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**EXPRESSIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS IN THE INCLUSIVE
INTERMEDIATE PHASE CLASSROOM**

BY

THAMEKILE PATRICIA MBILI

STUDENT NO.: 217080141

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DECLARATION

I, Thamekile Patricia Mbili, declare that this study represents original work by the author and has not been submitted to any other institution. Where the use of work of others has been made, it has been duly acknowledged in the text.

Thamekile P. Mbili

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my daughter, Minenhle Nkosingiphile Mbili, for nurturing and believing in me.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Completing a Master's degree part time requires a lot of hard work and dedication. I would like to express my great appreciation to all those who supported me in completing this study.

First and foremost, I would like to thank God Almighty, for the grace He has bestowed upon me in giving me the opportunity to complete my degree. The continued support, encouragement, and motivation from my daughter ensured that I performed at my best. I would like to thank her for her support and assistance during my late nights of hard work. I trust that this achievement will motivate her to continue to do her best in her studies, and that she will look up to me as her role model in always striving for more.

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ABSTRACT

The 1994 democratic election brought significant changes to South Africa, and one of the main areas of focus was transformation in education. Inclusive education was adopted as the foundational policy for ensuring that all learners, regardless of race, socio-economic background, gender, or level of ability, could be successfully educated within an inclusive education system. However, the implementation of this policy has not been successful, and learners still experience overwhelming barriers to learning. One of these barriers is a language barrier. The language of learning and teaching (predominantly English) is not the home language of the majority of South African learners. Learners often find it difficult to express themselves in English, and to understand English at the appropriate level, and so the language of learning and teaching has become a significant barrier to successful teaching and learning. This study therefore sought to understand the experiences of the educators who teach learners whose home language is different from the language of learning and teaching.

A qualitative approach informed by a critical research paradigm was adopted for this study. A purposive sampling strategy was used to select seven participants from the target population: English FAL educators with three or more years of teaching experience in the intermediate phase. Three data collection instruments were used to gather information from the participants: questionnaires, one-on-one structured interviews, and classroom observations. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis, and the interpretation of the results was informed by Ubuntu philosophy.

The results indicated that educators in the intermediate phase experience significant challenges in trying to overcome the barriers to learning created by using English, a first additional language, as the language of learning and teaching. These challenges are related to a lack of training in the practical implementation of inclusive education; the lack of adequate expressive English language skills of the intermediate phase learners; frustration and disengagement on the part of learners; overcrowded classrooms and a lack of resources; and a lack of support from parents and the wider educational community.

The study recommends that educators receive professional development and training in the implementation of inclusive education; that all stakeholders (parents, learners, educators, government officials and school governing bodies) collaborate in addressing

the language barrier; that English should be introduced as the language of learning and teaching in the foundation phase; that overcrowding in classrooms be addressed; and that input from educators should inform policies related to language and inclusion.

Key words: inclusive education, expressive language skills, barriers to learning, language of learning and teaching, Ubuntu, intermediate phase

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ANA	Annual National Assessment
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements
DBST	District-based support team
FAL	First additional language
HACT	Hillcrest Aids Centre Trust
IDP	Internationally displaced person
LoLT	Language of learning and teaching
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NGO	Non-governmental organization
SBST	School-based support team
SIAS	Screening, identification, assessment and support
SNA	Support Needs Assessment

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

As an educator who works with learners in the intermediate phase who are struggling to communicate in their first additional language (FAL), which is English, I have come to realize that their academic performance often does not match their level of intellectual capability. Consequently, these learners experience difficulties that lead to barriers to learning. I therefore undertook this study to explore ways to ascertain the experiences of educators who teach learners in the learners' FAL (English). The problem starts at the primary level of education and grows as the learners advance through the education system, all the way to tertiary level. According to the South African Constitution, the country has eleven official languages. However, English dominates, and functions as a universal language. If people are not able to express themselves well in English, they are at a serious disadvantage when it comes to learning, to successful progress through their studies, and to their careers, where it is important to communicate well and conduct oneself well in interviews and in the workplace. It is therefore vitally important to understand and be able to express oneself well in English in South African.

1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

I selected the topic as a result of her personal involvement in learner support. The researcher taught English (FAL) in Grade 6 for four years, and has currently been teaching English (FAL) in Grade 4 for the past two years. I have noticed throughout my time as a primary school educator that most learners have difficulty in expressing themselves in English during classroom activities. Some of them have some success in expressing themselves orally, but a problem arises with their written expression. Other learners have some success in expressing themselves in writing, but find it difficult to freely express themselves orally in the classroom. Fenty and Brydon (2017) point out that literacy can be connected to all content areas relatively because subject-specific texts comprise of

distinguishable vocabulary and structures that underwrite to the comprehension. Furthermore, they highlight that difficult vocabulary, text structures and extent of the text are all the features that can influence the aptitude of learners with incapacities in literacy to access text and content.

English (FAL) is the language of learning and teaching (LoLT), but learners find it difficult to switch from their mother tongue to the LoLT and adjust to it. Consequently, they encounter barriers to learning. Applying the ideologies of design for learning in the instructional design of a story – mapping lesson increases openness and eradicates barriers to engagement and contact experienced by learners with learning infirmities more especially in reading and writing (Narkon & Wells, 2013). My intention for this study was to see most of the learners participate in the learning process, even though English is the second language. The Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) (2011) documents stipulate that particular expressive skills need to be mastered at particular times, and all learners therefore need to be able to grasp the information or skills at those stipulated times. In order to ensure the necessary curriculum coverage, educators often end up setting the teaching pace according to the fast learners. Narkon and Wells (2013) also point out in their research that reading comprehension is about connecting prior knowledge to new information being read and an understanding. It is not easy for learners to quickly connect prior knowledge to new information due to language barrier or restricted vocabulary. Learners who are left behind often become disruptive in the classroom, and end up adding to the list of failing learners who are still promoted/progressed at the end of the year.

When learners are progressed to the following grade without having mastered the previous grade's work, their learning becomes more difficult. They often end up becoming disruptive and aggressive, and some of them drop out of school before they even reach high school. Those learners who remain in the system often fail when they reach matric, or increase the number of matriculants who do not achieve Bachelor passes. As a result, their prospects for further study and employment are very low, and the number of unemployed people in the country increases for reasons that should have been addressed at a much earlier stage. In the future I would like to see matric results improving, and South African matriculants making our country proud. It is hoped that this study could contribute to the development of strategies that could be applied to

promote inclusive teaching that improves English expressive skills for all learners.

1.3 LOCATION OF THE STUDY

The study was located at a primary school (Grade 1 to Grade 7) in the Pinetown district, which falls under the Umhlathuzana circuit. It is a no-fee, mainstream, quintile 2 public school. 821 learners are enrolled at the school, and the 23 staff members comprise of 22 educators and 1 clerk.

This school is located in a rural village. Most learners travel to school by taxi due to the long distances they travel, but many learners who can't afford taxis walk to school, in spite of the distance. Public transport is not reliable, so educators are required to own their own cars or arrange lifts with colleagues.

The school has 19 classrooms and one small hall. One classroom has been turned into a library and one school educator is a librarian. There is no playground or sports field, only an open space where learners play during break. The school grounds are wire-fenced. Flush toilets are available for educators only, and the learners use pit toilets. A group of local women sell sweets, chips, fruit and vetkoek to learners during break. There are a number of outside taps for the learners, some of them with concrete sinks.

Many learners have parents who are still studying or are unemployed. Many of the learners' biological parents are deceased, so their caregivers are their grandparents, who are often illiterate or undereducated.

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Expressive skills are language skills, and language is the basis for all learning. If learners experience difficulty with language and expression, it goes without saying that they will experience barriers to learning, as language proficiency is essential for learning. As an educator, I observe and experience directly the difficulties faced by learners who cannot express themselves in the English language intermediate phase classroom. Speaking, reading and writing skills are the core problem, and my experiences have led me to pursue

this study. Grades 4–6 are the main grades that need support as far as expressive English language skills are concerned. If the learners could master expressive English language skills in this phase, many barriers to learning could be eliminated. In their study Stott and Beelders (2019) found that learners in rural areas and townships have poor reading comprehension skills. As a result, it affects their understanding of the content subjects negatively, particularly natural sciences. Moreover, they state that 80% of the South African learners who attend quintile 1-4 schools are rated at or near lowest in international tests of reading comprehension as well as of science knowledge.

1.5 FOCUS AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The focus of the study was to explore ways of enhancing expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom. Learners seem to find it difficult to express themselves in the classroom, and as a result their academic performance deteriorates. Listening and speaking, reading and comprehension, and writing and presentation skills are the core elements of expressive skills. However, this is where learners experience difficulty. If they cannot express themselves orally, usually they also experience problems in expressing themselves in writing. Baker, Stoolmiller, Good III, and Baker (2011) state that English has difficult spelling. 50% of words are exclusively decodable, 37% are decodable except for one sound and 13% are irregular words. Consequently there is no consistent guide to accurate pronunciation.

Moreover, because language is the basis for all learning, and because learners are experiencing difficulty with language skills in the LoLT, all their subjects are negatively affected. Most children worldwide attend schools where language of instruction is not their native language but English language (Haager & Osipova, 2017). As the LoLT in the intermediate phase, English is also the FAL for the majority of learners. In the foundation phase they were taught in their home language, and so they are not used to speaking and writing in English. Those who experience difficulties with expression and comprehension in English are therefore excluded from effective learning, and this sense of exclusion is often exacerbated by differences in culture and background. Altinkamis, Ozcan and Gillis (2018) mention that bilingual children acquire each language distinctly. They state that when children are at the ages of 2-3 years, their vocabulary is up to 100

words; then move from 100 words to 400 words, after that verbs and adjectives follow. The words then add up to 700 words as time goes on.

The aim of this study was to address such exclusion on the basis of language, and to develop strategies for including all learners in the learning process, as I believe that all learners have the ability to learn. Merga and Ledger (2018) mention that children who participate in pleasant literacy experience at home are more likely to read in childhood and out there. Furthermore, they state that some of the parents do not get time to provide reading aloud for their children. Nonetheless, schools are to provide and support learners who are not exposed to the opportunity of reading aloud at home. The purpose of this study was therefore to explore the experiences and perspectives of seven educators, three of whom teach English language as a subject, three of whom teach content subjects in English, and one of whom is the school principal (gatekeeper). The participants were selected for their involvement in intermediate phase teaching, which is where the problem with English starts. An additional participant from the senior phase (Grade 7) was selected to replace the researcher. Grade 4–6 educators were selected to share their experiences, as they are the ones who receive learners from the foundation phase and progress them through the intermediate phase. In total the study involved seven participants.

1.6 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

Inclusive education is an approach to teaching and learning that recognizes that learners are different, and that it is possible for all learners to learn together when their diverse learning needs and learning styles are understood and taken into account (Education White Paper 6: Special needs education: Building an inclusive education and training system, DoE, 2001)

Expressive skills are language skills used for expression — speaking, reading, and writing (Dokrell, Ricketts & Lindsay, 2012)

Barriers to learning are the difficulties that learners encounter that prevent them from experiencing effective learning (Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment, and Support, DoE, 2014)

The **intermediate phase** (Grade 4 to Grade 6) is the middle phase of schooling where

content subjects are introduced.

Curriculum differentiation is the key strategy for responding to the needs of learners with diverse learning needs and styles. It includes the process of modifying, changing, adapting, extending and varying teaching methodologies, teaching strategies, assessment strategies and the content of the curriculum (Guidelines for responding to the learner diversity in the classroom, DoE, 2012)

Modification refers to the adjustments that are made for the purpose of assisting learners with diverse learning styles and needs. Learners are given work according to their levels of cognitive ability (Bornman & Rose, 2010)

1.7 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study were as follows:

1. To explore the current situation in expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom.
2. To explain the need for enhancing expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom.
3. To explore how to promote expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom.

1.8 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This primary question was broken down into three secondary research questions:

1. What are the expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom?
2. Why do we need to enhance expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom?
3. How can expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom be promoted?

1.9 RESEARCH PARADIGM

A critical paradigm was chosen for this research. Bertram and Christiansen (2014, p. 4) describe this as a paradigm that perceives the real world as formed by social, political, cultural, economic and other dynamics. Research conducted according to this paradigm focuses on creating social change in favour of groups who are assumed to have little power or fewer opportunities open to them (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Researchers working within this paradigm believe that the world is categorized by unequal power relations. Critical researchers aim to break down the structural, historical and political aspects of reality for analysis, in order to produce change and transformation (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). I therefore chose this paradigm because it is transformative and inclusive in its approach. It fitted well in my study as I intended to transform and shape the way learners express themselves in the English language intermediate phase classroom. The critical paradigm is discussed in greater detail in section 3.4.

1.10 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

A qualitative approach informed by a critical research paradigm was adopted for this research study. A purposive sampling strategy was used to select seven participants from the target population: English FAL educators with three or more years of teaching experience in the intermediate phase. Three data collection methods were used to gather information from the participants. These were questionnaires, one-on-one structured interviews, and classroom observations. The data was analyzed carefully using thematic analysis, to search for patterns or themes that would provide information that could answer the research questions. All the necessary ethical considerations were taken into account, and I strove to achieve trustworthiness in the study. A more detailed explanation of each of these aspects of the research design and methodology can be found in Chapter 3.

1.11 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework influences the design of the study and how he or she analyses the collected data. The theoretical framework has to connect clearly with the research

purpose and research questions (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). The guiding framework chosen for this study was Ubuntu philosophy, which Venter (2004) describes as a philosophy that upholds the collective morals of a society, that includes humanity as an essential part of human development, and that can be used as a tool to resolve problems, in this case the problem of how to enhance expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom. The principles of Ubuntu philosophy, its advantages, and its challenges are discussed in detail in section 2.2.

1.12 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Delimitation in a study refers to the choices and decisions that the researcher makes for the study, and the characteristics selected to specify and define the boundaries of the research (Creswell, Bursley, & Satpute, 2013). The study explored expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom. The sample of the study was therefore purposively selected in order to focus on English language educators. The study was limited to seven participants in a single educational institution, and therefore the findings of the study cannot be generalized.

1.13 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

This research dissertation is structured in the following manner:

Chapter One is an introductory chapter that contextualizes the research and explains the motivation of the study. In addition, the chapter describes the key concepts, delimitations and organization of the study.

Chapter Two consists of an in-depth and relevant literature review from a local as well as international perspective, and provides the theoretical framework underpinning this study. The literature review explores and explains English language expressive skills in the context of South African education.

Chapter Three presents a detailed discussion of the research process, which includes an overview of the research paradigm and research design, the research methodology

adopted for the study, an outline of the methods of data collection and data analysis, as well as the issues of trustworthiness and ethical considerations that were addressed in the study.

Chapter Four presents and discusses the research findings of the study. Thematic analysis is employed to interpret and discuss the findings in light of the theoretical framework and the relevant reviewed literature. Descriptive quotes from one-on-one semi-structured interviews, information generated from questionnaires and observations are also provided to add further context to the findings.

As the concluding chapter, **Chapter Five** provides a chapter summary and formulates conclusions based on Chapter Four's interpretations, discussions and analysis. Recommendations for further research are provided, the perceived implications of the study are highlighted, and the study is concluded.

1.14 CONCLUSION

The focus of this chapter was to introduce the various aspects of this research study on the need to enhance expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom. This chapter provided an overview of the study, which began with a discussion of the rationale for the study, and the focus and purpose of the study. The main concepts used in the study were then clarified, and the location of the study was described. The problem statement of the study was then defined, and the research objectives clearly articulated, followed by the research questions that guided the study. The critical research paradigm was introduced, and the overall methodology was described, followed by an overview of the theoretical framework grounded in Ubuntu philosophy. The delimitations of the study were noted, and an outline of the chapters was presented.

The following chapter provides a review of the existing literature pertaining to this study, focusing on inclusive education, expressive skills, barriers to learning, and various intervention strategies used by educators to overcome these barriers. The theoretical framework underpinning this study, Ubuntu philosophy, is also described and discussed.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter introduced various aspects of this research study on the need to enhance expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom. The rationale for the study was explained, as well as the focus and purpose of the study. The main concepts used in the study were then clarified, and the location of the study was described. The problem statement of the study was defined, and the research objectives and research questions were clearly stated. The critical research paradigm was introduced, and the overall methodology was described, followed by an overview of the theoretical framework grounded in Ubuntu philosophy.

This chapter provides a review of the existing literature pertaining to this study, and focuses on inclusive education, expressive skills, barriers to learning, and various intervention strategies used by educators to overcome these barriers. The theoretical framework underpinning this study, Ubuntu philosophy, is also described and discussed, and the advantages and challenges of this philosophy are outlined.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theories offer possible explanations for why things happen or provide models for how things happen. Researchers may use a specific theory for the sake of testing whether the theory holds true or not. Theories may also be used to frame a study. The theoretical framework influences the design of the study and how he or she analyses the collected data. The theoretical framework has to connect clearly with the research purpose and research questions (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). The guiding framework chosen for this study was Ubuntu philosophy, which Venter (2004) describes as a philosophy that upholds the collective morals of a society, that includes humanity as an essential part of human development, and that can be used as a tool to resolve problems, in this case the

problem of how to enhance expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom.

2.2.1 Ubuntu philosophy

The concept of Ubuntu was popularized during Nelson Mandela's presidency, in particular by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. It is widely accepted that the philosophy can be summed up in the isiZulu phrase, "*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*," or, "a person is a person through other people". Khomba (2011) states that this philosophy emphasizes how people learn from each other and help each other as Africans, and expresses humanity, dignity and respect. He also states that although "*ubuntu*" is an isiZulu/Xhosa word, the concept of Ubuntu can be found in all African cultures and languages. An African does not live in isolation, but within a community. I grew up knowing that an adult is a parent to every child he or she meets, and the child respects every adult as his or her own parent. According to Dladla (2017), South Africa's transition to a democratic society has not ended white supremacy. White South Africans are strangers to Ubuntu. In contrast, Nelson Mandela (Sizani, 2012) explained Ubuntu as follows:

A tourist visits a country and would stop at a village, he would not ask for food and water but the people of the village would offer food and take care of him without any hesitation. Ubuntu enables people in the society to do things for the community to improve.

Dladla (2017) explains that Ubuntu as a philosophy comes from two interrelated roots: language and culture. As a philosophy, it responds to the trials experienced by the native people after their defeat in the unfair colonial wars. Dladla further states that Ubuntu has become a topic of great interest in academic and public debate. However, he states that most of these *ubuntus* are without *abantu* (the people whose philosophy it is) and also without *isintu* (culture). According to Gade (2012), there are two different answers to the question, "What is Ubuntu?" The two answers define Ubuntu as the ethical value of a person, and as a phenomenon. In my understanding, both of these answers have the same factor, which is the person.

Venter (2004) describes Ubuntu as a philosophy that upholds the collective morals of a

society, and that includes humanity as an essential part of human development. Moreover, Venter (2004) explains that Ubuntu is a tool to resolve problems. Framing this study according to Ubuntu philosophy is appropriate, because I believe that learners who face barriers to learning due to inadequate communicative skills would receive a great deal of help and would experience an improvement in their skills if Ubuntu philosophy were applied during contact lessons.

2.2.2 Principles of Ubuntu philosophy

The principles of Ubuntu philosophy are derived from the African tribal communities that personify the philosophy. They consist of trust, interdependence and spiritualism. Ubuntu represents humanness, and a spirit of caring within a community in which the individuals love one another. Ubuntu plays an important role in determining the success of any African organization. Culturally, Ubuntu philosophy is based on the concept of the extended family in the community or place of work. The epistemology of Ubuntu philosophy constitutes wholeness and oneness.

Learners begin school with communication skills in their home language. Educators at school carry on where the parents have left off, which is the type of interconnection that is emphasized by Ubuntu philosophy. It does not end there, though; parents are also involved when their child is enrolled at school. They help with homework, and work with their children's educators when necessary, since learners have diverse learning styles and needs.

Ubuntu philosophy also denotes that if people are treated well, they are likely to achieve better. I believe this theory also applies at school level; where learners are given love, respect and support when they experience difficulties, good results can be achieved.

An approach informed by Ubuntu philosophy also encourages group work, where learners can work as a team. When learners of different abilities work together, share ideas and engage in discussions, inclusivity in the group and in the classroom as a whole is promoted. For instance, a group of learners may be given an activity to discuss, write and present. Planning, drafting, editing and writing require everybody in the group to speak to share their ideas, to write to record the ideas, and to generate spoken and written content

for the presentation. In this way learners use all the expressive skills. Ubuntu philosophy understands that Africans are societal beings who are in an endless relationship with one another in a shared environment. The very survival of a human being is reliant on other people.

People who practice Ubuntu are always open towards others, in the researcher's view, and they do not feel threatened by other people's success. When Ubuntu philosophy informs a situation, people's rights, beliefs and property are considered and respected. The basics of sharing are mutual in African communities.

2.2.3 Advantages of Ubuntu philosophy

Khomba (2011) describes the advantages of Ubuntu as an underlying philosophy as follows:

- It encourages and promotes commitment, loyalty and the wellbeing of all members of a group, which has a positive impact on overall performance.
- Africans teach their children to communicate effectively, reconcile and find ways to cleanse and let go of hatred.
- The traditional local justice system is both punitive and compensatory. The offender pays a fine, in the form of chickens, goats or cattle, to the offended party, depending on the weight of the offence. The Western justice system sends an offender to prison and neglects the offended party in the process.
- It promotes the idea of the extended family.

According to my view of Ubuntu philosophy, there are few orphans due to the extended family ethos. Khomba (2011) mentions that a worker at one stage lost four fathers in the short space of one year. The employee asked for financial assistance from his employer for each funeral. The employer was confused, and could not understand how one person can have four fathers. The employee had to explain that the other three fathers were his biological father's brothers, and that the fourth one was his real biological father. That's how far Ubuntu can go, in terms of caring, sharing, supporting, respecting and humanity. My opinion is that the same can apply in the classroom, so that no one should experience learning difficulties alone. Support should be provided by everybody: educators, peers,

language specialists, parents, and so on.

2.2.4 Challenges of Ubuntu philosophy

Where there are advantages, there are always disadvantages. Ubuntu philosophy is sometimes associated with outdated African traditional rituals, customs and practices.

The main issue is that African indigenous knowledge is not written down. Knowledge is generally passed on from one generation to the next through word of mouth (storytelling). This makes it difficult for new generations to practice African Ubuntu philosophy fully (Khomba, 2011). Nonetheless, studies have been recently piloted to help people understand and appreciate Ubuntu philosophy.

Ubuntu philosophy is also negatively associated with some damaging African rituals, customs and practices, which are viewed as outdated and harmful in the modern environment. Witchcraft still prevails within African society. Envy is another challenge, especially when an individual accomplishes more than was expected. Polygamy, where a man can have more than one wife, is a cause for concern, given the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Another challenge is the practice of inheriting the widow of a deceased brother. The inheriting brother may be married, or have someone in his life, and the widow may not have feelings for the brother. This situation could cause trouble amongst family members. The man's cause of death is not even considered, and could be HIV/AIDS related. There is also the unsafe circumcision of young boys, some of whom die during the process. Another situation is when a man cannot impregnate his wife, and then the family organizes for another man in the family to have sex with this married woman for the sake of having a child for family extension purposes.

2.3 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Inclusive education in the classroom allows all learners to learn together, and the classroom is organized in a manner that promotes a positive learning environment. Inclusive education recognizes that learners are different, but acknowledges that they can all learn even though they have diverse learning needs and learning styles. According to

Bornman and Rose (2010), each and every learner is distinctive, and it is therefore essential for learners to be taught according to their individual styles of learning. Differentiated teaching provides learners with various options for accepting and understanding information, and involves modifying, changing, adapting and extending curriculum content accordingly.

However, Kavkler, Babuder and Magajna (2015) state that the definitions of exclusive education emphasize the shortfall, lack of capacity and obstacles to learning experienced by children with special education needs, whereas their strengths are not valued. They urge education professionals to concentrate more on the strengths of the learners with special educational needs than their weaknesses, and to encourage factors that can lead to successful lives and careers for them, irrespective of their disabilities and needs.

According to Sebastian (2004), inclusive education emphasizes transforming the education system rather than the learner. This rights-based, inclusive and participatory approach to education, in terms of which all students have access to all aspects of schooling, is in keeping with South Africa's transformation agenda. During apartheid, segregation on the basis of race compounded how non-white citizens experienced disability. Schools for white disabled learners were better resourced than schools for black disabled learners, and black learners who experienced learning difficulties due to severe poverty did not qualify for educational support. Consequently, there was an imbalance between black and white schools, which promoted inequality.

The national DoE in South Africa has therefore adopted inclusive education as a guiding policy for South African schools. *Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education: Building an inclusive education and training system* (DoE, 2001) addresses the issue of inclusive education, and defines inclusive education as the education structures, systems and learning methodologies that ensure that the needs of all learners are met. *Education White Paper 6* (DoE, 2001) outlines how policy will:

- Indicate how learners with disability will be identified, assessed and combined into special, full-service and ordinary schools in an incremental manner.
- Introduce strategies and interventions that will assist educators to cope with a diversity of learning and teaching needs, to ensure that temporary learning difficulties are upgraded.

- Give direction for the Education Support System needed.

The policy document emphasizes the importance of educators structuring their lessons to deliver multi-level (or differentiated) classroom instruction to accommodate all levels of learners. However, it is not that easy to deliver multilevel classroom instruction when classrooms are overcrowded. One of the participants teaches 65 Grade 5 learners at a time. Some of these learners have sick parents at home who they take care of, and they are absent minded at school because they are preoccupied with the stressful situation they have at home. Engelbrecht and Green (2007) describe the state of inclusive education in South Africa. Firstly, they observe that South African educators already do a lot of things that they were not trained for, such as counselling, ministering, and parenting, and must also function as legal representatives for learners in trouble with the law, and midwives for learners who fall pregnant and carry on with their studies. South African educators do not therefore welcome inclusive education, as they regard it as a further addition to their already heavy workload. Furthermore, educators have not been trained in the skills needed to implement the current curriculum in inclusive classrooms. However, inclusive education is intended to ensure that all children have access to good quality education, by creating a flexible environment that is conducive to all types of learning through the creative use of the learning space, and of resource materials.

2.4 EXPRESSIVE SKILLS

Expressive skills are language skills used for expression — speaking, reading, and writing. Learners express themselves when they are answering questions in the classroom during learning, in group discussions, and when they are reading or reciting poems. Without these expressive skills their learning is doomed. All expressive language skills complement each other. Listening skills are linked to expressive skills, because receiving and understanding information is an essential part of communication. Learners may need to listen to the instructions before they engage in activities, for example, and when they participate in group discussions they need to listen to each other. They also need to be able to express their thinking in writing, as most of their assessments are written and need to be able to read instructions to write the correct answers.

In the intermediate phase there is a major deficit in the expressive skills of most South

African learners in their LoLT. Learners often leave the foundation phase with no English language skills; the few words that they can pronounce are the words that they can't even write. They find it difficult to even ask to go to the bathroom in English. There is therefore a major gap in understanding between the educators and the learners. However, inclusion proposes that learners with a variety of needs (cognitive and learning, communication and interaction, social emotional and behavioral difficulties, and/or physical needs) must be considered (Jali, 2014). Expressive English language skills need to therefore be strengthened in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom, which will require all stakeholders (educators, learners, parents, DoE officials, and the community) to be involved. Mc Murray and Thompson (2016) state that learning to read is a huge phase in a child's growth, as a result, it finishes in diverse methods of teaching reading.

In many schools where English is the learners' LoLT but not their home language, it is in fact a foreign language. Cummins and Davison (2007) point out that the development of home language skills connects well with FAL skills. If learners have mastered their native language, there is a better chance of mastering an additional language. It may be better to introduce English as medium of instruction in grades 5 and 6 if the foundation for language learning in general is laid properly in Grade 4. Lonigan, Goodrich and Farver (2018) state that if learners are exposed to both their home language and an additional language, they develop a shared fundamental expertise that enables them to process and decode knowledge through multiple languages.

In South Africa, Du Plessis, Steyn, and Weideman (2013) state that the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (2011) define language skills in terms of speaking, listening, reading and writing. It is of significant importance that expressive skills are taught in a manner that will cater for the inclusion of all learners at their different learning styles and needs. This is supported by the *Guidelines for responding to the learner diversity in the classroom* (DoE, 2012). Dockrell, Ricketts and Lindsay (2012) state in their study that learning English as an additional language is considered as one of the main reasons learners have speech, language and communication needs. They further state that it is for this reason that performance is poor.

The fact that all subjects are taught in English compounds the problem because it becomes difficult for learners to understand and communicate in all their content subjects, and

major barriers to learning creep in. According to Landsberg, Kruger and Nel (2005), when learners enter school, they come from various backgrounds. Some of have not received foundation phase education. Reinforcing English skills as an FAL takes more than six years, and this places a serious burden on educators, who are the ones responsible for devising strategies to deal with the situation (Landsberg et al., 2005).

Neuman and Roskos (2012) point out that spoken words are not easily forgotten, and that listening and speaking are the first steps in acquiring expressive language skills. They further state that children's expressive language development is associated with their parents' language. Tamis-LeMonda, Song, Leavell, Kahana-Kalman and Yoshikawa (2012) state that language skills are developed between the ages of 14 months to two years. The parent-infant connection therefore plays a major role in language development. Parents use different activities to communicate with their infants (e. g. gestures and vocalizations), and they also instill a sense of culture while the child is still an infant. Tamis-LeMonda et al. (2012) further state that infants improve their communicative styles according to their daily practices with their parents. Moreover, they mention that early practice with different forms of communication might strengthen specific skills, such as expressive language skills and action imitation. Vocalization and gestures are a core form of expression, so coupling vocalization and gestures speeds up infants' vocabulary growth (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2012, p. 385). Expressive and receptive language is promoted during mother-infant interactions, which provides a good foundation for vocabulary development for preschool, where the influence of educators and peers also starts to assist in the development of expressive skills. Learners therefore develop their expressive language skills through the combined efforts of their parents or caregivers, their educators, and their friends.

McIntyre, Hellsten, Bidonde, Boden and Doi (2017) concur, and that enhancing expressive English language skills requires massive support from different stakeholders, such as parents, educators and language pathologists. McIntyre et al. (2017) further state that promoting expressive verbal skills in the primary phase creates a strong foundation for developing written skills.

2.5 BARRIERS TO LEARNING

Liton (2016) observes that barriers to learning are experienced by learners everywhere, even in places with the most effective education systems. He states that barriers to learning may be individual, sensory, financial, attitudinal, situational or even administrative. For educators to be able to diagnose and minimize barriers to learning, Liton (2016) recommends that they acknowledge their learners' diversity, recognize their own inadequacies, and understand the socio-cultural issues that surround the learners. He further states that curriculum materials should be diverse, discerning and suitable, and should consist of up-to-date resources, such as e-resources, as opposed to outdated textbooks.

The barriers to learning identified in the research to date are discussed in the following sections.

2.5.1 The language of learning and teaching (LoLT) being a first additional language (FAL)

Sebastian (2004) explains that for most South African learners, teaching and learning takes place in a language that is not their home language, and they therefore frequently experience language difficulties that create barriers to learning. For example, learners may think in their home language, and then try to translate those words directly into their FAL. Jali (2014) points out that educators who teach learners whose home language is not the LoLT often encounter problems in transferring information to the learners. Learners often lack an understanding of basic instructions, and so find it difficult to respond appropriately in class and to communicate with the educators. Cyparsade, Auckloo, Belath, Dookhee and Hureeram (2013) state that poor literacy skills further highlights learning complications in areas including science. Learner's need the appropriate expressive skills to communicate well, engage in debate, learn how to speak publicly, read instructions and conduct written assessments. Thus, it is of utmost significance that expressive English language skills are enhanced so that learners can understand the content better.

This situation is of great concern during the intermediate phase (Grades 4 to 6). In the

intermediate phase content subjects are introduced and are taught in English, the common language in South Africa. If learners have not mastered expressive skills in English, the language barrier starts to introduce a conceptual barrier, and it becomes too difficult for the learners to understand the content subjects. This can cause low self-esteem, because oral expression, reading and writing all become a major problem for the learner. Sebastian (2004) states that reading problems are in fact language-based disorders characterized by difficulties in word decoding. This does not only happen in the English language classroom, but in all four of the content subjects (social sciences, life orientation, natural sciences and technology, and mathematics), as the LoLT for these subjects is English. Expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom serve as the basis for learning in all these content subjects. It is therefore vitally important for learners to grasp the basics of English in the intermediate phase, and preferably before they enter this phase.

2.5.2 A limited vocabulary

Al-Zahrani (2011) states that learners often experience problems in expressive language skills as a result of a limited vocabulary. He mentions that in Saudi Arabia, English is taught as a foreign language in the intermediate phase for the purpose of teaching learners to be able to express themselves in different life situations. Lawrence (2009) mentions that vocabulary is a substantial feature in contributing to reading comprehension. Moreover she states that vocabulary acquaintance is not about knowing the definition, but to be able to use the word or comprehend the word in a context. Pretorius (2014) states that on its own, developing verbal skills in a language is not sufficient for improving learning, but needs to be coupled with developing writing skills and a good vocabulary. According to Jalongo and Sobolak (2011) learners from low socioeconomic backgrounds and those who speak English as a second language are predominantly in jeopardy of failing to make proficiency vocabulary improvements.

2.5.3 Culturally specific content

Burgoyne et al. (2013) mention that content that reflects an unfamiliar cultural or personal

context may hinder the process of understanding. They state that if learners are not familiar with the content of a reading comprehension, for example, their background knowledge would not be of assistance. However, when learners are supposed to write national common papers, such as the Annual National Assessment (ANA), learners' general familiarity with the content is not considered.

2.5.4 Low self-esteem

When learners find it difficult to express themselves competently, they encounter problems that lead to barriers to learning (Wium et al. 2011). One of the problems with a lack of proficiency in language is learners' sense of embarrassment and low self-esteem at their failure to communicate well. Consequently, they start developing a negative attitude towards certain subjects, or towards school as a whole. That can be the beginning of absenteeism, which further reduces a learner's chance of developing the language skills they lack, thus exacerbating their language barrier to learning.

Many learners cannot practice English language skills away from school, as English is not spoken in their home environment. It is therefore even more important to be able to use class time with learners to enhance their expressive language skills, and in this way boost their self-confidence. Another way to enhance expressive English language skills would be to try to find ways to involve their parents and their community in their language learning.

Toppel (2015) illustrates how a lack of language proficiency causes low self-esteem in her description of how she felt when she could not speak German properly. She relates how being unable to express herself put her in a position of doubt and humiliation. She states that her experiences in Germany made her understand what many culturally and linguistically diverse students and families go through in the U.S.

2.5.5 A lack of engagement on the part of learners

Duffy and Elwood (2013) find that a lack of engagement on the part of learners in the classroom can be due to a lack of comprehension, poor reading skills, embarrassment on

the part of the learners due to their lack of skills, or a poor relationship between the educators and the learners. Consequently, this leads to barriers to learning. They state that the level of commitment and engagement shown by learners depends strongly on the classroom dynamic and the relationship they have with their educator.

2.5.6 Emotional problems

Wyness and Lang (2016) identify social and emotional problems as potential barriers to learning. They state that negligent parents and schools contribute to social and emotional dysfunction in learners, which creates a barrier to learning. Wyness and Lang (2016) recommend that schools ensure the social and emotional wellbeing of their learners by developing a widespread network of support that combines parents, learners and staff.

2.5.7 Reading problems

The factors associated with reading difficulties include neurological and cognitive factors, environmental factors, cultural factors and school factors. Birsh (2005) describes the critical components of reading as phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, and reading comprehension strategies. These components complement each other, and learners need to master them simultaneously in a comprehensive reading programme to develop into successful readers (Birsh, 2005, p. 5). Phonemic awareness is the ability to observe, reflect and work with individual sounds in words. Knowledge of the names and shapes of both lower-case and upper-case letters is the basic element that leads to successful reading. Phonics is the correlation between letters in written language and their sounds in spoken language. Fluency has to do with being skilled in naming letters and knowing their sounds, which results in the ability to read a text precisely and quickly. Vocabulary is the ability to speak and understand the text through the knowledge of word meanings. It is taught directly and indirectly. Comprehension involves interpreting what has been read (Birsh, 2005, pp. 5–7).

Ness (2019) points out that thinking aloud is key to developing successful reading comprehension. Moreover he states that making inferences, synthesis and question generation makes it even easier to understand the reading comprehension.

A reading disability is one of the reasons why learners have learning problems. Livingston, Klopper, Cox and Uys (2015) describe the impact of limited reading skills in university students who need to be placed in an academic reading programme. In most South African universities, English is the medium of instruction. Livingston, Klopper, Cox and Uys (2015) state that first-year students in South African universities often find it difficult to read at a fast pace, comprehend what they are reading, and decode the content. Consequently, the academic workload becomes too much for them. Their study focuses on academic reading programme instituted in 2010, which included the following strategies: goal setting, scanning, activating prior knowledge, monitoring of comprehension, questioning, visualizing, drawing inferences, connecting, summarizing and evaluating. Livingston, Klopper, Cox and Uys (2015) show that most failures are not caused by a lack of ability, but by a language barrier that results in a lack of information and conceptual understanding. If learners do not master expressive skills at the primary school level, the barrier to learning moves along with them until they reach tertiary level.

Sebastian (2004) defines reading difficulty as a language-based disorder characterized by difficulties in single-word decoding. Mthethwa (2015) states that reading is more than just the basic decoding of signs and symbols into sounds and words, and that with the right type of dedication instruction learners can master reading skills perfectly in the foundation and intermediate phases. He also points out that if reading difficulties are not attended to, learners will be prevented from achieving positive educational outcomes.

Rief and Heimburge (2006) find that roughly half of reading difficulties can be avoided if learners are provided with effective language development in the foundation phase. Learners' phonemic awareness in the foundation phase can predict their level of reading and spelling achievement even years later (Rief & Heimburge, 2006, p. 76). They further state that another common reading difficulty is learners have cognitive problems, such as ADHD, that interfere with concentration and engagement. Due to a lack of engagement while reading, they find it difficult to make connections with what they are reading. Memory skills, and their ability to summarize, retell and answer questions linked to what they have read or heard are affected. When learners are preoccupied they cannot focus, which leads to them missing words and important details (Rief & Heimburge, 2006, p. 78). Learners with ADHD also struggle with writing. In most cases these learners are knowledgeable but they find it difficult to transcribe the information on paper. Written

expression is complicated due to the processes involved, which include a variety of skills and brain functions, organizing, planning, memory language processing, graphomotor skills, self-monitoring and processing speed (Rief & Heimbuge, 2006, p.79).

2.5.8 Specific language-based problems

2.5.8.1 Dyslexia

Rief and Heimbuge (2006) describe dyslexia as a language-based education incapacity. According to Gillis (1992), dyslexia involves complications with interpreting and understanding words or language, such as reversing letters, reading words in the reverse order, putting syllables in the wrong order, and so on. Gillis states that dyslexia can be hereditary and that there is no cure for it.

Some school learners who experience difficulties with expressive language suffer from dyslexia. Birsh (2005, p. 8) states that dyslexia affects up to 80% of the learners diagnosed with learning problems. Roughly 5–17% of U.S. residents are thought to have dyslexia, and it is thought to affect up to 40% of fourth graders (Birsh, 2005, p. 8) The incidence is higher in Grade 4 because that is when most learners begin to be taught in English as their medium of instruction, and as in South Africa, the medium of instruction often doesn't reflect their cultural or language background. Even though dyslexia is neurobiological in origin and hereditary in nature, an environment that is not conducive to effective learning can complicate an already difficult situation for learners with dyslexia.

Reid, Deponion and Petch (2005) state that it is the responsibility of educators to identify learners with dyslexia, and that it should be noticed during the foundation phase. In the foundation phase, signs of dyslexia include poor letter-sound knowledge, poor phoneme awareness, poor word recognition skills, and problems with copying letters and words. In the intermediate phase, signs include slow reading, poor decoding skills when faced with new words, and poor spelling. Shaywitz et al. (2008) and May (2006), cited by Mthethwa (2015), point out that dyslexia attacks the areas of the brain responsible for vision, sound and language awareness. If educators do not understand this, and are not aware that learners are suffering from dyslexia, their relationships with the learner can break down. Parents and educators need to work together to help the learner succeed.

During a Brain Awareness Week in America in 2001, a new treatment to help dyslexic people learn language was announced. Computer-generated speech that slows and improves specific sounds in language can help children with one type of dyslexia. It can advance their language comprehension skills by as much as two years with just one month of training, and it is believed that these changes are permanent. Similar strategies may also be effective for other forms of dyslexia and reading disabilities.

2.5.8.2 Dysgraphia

Bornman and Rose (2010) state that dysgraphia is a disability in written expression. They further state that problems with visual-spatial skills, fine motor skills, language processing, spelling, handwriting, grammar and the organization of language are features of dysgraphia. Researchers believe that there are numerous causative factors, and that it is also hereditary (unless it is caused by brain damage). In most cases learners are able to express themselves well in spoken language, but they experience problems when they have to transfer what they know to paper. In recent years, technological advances have assisted people with dysgraphia. Learners no longer have to rely on handwriting to produce written output, but can use computers and other aids that can help with organizing information and checking spelling (Bornman & Rose, 2010). However, not all schools have access to computers to help with the problem, especially schools in rural areas and poor areas.

2.6 INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Bornman and Rose (2010) state that every child is distinctive, and that every child can learn, but not in the same way and time. Du Plessis et al. (2013) explain that inclusive education acknowledges that all learners need to be catered for according to their learning levels and needs. Mantshongo (2015) and Burgoyne, Whiteley and Hutchinson (2013) state that it is best to start by identifying the barriers to learning experienced by the learners, and then planning intervention strategies.

2.6.1 SIAS (screening, identification, assessment and support)

The policy on screening, identification, assessment and support (SIAS) (2014) aims to providing a policy framework for the standardisation of the procedures for identifying and assessing all learners who need extra support, and for providing programmes to enhance their participation and inclusion in school. This policy outlines the process of identifying individual learner needs in relation to the home and school context, to establish the level and extent of additional support that is needed. In determining support, SIAS:

- Is structured in a way that ensures that educators and schools understand the support needs of all learners.
- Is intended to assess the level and the extent of support required in schools and in classrooms to optimise learners' participation in the learning process.
- Outlines the protocol to be followed in identifying and addressing barriers to learning.
- Identifies the responsibilities of educators, managers, district-based support teams (DBST) and parents/caregivers.
- Gives guidance on how support and intervention should be made available to learners who have been identified.

SIAS aims at shifting the focus from the learner deficit to the support programme that increases learner participation in the learning process. When the learner has been identified, a parent or caregiver must be involved because the completion of the Support Needs Assessment 1 (SNA 1) form needs information that parents have to obtain from a discussion with the educator. Then support is provided by the educator and is reviewed at least once a term. If the support is ineffective, a school-based support team (SBST) should be involved. They will review the educator's identification of barriers to learning and the interventions conducted. They will also complete SNA 2, which will guide them on how to support the learner.

2.6.2 Curriculum differentiation

According to the *Guidelines for responding to learner diversity in the classroom* (DoE,

2012), educators need to understand that the most important way to respond to learner diversity in the classroom is through the curriculum, and the key strategy for responding to the needs of learners with diverse learning needs and styles is curriculum differentiation. Curriculum differentiation involves modifying, changing, adapting, extending and varying teaching methodologies, teaching strategies, assessment strategies and the content of the curriculum. Learners' levels of ability, interests and backgrounds are also considered. There are three main elements of the curriculum that can be differentiated: content, process, and the product.

The *Guidelines for responding to learner diversity in the classroom* (DoE, 2012, p. 4) state that content needs to be differentiated to accommodate all learners. It can be differentiated so that learners are given different routes to a similar learning outcome. The types and levels of content may not be the same for all learners, because some of them are at an advanced level while others are far behind them. So the facts, concepts and skills that learners acquire within the learning environment will be delivered according to their learning abilities through content modification.

Educators should assess how learners receive the curriculum content and find various strategies to help deal with problems. Finding entry points, simplifying complex instructions, compacting the curriculum, and flexible grouping can be planned according to learners' needs and styles of learning (Bornman & Rose, 2010). For example, educators can group the learners according to their capabilities without even letting them know that they are doing so. But the educator would know which groups need curriculum modification and which ones do not.

According to the *Guidelines for responding to learner diversity in the classroom* (DoE, 2012), educators need to differentiate their teaching methods and strategies in response to learners' diverse needs. This can be done by using various learning materials, methods of presentation, learning activities and lesson plans. Scaffolding helps learners to understand content at their own pace, and to be able to work according to their own understanding. A successful diverse learning environment also needs to be conducive to learning. A relaxed learning atmosphere, effective communication and effective participation are important aspects of a learning environment.

Differentiation of curriculum products can be achieved through providing different

methods of evaluation, different tests, a range of activities and a range of homework exercises. Different types of pupils will be able to demonstrate in different ways that they have learned and understood effectively (Bornman & Rose, 2010).

Lavadenz and Armas (2008) state that to develop the four language domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, which are language skills, educators should connect aspects of the curriculum to learners' prior knowledge, to ensure comprehension and promote communication and interaction among learners.

Differentiated teaching provides learners with various options for making sense of information. Niño Santisteban (2014) analyses 15 learners aged 8 to 15 years whose education was at Grade 1 level due to interruptions in their learning caused by having to flee from economic instability or dangerous situations, by family problems or by cognitive problems. Eight of the learners were internationally displaced persons (IDPs), who experienced difficulties with reading and writing. Differentiation was applied in conjunction with the GANAG model (Goal setting – Accessing prior knowledge – New information – Apply new thinking – Goal review). Children were separated into two groups: the basic process dealt with literacy support for children aged 8–12, while an accelerated process was established for adolescents.

2.6.3 Non-governmental intervention

An example of positive intervention on the part of a non-governmental organisation (NGO) is evident in the case of the Hillcrest Aids Centre Trust (HACT). HACT education manager Sibusiso Mthethwa contacted the Nal'ibali campaign (“*Nal'ibali*” means “here is the story” in isiXhosa) for the purpose of improving language skills in schools of the Upper Highway area. The main components of the campaign involved using high-visibility media to enlighten, stimulate and prepare adults to engage children using stories and reading. The campaign also comprised of a national network of direct mentoring, training and support to drive reading-for-enjoyment activities in communities across the country (Shozi, 2018). According to Shozi (2018), HACT has a library of multilingual stories and resources for caregivers, parents, educators and volunteers to share with children. Mthethwa, the education manager, told Shozi that by enhancing language skills they are trying to combat illiteracy. He further stated that due to a language barrier,

learners are failing to pass all subjects at school, especially at primary school. He explained that educators will be trained and that there are programmes that are currently running to identify the problems that learners face with language skills. The reading clubs will then start soon, and educators and facilitators from Nal'ibali will train learners to teach other learners (peer teaching).

2.6.4 Importance of mastering vocabulary

According to Al-Zahrani (2011, p. 27), “ the aim of teaching English as an external language for the intermediate phase in Saudi Arabia is learning the given vocabulary that will allow learners to express themselves in different situations”. He explains that vocabulary is a part of language that needs to be learned. Listening, speaking, reading and writing proficiency can be enhanced by learning new vocabulary. Vocabulary is classified into three categories, according to its use, its frequency and its context. A good vocabulary is related to academic success; the better a learner's vocabulary, the better they comprehend new ideas and concepts (Al-Zahrani, 2011, p. 28).

Hall, Greenberg, Laures-Gore and Pae (2014) describe the issue of breadth and depth of expressive vocabulary and word identification. They find in their study that expressive vocabulary is related to success in reading comprehension and word reading skills for adult struggling readers. Multicomponent academic vocabulary instruction can have a positive effect on the use of expressive language to read and define words. Clear instructions, self- regulation, and cooperative learning structures are elements of academic vocabulary instruction (Jozwik & Douglas, 2017). Learners are given instructions in such a way that they understand every step of the way. They are then encouraged to practise vocabulary learning and writing on their own, memorising vocabulary and checking for mistakes. Finally, they engage in peer tutoring, as it is believed that sometimes learners learn better when they teach each other.

Ball (2013) states that in the intermediate phase, storytelling activities help to build vocabulary. Learners enjoy storytelling and get excited about it. She then asks them to retell the story, which gives the learners the opportunity to engage with the learning content. They then learn to express themselves orally and have fun with the language. Furthermore, their self-esteem is boosted. If the vocabulary is prepared beforehand,

learners have a better understanding of the story.

Polat (2017) explains that some educators prefer to use the home language instead of English to give explicit and easily understood instructions to the learners. Others favour instantly correcting the learners' poor grammar in language classes to highlight the significance of correct language usage. According to Polat (2017, p. 379–380), only a few educators are in favour of teaching grammar as an essential part of speaking, reading and writing, by reading texts, initiating dialogues, providing examples of well-written texts and preparing the learners for listening. The researcher supports this approach and believes that in order for learners to be able to express themselves effectively in English, they need to know the basic rules of grammar, and learn the rest of the rules indirectly.

2.6.5 Usage of technology (e learning)

Reynolds and Bai (2013) examine whether allowing readers to choose their reading material freely has an impact on vocabulary development in English as a foreign language. They find that it does, and that educators need to allow learners to choose their own reading material, within reason. Allowing learners to choose their own reading material is facilitated easily through giving them access to a range of online content. Yeung and King (2015) find that parents in China play a huge role in teaching their children English as a second language. Educational materials such as books with pictures and CD-ROMs help a lot. Shared reading is the core element of teaching English expressive skills, and Chinese parents use explicit explanations and teach their children to pronounce words properly. They also let their children watch educational CD-ROMs almost every day. These CD-ROMs also have songs in them. I strongly believe that shared online reading could work well in South Africa if it was facilitated in a controlled manner (e.g. giving learners homework to read with their parents and educators choose the CD-ROMs to be watched at home, according to the age and the grade of the child). This would help to improve expressive English language skills and reduce barriers to learning.

2.6.6 Addressing learners' emotional problems

Sometimes learners experience barriers to learning due to emotional problems. Regan

(2003) explains how dialogue journals between the educator and the learners can improve expressive skills in the classroom. Learners write about anything in their journals for 10–15 minutes. They bring them to the educator, and the next day they get their written responses from the educator. They read and write again before they carry on with the day's work. The educator therefore knows the learners' problems, is able to keep track of their emotional state, and has a channel for personal communication with them. In this way, the learners improve their reading and writing skills while also regulating their emotional state. If the school has psychological services, the school counsellor or psychologist can also intervene when necessary.

According to Castillo and Fischer (2017) expressive writing improves emotional intelligence (EI). They further state that studies have shown that individuals who write about meaningful emotional experiences show positive results, ranging from better mood to improved physical health. Writing about emotional aspects of events may motivate cognitive processing, desensitize the effects of distressed memories and provide a sense of security. Likewise, Facchin, Margola, Malgora and Revenson (2014) state that written emotional expression about stressful events has beneficial effects on physical and psychological health for adults.

2.6.7 Foundation phase background

Chlapana (2016) describes informational texts as non-fiction texts, and explains that this type of text is limited in the foundation phase, as narrative fiction plays a significant role there. However, children who have not been exposed to informational texts at foundation level often experience problems in text comprehension when they are at primary school, and show low literacy accomplishment. Informational texts can encourage learners to progress from the known to the unknown, if they predict what the text will be about using pictures and the title of story. Pentimoti et al. (2010), as cited by Chishom and Wildeman (2013), suggest that foundation phase educators need to be made aware of the importance of using non-fiction texts for the purpose of developing their learners' informational text comprehension skills. Reading aloud should also be encouraged as it can encourage learner participation if open-ended questions are asked by the educator in order to give learners the opportunity to express themselves and share their ideas (by engaging in

discussions). In that way listening, reading and speaking skills are enhanced.

2.6.8 Classroom environment and lesson planning

Birsh (2005) states that intervention and remediation cannot eliminate barriers to learning on their own, and emphasises the importance of setting up the most optimal learning environment and mindset for all involved. This involves paying attention to the classroom environment, ensuring that the educator is organized, ensuring that learner behaviour is conducive to learning, and planning interesting lessons that involve creative and engaging activities, such as multisensory activities.

2.6.8.1 Classroom environment

- The seating arrangement must encourage learner engagement.
- The position where the educator stands during daily instruction must be visible to all learners.
- Learners must have the correct sized desks in order to sit comfortably.
- Educators must decide where learners' books should be kept, either on their desks or in lockers.

2.6.8.2 Educator organization

- Educators must have sufficient space to keep their documents and teaching materials.
- Teaching materials must be available and must be prepared on time.
- Educators must manage the time spent on activities and must manage the engagement of the learners.

2.6.8.3 Learner behaviour

- Good behavior needs to be recognized and praised for the purpose of encouragement.
- The rules of the class need to be discussed at the beginning of the year and be visible in the classroom.

2.6.8.4 Planning multisensory structured language lessons

- Lessons must be planned and structured to effectively organize the content to be taught.
- Lesson activities must be short and focused.
- Activities should include a range of visual, auditory and kinesthetic cues.

Using innovative materials can motivate learners to learn and participate more than they do when they use old-style text books because learners like active, hands-on tasks. I have also noticed that when it is listening and speaking time, I read to them with the aim of asking questions afterwards. Some of the learners lose concentration, not because there is something wrong, but because they just cannot sit still and listen. But when I play a CD that narrates the very same story, they keep quiet and listen attentively.

2.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided a review of the existing literature pertaining to this study, and has focused on inclusive education, expressive skills, barriers to learning, and various intervention strategies used by educators to overcome these barriers. The theoretical framework underpinning this study, Ubuntu philosophy, has also been described and discussed, and the advantages and challenges of this philosophy are outlined.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided a review of the existing literature pertaining to this study, and focused on inclusive education, expressive skills, barriers to learning, and various intervention strategies used by educators to overcome these barriers. The theoretical framework underpinning this study, Ubuntu philosophy, was also described and discussed, and the advantages and challenges of this philosophy were outlined.

Accordingly, this chapter focuses on the research design and methodology selected for this study. Research design is the thoughtful preparation of research methods to ensure that the research is precise (Bradshaw & Stratford, 2010). Accordingly, the purpose of the study and the research questions are clarified, and then the reasons for selecting the critical paradigm and the qualitative approach to the research are explained. The location and the target population of the study are defined, and the sampling strategy is explained. The data collection instruments are identified and discussed, and then the process of data collection is outlined, and the approach to data analysis clearly explained. Finally, the ethical considerations taken into account during this study and the limitations of the study are discussed.

3.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to identify the causes of poor expressive skills in the English language intermediate phase classroom that lead to barriers to learning, with the aim of providing support. Grades 5, 6, and 7 were observed only in the English language subject for the purpose of identifying the barriers that were mentioned by the participants during interviews. The grades were chosen because English language is taught as a second language in these grades.

3.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

3.3.1 Secondary research questions

The following secondary research questions were derived from the primary research question:

1. What are the expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom?
2. Why do we need to enhance expressive English language skills in the inclusive language intermediate classroom?
3. How can expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom be promoted?

3.4 CRITICAL PARADIGM

Mackenzie and Knipe (2006) state that a research paradigm sets out the objectives, inspiration and general orientation of the research. They describe how the critical paradigm became popular in the 1980s and 1990s as a result of dissatisfaction with the dominant research paradigms of the time, which were largely developed from a white, able-bodied, male perspective.

Bertram and Christiansen (2014, p.4) describe the critical paradigm as a paradigm that perceives the real world as formed by social, political, cultural, economic and other dynamics. Therefore, what we think we know about the world is often subjective and influenced by our role and status in the community. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) state that research according to this paradigm focuses on creating social change in favour of groups who are assumed to have little power or fewer opportunities open to them. Researchers working within this paradigm believe that the world is categorized by unequal power relations. This leads to certain groups of people holding authority and others being troubled. Critical researchers aim at breaking down the structural, historical and political aspects of reality for analysis, in order to arrive at change of a liberated nature (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). I therefore chose this paradigm because it is transformative and inclusive in its approach. It fitted well in my study as I intend to transform and shape the way learners express themselves in the English language

intermediate phase classroom.

3.4.1 Assumptions of the critical paradigm

A paradigm includes four components: ontology, epistemology, methodology, and methods. According to Scotland (2012), the ontological position of the critical paradigm is historical realism, or the view that reality has been shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender values. According to this position, realities are socially made objects that are under continuous internal influence (Scotland 2012, p. 13), and are constructed through an interaction between language and aspects of an independent world. Scotland (2012) emphasises that the critical paradigm takes the view that language produces power relations — it is used to empower or to weaken. The main purpose of this study was to explore how educators could assist diverse learners to use expressive English language skills more effectively. When words are uttered or written, some people's lives are changed, either positively or negatively. It is of the utmost importance to enhance expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom so that South Africa's overall standard education can change for the better.

A critical epistemology is one of subjectivism, which is grounded in real-world occurrences and is influenced by society. Knowledge is both socially built and influenced by power relations from within the society. The critical paradigm seeks to address issues of social justice and marginalisation. Knowledge is therefore construed as emancipatory, and as created through critical questioning.

Critical methods enable realities to be critically studied from a cultural, historical and political perspective. Examples include open-ended interviews, focus groups, open-ended questionnaires, open-ended observations, and journals. These methods normally generate qualitative data.

3.5 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

A qualitative approach to research is adopted when there is a problem or concern that needs to be explored, and when a multifaceted thorough understanding of the issue is needed. It is also used when the aim is to empower individuals to share ideas and to listen to their voices (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative researchers assemble data in the field at the site where participants experience the problem under study. Information is gathered by talking directly to the people, and by observing how they behave within their context. Researchers collect data through examining documents, observing behaviour and interviewing participants. Numerous forms of data are collected, analysed and interpreted (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 43).

Ravitch and Carl (2015) agree with Creswell and Poth in defining qualitative research, they describe qualitative research as an effort to comprehend persons, groups, and phenomena in their ordinary settings in contextualized ways. Then replications about peoples` experiences are made. Holliday (2016) describes qualitative research as a research that details aspects that are profound in quality of social life. He says it conserves probe, catching of hints, clarification and analysis of reality.

A qualitative approach was employed for this study, which aimed to analyse expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom. The qualitative approach allowed for a closer look at the reasons why most of the learners fail to express themselves well in English, and therefore end up experiencing barriers to learning. Data was collected by means of questionnaires, interviews and classroom observation. Key documents, lesson presentations, annual educators' plans and learners' books were analysed.

3.6 LOCATION OF THE STUDY

The study was located at a primary school (Grade 1 to Grade 7) in the Pinetown district, which falls under the Umhlathuzana circuit. It is a no-fee, mainstream, quintile 2 public school. 821 learners are enrolled at the school, and the 23 staff members comprise of 22 educators and 1 clerk.

This school is located in a rural village. Most learners travel to school by taxi due to the

long distances they travel, but many learners who can't afford taxis walk to school, in spite of the distance. Public transport is not reliable, so educators are required to own their own cars or arrange lifts with colleagues.

The school has 19 classrooms and one small hall. One classroom has been turned into a library and one school educator is a librarian. There is no playground or sports field, only an open space where learners play during break. The school grounds are wire-fenced. Flush toilets are available for educators only, and the learners use pit toilets. A group of local women sells sweets, chips, fruit and vetkoek to learners during break. There are a number of outside taps for the learners, some of them with concrete sinks.

Many learners have parents who are still studying or are unemployed. Many of the learners' biological parents are deceased, so their caregivers are their grandparents, who are often illiterate or undereducated.

3.7 TARGET POPULATION

The general target population for this study was English FAL educators with three or more years of teaching experience in the intermediate phase. The target population is described in Table 3.1.

Table 0.1: Target population for the study

Type of school	Mainstream primary school
Geographical location	Pinetown District, eThekweni region
Population	Intermediate educators
Area	Rural
Age of educators	25–60 years
Gender	Female/male
Years of teaching experience	3 years and above
Subject	English FAL

3.8 SAMPLING STRATEGY

Time constraints, research costs and the availability of participants means that data cannot be collected from the whole target population (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). It is vitally important for researchers to decide their sampling strategy at an early stage of the research planning.

3.8.1 Selection of participants

According to Maree (2016), qualitative research usually makes use of purposive sampling, and purposive sampling was used to select the sample of participants for this study. Maree (2016) describes purposive sampling as choosing participants who can provide information that fulfils the required research objectives about the phenomenon, location, incident or type. This method of sampling means that the researcher chooses the participants. English language educators in the intermediate phase were sampled. Three English educators and the school principal were selected to participate. Three other educators in other subjects were selected from grades 4–6 (one educator per grade). They were selected as participants because English is the LoLT in their subjects as well, and to safeguard the research process in case one of the English educators decided to withdraw from the research process. The principal was included, because of his wider knowledge

of the school's performance in English over the past few years and of the intervention strategies that have been employed. There were therefore seven participants as a result of three English language educators from intermediate phase, another three contented educators as they use English when they teach and lastly the principal.

I met with the participants and explained the outline, purpose and rationale of the study, as well as the data collection methods. Participation was strictly voluntary. A breakdown of the participants is provided in Table 3.2.

Table 0.2: Biographical details of participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Teaching experience	Grades taught	Subjects teaching	Academic qualification
1.	M	49	26	12	none	BA
2.	F	36	4	4 & 6	isiZulu/SS	BEd
3.	F	33	4	4	Math/LO	PGCE
4.	M	28	4	4 & 6	Eng/SS	BEd
5.	F	55	29	1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6	Ns-Tech/Lo	BA
6.	F	54	28	3, 5, 6 & 7	SS	BEd(Hons)
7.	F	58	32	6 & 7	Eng/Lo	BEd(Hons)

3.9 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

According to Bertram and Christiansen (2014), research depends on verified information. Thus research is grounded on the information that is gathered. Data was collected in August 2018 to explore how educators could enhance expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom, to explain why enhancing these skills is necessary, and to explore how to promote these skills.

Data was generated over a two-month period through questionnaires, interviews and

classroom observations. All information was accurately recorded (using audio recordings, questionnaire forms and observation sheets), and the audio recordings were carefully transcribed. Interviews were conducted before and after the classroom observations.

Triangulation is defined by Cohen et al. (2011) as the use of compound approaches to information gathering. Maree (2016) states that triangulation frequently involves three methods of data collection, and is a crucial means of consolidating the findings. The dominant approach in qualitative research studies is to survey for an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon, rather than for underlying interactions (Maree, 2016, p. 121). In this study, three data collection instruments were used in order to achieve triangulation. Using these three methods was intended to achieve a deeper understanding of the research questions.

3.9.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires were distributed during the first school visit in order to give the participants time to complete them at their own pace and leisure. They were asked to finish completing the questionnaire by the end of the week. A separate questionnaire was completed by the principal (Appendix F). The main purpose of the principal questionnaire was to establish an accurate overall understanding of the school. The educator questionnaires focused more on the educational experiences in relation to the objectives of the study. The research began with the questionnaires so that the responses could be discussed further during the one-on-one interviews.

3.9.2 Structured interviews

An interview is a conversation between I and the respondent, but is not the same as a normal discussion. I dominated the conversation by asking questions that he or she has already prepared. The questions are structured in a manner that leads to the information the researcher needs (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). According to Maree (2016), an interview is a shared discussion during which I engaged with the participant using a question-and-answer format. I gathered information in order to find out more about the participant's thoughts, principles, interpretations, feelings and actions. Bertram and

Christiansen (2014) state that the interview is an important research method, since dialogue is pivotal to critical research. Maree (2016) also maintains that qualitative interviews are intended to inspect the world from the participant's perspective.

I conducted structured one-on-one interviews with the participants on different days and at different times, and at different venues, such as the community library and the school counseling room. During the interviews the researcher sought various types of answers (one-word answers, limited answers, and open-ended answers). In structured interviews, all participants are asked the same questions by the same researcher in the same manner (Maree, 2016).

The interviews were recorded after permission had been granted by the participants. Participants were informed that they could ask for a question to be repeated if they did not understand. Notes were taken for the purpose of asking additional questions. The personal views and experiences of the participants were sought, as they added "richness" and value to the qualitative study. The seating arrangement during the interviews allowed the researcher and the participant to make good eye contact and hear one another clearly. Interviews took roughly 45 minutes, depending on the participant.

3.9.3 Classroom observations

Maree (2016) defines observation as a non-verbal practice of recording a participant's experiences. Furthermore, he states that it is an everyday act that uses the senses of seeing, touching, smelling and hearing, but also includes intuition and interpretation. It is selective and subjective in nature. The researcher is also permitted to participate in the observation and to be observed in qualitative research. However, the researcher's attention must be focused on the primary and secondary research questions. In this case the researcher was not a participant. It is also important that events are observed as they happen within the setting, and that the researcher accepts the information that is given without forcefully digging for more (Maree 2016, p. 90). Bertrams and Christiansen (2014) state that the site of observation may be a school, a classroom, and a staff room, an office or a community meeting space.

I visited the study site in order to observe for herself what was happening there, and was

able to gather first-hand information that she may not have picked up on during the interviews. I only observed the English language educators classrooms, as her focus was on how to enhance expressive English language skills. The participants were visited on random days to prevent delays and excuses, and to limit the possibility of excessive preparations that would have been out of the ordinary for normal teaching days. Lesson plans, assessment records, methods of teaching, and teaching materials were part of the observation. I tried to interact in a relaxed way with the participants so that they did not feel that I was keeping tabs on them.

3.10 DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

Data was collected over a two-month period, and the researcher adhered to the following research schedule:

<p>Week one</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I met with the principal, and gave him an information kit, which consisted of a letter formally asking for permission to conduct research at the school (Appendix C), a consent form (Appendix D), permission from the DoE to conduct research (Appendix A), a summary of the research proposal, a written personal introduction, and the general questionnaire for educators (Appendix G). • I selected and met with the educator participants, and gave them an information kit consisting of a letter asking permission to include the educator as a
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	<p>participant, which included some background to the research (Appendix E), a consent form (Appendix D), and the questionnaire for educators.</p>
Week two	<p>I collected the questionnaires, scheduled the principal's interview, interviewed the principal, and transcribed the principal's interview.</p>
Week three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I scheduled interviews with the educators, and interviewed the educators
Week four	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I completed the educator interviews.
Week five	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I transcribed all the interviews.
Week six	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I began the classroom observations, sat in on various classrooms and filled in classroom observation sheets (Appendix J).

Week seven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I completed the classroom observations.
Week eight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I presented the interview and observation data, and gave the principal and each educator a copy of their interview, the classroom observation notes, and a thank you card to show appreciation.

3.11 DATA ANALYSIS

After the data collection process using the three data collection methods had been completed, the process of transcribing, consolidating and organizing the data took place. I selected, focused, simplified, abstracted and transformed the field notes in order to reduce the volume of information, to focus on the main points, and to interpret the collected data appropriately. After all the transcripts were printed and the participants had viewed them to confirm that what had been captured was accurate, the researcher started to acquaint herself with the data by reading through it.

In this study, the collected data was analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis focused on addressing the following research questions:

1. What are the expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom?
2. Why do we need to enhance expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom?
3. How can expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom be promoted?

Themes were then identified through a process of coding, and were grouped accordingly.

3.13 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The primary ethical consideration in research is to protect the wellbeing and security of the participants. To satisfy ethical considerations, the researcher ensured that the appropriate permissions and consent were obtained, that participants were ensured of anonymity and confidentiality, and that participants were aware that their involvement with the study was completely voluntary.

I shared the findings with the participants, in order to confirm that my perspective was accurate. On arriving at the school, the researcher gave the participants information packets that contained a short summary of the research proposal. All participants were given copies of their interviews and my classroom observation notes of their classroom visits, in order for them to provide feedback to me about my interpretations. The school was also given a copy of the final thesis to read. The participants were guaranteed confidentiality, and were given a copy of their transcribed interview at a later stage.

3.13.1 Consent

I first obtained permission to conduct the study from the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Ethics Committee (Appendix B) and the DoE in 2018 (Appendix A). I also obtained permission (Appendix C) from the school gatekeeper (the principal) at the school where the study was going to be conducted in 2018. Thereafter, I consulted with the participants and explained the purpose and nature of the study. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions about the study, and the answers were given to their satisfaction. The details of the study were therefore clearly understood by each participant. Participants were also made aware that interviews would be audio recorded. I explained that three data collection instruments would be used. My supervisor's contact details were provided in case the participants had further queries. The participants were asked to sign informed consent forms (Appendix D) after I had finished explaining the content of the form to them, to formally indicate that their participation was informed and voluntary.

3.13.2 Confidentiality

Participants were also assured of anonymity, and I removed their names, as well as the name of the school, to guarantee that their identities would not be revealed by participating in the study. They were written as respondent no. 1, 2 ... in their interview scripts and as participants in the thesis. They were promised that all data recordings and transcripts would be stored in a locked cabinet in the project leader's office for a period of five years, and would then be disposed of. Participants were ensured that all information collected would be used for research purposes only. The participants' identities were protected by using pseudonyms, and the anonymity of responses, evidence and documentation was guaranteed.

3.13.3 Voluntary participation

The participants were made aware that participation was voluntarily, and that there would be no money paid or incentives given to them. Participants were made aware that they were at liberty to withdraw at any stage of the research should they feel uncomfortable, and that there would be no negative nor undesirable consequences for that decision.

3.14 LIMITATIONS

A sample of three English language educators at one intermediate phase school is not a representative sample of English language educators at intermediate schools in KwaZulu-Natal or South Africa, and therefore the results cannot be generalised.

Time was a problem since most of the participants were educators. To address this constraint, I conducted interviews during afternoons and over weekends. There were problems with scheduling classroom observations, as learners were writing examinations. To address this issue, the researcher consulted with the participants and established the most appropriate time.

Certain participants did not want to be the part of the study, as they work at the same school as the researcher, and were concerned about divulging personal information. I

ensured them of anonymity, confidentiality, and the freedom to withdraw from the study should they feel uncomfortable.

3.15 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on the research design and methodology selected for this study. The purpose of the study and the research questions, the reasons for selecting the critical paradigm, and the qualitative approach to the research were explained. The location and the target population of the study were defined, and the purposive sampling strategy was explained. The data collection instruments (questionnaire, interview and classroom observation) were discussed, the process of data collection was outlined, and the thematic approach to data analysis was clearly explained. Finally, the ethical considerations taken into account during this study and the limitations of the study were discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter defined the research design, research methodology and research paradigm that guided this study. This chapter presents an analysis of the data that was collected using the three research instruments (questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and classroom observations) and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings are presented according to the three specific research questions, in order to determine how to enhance expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom. The educators' experiences were interpreted and analyzed using Ubuntu philosophy

4.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

Three research objectives guided this study:

1. To explore the expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom.
2. To explain the need for enhancing expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom.
3. To promote expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom.

These research objectives translated into the following research questions:

1. What are the expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom?
2. Why do we need to enhance expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate classroom?
3. How can expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom be promoted?

4.3 DATA ANALYSIS

According to Hyett, Kenny and Dickson-Swift (2014, pp. 175–176), data analysis is determined by inductive and deductive reasoning, and manifold readings and interpretations. Furthermore, they state that data analysis is the most challenging aspect of the research process, as the researcher is required to make sense of the collected data in an objective way. Merriam and Tisdell (2015, p. 169) state that the collection and analysis of data can be done concurrently, and assert that data analysis can be deceptive when it is conducted in isolation, as the researcher may become confused about where the starting point is.

The researcher used thematic analysis to analyze the data. Oliver (2013) states that thematic analysis (identifying and coding themes) is one of the best options for conducting qualitative data analysis. Hyett et al. (2014) state that thematic analysis of data involves a close reading of the transcribed and written data, and the identification of patterns of recurring ideas or themes, which he calls coding. Accordingly, the researcher prepared the data for analysis by transcribing the raw interview data from the audio tapes, and then coding the data pages and searching carefully for patterns and themes.

4.4 RESEARCH QUESTION 1: WHAT ARE THE EXPRESSIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS IN THE INCLUSIVE INTERMEDIATE PHASE CLASSROOM?

The researcher sought to determine how educators understand expressive English language skills in the learning experience. Ubuntu philosophy suggests that educators should use their knowledge and innate understanding to improve, craft, simplify and manage expressive English language skills, in order to facilitate learning for all learners in the classroom. Thus, educators' understanding of the basic definition of inclusive education is important. In response to the question "What is your understanding of inclusive education?" the responses were as follows:

Questionnaires

QUESTION 1: WHAT ARE THE EXPRESSIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS IN THE INCLUSIVE INTERMEDIATE PHASE?

Participant A: *Inclusive education means that regardless of any challenges school going children may have, they are placed in a general education and should not be discriminated.*

Participant B: *It caters for all learners, embrace all of them irrespective of disability, race and gender. Does not discriminate, they are equally treated.*

Participant C: *This is when learners with and without disabilities participate and learn together.*

Participant D: *It is education that does not discriminate.*

Participant E: *Education where all languages, cultures, religions, gender, races, disabilities etc. that learners have are considered and all learners are welcomed.*

Participant F: *It means including learners with challenges to learning together with fast learners. Giving all learners equal attention.*

Participant G: *Include learners who have learning difficulties and those who do not have learning difficulties.*

Participant B: *It is oral expression, as from grade R learners use isiZulu. As much as they would like to express themselves in English, it is not easy to adjust to a second language, maybe English needs to be learned at the entry grade.*

Participant B: *They do not understand English, they need more time as they do not speak English at home. Adjustment is a challenge.*

Participant E: *The language is a barrier, it makes learners uncomfortable to speak even if they know the answer.*

Participant G: *Firstly they have a problem with terminology, even though they like to speak English, history has difficult terminology but I make them feel at ease by allowing them to speak the way it comes to their minds. I also use simpler*

language with them.

Participant C: *I believe communicative skills also include spelling as it is the basis of writing. Learners tend to write English spelling as if they are writing isiZulu, e.g. if a learner wants to write I, he or she will write ay. So transactional writing becomes a challenge.*

Participant A: *Yes there are challenges, time constraints. Educators are time conscious about curriculum coverage, time for individual attention is limited because of curriculum coverage and overcrowding.*

QUESTION 2: WHY DO WE NEED TO ENHANCE EXPRESIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS IN THE INCLUSIVE INTERMEDIATE PHASE?

Participant B: *They find it difficult to express themselves, it promotes the use of English than mother tongue.*

Participant C: *Majority of learners struggle with comprehending English, teaching becomes slightly a struggle on its own.*

Participant E: *Since it is an additional language, a number of learners struggle to use it or understand it. Learners try to cope with contents because it is spoken and used across the curriculum.*

Participant F: *English as a medium of instruction is a challenge for grade four since they've been using isiZulu from the foundation phase.*

Participant A: *Rural community does not value education that much, so they do not bother to be actively involved in the learning of their children, in that way they don't fully give support.*

Participant A: *Some of the parents are illiterate, they are unable to offer help to the work of their children and they don't want their children to know that they are illiterate.*

Participant B: *Parents do not care about what is happening with their children's*

work.

QUESTION3: HOW CAN WE PROMOTE EXPRESSIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS IN THE INCLUSIVE INTERMEDIATE PHASE CLASSROOM?

Participant C: *With those that cannot read, I have words that we read, writing of spelling, flash cards and hang man (spelling game). I also choose books from the lower grades depending on the level of learner performance in reading.*

The responses above reveal that the respondents had a basic conceptual understanding of inclusive education, and that their understanding generally matches the definitions provided by Jali (2014), and Engelbrecht and Green (2007), who describe inclusive education as the involvement of all learners in the learning situation, irrespective of ability or disability, religion, race and gender. Bornman and Rose (2010) explain that every child is distinctive and every child can learn, but not in the same way or at the same pace. Inclusive education acknowledges that all learners need to be catered for according to their learning levels and needs.

However, they research indicates that educators are not trained in linking the curriculum with inclusive education practices. Kavkler et al. (2015) express concern about how learners' inabilities are the main focus of definitions of inclusive education, instead of capitalizing on learners' abilities for the purpose of encouragement and successful careers. The sections below illustrate how the respondents seem to have a clear understanding of inclusive education, but sometimes do not know how to apply creative practices when the need arises. As much as they have the basic idea, they do not have the skills to implement inclusive education fully. The respondents expressed frustration at realizing that some of their learners are being left behind with the curriculum, even though as educators they had done everything they were able to in order to help.

4.4.1 Listening and speaking

The respondents indicated concern over their learners' listening and speaking skills. Their

learners had not been exposed to English as their FAL in the foundation phase, and as a result they found it difficult to understand and express themselves in English. As a result they often chose not to say anything at all, as they felt that they would say something stupid.

Structured interviews

Participant A: Eh... learners need to listen to the instructions and respond, but they seem to experience problems. I understand it is because all the contents are learned in English and English is not their first language, which means they acquire English at school. They think in isiZulu and transfer in English when they express themselves. The school is a rural area, so they cannot mix with other people in order to be exposed to the second language. They are also shy.

Participant C: Well my experience firstly is that I find learners struggle to communicate orally in English. They are not able to express themselves very well. Some are reserved and some are not confident. They rather listen to those that are smart. In conclusion, I can say they struggle very much they prefer not to say anything.

Participant D: Uhm...learners do not want to speak in English. It is not easy for them as they started learning using isiZulu in the foundation phase. They are scared to make mistakes.

However, Participant F stated something slightly different: My experience with learners is that they are playful and lack concentration, it is not that they don't understand.

It is clear from most of the responses that the respondents' learners experience low self-esteem in relation to communicating in English in the classroom. Okoye (2012) states that learners perceive themselves as shut out from the learning content if they communicate poorly in the LoLT. According to Landsberg et al. (2005), reinforcing an FAL takes more than six years, and barriers to learning stem from language barriers created by the LoLT being an FAL.

According to Jali (2014), to successfully develop learners' expressive skills in the intermediate phase, educators, parents, and language therapists should work together with the main aim of creating a caring society. This is in line with Ubuntu philosophy, which

promotes change and transformation through support, interconnection and respect for everybody's culture. It encourages educators to give learners a chance to try to speak in the newly acquired FAL, by communicating with them in simple language that makes them comfortable and creates a relaxed atmosphere.

Listening and speaking are practical communication skills that learners need to master to position themselves within the social and cultural environment (Zheng, 2014). Copp et al. (2016) mention that educators should encourage learners to sharpen their speaking skills through asking open-ended questions. Many listening and speaking activities require learners to work in groups, share ideas, or engage in dramatic role play, which facilitates the practice of expressive skills. Similarly, Boon, Desloovere, and Verhaert (2018) suggest that listening and literacy can be stimulated through music.

Córdoba Zúñiga and Rangel Gutiérrez (2018, p. 165) state that the basic element of understanding language and becoming a successful speaker of a foreign language, is listening articulacy. They also found that listening and speaking skills can be developed by encouraging learners to listen thoughtfully, pay attention to others when they speak, and wait their turn to be part of the conversation.

However, Cummins and Davison (2007) point out that the development of home language skills is vital for the development of skills in any additional language, as learners need to master their first language if they are to successfully learn subsequent languages. Lonigan et al. (2018) state that if learners are able learn in both their home language and their FAL, code-switching would assist learners in understanding and transmitting knowledge from one language to the other through the shared linguistic context.

4.4.2 Reading and comprehension

In response to the question “What do you think is the basis of mastering expressive skills in the classroom?” the respondents indicated that reading and understanding go hand in hand. According to the respondents, if you are able to read, you are also able to write. Reading enlightens the mind, whether it is for leisure or for formal comprehension purposes.

Participant A: *I think it is reading and comprehending of what you have read. We*

have a 30 minutes reading period every day, but it is not enough.

Participant B: Reading could be for enjoyment or answering questions in the end, so it is important to understand what you are reading.

Participant C: To be able to read and understand what you are reading, I always emphasize reading because I feel like if you read well you can write well. At the end of the year you will be a different person compared to the beginning of the year.

Participant F: I can say it is reading, everywhere they go they must read. Even when watching Television they must look for spelling.

Winthrop and McGivney (2016) state that reading and writing are essential tools for interacting with the world. According to Pretorius (2014), reading comprehension skills are independent from language and can be transferred across languages, for instance being able to identify main points, characters, setting, etc. Birsh (2005) describes the critical components of reading as phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency and reading comprehension strategies. However, according to Sebastian (2004), reading difficulty is a language-based disorder characterized by difficulties with word decoding.

Research has revealed that solving most of these problems can be achieved using Ubuntu philosophy. Dladla (2017) explains Ubuntu as a philosophy that comes from two interrelated roots — language and culture. Khomba (2011) states that Ubuntu philosophy emphasizes the issue of people learning from each other, and helping each other as Africans. Furthermore, he states that an African does not live in isolation but with the community.

4.4.3 Writing and presenting

The respondents indicated that their learners have a limited vocabulary which makes it difficult for them to express themselves in English. A limited vocabulary and poor spelling make constructing a sentence a huge challenge, let alone writing a paragraph. However, the educators try to assist and improve their learners' writing, even though it is

a time-consuming activity.

Participant A: *Writing and presenting is one of the most important communicative skill. You know, most of our assessments are in a written form. So if our learners are still struggling with spelling; writing a sentence takes a lot of time let alone a paragraph. Learners need to be taught how to express themselves in writing.*

Participant F: *Writing of vocabulary words in a personal dictionary is another writing skill that helps learners practice their writing, more especially when they do peer teaching getting ready for spelling test and dictation. When it is time to write paragraphs and stories, challenges could be minimized.*

Participant G: *I think learners should be given just a paragraph maybe three times a week to transcribe in order to improve their writing skills.*

Ubuntu philosophy emphasises that an African does not live in isolation, and that there is always someone ready to assist where necessary (Piper, 2016). An approach informed by Ubuntu philosophy emphasizes how people learn from each other. An educator needs to take learners step by step into the writing process, starting with phonics, and progressing to words, sentences and then paragraphs. Parents and peers also need to be involved by helping their children with homework, and peers need to help each other in group discussions and by working in pairs.

Pretorius (2014) states that on its own, developing verbal skills in a language is not sufficient for improving learning, but needs to be coupled with developing writing skills and a good vocabulary. Tsheko and Mogapi (2015) state that reading and writing skills are developed at the same time during expressive writing.

Regan (2003) explains the usefulness of dialogue journals between the educator and the learners. Learners write about anything in their journals for 10–15 minutes and hand them to the educator to read, after which the educator responds in writing and returns the journals the next morning. This type of expressive writing is known to improve emotional intelligence (Castillo & Fischer, 2017), and Facchin et al. (2014) state that written emotional expression has beneficial effects on physical and psychological health for adults.

Pollington, Wilcox and Morrison (2001) mention two types of writing: traditional writing

instruction, and the writing workshop approach. The first is more educator-orientated because everything is managed by the educator and the class is addressed as a whole (in terms of topic, time and conversation). The second gives learners the opportunity to work in groups and write about their own topics, and share ideas with other peers.

4.4.4 Language structure

The respondents indicated that learners may have a very general understanding of how English works, but have a great deal of difficulty with the specific details of the grammatical structure of the language. They have difficulty processing and remembering the grammatical rules, and often need to be reminded. As has been mentioned, it takes more than six years to master a language, so the respondents assume that their learners will gather this knowledge as they move through their primary schooling.

Participant D: Ey... it is not easy to master English language structures, more especially if you are a second language speaker; it takes time even years. There are language rules which involve grammar. Objects, topics, pronunciation and many more. Learners tend to forget topics like nouns, verbs adjectives or punctuations. They need to know these things so that when they come out in the question paper they don't get confused.

Participant C: Language structures have to do with rules of the language, but if you explain in simpler terms and use teaching aids; learners find it interesting. The only problem is that when it come back some other time or in an assessment, they don't know what you are talking about not unless you will remind them, make examples. A topic on its own does not work for them, just imagine if they are in an examination room...

Participant E: Hehehe...madam! [Covering his mouth with the palm of his hand] Don't get me wrong here, you know language has rules and so many topics. When you are still working with the learners in the classroom, everything is ok, they can even get a total. Come examination time, you recognize it when you are still revising with them that they are blank. English has too many topics, it is confusing for them.

4.5 RESEARCH QUESTION 2: WHY DO EXPRESSIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS IN THE INCLUSIVE INTERMEDIATE PHASE CLASSROOM NEED TO BE ENHANCED?

The respondents indicated that their learners have a problem when it comes to expressing themselves in English as the LoLT. The difficulties start in the intermediate phase, especially in the rural and location schools where the majority of South African citizens are black and do not have English as their home language. Reading and understanding instructions is one of the problems experienced by the learners. Consequently, this leads to poor performance in all subjects.

The responses provided by the respondents' suggest five main areas of concern that support the argument for why expressive skills in the English language intermediate classroom need to be enhanced:

1. English is a new LoLT in the intermediate phase.
2. Learners' inability to express themselves well causes barriers to learning.
3. Frustration on the part of learners leads to lack of engagement.
4. English is a universal language.
5. Learners' lack of expressive ability leads to additional challenges for educators.

These five areas are discussed below.

4.5.1 English is a new language of teaching and learning (LoLT) in the intermediate phase

The participants indicated that it is not easy for learners to adjust from teaching and learning being conducted in their home language in the foundation phase, to teaching and learning being conducted in their FAL in the intermediate phase. What makes it more difficult is that the FAL is only used at school. At home they use their home language, so they do not have sufficient opportunities to practise the FAL. The respondents' perceptions on enhancing expressive skills in English as the LoLT were as follows:

Participant A: English makes it difficult for learners to comprehend the learning content. This is because they use this language in class only, thereafter back to

their home language. This language makes it difficult for them to perform at their outmost best because they are unable to express themselves freely.

The respondents' statements concur with Sebastian (2004), who observes that in most cases learning and teaching takes place using an FAL rather than the learners' home language. Hodge (2012) finds that nationally, 20% of children aged 5–17 years do not speak English at home. Jali (2014) also states that educators who teach learners whose home language is not the LoLT encounter problems in transferring information to the learners. Consequently, this causes educational problems in schools. Al-Zahrani (2011) states that learners experience problems with expressive skills due to their limited vocabulary. In their study, Wyness and Lang (2016) reveal that barriers to learning are challenges triggered by social and emotional measurements. In addition, they state that negligent parents and schools are part of the social and emotional problem.

4.5.2 Learners' inability to express themselves appropriately causes barriers to learning

The respondents indicated that the LoLT is a cause for concern, due to the fact that learners find it difficult to communicate in their FAL. Consequently, learners encounter barriers to learning, not because they are slow learners but because of the language barrier.

Participant A: The language barrier makes it difficult for learners to understand even simple instructions. They are unable to construct a simple sentence. Let alone to write a paragraph, an essay is a nightmare.

Participant G: It is challenging because it is hard for learners to understand instructions in English since it is not their mother tongue.

Participant F: Learners are battling to read instructions.

Participant E: Mostly it is language barrier.

These findings echo the work of Dockrell et al. (2012), who note that English as LoLT is one of the main causes of speech, language, and communication needs. Liton (2016)

states that these learning obstructions and difficulties are widely experienced, even in the most effective education systems throughout the world. Livingston et al. (2015) also echo the observations of the respondents when they state that most failures in teaching and learning are caused by a language barrier instead of a lack of information.

The respondents also revealed that difficulty with reading is a major barrier to learning, as is bound to happen when learners have a limited vocabulary, since vocabulary is the main key to mastering a language. The more words learners have or know, the better they will be able to read. The respondents noted how their learners are not able to read properly on their own, as they need educators to pronounce words for them. They also need educators to deal with difficult words first by writing them on the board and explaining them, before the learners can make headway with actual reading.

Participant A: *Learners cannot read properly or read at all, due to restricted vocabulary.*

Participant B: *Reading is a problem to some of them.*

Participant D: *It's just that they find it difficult to read on their own.*

Participant F: *One of the challenges is reading.*

Participant G: *Reading, even writing as I said before that spelling is a problem.*

This is not simply a South African problem. According to Spencer and Petersen (2018), many primary schools in the United States experience the problem of their learners not writing at the level they are supposed to. 72% of Grade 4 learners in the U.S. experience this problem, and as a result Grade 8 learners are also affected. Furthermore, Spencer and Peterson (2018) mention that educators reported that learners devoted only 30 minutes a day to writing, which seems to be far less than the time required to help learners achieve adequate writing skills.

Ubuntu stresses the principles of empathy, sharing and cooperation in trying to solve common problems (Brock-Utne, 2016). Barriers to learning are problems that learners and educators encounter. Applying Ubuntu philosophy to a learning programme may assist in reducing problems experienced by both learners and educators.

4.5.3 Frustration on the part of learners leads to lack of engagement

The respondents indicated that some of the learners do not want to even hear about English as the LoLT, and simply close their minds to the issue because it creates stress for them. Their stress and frustration lead to a lack of engagement and a negative attitude that in turn frustrates the educators as well, creating a huge problem for both learners and educators.

Participant A: *I think learners do not embrace this learning in this foreign language, instead they get frustrated and lose interest in learning. Others end up hating school and sometimes drop out of school.*

Participant B: *I'm not sure if it is culture or what? They do not want to participate, they seem to be shy.*

Participant D: *Some learners tend to enjoy and do better while others struggle and become frustrated.*

Participant C: *Some are reserved and some are not confident. They rather listen to those that are smart. I can say they struggle very much. They prefer not to say anything.*

Participant E: *I think learners have attitude, they just switch off their minds purposely. When I read a story to them, they need to listen and answer the questions that follow. It is not about knowing the language, they need to listen, but because of attitude they just keep quiet.*

Participant G: *Some of them are lazy or they do not want to be taught by you.*

Marzban and Sarjami (2014) find that sometimes educators give feedback to learners with the intention of assisting them and helping them to develop; however, this feedback is often perceived as annoying and hurtful instead of helpful, due to the manner in which the feedback is given. Toppel's (2015) experience supports the observations of the respondents above, when she explains the feelings of doubt and humiliation she experienced when she failed to express herself adequately in German.

A poor relationship between educators and learners may cause learners to disengage in

the classroom or during learning activities, and such disengagement is a significant learning barrier (Duffy & Elwood, 2013). If there are no psychological services at the school, the situation becomes even worse. Moreover, learners do not commit themselves to the process of learning if they do not like the educator. Cultural and personal experiences may therefore hinder the process of understanding (Burgoyne et al., 2013).

Boisseier (2016) states that irrespective of the approach used in the classroom, all educators should have one goal: to enable learners to communicate concepts well. Educators need to understand the learners' perspective and try to find ways of fixing the problem. Other forms of less embarrassing feedback should be tried, such as written feedback, to avoid disengagement and promote self-reliance on the part of the learners. However, these are more time-consuming approaches.

4.5.4 English is a universal language

The respondents acknowledged that in spite of the difficulties of using English as the LoLT when it is in fact an FAL, it is vitally important for the learners that they master English.

Participant A: I would say yes because we call parents, talk to them about the importance of education and particularly being proficient in English as it is widely used.

Participant D: I tell them that English is a very important language because they will use it wherever they go.

Participant F: I can say English is the most used language worldwide.

South Africa constitutionally acknowledges eleven official languages. However, English functions as a common language amongst diverse cultural groups, is the language of commerce and education, and is widely spoken. For these reasons, 64% of learners are enrolled in schools in which English is the LoLT (Van Staden, 2011). In many cases, however, this LoLT is the learners' FAL, and not their home language. When learners write examinations, they are expected to write them in English; job interviews are conducted in English; the business sector communicates in English, and so on. If learners

are not taught this language, they will experience barriers to learning and assessment, including at tertiary level, and will experience damaging communication barriers in the work environment. Even though this all occurs in what is an FAL for most learners, it is an FAL that is vital for their future success.

Dennaoui et al. (2016) echo the respondents' observations in a different context: of the five languages spoken in Australia, English is the LoLT in the majority of Australian schools. Al-Zahrani (2011) states that in Saudi Arabia, English is taught as a foreign language in the intermediate phase for the purpose of teaching learners to be able to express themselves in diverse life circumstances. Winthrop and McGiviney (2016) describe how the ancient Greeks taught children for the purpose of maturing them into good citizens who could use the knowledge, formal discussions and reasoning in life beyond the classroom. Being able to read, write and communicate effectively in the agreed upon common language is vitally important in order to interact effectively with the world.

According to Hodge (2012), in U.S. schools extracurricular activities are being eliminated in order to keep up with the No Child Left behind Act (2001), which instructed all U.S. public schools to ensure a particular level of English proficiency. These schools have to assess learners' proficiency in English skills annually. Learners who seem to have limited English proficiency are provided with a programme called "Release Time", during which these learners receive spiritual instruction once a week for an hour. Hodge states that school officials thought Release Time would hinder the academic progress of these learners, but instead it seems to have improved their academic performance in standard tests.

4.5.5 Learners' lack of expressive ability leads to additional challenges for educators

4.6.5.1 Time constraints

The respondents observed how their learners' lack of expressive ability, and the pressure on them to improve this, resulted in significant demands on their time and energy.

Participant C: Yes, perhaps time is a hindrance as well as the fact that some other learners need attention.

Participant E: *There is nothing I have done to them. I think if I can stick to my subject improvement plan, there can be an improvement. Due to time restriction, I end up not doing what I said I will do.*

Participant G: *Individual attention is also the basis of mastering expressive skills, but due to limited time and overcrowding; it is not easy to assist learners as we would like to.*

In their study, Tsheko and Mogapi (2015) mention that primary educators in Botswana are concerned about time allocation, especially in relation to story writing and letter writing, as they spend a lot of time teaching learners the format and procedures of writing. Moreover, the educators point out that learners also need time to brainstorm, draft and edit their work, and that the allocated time only benefits those learners who can already read and write fast. Tsheko and Mogapi (2015) add that learners in rural areas often do not have access to most of the things that they are asked to write about, so the socio-economic background of the learners should be taken into account as well. More time needs to be taken to provide these learners with adequate context to allow them to complete the task.

4.5.5.2 Lack of parental involvement

Lack of parental involvement was another challenge identified by the respondents, who mentioned that it seems as if education has no value to the parents and the community they are servicing.

Participant C: *Yes I have consulted them, it is hard for them to hear that their children are struggling at school. It is embarrassing to them, so they don't come as a result, we end up playing a bigger role as educators. The parents can be defensive because they feel embarrassed of the situation.*

Participant D: *Yes I have, in most cases they do not come. I think it is because they already know what I am going to say or they are embarrassed because of the barriers to learning their children encounter.*

Participant E: *During holidays I communicated with parents through WhatsApp,*

asking them if they could buy reading books that were on sale for their kids to read. Those were grade two books and they were going to be read by grade fives. Their response was I need to stop wasting their data its holidays. Parents whom their children do not need support agreed to by the books.

Participant G: Parents not giving enough support to the school and to their children's work.

McIntyre et al. (2017) state that for expressive English language skills to be enhanced, massive support is needed from different stakeholders — parents, educators and language pathologists. Jali (2014) shares the same sentiment, stating that all stakeholders need to be involved in strengthening expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom.

The importance of parents in particular is shown by a number of researchers. Yeung and King (2015) point out that parents in China play an important role in teaching their children English as a second language. Boardman, Greenberg, Vining and Weimer (2017) state that parents in Australia are eager to be part in their children's education, and want to be reading coaches and classroom assistants. However, schools do not give them the opportunity to participate, and want to simply report to parents about their children's performance. As a result, educators are missing out on the opportunity to work with skilled people in the wider school community.

Banerjee, Harrell and Johnson (2011) find that parental commitment promotes good educational outcomes at primary and secondary school level. Furthermore, they state that positive relations between children and their parents are fostered when parents assist children with scheduling homework. Parental contribution in Banerjee et al.'s (2011) study includes attending school activities and having meetings with the educators.

Tamis-LeMonda et al. (2012) support the finding that parental involvement promotes good educational outcomes. They state that language skills are developed as early as 24 months, and that parents who use different vocalizations and gestures on a daily basis to communicate with their infants expand their infants' communicative styles and instill knowledge and culture.

Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2007) observe that parental involvement

depends on the personal skills and the knowledge parents have. For instance, a parent is more likely to help with homework in a field that he or she is good at. Parents can be involved at home or at school. At school they can volunteer their expertise, and at home they can be positively involved with their children's schoolwork.

4.6 RESEARCH QUESTION 3: HOW CAN EXPRESSIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS IN THE INCLUSIVE INTERMEDIATE PHASE CLASSROOM BE PROMOTED?

The respondents put forward a range of suggestions on how to promote expressive skills in English. These suggestions are grouped into four main areas:

1. Making English the LoLT in the foundation phase
2. Using a differentiated curriculum
3. Using teaching aids and planning lessons carefully
4. Providing emotional support.

These are discussed below.

4.6.1 Making English the LoLT in the foundation phase

A number of the respondents supported the use of English as the LoLT in the foundation phase:

Participant A: Education officials in the Department of Education should consult with the teachers first before they do their planning. I don't think it is a good idea that foundation phase learn in home language and start using second language in the intermediate phase. It is very confusing; take for instance in mathematics, a triangle is called 'nxande' only to find that the learner will never hear or see that word until s/he finishes school because it will lose its meaning the moment s/he gets into intermediate phase. It will change to 'triangle', now what is the purpose of teaching something that will never be used again? If English can be used as a medium of instruction as from grade 1, the problems that are experienced in Grade

4 can be minimized.

Participant C: *I can say majority of learners are battling when they go to Grade 4 as they now start to learn all subjects in English except for isiZulu. It would be much better if they had already started using English as a language of learning and teaching at the entry grade.*

Participant D: *It is not easy for them as I have said before, they started learning using isiZulu, it would be better if they started learning in English from the beginning.*

Participant F: *Most of the time is spent on helping learners adjust from mother tongue to English, something that should have been introduced in Grade 1.*

The responses above support Landsberg et al.'s (2005) finding that reinforcing English second language skills takes more than six years. Jali (2014) states that exposing learners to both their home language and their FAL assists them in the translation and transmission of knowledge. Cummins and Davison (2007) agree that the development of home language skills connects well with the development of FAL skills, and that language and reading difficulties can be avoided if learners are provided with effective language development in the foundation phase.

4.6.2 Using a differentiated curriculum

The respondents explained how they used a differentiated approach to the curriculum in order to cater for all levels of their learners' ability in the LoLT, particularly the weaker students:

Participant A: *I include them in my lesson planning, find their main problem and give them something suitable for their ability like giving them books from lower grades. I identify the learners with learning barriers and screen them for the purpose of giving support. I simplify the content and use concrete examples to give meaning to what is taught.*

Participant G: *Once I have identified them, I group them according to their*

abilities so that the same work can be simplified for them. Some of them show improvement while others take time to improve. I monitor them so that they can all participate.

The approaches used by these respondents is supported by Mantshongo (2015) and Burgoyne et al. (2013), who state that it is best to start by identifying the barriers to learning experienced by the learners, and then planning intervention programmes. Liton (2016) recommends that educators take the lead in acknowledging diversity in terms of learners' variances, recognized inadequacies, and socio-cultural issues in order to be able to diagnose and minimize barriers to learning.

To assist educators in identifying learners who experience difficulties, SIAS (2014) was developed in order to provide a policy framework for the standardization of the procedures to identify, assess, and provide programmes for all learners who need extra support to enhance participation and inclusion in school. However, Naidu (2016) does not believe that SIAS has brought any positive changes or additional support for learners who experience barriers to learning. He states that SIAS has failed to provide the necessary support that is needed due to its complex administration, which deters educators from referring learners with barriers to learning for support. They say filling in the forms is difficult and time consuming.

An approach to teaching based on Ubuntu philosophy would be similar to children at home sitting around the fire listening to an elder telling stories. Educators should be trained to read in that manner and encourage learners to involve actions, facial expressions and tone of voice to add meaning to the story. Children never forget stories told around the fire, so if educators adopt this style of teaching and learning it would work in their favour. Learners would know how to read and even reflect on the story they read. Differentiation is inherent in fireside story telling. There are stories for infants if you want them to sleep, stories for schoolgoing children and stories for young people who have boyfriends and girlfriends.

Smith (2017) describes Ubuntu as a process that includes both hostility towards and restoration of one another in our communities. Consequently, saints and sinners are well understood in the philosophy of Ubuntu. Smith (2017) breaks the word Ubuntu into *ubu* and *-ntu*, which are inseparable from each other, and links it with the isiZulu saying *zifa*

ngamvuyinye (“an injury to one is an injury to all”). In a classroom situation, this is relevant to learners working in groups (peer teaching) with the intention of helping each other succeed. Louw (2010) cited by Smith (2017) reveals that while people cannot be shielded from evil and suffering, they can be supported through language and participation, and achieve wholeness again.

4.6.3 Using teaching aids and planning lessons carefully

The respondents explained how they use teaching aids, and how they plan their lessons carefully in order to make them both interesting and beneficial to all types of learners:

Participant A: *I carefully plan the teaching and learning activities in such a way that they are manageable to learners and examples are concrete and within their reach. We have all the teaching aids we need because if you need something our principal buys it according to educator’s request.*

Participant B: *I always make my lesson interesting. It becomes easy for them to enjoy the lesson unaware that they are learning, more especially that I teach NS/Tech most of my teaching is practical.*

Participant D: *I check the list of progressed learners in the grade, when I have screened them I then plan according to learner’s abilities. Teaching aids like charts, books and real object also help in simplifying the content.*

A classroom observation was conducted to observe how the respondents planned and conducted their lessons. A summary of the researcher’s observations can be found in Table 4.1.

Table 0.1: Classroom observation

Grade	Section	Number of learners in the classroom	Atmosphere	Material/resources	Lesson presentation
5	A	65	Relaxed & disciplined	Available teaching aids	Presented very well

6	B	63	Flexible & relaxed	Teaching aids were available even on the walls	Outstanding presentation
7	B	48	Relaxed	Available teaching aids	Well presented & clear introduction

Participants were observed on different dates according to their personal timetables. In Grade 7B, the educator introduced her lesson very well, explaining the types of words and slowly getting into pronouns as the topic of the lesson. Flash cards were used to differentiate types of pronouns. A lack of engagement on the part of most learners was observed. Some learners were shy and did not want to embarrass themselves, even though they knew the answers. The educator tried to include everyone, even those who were passive. One learner was instructed to pronounce the word “pronoun”, as they were asked to read it from the chalkboard, but she said she could not pronounce it. To my surprise, when the educator asked her to try, she read the word and pronounced it well. This shows that some learners simply have low self-esteem. Other learners enjoyed the lesson, and it was clearly exciting for them to use flash cards to differentiate types of pronouns.

Similar observations applied to the Grades 5 and Grade 6 class. Some learners worked with the educators while others did not want to say a word. The educators would even get very close to them, and give them individual attention while others were getting on with the activities. Limited vocabulary seemed to be the main factor, as some learners would give their answers in isiZulu. Learners were commended for their efforts even when their answers were wrong.

4.6.4 Providing emotional support

Some of the respondents indicated their concern for the emotional wellbeing of their learners:

Participant B: *I am a friendly teacher by nature, I always make my lesson interesting.*

Participant C: *Yes there is improvement, as long as you give them time and a little bit of kindness, show them that you can get there together; they come around. Teaching is also about nurturing and loving as some of learners lack love. They start trusting you and want to prove to you that they can do it.*

Participant E: *Learners need love, but there is too much of them. It is difficult to attend to them individually, maybe we need to have a remedial class where identified learners with difficulties can go.*

The above responses show clearly that their concern is not simply about teaching, but also about taking care of their learners, and showing respect and concern for them. Some of their learners are from broken families and they lack love. So if they get love from educators and classmates, school becomes a home away from home, and they will do their best to try to please their educators and peers. Ubuntu philosophy emphasizes respect, love and humanity, which is what the respondents above are talking about. This would translate into a relaxed atmosphere and interesting lessons in a classroom where every learner feels welcome and cared for.

Ball (2013) confirms the importance of love and kindness, and describes how storytelling provides a mechanism for its expression. She describes how learners enjoy storytelling and get excited the moment she mentions it. Learners retell the story, which enables them to express ideas and concepts orally and to have fun with the language. With storytelling come actions and gestures, and a rising and falling intonation which engages the learners so that they pay more attention. In other words, storytelling brings warmth and a sense of belonging.

In a study on learners in the U.S., Hodge (2012) describes how learners with limited proficiency in English were provided with a programme (Release Time) which released them for spiritual instruction once a week. Their language proficiency showed a great improvement, as the spiritual instruction involved listening and speaking, and reading and writing skills. The main purpose of the programme was to offer learners an inclusive education that does not discriminate, that emphasizes that everyone can make progress irrespective of any barriers to learning, and that makes learners feel loved and important. The focus was put on whatever they were able to do, not on what they could not do. In this way, learners would want to make the educator or anyone else proud of them.

Ubuntu philosophy corresponds well with the respondents' concern for their students' wellbeing, and is supported by Thomas, Silverman and Nelson (2015), who describe Ubuntu as the enablement of people by other people in order for them to be the best people they can be and to have good relationships through generous contact with others.

Thomas (2015) describes the way he grew up as the last-born in his family. His family showed love and kindness to each other, to extended family and to the community, to such an extent that even the gangsters of the community respected his parents and knew that their family was off limits when it came to negative acts. Thomas describes how thugs would protect his parents because of the Ubuntu that they had shown to the family and the community at large. He says his mother believed that if people knew each other well, everybody could become better.

I agree that knowing all one's learners and knowing their background could improve educational performance. Love and kindness conquer all. If learners feel that they are all included and welcome, they feel happy and strive to do their best. Some of our learners lack love from home for various reasons. So if school becomes a home away from home, this could work in their favour.

Thomas quotes Luke 12:48: "To everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked". This means that those whom God has given talent, wisdom and knowledge should use these attributes wisely by helping others. Everyone feels proud and self-confident when people they have helped become victorious. Furthermore, Thomas (2015) states that teaching using Ubuntu as a basic philosophy means that the educator bears in mind each and every learner's abilities, and the fact that every learner can learn. Learners need to be encouraged through interaction and scaffolding to adopt a positive and constructive attitude towards their learning.

Thomas (2015) also mentions that learners at primary level should learn to read, write, and calculate while having more time for singing, dancing, drawing and playing, as these activities help them to be happy at school. He also recommends that for effective individual attention, the number of learners in the classroom at primary level should not exceed twenty.

4.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented an analysis of the data that was collected using the three research instruments: questionnaires, structured interviews and classroom observations. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the collected data in light of the three specific research questions, in order to determine how to enhance expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom. The educators' experiences were interpreted and analyzed using Ubuntu philosophy, which argues that experiences are produced through relations amongst individuals in diverse frameworks. In this study, the framework was inclusive education.

The findings showed that the respondents, all English educators in the intermediate phase, identify listening and speaking, reading and comprehension, writing and presenting, and language structure as expressive skills in the intermediate phase classroom. They also identified five general reasons for enhancing learners' expressive English language skills in this phase: English is a new LoLT for most South African learners in the intermediate phase; learners' inability to express themselves well creates barriers to learning; frustration on the part of learners leads to a lack of engagement; the importance of learning English as a common language; and the fact that learners' lack of expressive ability creates challenges for their educators, who need assistance and support from all the stakeholders involved in the teaching and learning process, both at school and at home.

The respondents described several intervention strategies that they were either already using or recommended to try to provide an inclusive English language education in their classrooms. They suggested making English the LoLT in the foundation phase too. They described using a differentiated approach to the curriculum and to lesson planning. They also described their use of teaching aids, and how providing emotional support to their learners was beneficial for educational outcomes.

The following chapter summarises and discusses the findings, notes the limitations of this study, and presents various recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented a thematic analysis of the data in light of the three specific research questions, in order to determine how to enhance expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom. The educators' experiences were interpreted and analyzed using Ubuntu philosophy. This chapter presents a summary of the research process, and a summary of the findings of this study. The experiences of mainstream educators who teach learners whose home language is not the LoLT are presented, followed by intervention strategies to assist in promoting expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom. The chapter also provides recommendations for the types of support needed to enhance these skills. The limitations of the study are noted, and areas for further research are proposed.

5.2 SUMMARY OF STUDY

The purpose of this study was to explore how to enhance expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom. A critical paradigm was chosen as the framework that guided this study, as the researcher sought an understanding of intermediate phase learners' failure to master expressive English language skills. A qualitative research design was also chosen as its methods produce rich data, which was deemed beneficial for this study. The study used three data gathering instruments: questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. The research was guided by the three following questions:

1. What are the expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom?
2. Why do we need to enhance expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom?

3. How can expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom be promoted?

Thematic data analysis was used to identify patterns and themes that would help I to understand the educators' experiences in teaching learners who find it difficult to express themselves in English as the LoLT, the reasons for the learners' failure to express themselves well, and the intervention strategies employed by the educators. A summary of the findings is presented below.

5.3 THE EXPERIENCES OF MAINSTREAM EDUCATORS WHO TEACH LEARNERS WHOSE HOME LANGUAGE IS NOT THE LANGUAGE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING (LOLT)

The educators in this study seemed to share some common ideas regarding English as an FAL LoLT, and as a common language used widely both in South Africa and globally. Because English is the language of education and business, the educators in this study are trying their level best to ensure that their learners master it. This situation is found elsewhere too and the reviewed literature shows that many other countries (the U.S., Australia and China, for example) also experience the problem of using English as an LoLT when it is different from the home language of many of the learners. While the educators in this study strongly believe that it is essential to master English as the global language of education and commerce, and as a common language in South Africa, learners' home languages should not be neglected. The educators found it very difficult to introduce English as the LoLT in the intermediate phase, and expressed a desire for English language skills to be developed much earlier, in the foundation phase. They argue that if English was used as the LoLT in the foundation phase, learners would not experience the expressive difficulties that they do, which negatively impact teaching and learning.

5.3.1 Educators' knowledge and understanding of the concept of inclusive education

The concept of inclusive education was generally well understood by the educators who were selected as participants for this study. In their own definitions they demonstrated

that they understood that inclusive education is broadly intended to ensure that all learners are successfully included in a common classroom environment, where teaching is differentiated to accommodate all types of learners, regardless of their race, gender, socio-economic background, ability or lack of ability, culture, religion or language. In this way, non-discrimination is practised. However, it was evident that while they understood the general theory of inclusive education, they battled to implement it, due to insufficient training or no training at all, and due to a lack of resources. They do not have enough knowledge to be able to put inclusive education into practice effectively. As a result, they develop negative feelings about the pressures inclusive education brings to the classroom, and sometimes feel that it is an abstract policy rather than a concrete reality.

Inclusive education is one of many things that these educators are expected to deal with in the classroom, but were never trained for, such as dealing with pregnant learners, learners who carry weapons to school, and learners who abuse substances. They feel that in addition to being educators, they are required to be police officers, nurses, social workers, parents, etc. While these educators recognise the value of an inclusive approach to education, it is one more responsibility that they are utterly unequipped for in a context in which too many demands are already placed on them.

5.3.2 English as the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) in the intermediate phase

The majority of South African learners are taught in their home language in the foundation phase, but once they enter the intermediate phase the LoLT switches to English in the majority of schools. The educators in this study described how using an FAL as the LoLT poses obvious challenges to the learners, which is compounded by the shift to more complex concepts during this phase. These complex concepts must be taught using a language that many of the learners are not yet adequately proficient in. Many of the learners only acquire and practise English language skills at school, and as a result have a very limited general and conceptual vocabulary, creating a serious language barrier that is also a critical barrier to effective teaching and learning.

The majority of South African learners in the intermediate phase find it difficult to express themselves in English, both orally and in writing. Their understanding is also severely

limited, and many of them experience serious difficulties with reading. The educators in this study described how reading simple content is an enormous problem, as learners who cannot read at the appropriate level cannot engage with the appropriate content or follow instructions on their own. As a consequence, the educators are required to take time out of the curriculum to try to remedy the situation, by backtracking to skills and content from lower grades, and by taking additional time during class to provide extra support, for example by explaining at greater length and writing difficult words on the chalkboard.

According to the educators in this study, they lack the required support from the wider educational community (the national and provincial administration, school administration and parents or caregivers) to deal with the serious learning issues created by English as an FAL LoLT. Educators do not receive explicit training in inclusive education practices, and do not receive additional resources to effectively implement an inclusive approach. Parents are often unwilling or unable to assist their children, as many of them are illiterate or received an inadequate education themselves. Because the school is in a rural area, the socio-economic context does not support effective learning, and some parents and learners do not even see the importance of education.

5.3.3 Barriers to learning caused by lack of expressive English language skills

As mentioned above, the English language as an FAL LoLT becomes a barrier to learning for the majority of intermediate phase learners in South Africa, thus preventing learners from performing to their natural abilities. While the issue starts off as a language issue rather than a cognitive or a conceptual one, as learners move through the more complex intermediate phase, an unaddressed language barrier starts to create an ever increasing conceptual barrier as scaffolded learning and understanding becomes impossible for them. Constructing a simple sentence becomes a problem, and so learners' ability to express logic and order ideas becomes a problem.

In South Africa, learners need to achieve 50% to pass their home language, 40% to pass their FAL, and 40% to pass mathematics. Passing these three subjects is essential, and failing one of these subjects is considered an overall failure, on the basis of which learners should not progress. In spite of the obvious language barriers, all subjects except for the home language are taught in English, an FAL. The possibility of successful teaching and

learning — especially in the important intermediate phase where English is used as the LoLT for the first time — is extremely low.

5.3.4 Frustration and a lack of engagement on the part of learners

The educators in this study described how learners experience a great deal of frustration as a result of the barriers to learning caused by their lack of expressive skills in the FAL LoLT. As mentioned in the reviewed literature, it takes more than six years to master an FAL (Landsberg et al., 2005), yet learners in the foundation phase are taught exclusively in their home language. This becomes an enormous barrier to teaching and learning in the intermediate phase, which is conducted in LoLT that is also an FAL for the majority of learners. The findings of this study showed that learners often misbehave and do not engage in classroom activities, as a result of feeling shut out from learning due to the language barrier they are experiencing. Educators often get frustrated and perceive the learners as rude and badly behaved, when in fact the learners are experiencing overwhelming difficulties with the FAL. The majority of learners only use English at school, which makes it difficult for them to master the language; consequently, they experience a low sense of efficacy and self-esteem in the classroom, and resort to disengagement as a way of avoiding embarrassment, or even dropping out of the education system completely if progress seems hopeless.

5.3.5 English as a common language

The educators in this study indicated that in spite of the problems caused by using English as an FAL LoLT, it is vital for their students to master the language. In South Africa, and globally, English functions as a common language that acts as a communication bridge between people who speak different languages. It is the global language of education, commerce, and international communication. In South Africa most job interviews are conducted in English, and English is the official language of the legal system even though interpreters are available in courts to interpret from English to various native languages. In South Africa, English is therefore the LoLT in most schools, in spite of the fact that the country's Constitution designates eleven official languages. English is therefore

simultaneously very important to master, but also very problematic as an FAL LoLT, as described above. This problem is not unique to South Africa, however, and is also experienced in the U.S., Australia, China, and Saudi Arabia, for example. The research findings of this study show that the educators are trying to encourage learners to value and engage with English as a life skill that they will use to further their education and communicate successfully, wherever they go.

5.3.6 Educators' challenges

The educators in this study demonstrated a willingness to help learners master English language skills, but they explained how the success of their efforts was constantly hampered by specific challenges that made it difficult for teaching and learning to be successful. These challenges fell into two main categories: time constraints, and lack of support.

The educators explained how classroom overcrowding prevented them from attending to learners individually, as there simply was not enough time to do so. The curriculum also specifies particular time allocations for different skills, and complying with these time allocations leaves the educators with insufficient time to provide adequate additional assistance to learners who need extra support to master the learning content. When English is introduced as the LoLT in the intermediate phase, learners experience many difficulties, particularly in Grade 4. A limited and inadequate vocabulary results in a great deal of confusion for learners, and this confusion is compounded and lasts throughout the intermediate phase and beyond.

The other main challenge described by the educators in this study was parents who do not support or become involved with their children's education. The school at which the study was conducted is located in a poor rural area where education is not greatly valued or understood by the community. Parents do not often engage with the school, even when educators ask to meet with them to address their children's problems. Some parents are clearly embarrassed about their children's performance, and some are defensive because they are undereducated or illiterate themselves, and are therefore ill equipped to understand their children's problems or assist with solving them. The community in which the school is located largely believes that educators are solely responsible for

teaching their children because they are paid to do so. Parents and caregivers therefore do not believe that it is their responsibility to help learners with homework, but rather believe that it is the educators' job to teach their children. This contrasts strongly with the parental involvement shown in other cultures and other parts of the world, where parents are committed to an involvement in their children's learning. The literature reviewed showed how Chinese (Yeung & King, 2015) and Australian (Dennaoui et al., 2016) parents, for example, are very involved in their children's education and in helping them to master English.

5.4 INTERVENTION STRATEGIES TO ASSIST IN PROMOTING EXPRESSIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS IN THE INCLUSIVE INTERMEDIATE PHASE CLASSROOM

5.4.1 Teaching English as the language of learning and teaching in the foundation phase

The educators in this study were in favour of the idea that English be used as the LoLT in the foundation phase. They felt that English language skills needed to be introduced and developed well in advance of the intermediate phase. They expressed concern that the DoE makes pedagogical decisions without consulting them, and that these decisions are often made by people who do not even teach. Instead they set policy without understanding the context or implications, and are not the ones who are affected when these potentially ill-informed policies are put into practice. The educators expressed a desire to be involved in policy decision making. They stated that more time needs to be spent on helping learners to adjust from learning in their home language to learning in English as an FAL, and that learners should therefore be introduced to English in the foundation phase. The educators believe that an enormously positive difference would be made if English were used as the LoLT from the start.

5.4.2 Using a differentiated curriculum

Learners have diverse abilities, and the educators in this study understood the importance of accommodating all learners in an inclusive classroom. The educators described how

they screen the learners as they conduct their normal teaching. When they identify learners who are experiencing difficulties, they assess these learners for the purpose of giving them the appropriate support for their abilities. The educators described how they plan their lessons in a manner that caters for diverse learners in the same classroom, and modify activities to suit different types of learners. Those learners who show signs of confusion are supported as much as possible until they can do the work on their own (through a scaffolding process).

Some learners improve their performance, but for those who show no improvement, an SBST intervenes. Their parents are also informed, and if there is still no improvement these learners are referred to the DBST. However, most educators are not happy with referring learners to the DBST, as they state that the administrative process takes too long, and many learners are progressed to high school before they receive any assistance. Often the DBST tries to locate the learner at high school, only to find that the learner has already dropped out of the education system.

5.4.3 Teaching aids and lesson planning

The educators in this study were aware that successful teaching and learning starts with the appropriate lesson planning. Well planned lessons make it easier for educators and learners to work together effectively to produce good learning outcomes. At the school at which the study was conducted, the availability of teaching aids was not an issue, as the school principal provided them as per the educators' requests. The only obstacle in this regard was if the teaching aids had not been delivered on time. The educators believed that if lessons were interesting, learners would be able to master skills and content with ease, and therefore felt that it was important to be creative and come up with ideas to stimulate the learners' interest. Charts, real objects and other teaching aids explain and simplify learning content. However, the educators described how learners sometimes got too excited during practical lessons and lost focus in the chaos, and emphasised that learners need to be trained to follow instructions for the smooth running of a practical project or demonstration.

The researcher strongly believes that training learners to follow instructions is a fundamental step in educating them for the real world. For instance, when teaching

reading to Grade 4 learners who have just been introduced to English as the LoLT, an educator cannot simply tell them to respect punctuation marks when they read. At this stage they don't even know what punctuation marks are, and the educator has to frequently remind them. For knowledge to progress, this lesson needs to be practical and physical. For example, learners can rest when there is a full stop, raise their intonation when they encounter a question mark, and using various movements or facial expressions to demonstrate the function of the punctuation marks. Learning punctuation can become a game, especially with punctuation such as exclamation marks, where everyone in the classroom can perform a surprised, angry or forceful actions. While having fun and laughing, learners can also establish a firm understanding of punctuation, and learn to read texts appropriately.

5.4.4 Emotional support

The educators in this study confirmed that emotional support (in the form of kindness and love) was the most significant thing that educators can provide to learners in order for them to feel welcome, included and nurtured. The educators were aware of the importance of providing caring and support to learners who clearly do not receive it at home. However, they mentioned that overcrowding prevents them from providing such support during contact time. They expressed a desire for two to three remedial classes where identified learners could be fully supported in the ways they needed. Even though it is contrary to the idea of inclusive education, the educators felt that skilled remedial educators would be much more effective in supporting learners with barriers to learning, particularly emotional barriers.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to ensure that learners who experience difficulties in expressing themselves in an English language classroom, and the educators who teach them, are properly supported, directed and encouraged to achieve the goal of enhancing expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate classroom.

5.5.1 Training in inclusive education and remedial education for all educators

The educators in this study had a clear basic understanding of inclusive education, but found it difficult to implement. They requested training in the form of professional development in order for them to develop the capacity to implement inclusive education, and to deal with the challenges of trying to create an inclusive language environment for learning. Specific areas that they identified for training were lesson planning for a differentiated curriculum in order to accommodate diverse learners within an inclusive classroom, and effective teaching strategies for engaging learners' interest.

The need for skilled remedial teaching in the intermediate phase is also of the utmost importance, as most learners are not learning effectively due to the language barrier created by the FAL LoLT. The findings of this study reveal that educators are able to support learners to a certain level, but qualified remedial educators are needed to successfully develop learners to achieve their latent ability. It is recommended that as part of the training that all educators undergo to become educators, they should be trained as remedial educators. This would minimise the problem of not having remedial educators on site, as is the case at most rural public schools. Each and every educator would be able to support his or her learners without having to rely on external remedial educators. In this way, all educators would be able to provide the appropriate support to all learners.

5.5.2 Involvement of all stakeholders

The cooperation and interaction of all stakeholders involved in the education of learners needs to be treated as a matter of urgency. Educators, school management teams, DoE officials, parents, school governing bodies, community members, and local business owners are the stakeholders in a school. Their involvement allows for a joint understanding and maximizes the chances of achieving excellence in education. A collaborative effort in addressing the challenges connected with inclusive education is essential.

Educators need more support from the different stakeholders to be able to implement diverse teaching approaches in an inclusive classroom, and to plan and implement intervention strategies. To address the language barrier, it is recommended that learners

are supported in learning English in their community and at home, and not exposed only at school. Parents could buy support materials such as English books and DVDs, or source these from public libraries. The DoE could prioritise the building of media centres that contain supportive material to assist in promoting expressive skills in the English language. Business owners could also make donations to their local schools to fund such resources. Schools should have academic committees where strategies to improve results are discussed, such as providing incentives like academic awards. Parents and the community should be invited to an awards day for the purpose of getting more sponsors and encouraging everyone involved to work even harder, whether they are learners, educators or parents.

5.5.3 Diverse educators

Mixed races of educators – Since many learners are not exposed to English away from school and are unable to speak it in their community, the researcher proposes that diverse educators are sourced for the purpose of exposing learners to English. If learners are only taught by educators who are home language isiZulu speakers themselves, they will not be exposed properly to the LoLT.

5.5.4 English as the language of learning and teaching in the foundation phase

Education using English as the LoLT should not start in the intermediate phase, but in the foundation phase. If learners start the intermediate phase without the relevant terminology/vocabulary and communication skills in the LoLT, it is difficult for them to engage with the intermediate phase content. It is suggested that learners should start to use the LoLT that will be used at school during preschool, as reinforcement of the FAL takes more than six years (Landsberg et al., 2005). The learners' home language needs to be taught as a subject, and their culture and language needs to be supported by their parents at home.

5.5.5 Educators' input to inform policy

The educators in this study felt that policy makers make decisions about what is supposed to take place in the classroom without consulting the educators who are responsible for implementing the policies. An important example is the policy of using the learners' home language as the LoLT during the foundation phase. The educators stated that they were not consulted on this, and asked for their input on such important issues to be heard, because they do not recommend the use of the home language as the LoLT during the foundation phase.

5.6 CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED DURING THIS STUDY

I began having panic attacks and anxiety attacks during the course of this research, due to the process of capturing and expressing issues and experiences that I was directly involved, and was hospitalized. I am extremely grateful to the social worker and the psychologist who treated me, because I left hospital after seven days a completely different person. However, this resulted in delays to the research process.

An educator from the senior phase, who taught English language in Grade 7, replaced me as a participant. She did this unwillingly, and even with support and encouragement she took her time to participate and caused further delays. Getting an appointment with her was very difficult, let alone the classroom observation. She kept on changing the date without letting me know.

5.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The experiences of educators who teach learners who find it difficult to express themselves in English as the LoLT were investigated in this study. The study was limited to seven participants in a single educational institution, and therefore the findings of the study cannot be generalised.

5.8 AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The following areas for further research are proposed:

1. The exploration of the experiences of educators was conducted at a single institution, thus there is a need for further investigation of educators' experiences at other schools.
2. There is also a need for a similar study with a larger sample size so that the findings can be generalized.
3. Investigating the perspective of learners concerning their difficulties in English expression and how it leads to barriers to learning is also necessary.
4. It would be worthwhile investigating if educators are sufficiently empowered to implement inclusive education.

5.9 CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to investigate expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom. The findings of the study underlined the need for educator training in inclusive education, for the collaboration of all stakeholders in the education system, for English to be the LoLT in the foundation phase, and for educators' experiences and input to be taken into account in the formulation of policy.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Permission to conduct research

APPENDIX B: Ethical clearance

APPENDIX C: Gatekeeper permission

APPENDIX D: Informed consent

APPENDIX E: Letter of consent

APPENDIX F: Questionnaire (Principals)

APPENDIX G: Questionnaire (Educators)

APPENDIX H: Interview questions (Principals)

APPENDIX I: Interview questions (Educators)

APPENDIX J: Observation sheet (Educators)

APPENDIX K: Editor's certificate

APPENDIX L: Turnitin report

APPENDIX A: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Phindile Duma

Tel: 033 392 1063

Ref.:2/4/8/1553

Ms TP Mbili
PO Box 1526
Link Hills
3652
Dear Ms Mbili

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **“ENHANCING EXPRESSIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS IN THE INCLUSIVE INTERMEDIATE PHASE CLASSROOM”**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 01 June 2018 to 01 October 2020.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, Pinetown District

Dr. EV Nzama
Head of Department: Education
Date: 19 June 2018

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Postal Address: Private Bag X9137 • Pietermaritzburg • 3200 • Republic of South Africa

Physical Address: 247 Burger Street • Anton Lembede Building • Pietermaritzburg • 3201

Tel.: +27 33 392 1063 • Fax.: +27 033 392 1203 • Email: Phindile.Duma@kzndoe.gov.za • Web: www.kzneducation.gov.za

Facebook: KZNDOE... Twitter: @DBE_KZN... Instagram: [kzn_education](https://www.instagram.com/kzn_education)... Youtube: [kzndoe](https://www.youtube.com/kzndoe)

...Championing Quality Education - Creating and Securing a Brighter Future

APPENDIX B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



20 August 2018

Mrs Thamekile Patricia Mbili 217030141
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mrs Mbili

Protocol Reference Number : HSS/0645/018M

Project title: Enhancing inclusive expressive skills in the English language intermediate Phase classroom

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received 8 June 2018, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Professor Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

cc Supervisor: Dr V Ja ram
cc Academic Leader Research: Dr SB Khoza
cc School Administrators: Ms Sheryl Jeenaarain

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X67331, Durban 4003

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 960 3507/00524567 Facsimile: 127 331 290 4609 Email: ethics@ukzn.ac.za / ethics@ukzn.ac.za / ethics@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



Funding Centres: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

APPENDIX C: GATEKEEPER PERMISSION

P O BOX 1526
Link Hills
3652

Letter of request for permission to conduct research at your school

Dear Principal

My name is Thandekile Mbili, I am currently studying towards the Masters of Education (M. Ed) degree at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN).

I am conducting a research study as a fulfilment for this degree. The title of my study is: *Enhancing expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom*. The objectives of the study are:

- To explore the expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom.
- To explain the expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom.
- To promote expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom.

I hereby request your approval to use the school premises, three English educators, three content educators and yourself in this study. I will be using various data collecting tools such as questionnaires, interviews and observations. The classroom observation will only be for English language educators. Interviews will be conducted outside the normal contact time (in the afternoon). The participants will be notified in advance of the times and dates scheduled for interviews. The data for interviews will be audio recorded using a digital device. Data will be then transcribed for analysis purposes. All data recordings and transcripts will be stored in a locked cabinet in the project leaders' office for a period of five years, it will be disposed after this period. All information collected will be for research purpose only.

Identities of participants will be protected by using pseudo names. Anonymity in terms of responses, evidence and documentation used in the research will be guaranteed. Participants are at liberty to withdraw at any stage of the research and there will be no negative nor undesirable consequences for that decision. Participation is voluntarily, there are no benefits or monetary involvement except for gaining more knowledge and understanding.

The supervisor of my study is Dr Visvaranie Jairam. For further queries and clarifications, please feel free to contact her on the contact details below:

Dr Visvaranie Jairam
UKZN School of Education, office no. : CS133 Main Tutorial Building
Edgewood campus
Tel.: 0827700509
Email: jairam@ukzn.ac.za

Yours faithfully

Thandekile Mbili

APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

I _____ (full name) have been informed about the study with the title: Enhancing expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom. I confirm that I understand the content of this document. The nature and the procedures of the study have been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study and the answers have been given to the best of my satisfaction.

I declare my participation to the study and give consent for the questionnaires, interviews and observations to take place at the school. I also give consent to the interviews to be audio taped and generated data to be used for research findings.

If I have any queries and concerns about any aspect of the study and the researcher, I may contact the supervisor.

Dr Visvaranie Jairam
UKZN school of Education, office no.: CS 133 Main tutorial Building
Edgewood campus
Tel.: 0827700509
Email: jairam@ukzn.ac.za

I hereby give consent to:

Audio record my interview YES/NO

I understand that:

I am free to withdraw from the study at any stage.

- That I will have access to all transcripts and have right to change, revise data that I have given.
- That my identity will be protected at all times.
- That my participation is voluntary.
- That there are no benefits that I will receive.

Date

Signature of participant

School stamp

APPENDIX E: LETTER OF CONSENT

PO BOX 1526
Link Hills
3652

Request for permission to conduct research

Dear participant

My name is Thandekile Mbili, I am currently studying towards the masters of Education (M. Ed.) degree at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (UKZN).

I hereby request your approval to be one of the participants for this study. I have selected three English language educators and three content subjects' educators. You will be used as participant to collect data in this study. I will be using various data collecting tools such as questionnaires, interviews and observations to gather information. All interviews will be conducted outside the normal contact time (in the afternoon). The data for interviews will be audio recorded using a digital device. It will then be transcribed for analysis purposes. All data recordings and transcripts will be kept in a locked cabinet in the project leaders' office for a period of five years, it will then be disposed. All information collected will be for research purpose only.

Your identity will be protected by using pseudo name. Anonymity in terms of your responses, evidence and documentation used in the research is guaranteed. You are free to withdraw at any stage of the research should you feel uncomfortable. There will be no negative nor undesirable consequences for that decision. Participation is voluntary, there are no benefits or monetary involvement except for gaining more knowledge and understanding.

If you have any queries, please feel free to contact the supervisor of my study Dr Visvaranie Jairam. Her details are as follows:

Dr Visvaranie Jairam
University of KwaZulu-Natal School of Education, Office no. CS 133 Main Tutorial Building
Edgewood campus
Tel.: 0827700509
Email: jairam@ukzn.ac.za

Yours faithfully

Thandekile Mbili

APPENDIX F: QUESTIONNAIRE (PRINCIPAL)

1. As a mainstream school how do you support learners with medical diseases? E.g. Epilepsy, etc.

2. Does the school have school-based support team? If yes, is it functional?

3. How does your school support learners who suffer from neurological diseases? E.g. ADHD, dyslexia, and autism.

4. What is your understanding on school based support team?

5. How does the school motivate learners to improve their academic performance?

6. Language is a key factor that assists learners to master the other subjects, how do you go about as a school to promote language skills.

7. What is the most common challenge the school experiences?

8. As a school how do you deal with ill-disciplined learners?

9. Does the school communicate with the parents? If yes, how does it happen?

10. Are there any structures that the school is in connection with for the betterment of the school in terms of enlightening the learners?

APPENDIX G: QUESTIONNAIRE (EDUCATORS)

1. English is a medium of instruction in this school, what effect does that have in your teaching?

2. How do learners embrace learning in another language that is foreign to them?

3. What does the term **barriers to learning** mean?

4. What is your understanding of inclusive education?

5. Do you have learners who are experiencing barriers to learning in your classroom?
If yes do you have a program in place for them?

6. Does the school support team assist you with the above mentioned learners?

7. Have you received any workshops on how to deal with learners with barriers to learning? If yes, were they beneficial to you?

8. Are there any challenges that prevent you from supporting learners with barriers to learning?

9. How do you plan to overcome those challenges?

10. How do parents of your learners cooperate with you?

APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (PRINCIPAL)

1. How many learners are enrolled at your school?
2. Does your school experience overcrowding problems? If yes, how do you plan to deal with the situation?
3. Does your school have a nutrition programme?
4. Does the school get support from the outside structures? E.g. health services, crime prevention, social welfare etc.
5. Are there any workshops organized for newly appointed educators and old educators to keep up with the strategies of teaching and assessing?
6. Is there any budget the school set aside to cater for academic motivation programs?
7. Does the school have an academic motivation committee?
8. Does the school have library? If yes, is it functional or beneficial to the learners?
9. Are there any learning aids the school has other than wall charts and text books?
10. If not, are there any plans to invest in them? E.g. media room with all the equipment.

APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (EDUCATORS)

1. As an educator in the intermediate phase, what are your experiences when it comes to learners` communicative skills?
2. According to your view, how do learners adjust from mother tongue to first additional language which is English?
3. Are there any difficulties learners experience during adjustment? If yes, how do you support those learners?
4. What do you think is the basis of mastering expressive skills in the classroom?
5. What are other structures that could assist in learners mastering expressive skills?
6. How do you deal with learners who find it difficult to read in your classroom?
7. How do you encourage your learners to speak freely in the classroom?
8. What do you think is the problem of learners who have difficulties in communicative skills?
9. Have you consulted the parents/guardians of these learners? If yes, what was the way forward?
10. Do you see any improvement since you started supporting the learners? If you are.

APPENDIX J: OBSERVATION SHEET (EDUCATOR)

The observation will be based in the classroom to observe lesson presentation, atmosphere in the classroom, resource materials and key documents.

LESSON PRESENTATION	ATMOSPHERE	RESOURCE MATERIALS	KEY DOCUMENTS

APPENDIX K: EDITOR'S CERTIFICATE

P.O. Box 100715

Scottsville

3209

4 February, 2019

To whom it may concern,

I have edited the following document for language errors, and in the process have checked the referencing and layout:

Title: Expressive English language skills in the inclusive intermediate phase classroom.

Author: Thandekile Patricia Mbili

Degree: Master of Education (Educational Psychology)

Institution: University of KwaZulu-Natal

Student number: 217080141

Supervisor: Dr V. Jairam

Please feel free to contact me should you have any queries.



Kind regards,

Debbie Turrell

debbie.turrell@gmail.com

APPENDIX L: TURNITIN REORT

Enhancing inclusive expressive skills in the English language
intemediate phase classroom

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