**Re: Proposal and Ethics approval for Barakias Baby Benita Shimbudhi (15S7671)**

The minutes of the EHDC meeting of 28 January 2016 reflect the following:

**2016.01.2 CLASS B RESTRICTED MATTERS  
MASTER OF EDUCATION RESEARCH PROPOSALS**

***Master of Education (Half Thesis)***

*Barakias Baby Benita Shimbudhi 15S7671*

*Topic: An investigation of the relationship between Grade 8 English 2nd Language's curriculum assumptions and learners' English literate life histories.*

*Supervisor: Professor EM Mgqwashu*

*Decision: Approved*

This letter confirms the approval of the above proposal at a meeting of the Faculty of Education Higher Degrees' Committee on 28 January 2016.

In the event that the proposal demonstrates an awareness of ethical responsibilities and a commitment to ethical research processes, the approval of the proposal by the committee constitutes ethical clearance. This was the case with this proposal and the committee thus approved ethical clearance.

Yours truly

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Graven', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Prof. Mellony Graven  
Chair of the EHDC, Rhodes University