

TITLE

**TEACHERS' CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCES OF THE
TRANSITION FROM MOTHER TONGUE TO ENGLISH AS A MEDIUM OF
INSTRUCTION: A CASE STUDY OF THREE PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN
LESOTHO.**

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ABSTRACT

In the Lesotho primary education system, the language policy states that the mother tongue (Sesotho) should be used up to Standard Three (this is the third year of schooling in Lesotho) as the medium of instruction. English is prescribed as the medium of instruction from Standard Four upwards. This sudden change presents enormous challenges for teachers, especially in Standard Four. The purpose of my study was to investigate Standard Four teachers' curriculum development experiences of the transition from the mother tongue to English as medium of instruction. The study also sought to understand how teachers plan and teach at this level.

This was a qualitative interpretive study that adopted a case study methodology. Participants were purposively selected. They were three Sesotho-speaking Standard Four teachers in three different urban schools. In addressing the research questions, data was generated through qualitative methods such as semi-structured teachers' interviews, classroom observations, document analysis and a personal reflective journal. Data was analyzed and interpreted through an open coding process. The findings revealed that these teachers experienced several challenges in the use of English as the medium of instruction. Teachers were faced with three key issues that they had to deal with, namely, overcoming their own perceptions of their competence in English, their low sense of self efficacy with regard to teaching at this transition class, and the difficulty with teaching pupils in a second language before these pupils had gained proficiency in their mother tongue. Teachers regularly employed code-switching as a strategy to make meaning in their classrooms.

The study recommends pre- and in-service teacher professional development, and a review of the Lesotho language policy in the primary school.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved, mother 'Maalbert Dlukula, late father, father-in-law and mother-in-law. It is through your prayers and support that I finally went through. Thank you.

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DECLARATION

I, Grace ‘Mamotloang Masilo, declare that this thesis is my own work. It contains no material which has been submitted for any degree or examination in any University. All the sources I have quoted have been indicated and acknowledged.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACL	Anglican Church of Lesotho
BICS	Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills
CALP	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
C2005	Curriculum 2005
DTEP	Distance Teaching Programme Certificate
FPE	Free Primary Education
LCE	Lesotho College of Education
LEC	Lesotho Evangelical Church
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Centre
NTTC	National Teacher Training College
PSLE	Primary School Leaving Examination
PTC	Primary Teacher Certificate
RCC	Roman Catholic Church

CHAPTER ONE

AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Using a case study design, this research project attempts to investigate Standard Four teachers' curriculum development experiences of the transition from mother tongue to English as the medium of instruction in Lesotho. This chapter will describe the background of Lesotho primary education, define the study in terms of the research problem, briefly present literature which forms the background of this study, provide the focus and rationale for the study, and define the key research questions. It concludes by outlining the structure of the research report.

1.2 Background

Before Lesotho became a British colony, the Basotho (people of Lesotho) had a unique kind of education. The learning by young children and youth was largely informal. It occurred through practical activities at home and outside the home. Formal education occurred in initial schools, where children were taught by local leaders, doctors of medicine and wise elders. Boys were separated from girls in terms of responsibilities and duties that were to be performed. Children were taught through stories, songs and riddles (Task Force, 1982). This meant that Basotho children relied mainly on listening and speaking skills. Writing and reading skills were not emphasized, and reading was not part of the traditional Basotho culture. Lefoka (1997) indicates that in Lesotho reading is mainly acquired at school. There was a noticeable change in Lesotho education after the arrival of the missionaries. Missionary education in Lesotho was supported by the British colonial government, as in other African countries which were under British control. As a result of the establishment of the schools by the missionaries, most primary schools are owned by churches (Task Force, 1982). In many countries which were under the colonial rule of the British, the pattern for primary education is to start learning in the mother tongue. English was to be introduced in later classes (Obanya, 1998). A similar policy is also applied in Lesotho.

Lesotho's school education is structured in the pattern 7-3-2: seven years for primary education, three years for junior secondary and two years for senior secondary. This structure is similar to that of some of the neighbouring countries such as Botswana,

Swaziland and Namibia (World Bank, 2005). It is stipulated in the Constitution of Lesotho that every Mosotho (Lesotho citizen) has a right to basic education. Primary education is free and available to all (MOET, 2005; Lesotho Government Gazette, 1993). Primary to junior secondary education is considered as basic education in the context of Lesotho (ibid).

My study is focused on primary education. The complete cycle of the primary education is marked by the writing of the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) where English and Sesotho are the key subjects (Ibid). In Lesotho, Standard Four is the transition class as it is in this class where mother tongue (Sesotho) as a medium of instruction ceases and English is adopted as the medium of instruction for the remainder of school curriculum. Children start school at the age of six and are expected to complete their primary education at around twelve years as indicated in the Lesotho education policy (MOET, 2005). In their fourth year of primary schooling they are around 9 years of age. Molapo (2002) argues that change to the medium of instruction happens at the time when these pupils are still developing communicative competence in their mother tongue and may not yet be ready for instruction in a second language.

1.3 Problem

The Lesotho language policy suggests a change in the medium of instruction from Sesotho to English in Standard Four. This presents enormous challenges for teachers as they attempt to plan and design a Standard Four curriculum that is responsive to the needs of the novice learners of English.

1.4 Contextualizing the problem (Setting)

It is important to consider the lives of the participants in their social context, and Woods (1983) stresses the importance of the contexts within which peoples' experiences occur. The participants were located in the Botha-Bothe district of Lesotho. This district is far removed from the capital city of Lesotho. Sesotho is the dominant language of communication in this area. Thus teaching and learning in English were likely to create challenges for teachers and pupils. In the next section, the related literature as a 'backdrop' for the problem will be presented (Creswell, 1994).

1.5 The historical emergence of language policy in Africa

In Lesotho formal education started in 1838 (Task Force, 1982). Missionaries recommended the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction for the first years of primary education (Task Force, 1982). Obanya (1999) and Heugh (2006) further indicate that this was agreed upon at the United Missionary Conference in Kenya 1909. Similar thinking is also expressed by the 1953 UNESCO *Report on the Use of Vernacular Languages in Education*. There appeared to be some consensus that there was a need for the use of African languages as a medium of instruction and that African languages needed support and development across the continent. There was however no agreement as to the stage at which the change from mother tongue to the colonial languages should occur. There was also little clarity about the relationship between mother tongue instruction in colonial (Heugh, 2006).

1.6 The Lesotho language policy

During the colonial period, languages like English, Portuguese and French were imposed on African countries by the conquering Europeans. These are still used by many African countries as the official language and the language of instruction in schools (Backman, 2006). Grey (2001) asserts that many years of colonisation and the policies of apartheid destroyed many African indigenous languages. The World Bank (2005) and Task Force (1982) share a similar perspective that because Lesotho had been a British protectorate until its independence, Lesotho has inherited the British system of education. English and Sesotho are official languages but English is used in schools as the compulsory medium of instruction beyond Standard Three (MOET, 2005). Johnson (2006) suggests five prevailing forces behind language policy shifts within a country. One of these forces, the imposition by a coloniser, applied in Lesotho, where English became one of the major languages in Lesotho. Lesotho, like other African countries which were colonised by the British, follows the legacy of the colonial language policy (Kgathi, 1993).

One debate around language policy in African countries is in relation to the British neo-colonialist language policy. Makoni (2002) claims that English as a language of power remain one of the legacies of British colonialism in Lesotho. Because English was the British Empire's language, its influence is still felt in the post-colonial

countries. Todaro (2000) asserts that ex-colonial countries use the language of colonial rulers as official languages. Keto (1990) stipulates that the educational policy and practice that were introduced by the colonists attempted to transplant a European educational system onto the colonized countries.

1.7 Focus and purpose of the study

The focus of this study was on teachers' understandings, experiences and implementation of the Standard Four curriculum. The more specific purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate Standard Four teachers' curriculum development experiences of the transition from mother tongue to English as medium of instruction. In other words, the study attempts to develop a deeper understanding on how Standard Four teachers plan and teach the Standard Four curriculum.

1.8 Critical Questions

My study is based on three critical questions:

- What are Standard Four Lesotho teachers' experiences of the transition from mother tongue instruction to English as medium of instruction?
- How do Standard Four teachers in Lesotho plan and design their curriculum for transition from mother tongue instruction to English as medium of instruction?
- How do Standard Four teachers teach novice learners of English?

1.9 Rationale for the Study

The Lesotho language policy advocates Sesotho and English as the two official languages. Mother tongue (Sesotho) is used as the medium of instruction up to Standard Three while English is prescribed as the medium of instruction and taught as a subject as well from Standard Four upwards. Success in English is a cause for concern in Lesotho education (Lesotho Government Gazette, 1993). The rationale for my study stems from my experiences as a primary school teacher for over twenty years in the Lesotho schooling system, where teachers experience a challenging transition from using mother tongue to English as medium of instruction. Most teachers in the Lesotho primary schools are Basotho who speak the same first language, Sesotho. English is their second language. More specifically, I want to understand and make sense of the Lesotho Standard Four teachers' curriculum

development experiences and how they plan and design the curriculum for the crucial transition class. I believe that this study would contribute to my personal development and to the development of other primary teachers. The study may also make a contribution to the debate on curriculum development as it relates to the issue of language of instruction and on the role of teachers as curriculum developers in transition classes. It may also inform the work of the policy makers and the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) of Lesotho.

While there have been studies conducted in Lesotho in relation to English as second language and language policy in primary schools (see Kgathi, 1993; Lefoka, 1997; Setoi, 1997; Khalanyane, 1998; Molapo, 2002, and Backman, 2006), there appears to be a limited understanding of teachers' curriculum development and teaching experiences in a transition class (standard four). This study attempts to address this issue.

1.10 Research Methodology

This study was a qualitative interpretive case study of three primary schools, focusing on Standard Four teachers' curriculum development experiences in a transition class. The study was guided by the principles of Symbolic Interactionism as this qualitative interpretive study was sensitive to the context within which participants worked. To answer my critical questions, four methods of data generation were used. I used interviews, classroom observations, document analysis and a personal reflective journal.

During the interviews, teachers' background biographies and their classroom experiences in teaching in medium of English were studied, in order to understand how this may have influenced their curriculum development and classroom practices. Classroom observations were carried out to observe actual practices. The document analysis helped me to understand how Standard Four teachers plan and design their classroom activities. A personal journal was used to record unplanned events which had appeared during my field work. It helped me to record the teachers' school environment and to constantly reflect on my work as researcher.

1.11 A Brief Overview of the Report

Chapter 2

This chapter provides a literature review relevant to the study. In the first section, the focus is on teaching in transition classes. The second section is based on teachers as curriculum developers.

Chapter 3

This chapter presents the design and methodology of my study. The concepts that form the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism which guided my study are also presented.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 presents data related to my research questions and analyzes the findings. The chapter begins with a thick description of the cases of the studied teachers and their schools' environment. This was meant to gain understanding of the teachers' school environment and their biographies as these could contribute to teachers' classroom experiences.

Chapter 5

In this chapter the arguments developed in this study are synthesized and recommendations are provided. In conclusion, areas of research which need to be investigated are highlighted.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter a brief history of Lesotho education and the focus and purpose of the current study was presented. As stated previously, the purpose of this study was to investigate Standard Four teachers' curriculum development experiences of the transition from mother tongue to English as medium of instruction. This chapter aims to review the existing literature and concepts related to the study. The chapter will focus on literature on teaching in a transition class, and will address issues of the medium of instruction, code-switching, language models in Africa, basic interpersonal communication skills, cognitive academic language proficiency. A brief overview of literature on teachers as curriculum developers will also be provided.

2.2 TEACHING IN THE TRANSITION CLASS

There are several key concepts related to this study. These will be discussed in the sections below.

2.2.1 Medium of Instruction

The medium of instruction is regarded as a tool in teaching and learning. It assists in the learning of the subject matter. Through the medium of instruction pupils reflect on different facts in order to construct new views of the world (Kyeyune, 2003). In many African countries teachers use mother-tongue as the medium of instruction for the first three or four years of primary education. Normally a European language (English, French or Portuguese) is offered as a separate subject during the initial years of schooling. From Standard Four or Five onwards, a European language becomes the medium of instruction (Kamwangamula, 1995; Heugh, 2005). Lesotho is not an exception from these African countries. Its language policy indicates that mother-tongue (Sesotho) should be used as the medium of instruction and taught as a subject from Standard Four upwards (Ministry of Education, 1975). Heugh (2006) argues that this was a colonial version which worked and succeeded under the colonial system. Its aim was to develop leadership which was needed in training the manpower required for the Africa envisioned by the colonial power. His argument is that this version should and no longer be the vision for the present Africa.

Hartshorne (1999) argues that the abrupt switch from mother tongue to English as a mode of learning, the readiness of pupils for the use of this European language before they can use it as medium of instruction, and their lack of exposure to the foreign language outside the classroom are factors that manifest themselves in children's dropping out of school. Molapo (2002) states that the transition from mother tongue to English as medium of instruction in Lesotho primary classes happens at a time when pupils have begun to develop communication competence in Sesotho but they are not academically well prepared to study in English. Scholars such as Skutnabb-Kangas (2000), Hakuta (1990) and Cummins (2000) state that in order to acquire second language there should be a well developed proficiency in the first language, which is a strong predictor of second language development. The view of the above scholars indicate that Lesotho primary school pupils at standard four are not likely to be ready to acquire a second language because they are still developing proficiency in the first language. Research conducted by Lewelling (1991) revealed that proficiency in the first language has influence on the development of the second language. I am inclined to agree with the above view that children are likely to struggle to develop competence in the second language if they have not mastered their mother tongue.

Taking this argument further, Heugh (2005) states that research in psycholinguistics and second language acquisition shows that the models inherited in Africa have a flaw, in the sense that children are expected to learn through the second language before they have proficiency in their mother tongue. It is almost impossible for pupils to have learned enough of the first language in three years to be ready to switch to a second language medium of instruction in Standard Four (Heugh, 2005). She further argues that even for countries where there are well trained teachers, adequate classrooms and textbooks, pupils take between six and eight years to learn a second language before they can use it as a medium of learning. Research evidence reveals that for less resourced schools it may be possible to switch to the medium of English in Grade 9 (ibid). A study conducted by Heugh (2006) in South Africa revealed that even African learners who learn through their mother tongue in the early years may not have first language foundations which are sufficient to enable them to learn successfully through a second language. It has to be recognized that if the medium of instruction retains its integrity and viability as delivering teaching and learning, while also serving as language of culture for pupils, there must be improvement in the way

the medium of instruction makes it possible for the delivery of curriculum. In this study, I attempt to investigate teachers' experiences of curriculum development and their classroom practice at this important stage in Lesotho children's schooling.

2.2.2 Code- switching

Code-switching is a strategy which is used by many teachers in Africa. It is a classroom practice involving the use of more than one language in order to contextualize communication (Nilep, 2006; Escamilla, 2007). This implies that teachers and pupils use code-switching as a technique to facilitate communication and interaction between themselves. Alidou (2007) states that there is likely to be little learning if pupils and the teacher do not understand each other during communication. A study by Escamilla (2007) examined the role of code-switching on the writing skills of children who were learning Spanish and English. Escamilla's study concluded that as children are living their lives in a bilingual environment, code-switching is an important and necessary element of communication. Furthermore, as children learn and employ strategies to express themselves in writing in Spanish and English, they use this strategy across both languages.

Heridia and Brown (2007) note that code-switching is common with people who are bilingual, with whom a regular mixing of languages occurs during communication, for example, when a person substitutes a word or a phrase from one language with a word or phrase from another language. Code-switching has been viewed as a strategy to compensate for diminished language proficiency in the language being learnt (ibid). Studies conducted in Lesotho primary classrooms (Khati, 1992; Sebatana, Chabane and Lefoka, 1989) revealed that most teachers use their mother tongue more than English in order to facilitate teaching and learning. Setoi's (1997) and Molapo's (2002) study argued that this could be because there is no special preparation for teachers and pupils for the transition from the mother tongue (Sesotho) to English as medium of instruction. Furthermore, the complete switch from mother tongue to English is instituted before pupils have developed any competence in either mother tongue or English (ibid). Clegg (1996) suggests that teachers teaching in the second language have to use methods which are different from the ones they used when working in the first language. The strategies should be designed to help pupils to

understand the subject while developing ability in the second language. The findings from the study conducted by Thelejane (1990), which investigated the implementation of educational policies in Lesotho, revealed that a mixture of languages is often used until secondary level, and pupils have very little chance to use English.

In this context, Lesotho teachers appeal to a technique of code-switching in order to conduct their lessons. Based on the arguments made about code-switching above, in the context of my topic which seeks to understand teachers' curriculum development experiences in transition from mother tongue to English as medium of instruction, teachers need to use code-switching as a strategy for teaching and learning. The focus of this study is on the curriculum development experiences and practices of these very teachers. The issues of medium of instruction and code-switching form a pattern of models of language delivery, which will be discussed in the following paragraph.

2.2.3 Language Models in Africa

Heugh (2006) identifies the following models which are commonly used in Africa.

2.2.3.1 The Subtractive Model

The goal of this model is to move pupils away from the mother tongue/ first language into the second language as a medium of instruction in the early years. Sometimes it is referred to as the 'submersion model'. This is where the child is submerged in the second language (Heugh, 2006), and the pupils' mother tongue or first language is not accommodated. Here pupils learn the medium of instruction while learning subject content knowledge (Alidou, 2007). In studies conducted by Cummins (1991) and Heugh (2006) related to the outcomes of bilingual education, it was concluded that subtractive bilingualism leads to academic and linguistic failure among pupils. Handscombe (1994) argues that when the first language is taken away suddenly there can be damage in social and cognitive areas which will take a long time to rectify.

2.2.3.2 Transitional Model

The objective of this model is to target a single language (usually the second language) throughout pupils' schooling careers. Pupils begin school in their first language, and gradually they move to the second language as medium of instruction. When the transition to the second language is done within one to three years it is called early-exit (from the first language) transition model. If the switch is done in Standard Six, it is called a late-exit (from first language) transition model (Heugh, 2006). In Africa the early-exit transition model is dominant, where pupils switch from mother tongue to second language anytime before or at the beginning of Standard Four. Lesotho's language policy like in most African countries dictates that pupils switch from mother tongue to English at standard four. While there is much literature on the consequences of early-exit models, little is known about how teachers experience curriculum development and teaching at this phase.

A transition to the second language as medium of instruction in standard Five or Six is termed the late-exit transition model (Ramireze et al, 1991). It is argued that because most African schools have poorly resourced learning conditions, five or six years of learning the second language as a subject may not be enough to facilitate a successful transition to the second language as medium of instruction (ibid). Alidou (2007) states that transitional bilingual programs employed in some African countries at the initial stage had produced positive learning in comparison with countries using submersion programs. Heugh (2006) argues that early transition to second language is expensive as it needs teachers who have developed native-like proficiency in order to teach well in the second language. In this study, I also examine teachers' sense of efficacy with regard to teaching in the transition phase.

2.2.3.3 Weak Bilingual Models

This model refers to subtractive and early-exit transitional models. When applied together they form weak bilingual models (Heugh, 2006). In the context of Lesotho pupils, mother tongue is used as a language of instruction from Standards One to Three. From Standard Four onwards, teaching is conducted in English. This model of education is similar to the weak bilingual model programme described above.

2.2.4 Additive Bilingual Education – Strong Bilingual Models

The aim of additive bilingualism that is sometimes practised in African countries is either the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction with the second language taught as a subject. This is usually done by a teacher who is a specialist in teaching second language acquisition. In this regard factors like well- trained and competent teachers in second language and in transition classes are important to develop enabling teaching and learning environments. In some cases, the first language together with second language is taught until the end of the school. Here first language is not removed as a medium of instruction. Pupils in this model gain high level proficiency in both first and second language (Heugh, 2006).

Some authors refer to additive bilingual models as strong bilingual models. In this sense a strong bilingual model is equivalent to an additive bilingual model (Heugh, 2006). Alidou (2007) indicates that for pupils to master their language of instruction and a second language, requires the development of strong bilingualism in both academic literacy and languages. He further states that when pupils have achieved these literacy linguistic goals, the language of instruction can help them become academically competent. Cummins (1994), in drawing the distinction between additive bilingualism and subtractive bilingualism, indicates that students working within an additive environment succeed to a larger extent than those students whose first language is devalued by the language policy. In the paragraph below a discussion of further concepts associated with bilingualism is presented.

2.2.5 BICS and CALP

Cummins introduced the acronyms BICS and CALP in the second language acquisition discourse (Cummins, 2000). BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills) refers to basic listening and speaking skills which is acquired quickly by many pupils. CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) refers to the ability of an individual to engage with the academic demands of different subjects. He draws a distinction between these two different kinds of language proficiency by noting that some individuals acquire fluency in the second language as compared to academic proficiency in that language (Cummins, 1997). CALP help pupils to cope successfully with cognitive and linguistic demands which are created by their educational and

social environment. Skutnabb-Kangas and Cummins (1988) indicate that the acquisition of CALP occurs only when BICS has been mastered.

The challenge that is faced by teachers is to ensure that pupils master BICS, as well as CALP, for they are required for language proficiency. The implication for teachers in the transition class is that they should not assume that non-native speakers who have acquired fluency, which is often acquired within about two years of exposure to the second language, would have a corresponding academic language proficiency (which can take between five to seven years to acquire). Learners must be given sufficient time to develop CALP (Cummins, 1979). Understanding these theories can help teachers develop appropriate techniques, strategies and assessments that guide pupils. There is a need for pupils to transfer what they know to something new. That is from known to unknown.

2.2.6 Transfer and Transition

Transfer is a process where what is learnt in the mother tongue can be transferred to the second language. There must be sufficient first language establishment for an adequate degree of transfer (Heugh, 2006). Transfer is mostly seen to be additive and bilingual in nature in cases where the first language is kept as the primary medium of learning. From this language knowledge and skills can be transferred (Cummins, 1979). This implies that pupils should have a firm foundation in their first language that would help them make English more comprehensible. This can happen when pupils have developed CALP and BICS. The argument raised by Heugh (2006) is that successful transfer may be possible in the 'late-exit'.

Transition is a switch or shift from using the first language as medium of instruction to the second language as medium of instruction (Heugh, 2006). The argument is that the transition to second language usually happens before pupils have acquired sufficient knowledge in the second language. This implies that it happens before the pupils can transfer knowledge and skills to the second language (ibid).

The models and concepts examined above are important as they are likely to assist in understanding both teachers' curriculum development experiences as well as their practice in the transition class. In the next paragraph I will discuss the role of teachers as curriculum developers in their classrooms.

2.3 TEACHERS AS CURRICULUM DEVELOPERS

The curriculum as educational plan is often simply presented to teachers. Curriculum is a blue print in the form of a government document written for teachers to interpret. Teachers are required to interpret it according to their different techniques, experiences and attitudes, and to implement it in their different contexts. Baker (2000) indicates that policy needs to be interpreted to the immediate context, and this can be done by teachers at the 'coalface'. Teachers connect the context of curriculum formation and context of curriculum performance (Bartlett, 1990). Teachers need techniques, strategies and different methods to contextualize the curriculum as plan which is to be implemented. Often there is a 'disjuncture', 'mismatch', 'gap' between curriculum as plan and curriculum as practice.

Stenhouse (1975, p.144) conceived teachers as 'extended professionals' as they question and test theory in teaching and learning using different skills. In classrooms teachers plan their activities in the manner that allows for teaching and learning. They develop curriculum according to their different context. Baker (2000) indicates that in the teaching and learning situation teachers are responsible for producing their different teaching materials, teacher and pupil activities and strategies in order to achieve their objectives, which was reflected in the teachers lesson plans (see appendix 8, p. 57). Ramparsad's (2001) study conducted in South African schools argued that the Department of Education should run regular in-service workshops for teachers in order to help them with curriculum development. This needed to be supplemented by formal in-service programmes.

The new South African curriculum, Curriculum 2005 (C2005), suggests that teachers act as curriculum developers. Lemmer, Meier and Van Wyk (2006) note that in South African schools, both primary and secondary educators must develop a curriculum that responds to the needs of learners and must develop a school environment that demonstrates cultural diversity. In addition to this, the implementation of continuous

assessment suggests that educators be active curriculum developers since its strategies are developed by the individual teacher and are unique to each educator, grade and school. Furthermore, the educational principles of curriculum development are based on the outcomes-based approach. The rationale behind this is to empower teachers to be active participants as curriculum developers (Department of Education, 1997). The Department of Education (2000) also indicates that the role teachers will play will be that of interpreter and designer of learning material, designing original learning programmes which will meet the desired outcomes which will be relevant to their context. The implication here is that teachers are perceived as curriculum developers – the curriculum as plan is presented to them, but they are to interpret it according to their different beliefs, attitudes and experiences and to implement it according to their context.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the existing literature and concepts related to the study. The chapter focused on literature on teaching in a transition phase, and addressed issues of the medium of instruction, code-switching, language models in Africa, basic interpersonal communication skills and cognitive academic language proficiency. A brief overview of literature on teachers as curriculum developers was also provided. In the next chapter, I present the research design and methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, an exposition of the relevant literature on the phenomenon under study was presented. In this chapter the research design and methodology of the study is presented. It describes how data was generated in order to explore teachers' curriculum development experiences of the transition from mother tongue to English as medium of instruction. The chapter discusses the research design, sampling, data generation methods, piloting, data analysis methods, and the limitations of the study and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design

3.2.1 Qualitative Approach

This research study was located in the interpretive paradigm and adopted a qualitative approach in order to generate data to answer the research questions. The intention was to attempt to understand, describe and interpret people's feelings and experiences. In particular, this study sought to explore teachers' experiences of the curriculum development as they engaged with working with novice learners of English. It necessarily required the generation of data that would capture the 'qualities' of the phenomenon under study as opposed to attempting to quantify the essentially 'social' nature of the phenomenon under study (Henning 2004). Qualitative methods were therefore best suited to answer the research questions posed (Maykuta and Morehouse, 1996; Morse and Richards, 2002). This study was conducted with teachers at their respective schools. An interpretive framework was useful as it allows exploration into the participants' natural setting by exploring the environment in which the participants create their reality (Radnor, 2002). Qualitative research presents true stories of real people. I used qualitative research because its intention is to go where real people live (Chambliss and Schutt, 2006). This I attempted to do through rich descriptions of the phenomenon as it played itself out in a real context.

A qualitative researcher makes sense of the world in different ways. In making sense I organized the experiences of the participants' events as they occurred in the natural setting (Morse and Richards, 2002). This approach best suited my study which aimed

to investigate teachers' experiences and implementation of curriculum in a transition class, a class in which the transition from mother tongue to English as medium of instruction happens. O'Leary (2005) indicates that it is challenging to work with managing and analyzing qualitative data in a way that best preserves richness yet crystallizes the meaning. A qualitative approach helped me to explore the teachers' experiences as they occurred in a natural setting of the classroom (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). Furthermore, this kind of research was aimed at understanding the individual experiences and perceptions in their working and living environment in their unique context and background (Henning, 2004). I drew on Walker's suggestion (Walker, 1992) who argues that curriculum research should be designed in relation to the environment in which it must function.

In qualitative research the voice of the participants should be heard because it not only provides data to be analyzed, but also contributes to the research questions and the way data are analyzed (Morse and Richards, 2003). In this research, to make the voice of the participants heard, I employed different procedures. These included teacher interviews, classroom observations, document analysis and the keeping of a personal reflective journal. As an interpretivist researcher, I went beyond the observable level of the phenomena. I attempted to get to the inner and subjective experiences of the participants. In order to understand the experiences of the participants, I had to generate thick layers of description (Neuman, 2006). Qualitative research is sensitive to the context in which participants work. This was an important principle that helped guide the way in which data generation proceeded (Mason, 2002).

3.2.2 Case Study

Case study was selected as an appropriate method for generating qualitative data in a natural setting. I used a case study to focus on teachers' experiences which had influenced the perceptions of social situations. This articulates with the theoretical framework (symbolic interactionism) used in this study which stresses the significance of context in teaching and learning processes. Case study is defined differently with different key issues or phenomena under study, but within a bounded system. There should be a relationship, commonalities, boundaries or outlines regarding the phenomenon under study. Furthermore, in a case study there should be a

unit of analysis which gives the boundaries in order to describe the case (Yin, 1984; Mouton, 2001; Babbie and Mouton, 2001; Opie, 2004; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007; Neiuwenhuis, 2007). In addition to this, case study research demands that the researcher be sensitive to the context in which she works. The studied phenomenon cannot be studied outside of its context, and it can not be separated from its context. A case study approach allowed me to explore the phenomenon in-depth within a particular context. I attempted to embrace the principles offered by case study research in order to answer the research questions. The boundaries set by the study were on Standard Four classes in three schools. Teachers were studied within the school context. The focus was on how they develop and implement the curriculum for a transition class.

Case study has key features which have guided to my study. A case study strives towards understanding how participants relate and interact with others. It offers a multi-perspective in which the researcher considers the views of the relevant group of actors and the interaction between them. This afforded me an opportunity to focus on the interaction between context and action (Henning, 2004). Through the use of different data collection methods an in-depth understanding was gained of teachers' experiences, understanding and implementation of curriculum in a transition class. This is one of the key strengths of a case study, namely: the use of multiple techniques in the data-generating process (Neiuwenhuis, 2007).

3.2.3 Theoretical Framework

My study was guided by Symbolic Interactionist theory. It provided coherence and is linked to case study methodology. Symbolic interactionist researchers view social interaction as a process which takes place in a social context. This theory suggests that participants will try to reach a mutually shared definition of a situation (Woods, 1983, Foody, 1993, Cohen et al, 2007). The social context was a classroom where pupils and the teacher interact. In order to understand teachers' social world I needed to understand how they interpret and define their social world.

In qualitative interpretive research, context and human interaction are important as the situations are constructed. It is the task of the symbolic interactionist researcher to discover the constructions (Woods, 1983). Interpretive research explores how people

see things and make meaning. I employed symbolic interactionism which I used to explore the phenomenon in its natural setting. According to Woods, (1983) and Foody, (1993), in trying to understand the process of human interaction, researchers use symbolic interactionism to focus on people's actions, reacting, interpreting, planning and acting. This provided a useful approach to my study which set out to explore teachers' experiences, understanding, and implementation of their curricula in the classroom setting.

The concepts of symbolic interactionism which were relevant to my study were context, culture, strategies and negotiations. These concepts have helped me to understand how teachers interpret and define their world. During the teaching and learning process negotiations had formed interaction between the teacher and the pupils in the medium of instruction, so negotiations had a significant role in the process of teaching and learning. Pollard (1998) argues that negotiation is the fundamental necessity for a teacher and the learner in all classrooms. Contextual issues play also an important role in the process of teaching and learning - context referring to a situation which is constructed. In a school there are different contexts and they are interpreted differently by different people.

As an interpretivist researcher, I had to access the schools and attempt to understand how teachers interpret their contexts. Furthermore, as a qualitative researcher, I had to explore phenomena in their natural setting. Perspectives are frameworks through which people make sense of the world. This concept was significant to the teaching and learning situation where pupils and teachers construct their realities and define situations. From my study of teachers, it became clear that teachers use different lenses to view their social worlds. This has helped me to understand how they construct their social life.

Each school has its own culture. This develops when people come together for specific purposes and may occur intentionally or unintentionally. The results that I got from different schools and classes indicated the different culture of schools. In a classroom there are goals to be achieved so strategies, which are regarded as the central concept in the interactionist approach, may be considered in order to achieve

the intended goals (Woods, 1983). The studied teachers used different strategies in order to teach novice learners of English.

3.3 Sampling and access

A process of purposive sampling was used in selecting the schools and teachers that were to participate in this study. A purposive sample implies that the sample should be chosen for a specific purpose (Maykut and Morehouse, 1996; Cohen et al, 2007). The selected participants were engaged with the particular phenomenon under study, namely working in a transition class. Special attention was given to selecting sites in which rich, in-depth data could be generated and contexts where research participants were most likely to contribute towards answering the research questions. A purposeful sample provides a clear criterion in relation to research questions (Ezzy, 2002). Furthermore, Mason (2002) refers to purposive sampling as theoretical sampling which is a selection of groups to study in relation to their relevance to one's research questions, theoretical position, analytical framework and the argument that is developed. The careful selection of the research sites in this study was certainly guided by these principles.

Gaining access to schools and teachers had to be carried out in a sensitive manner (Maistry, 2008). The following extract from my reflective journal describes the process I followed at Boiketlo Primary

Extract from my reflective journal

When I went to this school (Boiketlo Primary) to seek for permission to conduct my study, the principal welcomed me in her office. She called her deputy to be involved in the discussion. After that the Standard Four teachers were called to meet me. I gave them an informed consent letter. They were to accept or reject the proposal, as participants should be informed about the research and they should know that their participation was voluntary. They did not have any problem they also indicated that they were happy because they would learn much from this experience. We arranged days and time for the meetings. I was given a log book by the principal to write the purpose of my visit and to sign up for the school record. I found that there was co-operation between the principal and the staff and the way she managed the school made it conducive for the teachers.

3.4 Data Generation Methods

In this section, I describe how data was generated. Data generation began in April 2008 and continued to the end of September 2008. The letters requesting consent described the purpose of the study and were sent to the participants and the gatekeepers (see appendix 2, 3, 4 pp.57-59). The data was collected from a homogeneous group (they were all Sesotho speaking and they were women). This enabled me to study the group in greater depth because the sample members were similar. A case study does not claim any particular method of data collection unlike survey or historical research (Neumen, 2006). Sarantakos (2005) argues that it is typical of interpretivists to structure their definitions loosely. This definition of research that is loosely developed may accommodate as many research methods for data collection from various sources to allow for multiple realities. According to Henning (2004), a researcher becomes a craft person, who has access to many tools that he uses skilfully at appropriate times. She uses the technical term 'bricoleur' to describe an interpretivist researcher.

Furthermore, Creswell (1998) advises that where different methods are used to collect data from different sources triangulation is useful. This means that all the data are mapped from different angles, to converge and be analyzed to build a text. Different methods of data collection were used in this study. Multiple layers of data were generated through semi-structured teachers' interviews, classroom observations, document analysis and a researcher's reflective journal. Data was systematically generated and recorded. Case study researchers usually continually analyze their data before embarking on other rounds of data generation (Pollard, 1998). Multiple methods of data collection complement each other and enhance trustworthiness and crystallization of the study (Neiuwenhuis, 2007). The aim of using different methods of generating data was to answer my research questions with different methods, to answer the same research question(s) through different angles. Furthermore, they helped me to analyze in greater depth as is one of the aims of a case study (Mason, 2002).

3.4.1 Interviews

Interviews had been chosen as a method of data generation for this study. An interview is a face to face meeting of an interviewer and interviewee. Its advantages stem from that personal contact of direct meeting where the two parties are able to exchange ideas and to build a rapport as the researcher interacts with the participants (Lowe, 2007). It is in this context that interviews allow the researcher to clarify or rephrase the questions and probe the interviewee for the specific meaning of answer, or investigate aspects of a response that one could not have found in a questionnaire response (Hopkins, 1976, Lowe, 2007).

The initial interviews were conducted successfully together with the first classroom observations. Interviews were employed to generate data about teachers' experiences, understanding and implementation of their curriculum. Interviews provide opportunities for the researcher to understand the lived experience of the participants and have the potential to generate rich data (Henning, 2004). Bell (1999, p.135) describes the interview as producing 'rich material... that can often put the flesh on the bones of questionnaire responses.'

The interviews were conducted in order to understand the participants as they perceived themselves in the teaching and learning situation. Furthermore, they were used to understand teachers' social opinions, which is the way they felt about certain issues in teaching and learning (Van Manen, 1990). An interview is regarded as a professional face-to-face conversation between two or more people where the researcher generates information from the interviewee(s) that may at the end help in answering the research questions (Cohen et al, 2007; Tuckman, 1978). In this study the interviews were relevant in generating information from teachers in relation to the type of experiences and their perceptions on the implementation of the Lesotho language policy. The interviews were conducted with three Sesotho-speaking Standard Four teachers in three different urban schools.

The plan was to conduct interviews at two points during my field study. Initial interviews were used to get background information, including teachers' biographies. The second interviews helped to gain insights as to why teachers behaved in the way they did as observed in their classroom practices (Maistry, 2005). Semi-structured

interviews were used. This approach allowed me to probe further in search of the answers to the broader research questions being investigated. Semi-structured interviews provide a room for negotiations and discussions of the interviewees' responses (Hughes and Hitchcock, 1989). Further, the semi-structured interviews allowed flexibility for me to probe, clarify answers and follow up on any unexpected issues that arose during the interview (Neieuwenhuis, 2007).

It is the aim of an in-depth interview to get a story from the participant. To check whether I had understood the participants I asked them about the interpretations I had developed about their experiences. This was one way I used to check interpretations with my participants (Ezzy, 2002). Greeff (2002) indicates that the aspect of unstructured interviews applies to semi-structured interviews. Unstructured interviews are rooted in the interest of understanding experiences of other people and the meaning they make of those experiences. All these were relevant to my study which was to explore teachers' understanding, implementation and experiences of their classroom curriculum. Furthermore, Lofland and Lofland (1984) assert that in-depth interviews allow a participant to give his or her feelings, experiences and perceptions. This was the intention of using this approach.

3.4.2 Observations

The heart of a case study lies in observation as a key method of data generation (Cohen et al, 2007). Nieuwenhuis (2007) identifies four types of classroom observations used in qualitative research. The first is that of complete observer. Here the researcher does not participate in the situation but observes the situation from a distance. The second is that of observer as participant. In this case the researcher is involved in the situation, but her main focus is on her role as an observer in the situation. Thirdly, in the case of participant as observer, the researcher becomes of the research process. Finally, in the case of a complete participant, the researcher is completely immersed in the setting. For the purpose of this study, I opted for the role of 'complete observer' where I became a non-participant observer in order to capture teachers' activities as they unfolded during the lesson. Complete observer may be a less obtrusive kind of observation but its limitation was that as a researcher I could not become completely involved in the activities.

Three Standard Four classes from three chosen schools were observed in two different lessons at different periods. During the classroom observations the focus was on how teachers presented the content using English as the language of instruction. Observations of lessons were undertaken to gain a general understanding of how the lessons were being conducted. This was done in order to gain a picture of what was happening in the classroom. This research instrument was designed specifically to get information on how teachers in the transition class teach second language speakers in the medium of English. During the observations I used classroom observation guide lines (see appendix 7, p66). They helped me to focus on aspects related to my research (Lowe, 2007). The main advantage of using observation for generating data is that it allowed me to use different senses (see, hear, and touch) (Henning, 2004; Nieuwenhuis, 2007). The use of classroom observation had proved itself to be an important form of data generation as I examined how teachers understand and implement curriculum in relation to the Lesotho language policy. These data were used to frame questions for my second semi-structured interviews with teachers and also for a preliminary analysis of my data (Burgess, 1985).

3.4.3 Personal Reflective Journal

A reflective journal was used to record my informal observations and interactions with teachers within the schools. It allowed me to record a thick description of the contexts of the three schools which were researched. This was essential to keep track of everything that was happening in the field, as keeping track of everything is central to good research practices in qualitative research (Yates, 2004). I used a personal journal as a systematic way to facilitate the interpretive process which is at the heart of qualitative research (Ezzy, 2002). He further indicates that writing journals is the beginning of interpretive work in the field. Qualitative studies do not treat data collection and data analysis separately; it is an ongoing process (Nieuwehuis, 2007; Ezzy, 2002).

A reflective journal assisted me in comparing and constructing actions, and to interpret the relationships. It further helped me to record observations of conversations, actions and events (Lowe, 2007) since context and perspectives are major concepts in social interactionism which is the theoretical frame that guided my

study. I had to observe and record the entire school context because what was happening in classrooms could not be divorced from what was happening in the entire school. As a result, data had been drawn from the wider context where classrooms were located (Griffiths, 1985).

3.4.4 Document Analysis

Document analysis is the use of communications, either hand-written or in electronic format, that relate to the research question(s) and that may shed light on the investigated phenomenon (Henning, 2004; Nieuwenhuis, 2007). In order to get an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study, teachers' curriculum documents were analyzed. Data from different teachers' curriculum related documents were used. These included lesson plans, schemes and record of work, assessment tasks, teaching resources, resource files and textbooks. The study of the lesson plans provided an insight into the way teachers planned and designed the curriculum. The use of documents increased crystallization of data which served to corroborate the evidence from other sources (Nieuwenhuis, 2007).

3.5 Piloting

Before attempting the actual study, there was a need to try to find out if the tools to be used would work and also to refine my ideas (O'Leary, 2005, Lowe, 2007). I ran a pilot study, where two teachers were interviewed. These teachers had a similar background as the ones who were participating in my study. These teachers were not part of the actual study. This exercise enabled me to make some changes and modifications where necessary which I might have not been aware of if I did not engage myself in this pilot study. The rationale behind a pilot study was to find out any problems so that they can be rectified before the actual study was carried out (Fraenkel and Wallen, 1990). Piloting in this study was done to give me a chance to practise how to ask questions, to allocate time for the actual interviews and also to reveal ambiguity and misunderstood questions. I checked for questions that might appear threatening to the participants, so that ways of eliminating the element of threat could be developed before the actual interview was conducted (Cohen et al, 2007).

3.6 Method of Data Analysis

Henning (2007) argues that the process of data analysis is the ‘heartbeat’ of the research. Furthermore, analyzing gathered data is an essential part of any research (Lowe, 2007). This implies that analyzing raw data gives the whole picture of the study. Data analysis in a qualitative approach is a non-linear process; data generation; processing and reporting are intertwined (Neiwenhuis, 2007). Taking this argument further, Holliday (2007) argues that these activities should happen at the same time as they feed each other. Morse and Richards (2002) indicate that analysis starts firstly with exploration of the topic and literature; it is the ongoing process throughout the study. The data from this study had been obtained through verbal and non-verbal responses.

In data analysis I used thematic code in order to capture the qualitative richness of the phenomenon (Neuman, 2006; Henning, 2004). These data were classified into chunks of themes, and emerging patterns guided me to formulate conclusions from each categorisation (Neuman, 2006). Creswell (1998) concurs that the researcher develops theories and hypothesis in the course of research. These are derived from categories of classified themes. The data and its interpretation were examined thoroughly for underlying themes and patterns which characterize the case more broadly (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001; Roberts, 2004). Roberts (2004) identifies five steps to analyze data. I was guided by the same activities as suggested by Roberts:

Step 1: After transcribing the tape-recorded interviews, I reviewed that data several times before developing categories, themes, and patterns. There were different themes emerging from the initial reading, and then each theme was given an initial coding.

Step 2: The responses were categorized and grouped according to research questions. I developed a master coding list of response categories, and these were counted by frequency in relation to research questions.

Step 3: Using coding developed in step 2, I coded the full transcript of each participant.

Step 4: I counted the analysis of each response to research questions and I analyzed each interview transcript. I made themes, patterns, and categories for the research questions.

Step 5: I reviewed all the findings and the main themes and patterns made sure that the findings and the main themes and patterns were consistent with the data.

3.7 Limitations of the Study

The study was conducted in three primary schools, with the sample of three teachers. This means that one could not generalize from the findings of only three schools to all other schools in the district, or even the country. It was not the intention of this study to offer generalized results because each case is unique and as such there may be no consistency with other similar cases. This means that the results cannot be generalized, but can be used to understand similar situations.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

To get access to conduct my study in the three chosen schools in the Botha-Bothe district, permission was granted from the District Education Officer, the school principals and teachers of the chosen schools. To get access to gatekeepers, there should be trust and mutual respect between the researcher and participants (Maistry, 2008). Van Manen (1990) argues that to enter and understand somebody's life world is to be part of him/her. Moral and ethical issues that were considered were informed consent, the right to withdrawal and the right to privacy. Assurances relating to the issues of confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed.

As interpretive researcher, I attempted not to disclose any confidential piece of information about the selected schools (Sarantakos, 2005) and the aspect of confidentiality was assured where the names of the participants were not included in the data and the information was not described in a manner that could be linked with a particular participant or place. Participants were assured that no real names of schools and teachers would be mentioned, and that data would be treated with confidentiality, and would only be used for the research purposes. Acting responsibly is regarded as an ethical issue. All recorded tapes would be kept safely and disposed after 5 years (Morse and Richards, 2002). Teachers signed a consent form which showed their willingness for participating in the data construction process (See appendix 4, Pg 59). Abiding by a strict ethical code implied more than simply gaining formal access and written consent from the participating teachers. It required that I be sensitive to the contexts within which teachers worked, and that I respected the confidentiality of the data that I generated with participants. I consciously attempted to abide by these principles.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the main aspects of the design and methodology used in this study and the rationale for the choices made. I have explained the limitations as well as the strong points of the methods used. The chapter concluded with a reflection on ethical issues relevant to this study. In the next chapter, I provide an analysis of the data that was constructed.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

As indicated in the previous chapter, data was generated through the use of interviews, classroom observations, document analysis and a personal reflective journal. The intention was to explore Standard Four teachers' curriculum development experiences of the transition from mother tongue to English as medium of instruction. The responses are organized into themes which are influenced by the research questions stated in chapter 1. This chapter is organized as follows:

Narrative vignettes of participants

Teachers experiences of teaching in the transition class

How teachers plan and design their curriculum for Standard Four

How teachers teach novice learners of English

4.2 Narrative Vignettes of Participants

The data presented in this study was developed from case studies of three primary schools. However, it is important to note that this was also influenced by my teaching experiences as a primary school teacher over twenty years. The names of teachers and schools are pseudonyms. Teachers' biographies and school environment contributed to teachers' understanding, experiences and implementation of curriculum. The data presented was from the initial interviews and my reflective journal. The intention was to obtain biographical information from the participants, as well as information about the school background. In symbolic interactionist research, understanding the context in which participants work enables the researcher to develop deeper insights into the behaviour of the participants under study. Furthermore, case study research suggests that the researcher provide a thick description of the research context (Yin 1984).

4.2.1 A Profile of Mathato

Mathato, a Mosotho woman, was over fifty-five years of age. She was born in Leribe, an urban part of Lesotho. She had trained for teaching at the National Teacher Training College in Lesotho (NTTC) where she obtained a Primary Teacher Certificate (PTC). There was no specific training for different Standards. She indicated that she was influenced by her grandmother to be a teacher who was also a

teacher. She had taught for thirty-five years. She had been teaching in a rural school for about ten years. Later she moved to a township school in order to pursue her studies. She was teaching a Standard Four class. She taught Mathematics, Science and Health. She had taught Standard Four for nine years. She claimed that even though she had taught this class for this long, with every group of pupils there were new challenges in the teaching and learning process. She stated that she is often tempted to use mother tongue when there was communication breakdown. Teachers who work in this kind of context resort to code-switching in order to help their learners make meaning of the content they teach (Nilep, 2006).

4.2.2 Mathato's School: Maoeng Primary

The school was situated in a town, in one of the Lesotho districts. During school hours no pupils were seen loitering around the streets. The school belonged to the district Education Office in the Botha-Bothe district. This was the Lesotho Evangelical Church (LEC) School. It was one of the oldest schools in the district. It was called an 'intermediate school' at that time, where after Standard Three pupils would attend Standard Four up to Standard Six, which was the final class in the primary phase at that time. It was one of the biggest primary schools in the district, and generally produced good results. Classes ranged from Standard One to Standard Seven; with a student enrolment of around 1000 learners and 25 teachers. Standard Four had an enrolment of 140 pupils with 4 teachers. All classes were streamed into three or four streams. Farrant (1977, p. 264) asserts that typically, in big schools, "... further grouping is carried out by streaming the class in A, B, and C streams according to ability." The school did not have a library or staffroom. There was a principal's office. Inside the office there were different charts which showed teachers' biographies, school master time-table, mission statement, school policy and other information about that school and the teachers.

There were playgrounds where pupils were playing. They were communicating both in Sesotho and English, but Sesotho was the language spoken most often. The languages that were used by both teachers and the pupils were Sesotho and English. The school had a big garden where vegetables were grown by pupils as part of their lessons in the Agriculture subject. The vegetables were sold for the schools' costs because the pupils were not paying fees because of the Free Primary Education policy

(FPE). Pupils received their lunch at school. This was supplied by the government through FPE. On Wednesday from half past seven to half past eight teachers held a service to pray and share the word of God. They presented reports of the previous week and announcements for the following week.

4.2.3 A profile of Mpho

Mpho was a Mosotho woman who was in her fifties. She had taught for 25 years at primary school level. She was brought up by her mother, who was a house-wife. Her father was a farmer. She indicated that she joined the teaching profession because of financial problems. She could not continue her High School so she studied at a teachers' training college. She had obtained her Primary Teacher's Certificate (PTC) at the National Teacher Training College (NTTC) in Lesotho. She explained that in the primary course there was no specialist subject training. A primary teacher was expected to teach all subjects and all classes.

She indicated that she started teaching in the rural part of Lesotho. She had transferred to her current school in order to further her studies. It was the first time that she taught a Standard Four class. She indicated that she was experiencing problems in teaching this class.

4.2.4 Mpho's School: Boiketlo Primary

This school was a Lesotho Anglican Church School (ACL). It had an enrolment of around 800 pupils and 20 teachers. The Standard Four cohort had 98 pupils placed in two streams with three teachers. Three other teachers were practising teachers from the teachers' college. The teacher indicated that the class was streamed according to their ability. Farrant (1977) asserts that streaming children of similar ability helps them to proceed at their own rate. There was a principal's office and a staffroom for teachers.

There were netball and football playgrounds. As with Maoeng Primary, this school also had a big garden where all the classes went for their practical work in Agriculture lessons. Anything that was produced from the garden was sold to the community. Pupils received their lunch at school, provided by the government through FPE.

4.2.5 A profile of Palesa

Palesa was 35 years, she was a Mosotho woman. She was a qualified teacher from LCE (Lesotho College of Education) which was formerly called NTTC National Teacher Training College. She had a Distance Teaching Programme Certificate (DTEP). She indicated that she did not want to become a teacher after her high school. She said that her parents were teachers but struggled financially. She stated that she was forced by her parents to join the teaching profession. But now she enjoyed teaching. She was preparing to register for a Diploma. She had taught as a private school teacher for two years at the same school. Now she had been teaching for three years as a qualified teacher. She taught Mathematics, Science and English. She indicated that she encounters problems with the use of English as the medium of instruction. She said that to facilitate teaching she mostly use code-switching.

4.2.6 Palesa's School: Lekhalong Primary

This was a RCC (Roman Catholic Church) School. The school was governed by the district Education Office. It was about 1 km from town. The school had an enrolment of 1071 pupils, with 25 teachers. Standard Four was streamed into three groups, with four teachers and three student teachers. There was a big garden and in front of the classroom buildings. In the playground pupils were communicating in English, few were mixing English and Sesotho.

The following table provides summary information on each teacher:

Table 4.1

PARTICIPANTS	AGE GROUP	TEACHING EXPERIENCE (schools and years)	TERTIARY QUALIFICATIONS	CURRENT STUDIES
Mathato	50-55	Rural primary, 10 years Urban primary, 25 years	Primary Teacher's Certificate: 3 years	Not studying

Mpho	40-50	Rural primary 5 years Urban primary, 20 years	Primary Teacher's Certificate: 3 years	To apply for a degree next year
Palesa	35-40	Urban primary, 5 years	Distance Teaching Education Programme: 4 years	Waiting for enrolment for a degree

The above description of teachers' biographies and school environments provides a context within which the research questions were to be addressed. In the sections that follow, I provide data and analysis as it relates to each of the critical questions posed in this study.

4.3 WHAT ARE TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF TEACHING IN A TRANSITION CLASS?

The intention of this study was to understand how teachers in a transition class experience teaching in English as the medium of instruction. All three teachers acknowledged that they experienced some challenges in teaching in the medium of English and this was also observed during the classroom observations (see appendix 7, p 66) Teachers indicated that they were not competent to teach in the medium of English and they did not feel that they had the necessary skills for teaching in a transition class. Teachers expressed that the pupils were not yet competent in their mother tongue. They indicated that there were times when they would ask a question and the pupils would not respond. The following extract from the interviews show teachers' communication experiences:

Mathato: Teaching in the medium of English is challenging because both of us with my class we are not competent in this language; moreover, these pupils are not yet competent in Sesotho. It is the aim of curriculum for the pupils to acquire the four skills at the end of the year.

Mpho: It sometimes makes a dull class because I will be the only one talking, the pupils will be just looking at me. This is mostly experienced when I introduce a new lesson. To practise the basic skills I practice comprehension and oral composition with my class.

Palesa: Even though we teach in English from Standard One up to Standard Seven, I still experience great challenges, these pupils are not competent even me I am not competent with English so communication becomes a problem, more especially when they want to express themselves.

In analyzing the participants' experiences, we note that they constantly refer to the challenges they were facing in teaching in the medium of English. The key issue here was that teachers and pupils as second language speakers were not proficient in English. Teachers felt that it hindered the teaching and learning process. Palesa and Mathato felt that the pupils were not yet ready in their mother-tongue. They felt that this was likely to affect their ability to learn in a second language. Mpho attempted different strategies to help her pupils practise communication skills. In informal conversations with teachers, all participating teachers alluded to using code-switching to help their children make meaning. From my experience of teachers and pupils, code-switching had been common in education in Lesotho. It can be assumed that code-switching would continue to happen in the Lesotho education as long as the language policy is the same. Thelejane's (1990) findings concluded that a mixture of language is often used from primary until secondary.

A recurring phenomenon that all teachers mentioned was the issue of time. In the extract of interview transcripts below, we note that teachers found that managing their class time presented an immense challenge. Teachers said that there were times that they did not complete their daily prepared lessons according to the timetable. They stated that they took time repeating and doing different things to make meaning in their classes. They indicated that they did not know of any specific strategies to teach in a transition class. While they claim, later we see that they do in fact develop strategies for teaching in this transition phase. Teachers felt that this class should provide the foundation for the use of English as mode of learning as English was to be the medium of instruction up to higher education. They indicated that there was a

need for children to develop a good foundation in English which would serve as a strong basis for future learning in English.

Mathato: There are times that I do not complete what I have planned for my class because there is a lot of time I take repeating and using different things to make meaning to my class. Standard Four is the foundation for teaching in medium of English up to higher education. I think as teachers we must make sure we make good foundation.

Mpho: To make my lesson a success I have to spend more than what is stipulated on my timetable because it takes a lot of time for my class to understand different concepts when using English as a mode of learning.

Palesa: There are some lessons that I do not complete what I have planned for the day. I think it is because I take a lot of time trying to make my class understand. It takes a long time for the pupils to make meaning.

Mpho and Palesa found that a lot of time was spent on clarifying concepts. Lessons planned for the day were hardly completed, but they had to exercise patience with their classes in order to achieve their objective of teaching and learning in this class where the medium of instruction had to change. There were communication difficulties between teachers and pupils which both teachers and pupils struggled to manage.

In the extract of interviews below, teachers revealed their experiences of curriculum development support that they received. Teachers felt that they did not receive adequate support from their school, the Ministry of Education or from the training institution. They indicated that they had not received training that would equip them to be able to teach at this crucial stage in the learners' development. More specifically, teachers alluded to the fact that they did not receive support for teaching in this transition class and felt that they could have benefited from some form of continuing professional development that would equip them to teach in the medium of English. They said that they received their training through the medium of English and this was one of the things which did help them to try to teach in the medium of English. However, teaching in a transition class where there was a sudden switch over from mother tongue instruction to English as a medium of instruction required that both curriculum development and teaching be mindful of and sensitive to the unique needs of pupils at this critical stage. All participating teachers felt that they were not

sufficiently competent to identify and make the curricular and pedagogic moves that were required to teach at this level.

Mathato: There is no support given by the Ministry of Education, even here at school we do not do anything to support each other. Even from the college we were trained for teaching in primary level not for a special class. But we were taught through English.

Mpho: In primary education we don't specialize either for subjects or classes. We were not trained for a transition class. There is nothing given by the Ministry of Education, even here at school there are no trainings or workshops on teaching in a transition class.

Palesa: There is no support from the Ministry of Education. Even here at school we do not do anything in preparing each other for the transition class. Even at the training college this class is taken like any other classes in the primary, there is no special attention given to it.

4.4 HOW DO TEACHERS PLAN AND DESIGN THEIR CURRICULUM FOR A TRANSITION CLASS?

In the discussion that follows, I provide an account of how teachers undertook their curriculum development activities for teaching in the transition class. Data from one participant will be selected. Teachers curriculum records are personal artefacts and teachers were understandably reluctant to allow me to take their preparation book record books away with me for closer examination. They did however allow me to view their records in their presence. After viewing teachers' curriculum records I developed a description and explanation of what I observed and recorded this in my journal. The following is an extract of such data recorded in my journal:

Teachers had a quarterly plan in their scheme of work. This was translated into daily lesson plans. From the scheme of work teachers selected a topic and planned them on a daily basis in their lesson plans. Their lesson plans were between one and half pages. The lesson plans had the following sub-headings: date, class, subject, time, topic, objective, introduction, teaching aids, activities (teacher and pupils), conclusion, and evaluation. They indicated that they planned on a daily basis because their planning was based on objectives. If the objectives were not reached they had to change the strategies. The objectives were linked to the assessment task. Teachers had different lesson plans for their different streams.

The above data reveals that teachers appeared to follow a linear approach to lesson planning (see appendix 8, p. 69). A broad scheme of work was planned for quarterly.

Daily planning was determined by the broad plan. Of significance is that planning appeared to be strongly influenced by ‘objectives’ that were pre-determined by the official curriculum. What this reveals is that curriculum planning and design was not shaped by or influenced by the special circumstances that Standard 4 teachers and learners were likely to experience, namely, that this was a crucial grade in which pupils and teachers had to make a sudden switch over to using English as a medium of instruction.

In the lesson plan below, we see how the teacher put ideas on how she expected to proceed in her lessons:

Lesson plan

Date: 17.04.08

Subject: Science

Topic: External parts of an insect

Sub-topic: Spelling of the parts of an insect

Time: 40 minutes

Teaching aids: Flash cards, chart of a labelled insect

Objectives: At the end of the lesson the pupils would be able to:

- Spell the external parts of an insect.
- Read and write the external parts of an insect

Introduction: Pupils are to say the external parts of an insect. A teacher places a chart on the chalkboard.

Development

Teacher’s activities

- Help pupils to read the parts of an insect on the chart.
- Pupils are given flash cards written parts of an insect.
- Pupils are instructed to look closely at the the word on the flash card
- Pupils are to read the word in chorus for For several times
- Pupils are to spell the word
- Pupils are to turn the card down
- Pupils are to spell the word

Pupils’ activities

- Pupils read after the teacher
- Collecting flash cards
- Pupils look at the word on the word on the flash card.
- Pupils read the word.
- Pupils spell the word in chorus.
- Pupils hide the word
- Pupils spell the word

- The steps are done with all words

Conclusion: The words which were practiced like head, thorax are written on the chalkboard for pupils to read.

Evaluation: Pupils spell the parts of an insect orally, after that a spelling exercise is done.

From the above transcript we are able to identify the sequence of events that were likely to unfold in this lesson. The teacher places emphasis on sounding out the new words that she wants the pupils to master. She intends to adopt a drill where pupils are expected to repeat the new word in chorus, observe the written word on a flash card, spell the new word out and practise the spelling. At the end of this sequence with each word, pupils are assessed both orally and through a written activity. A key feature of the lesson plan is that it is scripted entirely in English. This is a consequence of the expectation of the school that lesson plans be scripted in English. The lesson plan appears to neatly reflect the procedures that the teacher intends following during the lesson. The lesson is clearly planned on the assumption that its contents will be taught in English. However, later we see that this ‘neat’ plan for teaching in English does not play out as it is scripted on paper, as teachers seldom confine the full duration of their lessons to teaching in English. From this we can detect a tension between what and how teachers plan as scripted in their lesson plans and the actual lessons that are taught in classrooms. A further discussion of this will be provided later in this chapter.

A further observation is that the lesson plan reveals that although the teacher intends using a chart to illustrate the various parts of the insect, the sequence of events that are planned suggests that the individual words were to be taught in isolation in rote fashion and without a context. An issue that second language acquisition theorists emphasise (Cummins, 1994) is that pupils are more likely to learn new concepts in a second language if the concept is embedded in context as opposed to being taught in isolation out of the context in which it has meaning. It becomes clear that teachers would certainly have benefited from understanding the nature of learning in a second language had they been exposed to research and theory in the field of second language learning. The absence of this kind of professional development support was clearly an issue that teachers felt needed greater attention.

4.5 HOW DO TEACHERS TEACH NOVICE LEARNERS OF ENGLISH?

In this section I draw on data that was generated through lesson observations in order to understand how teachers taught in transition classes. An extract of a typical lesson is selected for analysis.

The following is an extract from a lesson of a participating teacher: (Sesotho phrases are put in brackets)

Extract of lesson on addition

Teacher: Good morning class. Someone come up and show us the place value of three digit number
(there is a long pause before the teacher intervenes and repeats the instruction in mother
tongue. (u bontse place value, u kenye lipalo).

A pupil stands up and shows the place value of a three digit number points to a number on the board.

Teacher: Thabo you are right. We said hundreds are? (makholo) (says the Sesotho equivalent –
makholo)

Pupils: (in chorus say out the Sesotho word required) (makholo)

Teacher: Tens are? (mashome)

Pupils: (in chorus say out the Sesotho word required) Mashome

Teacher: Units are? (metso).

Pupils: (in chorus say out the Sesotho word required) Metso

Teacher: Good. Today our lesson is on addition. Three boys and five girls come up. Class I have three
boys and five girls, how many pupils altogether?

(Long pause and teacher provides the Sesotho translation) (Ke na le bashanyana ba bararo, le banana
ba bahlano, ke bana ba ba kae kaofela?).

Pupils: (ba supile).

Teacher: Very good, when we bring things together we say we add. We use addition, plus, + sign to

add. (Hare kopanya re sebelisa letsoao la ho kopanya. Re tlisa lintho tse re li kopanyang ‘moho.

The teacher writes the sum on the board

H	T	U
2	3	1
+ 7	2	2
<u>9</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>

Teacher: When we add we start with the units column, then go to tens column, then the hundreds column (Ha re kopanya re qala ka column ea li units, ebe li tens, e tlo ba li hundreds)

The teacher writes a sum on the board.

Teacher: Limpho come to the chalkboard (u tlo sebetsa palo ena, u re joetse na u ntse u etsang.) work out the problem and you tell us what you are doing.

Pupil: Three plus six (ke) nine, two plus three (ke) five, five plus three (ke) eight, (karabo ke) eight hundred and fifty-eight. (The answer is eight hundred and fifty-eight).

Teacher: Very good Limpho. Class open on page 12 in your mathematics books (sebetsang) question 3 (a), (d) (e) le (f). You must remember when we add we start with units, when we add we put things together and count them together. (Hopolang ha re kopanya re qala ka metso, u tlisa lintho ha ‘moho, re li bala li le ‘moho).

An analysis of the above lesson transcript reveals several issues. As with other lessons observed, the resources that were most commonly used were text books and the chalkboard. There appeared to be a sufficient number of textbooks available for each pupil. These textbooks were administered through a government system of textbook rental initiated in 1980. All the pupils appeared to have adequate stationery. This was part of the Free Primary Education programme of the Lesotho government. Although the above lesson did not include other teaching artefacts, some teachers did use

objects from the environment, such as sticks and stones which were used as counters for addition and subtraction.

A significant issue that is revealed in the above transcript is the importance of code-switching in this lesson. At key points in her engagement with her class, the teacher felt it necessary to translate her instructions in English to that of the pupils' mother tongue. When the teacher raised questions, it was evident that pupils did not fully understand what was being asked because it was being asked in English. It also became evident that it was not the ability of the children to comprehend the nature of the content being taught, but the use of English itself created a barrier to spontaneous responses from pupils. When the questions were translated into mother-tongue, it was clear that pupils began to understand what was expected of them and were able to respond to the teacher. As the lesson continues both the teacher and the pupils slip between English and mother tongue as they proceed to make meaning in this lesson. Studies conducted in Lesotho by Setoi (1997) and Molapo (2002) indicates that this might happen because there is no special preparation for teachers and pupils for the transition from the mother tongue to English as medium of instruction. The teacher, in her use of both mother tongue and English in her instruction as well as allowing pupils to engage in both mother tongue and English affirms the pupils by acknowledging their limitations with regard to the use of English. She at no stage denigrates pupils for not being able to respond to her instructions in English. This is kind of affirmation where both mother tongue and the second language are constantly reinforced is an example of additive bilingualism at work (Escamilla, 2007, Cummins, 1991). Additive bilingualism is more likely to facilitate the development of both mother tongue and the second language than if an all English approach is adopted.

From the transcript, we note that pupils were expected to do an application exercise out of a textbook. Of note here is that the textbook is written in English. In informal conversations with teachers about how pupils cope with this aspect, teachers noted that it is presented as a challenge to most pupils especially if pupils were allocated homework which was to be done without the supervision of the teacher.

While important data was generated through formal interviews and lesson observations, I also recorded relevant information that teachers revealed in my informal discussions and conversations with them. The following is one such entry in which teachers experiences were recorded.

Extract from my journal

Palesa stated that while she was practising spelling with her class, she emphasized pronunciation which was a speaking skill. She did this because she had found that pupils pronounced words in their native language and when they write, they spell words through the influence of their mother tongue, for example the use of the word paraffin. She stated that while pupils were using speaking skills at the same time they were using listening, reading and writing skills. She further indicated that she had learned that if she had selected activities that involved pupils they participated, even though there were a few who were still anxious about communicating in English. Mpho said that to involve her pupils in communication she used comprehension strategies and oral composition. She said she found them useful to bridge from what they know to what was new. Furthermore, she indicated that she was practising listening, speaking and reading skills.

From the above extract we note that teachers were alert to how pupils' mother tongue May influence the way they used the second language. Here the teacher specifically refers to how pronunciations in the mother tongue may influence the way learners pronounce and spell words in English. Teachers also allude to the fact that there may be pupils who may not be sufficiently confident or competent to be able to answer questions. Teachers also express that the kinds of strategies that were most likely to succeed with children were those that had them actively involved in the learning process.

From the above discussion, we see that teachers were compassionate towards their pupils and appeared to understand the difficulties that they were likely to experience as a result of learning for the first time in a new language. Teachers' biographical experiences and their background were important to be considered because they may have influenced teaching and learning. The intention of my study was to understand how Standard Four teachers experience their classroom practices relating to the use of the medium of English. Teachers biographies illustrated earlier in this chapter appeared to have shaped how teachers perceived their jobs and their approach to working with children and their classroom practices. In response to the question of

whether teacher's personal school experience influenced the way they currently teach, they noted:

Mathato: I did not like teaching because we were badly beaten by our teachers, when coming to school late in winter without shoes, being cold, the teacher will beat those cold feet and hands. I hated those teachers, and teaching. In secondary, most teachers did not care whether we study or not. But I want to emulate my mathematics and science teachers, they made me to be interested in sharing, leadership skills and thinking critically. At the college the lecturer who was teaching development studies changed me completely, I love teaching and my pupils.

Mpho: Yes I can say my schooling experiences have influenced my teaching. Primary experiences made me to hate teaching, the way we were taught and treated, teachers were calling us names, punishing us for being late, I hated agriculture, and gardening was one of the punishments. In secondary, I had some teachers who were my role models. From the college being exposed to the school curriculum I found that the hidden curriculum plays an important part in the teaching and learning.

Palesa: At the beginning of my schooling it was not my intention to be a teacher. My teachers in the primary were devoted to their work and this made me to work hard to go to a high school. The high school I attended was a Roman Catholic school, most of our teachers were nuns they were very strict but they have made us mature people. When I went to the college I learned that teaching is sharing, faithfulness and treating pupils according to their individual differences. Sharing my ideas and pupils ideas makes my work manageable. I enjoy teaching very much.

In analyzing these teachers' schooling experiences, Mathato and Mpho referred to incidences of poor experiences with their primary school teachers, such as corporal punishment and labelling. Their own teachers were insensitive to the difficulties that they had to endure as pupils. These experiences made the research participants more aware of their own responsibilities when working with the children they currently teach. The participating teachers appeared to have had better high school experiences and were particularly influenced by the lectures who taught them during their teacher training courses. Teachers own schooling experiences, whether positive or negative certainly influences how they see their current roles as teachers and their approach to curriculum development and their classroom practices. Teachers with a heightened sensitivity to the needs of their pupils are likely to cognisant of pupils differing needs especially in transition classes.

4.6 Conclusion: This chapter started with a narrative description of my participants' biography and school context. These have helped me in understanding their context and their biography as they had contributed to the influence of classroom practices. Data presented was of the teachers' classroom experiences, how they plan and design their curriculum, and how they teach novice learners of English. Looking at teachers and their classroom practices led me to different conclusions about their role in planning, designing and implementing the Standard Four curriculum. These teachers had to perform activities that they thought would enable the teaching and learning process. They had to adopt strategies that they considered would ease the process of learning. A general feature of the approach was that they used code-switching as a common communicating strategy. The data generated indicated that teachers were faced with various challenges in teaching and learning because of the medium of instruction used in this class.

CHAPTER FIVE

SYNTHESIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter the data generated was presented and analysed. The responses were organized into themes which were informed by the research questions. This chapter provides a synthesis of the key issues that have emerged in this study. Furthermore, recommendations are made based on the findings. A reflection on the limitations of the study will be presented and the areas which need further research will be highlighted.

5.2 Synthesis of the study

Teaching through the medium of English has received much attention in many African countries. Lesotho, as one of the African countries which have been under the British colonial rule, adopted the colonial language policy which states that pupils should be taught in the medium of the mother tongue from Standards One to Three. From Standard Four onwards English is advocated as the medium of instruction.

The literature reviewed revealed that internationally and nationally teachers are viewed as classroom curriculum developers (Department of Education, 2000). Through lack of training and support teachers in this research perceived themselves as curriculum implementers but not curriculum developers. The literature review also shows that the early introduction of English as medium of instruction has an impact on teaching and learning. Early-exit transition models and ‘subtractive’ bilingual models can damage social and cognitive areas which will take a long time to rectify (see, Cummins, 1994, Handcombe, 1994, Heugh, 2006). In the current study, teachers reflected on the negative impact that the marginalisation of pupils’ mother tongue in favour of instruction in English might have on pupils. They expressed concern that their pupils were not sufficiently competent in their first language at this early stage of their development. This is related to the Lesotho language policy where Sesotho as mother tongue is dropped in Standard Three and English becomes the medium of instruction from Standard Four. Furthermore, the literature reviewed states that teachers’ background experiences and biographies have an influence in their classroom experiences and practices (Pollard, 1998). Teachers who are non-native

speakers of English need adequate skills, techniques, to teach second language speakers. In the current study participants lamented the absence of teacher professional development in the area of pedagogy associated with teaching in a second language to novice second language pupils. The data did reveal however, that teachers did attempt to scaffold children's learning by making use of the scarce resources available to them. They acknowledged that they did not have the specialist required to teach in a transition class.

This study had followed an interpretive paradigm in a framework of qualitative methods of interpretation. Qualitative inquiry integrates research questions, the data and data analysis, and this integration is one of its strengths. Qualitative research helped me to interpret reality in different ways through combination of different data, different perspectives and different ways of handling data (Morse and Richards, 2002). The research took the form of a case study conducted with three Sesotho-speaking Standard Four teachers in three different urban schools in Lesotho. The data reported in this research were generated using different techniques, namely: interviews, classroom observations, document analysis and personal reflective journal. Interviews were designed to get teachers' experiences in teaching in medium of English in order to understand how teachers implement Standard Four curriculum. The primary aim of classroom observations was to see and understand the actual practices of teachers in the medium of English and to verify the interviews. The intention for document analysis was to see how Standard Four teachers plan and design their classroom activities in relation to the target language of instruction, being classroom curriculum developers and implementers.

Even though these teachers perceived themselves as curriculum implementers, in analysing the data it was revealed that they were adapting the curriculum in an attempt to meet the needs of their pupils. They were using different techniques and approaches to teach the transition class. One teacher was using step by step procedure while the other used short and direct instructions. They were both using code-switching. Teachers however, did not appear to be convinced of the effectiveness of their methods.

For the reader to have a feeling of time and place of this study, a vignette of the three cases was presented (Stake, 1995). Teachers' biographical background and school contexts were discussed because they influenced teachers' teaching practices. The school context and teachers' biography helped me to understand the background within which the data for each research question was to be generated. It became evident that the personal schooling experiences of teachers influenced how they saw their role as teachers and their approach to curriculum and classroom practices. In relation to the symbolic interactionist concept of 'context', reviewing teachers' school contexts played a major role in understanding the classroom situation. In data analysis I used a system of open coding in order to capture the qualitative richness of the phenomenon (Neuman, 2006; Henning, 2004). Moral and ethical issues that were considered were permission to get access to conduct my study from the gatekeepers, informed consent, and right to withdrawal and right to privacy. Assurance in relation to confidentiality and anonymity was guaranteed.

5.3 Research Findings

5.3.1 Teachers' low sense of self efficacy with regard to using English as a medium of instruction

Lesotho primary teachers in the transition class like other teachers around the world experience problems in teaching through the medium of English. As non-native speakers of English, teaching novice learners of English, they experience a dual difficulty. They have to contend with their own sense of self efficacy and competence as well as the challenges that they encounter when teaching their pupils. The participants in this study experienced difficulties and challenges in the teaching and learning situation. A study conducted by Moloji, Morobe and Urwick (2008) discovered that there were difficulties in teaching English because primary teachers lack confidence in their abilities and skills to teach in transition classes. Furthermore, pupils became passive during English lessons. This was what was revealed by this study as well. Moreover teachers indicated that pupils were not active because they (pupils) were not competent in English. Because of the medium of instruction used there was limited communication and this affected the classroom practices. Through classroom observations and the interviews with teachers in this study it was revealed that the participants struggled to teach in English. This complicated the teaching and

learning, as teachers' limited English skills would not enable conversational exchanges in the classroom (Lemmer, 1995). Participants also alluded to the lack of professional development available to teachers who work at this crucial stage in children's development.

5.3.2 Code-switching as a dominant strategy

Although the official language policy at Standard Four level prescribes that teachers should teach in English, this study showed that teachers who were observed struggled to implement this policy as stated. Teachers adapted their strategies to manage their teaching in order to help children to make meaning. Teachers typically moved between English and mother tongue as they taught their classes. Looking at teachers' strategies, it was discovered that the strategies were influenced by the context the teachers were working under. A significant phenomenon that emerged was that teachers regularly code-switched from English to mother tongue in order for their pupils to make meaning in their classrooms. In most cases, code-switching occurred frequently and in many instances, teachers had to use extended explanations in the mother tongue. Teachers expressed concern that they struggled to manage the time available to develop both language competence and to teach new subject content. (Woods, 1983) argues that when contextual factors such as externally imposed policies, and internal school constraints restrict teachers' abilities to do their work as teachers, teachers almost spontaneously spawn strategies that they feel would help them cope with the context within which they find themselves. Strategies are pedagogical mechanisms or devices formulated by teachers to deal with the difficulties under which they work. The more complicated the goal, the more complex the strategy (Woods, 1983). In a study of student teachers, Lacey (1997) identified three types of social strategy for dealing with difficulties. First, 'strategic compliance' which refers to a situation where an individual merely complies with the demands of a situation in order to survive. In this study, teachers were required to comply with the official language policy that was to be implemented at Standard four level. Secondly, 'internalised adjustment' is when a person makes a change in her thinking about a situation to deal with the demands it creates. In the current study, teachers began to realise that teaching exclusively in English was not going to work. Thirdly, 'strategic redefinition' is when the teacher interprets the conditions of a situation so that the problem is perceived as something that can be dealt with at another appropriate level.

In this study, teachers began to articulate that this problem had to be addressed by a higher power, namely, the department of education.

5.4 Limitations of the study

The participants in this study were Basotho who speak Sesotho and use English as the medium of instruction. However, they differ in their teaching experiences, educational backgrounds, practices and school cultures. Through the interviews, the participants have given their personal experiences as well as classroom observations which were conducted. Therefore, as the study was conducted in three primary schools; with the sample of three teachers, this means that one could not generalize from the findings of only three schools to all other schools in the district or the country. The three schools were used as only three cases out of many that may differ to a considerable extent. However, it is believed that there could be similar cases of schools where the conditions would be similar to those studied.

5.5 Recommendations

The participating teachers in this study noted several problems and challenges in relation to their teaching through the medium of English, being non-native speakers of English teaching non-native, novice learners of English. The recommendations that are made are as follows:

Language policy

The Lesotho language policy stipulates that from Standard Four upwards English should be used as the medium of instruction. But when it comes to practice, there is a 'gap', 'disjuncture', 'mismatch', 'lack of fit', between the official plan and the actual classroom practices of teachers and pupils (Jansen, 1999; Chisholm, 2000; Harley and Wedekind, 2004). As was seen in the literature review, the Lesotho language policy is following the colonial legacy, according to Heugh (2006), where transition happens at early stage within one to three years of schooling it is called 'early-exit transition model', or 'subtractive' bilingualism. The argument raised by different studies (Cummins, 1994; Handscombe, 1994; Heugh, 2006) is that 'subtractive' and early transition to second language programmes does not produce successful results. Furthermore, when the first language is taken away suddenly there can be damage in social and cognitive areas which will take a long time to rectify.

In line with this argument and the findings revealed by this study, I recommend ‘additive’ bilingualism for language policy in Lesotho. ‘Additive’ bilingualism is being advocated internationally. It attempts to introduce English alongside with the home language (Heugh, 2006). This would give the pupils an opportunity of learning both languages (Sesotho and English) equally well. The studies conducted in Lesotho primary schools recommend the examination of a change of the English medium policy or implementing it in the way that will benefit the local students (Setoi, 1997; Molapo, 2002; Backman, 2006). During teaching and learning teachers were using both English and Sesotho for clarification of some concepts and pupils began to understand what was expected from them.

Teachers’ training and support

Professional development for teachers who are not English native speakers, like the ones who were studied, need to include pre- and in-service courses in second language and teaching in the transition class. These practices and exercises of learning English for this purpose can improve their competence in their classroom practices which was one of their challenges. Besides these, their training should include assistance in planning and designing lesson and activities that will foster teaching and learning in a transition class that focus on teaching novice learners of English.

Pre-service teacher training

Primary teachers must be trained for the use of both languages that are to be used as a medium of instruction at their teacher training institutions. The teacher training institutions should equip teachers with skills and strategies to teach a transition class (Alidou, 2007).

In-service teacher training

There should be school-based and district or centre training with mentors. This will be an effective way of making sure that the educational policies are well implemented (Alidou, 2007).

The information found from this study would assist the policy makers and the Ministry of Education to answer questions such as:

- a) Is there a need for a special teacher training for a transition class? If so, what kind of training do the teachers need?
- b) What is the role of language as a medium of instruction in education?
- c) What challenges do Standard Four and teachers at higher standards face in the use of medium of English?
- d) How do Standard Four teachers and those at higher standards engage in teaching strategies in the transition class?

5.6 Suggestion for further research

This study has implications for further research areas. Pupils' experiences in transition class need to be examined. Research on the effects of English as the medium of instruction in Standard Four and higher classes is another important area. Furthermore, teachers' professional development initiatives need to be researched in order to get a sense of the extent to which teacher education articulates with the needs of the teaching context in Lesotho.

5.7 Conclusion

The purpose of this research study was to explore Standard Four teachers' curriculum development experiences of the transition from mother tongue instruction to English as the medium of instruction. The overall findings revealed that teachers' professional development for a transition class needs to be considered. It is evident that the language policy used presents challenges for teachers. While teachers present themselves as being disempowered curriculum implementers, they do in fact actively construct strategies to survive in the contexts they are required to teach.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 2

19 May 2008



Faculty Research Committee
Faculty of Education
Edgewood Campus
University of KwaZulu-Natal

Dear Dr Maistry,

Consideration of Ethical Clearance for Student Research Project:

Masilo, 'Mamotloang Grace - 206519686

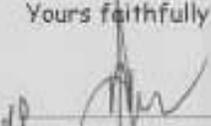
Your Student's ethical clearance application has met with approval in terms of the **internal review process** of the Faculty of Education.

The application will be forwarded to the Ethics Sub-Committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. All PhD and Staff applications, will only be able to commence research once the USC has given their approval. All other students (MEd, Hons, Undergraduate) may commence research upon receipt of this letter.

PhD and Staff applications will be advised as to whether ethical clearance has been granted for the research thesis/project, once the University Ethics Sub-Committee has reviewed the application. An ethical clearance certificate will be issued which you should retain with your records. Certificates are to be included in the final bound dissertation.

Should you have any queries please contact the Faculty Research Officer on (031) 260 3524 or on the email buchler@ukzn.ac.za

Yours faithfully



Professor D. Bhana
(Acting) Deputy Dean Postgraduate Studies and Research



A LETTER TO DISTRICT OFFICER

Phaphama
P.O. Box 365
Botha-Bothe
Lesotho

20th February, 2008

The senior Education Officer Botha-Bothe
P. O. Box 230
Botha-Bothe
Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Request for permission to do research in two selected schools in Botha-Bothe.

I am presently studying for Masters in Education in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu Natal. As part of the coursework for the degree, it is the requirement to conduct a study. I will be conducting classroom observations, teacher interviews and document analysis. My study will be on 'An investigation of teachers' curriculum development experiences of the transition from mother tongue to English as medium of instruction: A case study of three schools in Botha-Bothe Lesotho.'

I hereby request permission to conduct a research in three selected primary schools in your district, and to be introduced to the principals of those schools. This study will begin in April, when they shall have settled into a new year. Furthermore, I would like to indicate that disruption of the school's and teacher's time will be limited. The findings from this research will be used in the writing of my dissertation.

Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation to my request.

Yours sincerely

Grace 'Mamotloang Masilo (Mrs.)

Kindness
El - Botha-Bothe
N. Kanyo
D.C.

APPENDIX 3

A LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL

Phaphama
P.O. Box 365
Botha-Bothe
Lesotho
20th February, 2008

The Principal

Re: Request for your school's participation in a research project

I am presently studying for my Masters in Education in the School Of Education at the University of KwaZulu Natal. As part of the coursework for the degree, it is a requirement to conduct a study. I will be conducting classroom observations, teacher interviews and document analysis. The documents that will be analyzed are preparation books, scheme of work, teaching resources, textbooks and assessment tools. My study is on "An investigation of teachers' curriculum development experiences of the transition from mother tongue to English as medium of instruction: A case study of three schools in Botha-Bothe, Lesotho."

I request your permission to conduct my study in your school. The study will observe the Standard Four teacher's classroom practices, interview him/ her and to analyze documents such as preparation books, scheme of work, teaching resources, textbooks and assessment tools. This study will begin in April, when they shall have settled into the New Year. Furthermore, I would like to indicate that disruption of the school's and teacher's time will be limited. I wish to ensure you that the name of your school will not be divulged. The findings for this study will be used in writing my dissertation. Confidentiality and anonymity will be highly guarded; pseudonyms will be used in order to protect your school and your teachers.

Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation to my request.

Yours sincerely

Grace 'Mamotloang Masilo (Mrs.)

APPENDIX 4
A LETTER TO THE PARTICIPANTS

Phaphama
P.O. Box 365
Botha-Bothe
Lesotho
20th February, 2008

Dear participant,

Re: request for your participation in research project

I am presently studying for my Masters in Education in the School Of Education at the University of KwaZulu Natal. As part of the coursework for the degree, it is a requirement to conduct a study. I will be conducting classroom observations, teacher interviews and document analysis. The documents that will be analyzed are preparation books, scheme of work, teaching resources, textbooks and assessment tools. My study is on “An investigation of teachers’ curriculum development experiences of the transition from mother tongue to English as medium of instruction: A case study of three schools in Botha-Bothe, Lesotho.”

The findings from this study will be used in the writing of my dissertation. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time. However, your full commitment, participation and answers will be highly appreciated. Confidentiality and anonymity will be highly guarded; pseudonyms will be used in order to protect your identity.

Thank you for your support and co-operation.

Grace M. Masilo (Mrs.)

Cell no: 0835019596

E-mail: literapeng@webmail.co.za

DECLARATION

(To be completed by participants)

I ----- (full name of participant)

Hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I can withdraw from the project at anytime, should I so desire.

Participant's signature

Date

APPENDIX 5

INTERVIEW 1

1. I: Tell me about your family background as you were growing up. Where were you born? Where did you attend school? Explain

P: I was born in Leribe district. I was raised up by my grandmother who was a teacher and my grandfather who was a priest. I attended school at Mositi Primary and Mositi Secondary.

2. I: Tell me about your schooling experiences in the primary: the medium of instruction you were using and your teachers' attitudes.

P: Our teachers in primary were beating us badly when we come to school late during winter time. I hated those teachers and teaching. In secondary teachers did not care whether we study or not. My Mathematics and science teachers were interested in our studies and responsibilities.

3. I: Why did you decide to become a teacher?

P: I was influenced by my grandmother who was a teacher.

4. I: Do you enjoy teaching? Explain

P: Now I like teaching very much. This is giving me different experiences of pupils' individuality.

5. I: How long have you been teaching?

P: I have been teaching for 30 years.

6. I: Have you taught in any other school? If yes why

P: Yes, I was teaching in a rural school.

7. I: Why did you move?

P: I changed school because I wanted to further my studies.

8. I: Do you think your schooling experiences from primary up to the institution have influenced your way of teaching? If yes, explain

P: My science and mathematics teachers in my secondary education promoted leadership and critical thinking skills which I find useful for my class. At the college I learned that teaching is sharing and treating pupils according to their individual differences.

9. I: For how long have you taught standard four?
P: I have taught standard four for nine years.
10. I: Do you enjoy teaching this class (standard four)?
P: I enjoy teaching this class because I have been teaching it for many years even though every year I meet with problems with every new group.
11. I: Are you trained to teach standard four?
P: No, at the college we were trained to teach in primary school, not for a particular class.
12. I: What are your qualifications?
P: I have a Primary Teacher Certificate.
13. I: Is your class streamed? If yes how is it streamed? Why is it streamed?
P: Our school is very big, all the classes are streamed. They are streamed according to their ability. This shift is done after every quarterly test.
14. I: What is the roll in your school? How many teachers are in your school?
P: The roll for the whole school is about 1000 pupils and 24 teachers. Standard four has 140 pupils with four teachers.
15. I: What is your home language?
P: My home language is Sesotho.
16. I: What is the home language of most of the pupils in your class?
P: Most of the pupils speak Sesotho.
17. I: What is the medium of instruction do you use in your class?
P: Er-er we are to use English as medium of instruction. But but is not always.
18. I: Are you familiar with the Lesotho language policy?
P: Yes, but as I have said earlier ----- I know it but I----I don't follow it.
I: Thank you very much for your time and the information you have given me.
P: Thank you 'm'e.

APPENDIX 6

INTERVIEW 2

1. I: What are your experiences in using English as medium of instruction to pupils who have been using mother tongue, who are second language speakers?
P: I meet with problems in teaching the second language speakers of English. Communication is a major problem; we have problems in understanding each other. Pupils at this stage are not mature in their mother tongue.
2. I: What are your experiences as a second language speaker teaching in medium of English?
P: Teaching in medium of English, more especially when I am introducing a new lesson I meet with problems because even me I am not competent with the rules of language. There are times that I do not complete my lessons because of a lot of repetition for understanding.
3. I: What are pupils' attitudes towards English as medium of instruction?
P: Some pupils are shy to express themselves, others like trying to use English while other pupils say that they are Basotho, they need to speak their language. They say they are not the whites.
4. I: Do you get any assistance or support from your school, Ministry of Education in teaching a transition class?
P: There is no support given by the Ministry of Education, even here at school we do not do anything to support each other. Even from the college we were not given a special training from the college.
5. I: Does the teacher training institution equip you with skills and techniques to teach in a transition class?
P: In primary education we don't specialize either for subjects and classes. There are no skills or techniques designed by the college for teaching a transition class.
6. I: How do you design and plan work for the standard four class that will allow interaction in medium of English?
P: I have quarterly plan in my scheme of work. I translate it into a daily lesson plan. Different lesson plans are done for different streams. I plan on daily basis

because our planning is based on objectives. I create activities that will help me deliver message successfully.

7. I: What kind of activities do you plan that makes your pupils communicate in English?

P: I use different approaches. I sometimes use technological activities where my class would work through step-by-step practising spelling.

I: Thank you very much for your time and the information you have given me.

P: It is ok. Thank you also.

APPENDIX 7

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SCHOOL A GROUP (c) SCIENCE

A. Classroom resource profile

- **Seating arrangement-** mixed boys and girls three on one desk
- **Desks-** 10 desks 30 pupils
- **Teacher's table-**on the side
- **Movement between desks-**enough space there is a free movement
- **Chalkboard-**long chalkboard

B. Teaching and learning

- **Goals and objectives are clearly stated** – objectives were clearly stated and achievable for example “At the end of the lesson the pupils will be able to name at least three senses”.
- **How is the teacher prepared for the lesson-** The lesson was prepared in the way that learners were involved and the teacher was prepared for the lesson, the planning was relevant to the lesson.
- **The teaching methods that are used-** The teacher was using question and answer, discovery and observation
- **Unfamiliar terms, concepts and principles were clearly defined-** most of the time for the teacher to make points clear she had to code switch and also to explain terms and concepts.
- **The major points were clear and understandable-**even though it took them time to understand what the teacher wants after the teacher had code switched and demonstrated what she means the pupils would follow and write or talk correct things.
- **Do pupils follow simple directions in English language-** few would understand and follow instructions with others the teacher needed to be patient in explaining and demonstrating. They had to spend a lot of time to accommodate most of the pupils.
- **Do pupils ask and answer in English-** is not all of them and I was told that those who are answering most of the time are transfers from other schools. Some seem to be shy to speak English while others do not know what to say.

According to our kind of education which is authoritarian-bureaucratic and also our culture, pupils do not ask they accept what the teacher gives.

- **The teacher interacts equally with pupils from both genders-** the teacher was asking and choosing both boys and girls to do demonstrations, it was only that they were shy to raise up their hands to answer questions but the teacher would call them even if their hands are not up.
- **The teacher waits for sufficient time for pupils to answer-** it takes a teacher a very long time to wait for most of the pupils to raise up their hands for answering.

C. Resources

- **Charts, worksheets-**there were no charts for the lesson nor worksheets
- **Other teaching and learning materials-** The teacher and the pupils were using a text book (primary science standard 4)
- **Resources appropriate to the language, gender and age of the pupils-** the text book was not gender bias, the language and pictures used were appropriate to the level of the pupils.

D. Planning of the lesson as observed through

- **Use of variety of teaching materials and strategies, improvisation-** the teacher used the textbook and the pupils as the teaching and learning materials. The teacher and the pupils used code-switching as a strategy for communication.
- **Use of variety of teaching and learning methods group work, peer learning, individual-** the teacher used individual learning.

E. The role of the teacher through the use of classroom based assessment

- **Probing and questioning-** she questioned the pupils and probe when trying to make herself clearer.
- **Formative assessment-** when evaluating her lesson she asked the pupils to name the senses they know and write them down in their exercises

- **Applicability of homework-** they were given short questions to fill about the senses as homework. I was told that the parents are to sign when the child has finished the homework and I saw some previous home works.

APPENDIX 8

Lesson plan

Date: 17.04.08

Subject: Science

Topic: External parts of an insect

Sub-topic: Spelling of the parts of an insect

Time: 40 minutes

Teaching aids: Flash cards, chart of a labelled insect

Objectives: At the end of the lesson the pupils would be able to:

- Spell the external parts of an insect.
- Read and write the external parts of an insect

Introduction: Pupils are to say the external parts of an insect. A teacher places a chart on the chalkboard.

Development

Teacher's activities

- Help pupils to read the parts of an insect on the chart.
- Pupils are given flash cards written parts of an insect.
- Pupils are instructed to look closely at the word on the flash card
- Pupils are to read the word in chorus for several times
- Pupils are to spell the word
- Pupils are to turn the card down
- Pupils are to spell the word
- The steps are done with all words

Pupils' activities

- Pupils read after the teacher
- Collecting flash cards
- Pupils look at the word on the word on the flash card.
- Pupils read the word.
- Pupils spell the word in chorus.
- Pupils hide the word
- Pupils spell the word

Conclusion: The words which were practiced like head, thorax is written on the chalkboard for pupils to read.

Evaluation: Pupils spell the parts of an insect orally, after that a spelling exercise is done.