

**Examining curriculum change in English language teaching from  
O-Level to the IGCSE curriculum in four selected high  
schools in Swaziland.**

by

**Esther Siphiwe Mvubu**

Supervisor: Dr. T. Mbatha

Co-supervisor: Prof. R. Sookrajh

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, in  
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Education.

October 2010.

## **ABSTRACT**

This study was undertaken to explore curriculum change from the General Certificate in Education (GCE) Ordinary Level (O-Level) to the International General Certificate in Secondary Education (IGCSE) with regard to English language teaching in four high schools in the Manzini region of Swaziland. The study investigated teachers' perceptions of the curriculum change and how they implemented it. The impact of the training teachers received in preparation for the introduction of the IGCSE English curriculum was also explored.

An interpretive research paradigm using qualitative methodology was chosen for the study and was driven by the following critical research questions:

1. How do teachers experience curriculum change from GCE O-Level to IGCSE with regard to English language teaching?
2. How was this change implemented in the Form 4 English language classrooms?

Qualitative methods comprising semi-structured interviews and non-participant classroom observations were used for collecting data. Data from interviews with teachers were analysed thematically through the use of the constant comparison method, while classroom observations data were qualitatively analysed by using themes that emerged from the observation schedule designed for the study. The data from classroom observations were triangulated with data from interviews with teachers to ensure validity of the study.

The study used the body of literature that relates to second language acquisition (SLA) and learning, with specific reference to social constructivism, bilingualism, communicative language teaching and task-based language teaching approaches, literacy and the genre approach as the theoretical framework. The theoretical framework facilitated an understanding that knowledge or meaningful learning is constructed by the learners as they interact using the target language. The results revealed that the teachers




used a constructivist approach towards teaching which comprised the communicative language teaching and task-based language teaching and learning approaches. The IGCSE curriculum emphasizes the use of these approaches. The findings also indicated that teachers were inadequately prepared for teaching the IGCSE English curriculum as some of the workshop facilitators were less informed than some of the participants; and that they were only given guidance for conducting assessment in the oral skill without training them how to teach it. Also, the language aspects such as grammar, writing and reading were left out when the curriculum was reviewed, as a result teachers reverted to using the structural approach when teaching grammar, as opposed to the constructivist approach. Findings showed that as much as the IGCSE English curriculum was said to be good, the reading skill was inefficiently taught. IGCSE does not give learners quality education since the tasks learners did were cognitively unchallenging. In view of the theoretical framework of the study, the IGCSE English curriculum produces skills-based, vocationally inclined learners who are not geared towards pursuing academic university education. Listening comprehension was found to be the most problematic language aspect since the learners could not understand the English native speakers' accent when they listened to passages from tapes and CD's during examinations.

Using the genre approach to essay writing findings showed that teaching essay writing was not well grounded. The study recommended that the curriculum be reviewed and teachers be taught more effective approaches to teaching essay writing as well as reading comprehension. It was also recommended that the Ministry of Education should assist teachers with additional resources and multimedia for teaching listening skills including CDs and listening to talk shows and in teaching essay writing. The study further recommended that localisation of the curriculum to SIGCSE should be postponed until a suitable curriculum is identified and that further research be conducted which would include a larger study that would be a true representation of all high schools in the four regions of the country.

## DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own work, supervised by the School of Languages, Literacies and Media Education (SLLME) Department. It is being submitted for the Degree of Master of Education in the University of KwaZulu-Natal. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university. All sources quoted and consulted have been duly acknowledged in the text.

Esther Sipiwe Mvubu  .....day of 31/01/2011.

Supervisor : ..... Date.....

Co-supervisor: ..... Date.....



RESEARCH OFFICE (GOVAN MBEKI CENTRE)  
WESTVILLE CAMPUS  
TELEPHONE NO.: 031 – 2603587  
EMAIL : ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

---

17 APRIL 2009

MRS. ES MVUBU (208530098)  
LANGUAGES, LITERACIES, DRAMA AND MEDIA EDUCATION

Dear Mrs. Mvubu

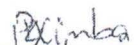
ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS/0165/09M

I wish to confirm that ethical clearance has been granted for the following project:

**“Factors affecting the learning of English language at high schools in Swaziland: A qualitative study of teaching English using the IGCSE syllabus”**

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

Yours faithfully

  
.....  
**MS. PHUMELELE XIMBA**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank God for giving me wisdom, strength and endurance throughout this research endeavour. He truly deserves the glory!

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisors, Dr. T. Mbatha and Prof. R. Sookrajh who sacrificed most of their time to guide, encourage and advise me during the journey towards the production of this study. Without their regular feedback and comments, this thesis would not have materialised.

I am indebted to the principals of the schools, who facilitated my easy access to the schools to do my research. Another pile of gratitude is extended to the teachers of the various schools who really co-operated with me to provide authentic information needed to work out this thesis, without which this study would not have been a success.

I also want to acknowledge help offered by the PRAESA administration and staff at UCT. They are no exception, and not the least. They were a stepping stone towards my success in the M. Ed. Programme.

Finally, my special thanks go to my loving family and friends who were never an ending source of encouragement throughout my studies. In particular, my husband, whose infallible understanding and support saw me through thick and thin. Thank you so much my dear. You are so great!

*May the Lord God bless you all !!*



### **List of acronyms**

CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
COSATU	Congress South Africa Trade Unions
ELT	English Language Teaching
ERIC	Education Resource Information Centre
ESL	English Second Language
GCE	General Certificate in Education
HIGCSE	Higher International General Certificate of Secondary Education
ICT	International Communication Technology
IGSCE	International General Secondary Certificate of Education
JC	Junior Certificate
L1	First Language
L 2	Second Language
MoE	Ministry of Education
NECC	National Education Coordinating Committee
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OBC	Outcome-Based Curriculum
O-Level	Ordinary Level
REO	Regional Education Officer
SEC	Swaziland Examinations Council
SGCSE	Swaziland General Certificate in Secondary Education
TBLTL	Task-Based Language Teaching and Learning
UCIE	University of Cambridge International Examination
UK	United Kingdom
UNISWA	University of Swaziland
WPS	World Paper Series
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<i><b>PAGE</b></i>
Abstract	i
Declaration	iii
Ethical clearance certificate	iv
Acknowledgements	v
List of acronyms	vi
Table of contents	vii
List of tables	xi
 <i><b>CHAPTER</b></i>	 1
<b>CHAPTER 1 Introduction</b>	1
1.1 Background to the study	1
1.2 An overview of the GCE O-Level and IGCSE curricula	1
1.3 Rationale for the study	6
1.4 Statement of the research problem	8
1.5 Aims of the research	10
1.6 Critical research questions	10
1.7 Significance of the study	11
1.8 Outline of chapters	11
1.9 Limitations of the study	12
1.10 Conclusion	13
 <b>CHAPTER 2 Theoretical framework and literature review</b>	 14
2.1 Introduction	14
2.2 Definitions of curriculum	14
2.2.1 What is curriculum change?	15
2.2.2 Curriculum change in Swaziland	17
2.3 Social constructivism	18
2.4 Bilingualism and Bilingual Education	21
2.4.1 Additive bilingualism	21
2.4.2 Subtractive bilingualism	22
2.5 Second language teaching and learning	24
2.6 Second language acquisition	25
2.7 The Communicative Language Teaching Approach	29

2.7.1 The Task-Based Language Teaching and Learning Approach	31
2.8 Literacy skills and practices	32
2.9 Reading teaching strategies	36
2.9.1 Approaches to teaching writing	37
2.9.2 The genre approach	39
2.10 Conclusion	40
 <b>CHAPTER 3 Research design and methodology</b>	 <b>42</b>
3.1 Introduction	42
3.2 Research paradigm	42
3.3 The research approach used in the study	42
3.4 Research design	43
3.5 Selection of the schools and teachers participating in the study	45
3.6 Profiles of the selected teachers	46
3.7 The instrument	47
3.8 Piloting the instrument	48
3.9 The procedure followed for collecting data	49
3.9.1 Semi-structured interviews with teachers	49
3.9.2 Observation of taught lessons	50
3.9.4 Observation schedule	51
3.10 Data analysis	52
3.11 Validity	54
3.12 Reliability	54
3.13 Ethical considerations	54
3.14 Conclusion	55
 <b>CHAPTER 4 Presentation and analysis of the results</b>	 <b>56</b>
4.1 Introduction	56
4.2 Findings in respect of critical question 1	56
4.2.1 The IGCSE curriculum workshops	57
4.2.2 Comparison between teaching using the IGCSE syllabus and teaching using the GCE 0-Level curriculum	59
4.2.3 Teaching approaches used in the IGCSE curriculum	63
4.2.3.1 Approaches used for teaching vocabulary	63
4.2.3.2 Approaches used for teaching listening comprehension	64
4.2.3.3 Approaches used in teaching grammar	65
4.2.3.4. Approaches used in teaching reading comprehension	66
4.2.3.5 Approaches used in teaching summary writing	67

4.2.3.6 Approaches used in teaching essay writing	68
4.2.3.7 Approaches used in teaching communication or oral skills	70
4.3 Effectiveness of the approaches used	70
4.4 Exposure to learning opportunities	73
4.5 Language in education policy	74
4.6 Summary of the findings	76
4.7 Findings in respect to critical question 2	77
4.7.1 An analysis of a sample oral lesson 1 from Teacher B1	78
4.7.1.1 An analysis of a sample oral lesson 2	82
4.7.2 An analysis of an essay writing lesson 3 from Teacher C2	84
4.7.2.1 An analysis of an essay writing lesson 4	87
4.8 Summary of findings	90
4.9 Discussion of findings of the study	92
4.9.1 Induction of teachers for the English curriculum change	92
4.9.2 Teaching approaches used in the IGCSE curriculum	93
4.9.3 The IGCSE English curriculum and teaching of the four language skills	93
4.9.4 Learners' use of English in the IGCSE curriculum in the classroom and school premises	94
4.10 The effectiveness of the IGCSE curriculum in terms of its intended purpose	95
4.11 A serious gap of the IGCSE curriculum	96
4.12 Conclusion	96
 <b>CHAPTER 5 Conclusions and recommendations</b>	 983
5.1 Introduction	98
5.2 Induction of teachers for the IGCSE English curriculum	98
5.2.1 The teaching approaches used in the IGCSE curriculum	99
5.2.2 The teaching of the four language skills in the IGCSE English curriculum especially reading and writing	100
5.2.3 Learners' use of English in the IGCSE curriculum in the classroom and school premises	102
5.3 Recommendations	103
5.4 Further research	104
5.5 Concluding remarks	105
 <b>References</b>	 106
<b>Appendices</b>	114
Appendix A Teachers' interview	114
Appendix B Observation schedule	119



Appendix C	Lessons field notes	120
Appendix D	Consent letters	129
Appendix E	IGCSE syllabus	135
Appendix F	Learning materials	161

## List of tables and a map

		Page
Table 1.1	Comparison between IGCSE and GCE O-Level curricula in approaches to English language teaching	6
Table 1.2	Students who passed and failed English in the years 2003 to 2005 and 2007 to 2009 in Form 5	9
Table 3.1	Number of teachers who participated in the study, their teaching experience, the subjects they taught and the lessons observed	46
Table 3.2	Respondent's frequency, research approach, inquiry and context	48
Table 4.1	Number of IGCSE English workshops attended	57
Table 4.2	Comparison between teaching using the IGCSE syllabus and teaching using the GCE O-Level curriculum	59
Table 4.3	Types and number of lessons observed and research method	82
A Map of Swaziland showing Manzini region where the research was conducted		44

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background to the study**

The study was undertaken to examine curriculum change from the General Certificate in Education (GCE) Ordinary Level (O-Level) to the International General Certificate in Secondary Education (IGCSE) with regard to English language teaching in Form Four, (Grade 11) classrooms in Swaziland.

In 2006 the Swaziland Ministry of Education (MoE) changed the curriculum from the Cambridge O-Level to IGCSE in order to introduce a curriculum that would enable learners to succeed in their education and to give them access to tertiary education, (Kunene 2005). However, according to Mazibuko (2008) it seems that the desired outcomes of the IGCSE are not being achieved. In this study the change from the O-Level to the IGCSE curriculum is problematized since it does not seem to give learners in Swaziland a better opportunity to perform better in English so as to access tertiary education, (Kunene, 2005).

This chapter will present a discussion of the rationale for the study and present the problem that is researched. The research aims, critical research questions and the importance of the study will also be provided. The research methodology, outline of chapters as well as limitations of the study will be defined. I will begin with an overview of the GCE O-Level and IGCSE English Second language (ESL) syllabi.

#### **1.2 An overview of the GCE O-Level and IGCSE curricula**

According to the British Council site (2009), the General Certificate of Education (GCE) Ordinary Level (O-Level) is an internationally recognized academic qualification generally taken in a wide range of subjects by learners aged 14-16 in secondary education in the UK and a few of the commonwealth countries. GCE is Grade 11 in any other country and Form 5 in Swaziland. By 2010, Swaziland had offered GCE for over 40

years, (Ministry of Education Consultative Document, 2005). GCE was introduced in the United Kingdom (UK) schools in 1951, replacing the School Certificate (SC) and Higher School Certificate (HSC), (Direct Government site, 2009). However, GCE was phased out in the UK in 1987 in state schools in favour of the General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE) which in Swaziland is equivalent to the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE). Assessment was carried by two bodies which are also maintained in GCSE and they are; Edexcel (also known as London Examinations) and Cambridge International Examinations (CIE). Learners were assessed mainly on written exams with GCE, (Direct Government, 2009).

GCE took two academic years to complete in the UK. The pass grades from highest symbol to lowest were numbered 1 to 9, with numbers 1 to 6 considered as passes with credits; numbers 7 and 8 constituted ordinary passes and 9 was U (unclassified). Letters were brought in as symbols A to C. Only grades A to C credits were given much credence in the UK. The same applies to Swaziland, A to C grades in all the subjects including English, were and still are considered as credits which gives access to tertiary education, (GCE and IGCSE Certification). The 2005 MoE Consultative Document says that GCE O-Level Certification used traditional approaches in delivering the programme. (See Table 1.1 below on page 6). Localization of marking examinations in Swaziland started in the 1990s. Prior to 1990 O-Level examinations were set and marked in the UK. As time progressed the Swaziland Ministry of Education and the Swaziland Examinations Council took over the marking process and only sent marks to the UK for certification.

IGCSE is an internationally recognized certificate of secondary education, issued by the University of Cambridge International Examinations (UCIE), on completion of an examination normally taken after two years of study at high school. The students in Swaziland were examined externally in the IGCSE programme for the first time in 2007.

IGCSE was introduced in Swaziland on grounds that education systems of the world were “constantly under microscopic examination and analysis to ascertain the extent to



which they satisfy national educational needs and aspirations” (Kunene, 2005:1). Swaziland could be no exception. A global aspiration is that education systems should deliver quality and relevant education in compliance with recognized educational value systems (Kunene, 2005). The fulfillment of these aspirations according to Kunene called for evolving strategies, methods, and programmatic approaches to strengthen the quality of the nation’s education and to guarantee its credibility and competitiveness in the wider global community. Thus, in the exploration of educational paradigms, the Ministry of Education adapted the IGCSE programme on ground that other countries like Botswana and Namibia were already using it.

According to the Ministry of Education Consultative Document (2005), IGCSE is a curriculum suitable for all nationalities, which offers subjects specific to the requirements of the Ministry of Education, Swaziland, as well as international subjects. It is offered through the medium of English which is an international language. It helps to promote ideals of equality and understanding between people of diverse backgrounds. Its advantages are that it does not only give learners an internationally recognized qualification, it also allows an individual country to adapt the system to its own needs within the IGCSE curriculum framework and the forms of assessment prescribed. Thus, the then Education Principal Secretary<sup>1</sup> (PS) Kunene (2005) proposed IGCSE to eventually form the basis of a new national localized curriculum and examination system between 2009 and 2011, run entirely by Swaziland (that is, Swaziland General Certificate in Secondary Education, SGCSE). Localisation would bring an Afrocentric curriculum and reduce not only the cost of teaching and learning materials imported from the United Kingdom, but also the dependence on UK systems. However, the link with Cambridge would still be maintained, with Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) retained as overseers. The Ministry of Education assured that quality education would be maintained, (Kunene, 2005).

---

<sup>1</sup> PS is the Principal Secretary or English highest officer in charge of the Education Ministry, second in command to the Minister who is a political figure.

The Ministry of Education aims at inculcating “attitudes and values of life-long learning”, (Consultative Document, 2005:1). IGCSE leads to a certificate that is equivalent in standard to the British GCSE and international GCE Ordinary Level Examinations. IGCSE also offers a wide range of assessment techniques to test a variety of skills in various subjects including English. The techniques include oral and listening tests, practical tests, project work, performance and school based assessment (coursework) as well as conventional written examinations of various kinds including objective (multiple choice) tests, (Consultative Document, 2005).

According to the MoE IGCSE guidelines (2008), the newly introduced IGCSE programme seeks “to develop the learners’ ability to use English effectively for the purpose of practical communication; to form a sound base for the skills required for further study or employment using English as the medium of communication; to develop an awareness of the nature of language and language-learning skills, along with skills of a more general application and, to promote students’ personal development” (IGCSE syllabus 2008:142 Appendix E). On the other hand, the GCE O-Level aims were to develop the ability of English second language (ESL) candidates to: “communicate accurately, appropriately and affectively in speech and writing; understand and respond appropriately and imaginatively to what they read and experience; enjoy and appreciate reading texts in the English Language” (O-Level syllabus, 2006:2). Both curricula thus emphasize the communicative aspect of the English language and the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. IGCSE goes to an extent of recognizing the language skills necessary for preparing the learners for both learning and employment purposes.

IGCSE also identifies the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach to be used. Both the CLT and TBLT are meaningful skills-based approaches and learner-centred education. Teachers are expected to select methods that promote problem solving and active participation by learners. The English IGCSE curriculum focuses on teaching the receptive skill of listening and the productive skill of speaking in addition to reading and writing which the previous GCE syllabus only addressed. In short, IGCSE teaches all the



four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, while GCE O-Level concentrated on the reading and writing skills only. The speaking skill was not tested in the phased out curriculum. English literature is and was taught as a different component of English in both curricula (O-Level syllabus, 2006; IGCSE syllabus, 2008). In order to carefully identify the teachers' perceptions of the curriculum change, the study will explore the approaches teachers use for teaching oral and listening skills including orientation of teachers to the curriculum by the MoE. The teachers' comparison of the two syllabi in terms of enhancing the learners' understanding of the concepts taught will also be investigated.

The IGCSE syllabus aims to assess a wider ability range to about 80% of students compared to GCE O-Level, which catered for the top 20%, (Consultative Document, 2005). According to Tikmany (2005), IGCSE recognizes that in some subjects including English language, the spread of achievement is wider than in other subjects. Therefore, learners may be entered for either Core level papers or Extended level papers. This gives students of all ability levels not only the freedom to choose subjects that suit them, but also the chance to score good grades. In the GCE programme, all the students used the same curriculum irrespective of their ability levels. In IGCSE students who take the core level papers are eligible for the award of grades C to G, while those opting for the extended tier are eligible for the award of grades or credits A\* (star) to C (namely; symbols A\* that is 90% and above, A is 80% to 89%, B is between 70% and 79%, and C from 60% to 69%) according to the International General Certificate in Secondary Education (IGCSE) Certification. IGCSE considers symbols F (30% to 39%) and G (20% to 29%) as passes, while these were a fail with O-Level curriculum. This then implies that it is easy to pass the IGCSE programme. However, the general public criticizes the MoE for introducing the IGCSE curriculum which is weak and cognitively less challenging to the learners, and which focuses on life skills. The following table shows a comparison of IGCSE and GCE O-Level programmes.

**Table 1.1: Comparison between IGCSE and GCE O-Level curricula in approaches to English language teaching<sup>2</sup>**

IGCSE	GCE O-Level
Learner-centred	Teacher-centred. Didactic approach
Core and extended levels	Same curriculum for all
Suitable for mixed ability classes	Designed for a selective, narrower range of ability
Positive achievement rewarded (grades A to G)	Pass or fail concept: (grades A to E only) (F ungraded)
School-based assessment an option (oral, listening and written)	Less scope for teacher-assessed work (mainly written work)
Focuses on teaching the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing	Focus is on literacy skills (reading and writing only)

According to Kunene (2005), Swaziland found it important to teach English well in order for Swazi children to compete with the rest of the world in communicating adequately in English. This study was therefore conducted against a background of a high demand for proficiency in English by the government in the Swazi education system and throughout the world, (Kunene, 2005).

### **1.3 Rationale for the study**

The rationale for this study was driven by three imperatives. Firstly, a personal rationale (that was, my concern that learners are failing English). Secondly, curriculum change, (the curriculum changed from GCE O-Level to IGCSE). Thirdly, contextual, (that is, how teachers received the change).

<sup>2</sup> (Ministry of Education's Consultative Document 2005:6).



The first rationale for the study is that in Form 5 or Grade 12, (the final year of schooling) learners are not performing well in English in Swaziland, (Mazibuko 2008) yet English language is a compulsory subject in Swazi schools and all learners are required to obtain a credit pass in English in order to get to the next grade and into tertiary institutions (Education Resource Information Centre, (ERIC) 1990). Students do not pass external exams if they have failed English. However, they may proceed to tertiary institutions such as the university if they have failed some of the other subjects excluding English Language. Form 5 students are expected to get a credit pass in English. A credit in English is a requirement for higher education in Swaziland. Even the Scholarship Selection Board guidelines (2004) stipulate that only candidates who have obtained more than three credits including English language are considered for the award of scholarship to institutions of higher learning locally and internationally.

The second rationale derives from my interest in tracking some of the effects of the curriculum change. In 2006 the curriculum was changed in order to rectify the problem of students' failing English. However, the Minister for Education admitted in the national newspaper 'Times of Swaziland Sunday' (14 June 2009:12) that the IGCSE certificate was meant for students who need empowerment in terms of recognising and realising their hidden talents, and not targeted at advancing with education in universities. He stated that the Higher International General Certificate of Secondary Education (HIGCSE) provides the platform that allows students to explore their talents in other universities and that it is the higher version of IGCSE and is more challenging than the latter. There seems to be a contradiction here. According to the Education Principal Secretary (2005), the introduction of IGCSE was done to empower learners in order to access tertiary institutions. The Minister for Education (2009) pointed out that the IGCSE is meant for vocational students and is not for academically inclined learners who are prepared for university education. If what the Minister for Education said is true, it is not clear why the two syllabi were not introduced simultaneously for the learners to choose what is best for them. It is also not understandable why the Swazi nation was not told the truth from the onset. This makes the public not to believe the Ministry. In order to

introduce a sound curriculum there must be transparency between the MoE and the public.

Thirdly, it transpired in the Swazi Parliamentary Debates on the 28 June 2009 that the IGCSE programme was imposed on the schools without teachers being given a chance to put forward their views about it. According to the MoE Policy Document (Mordaunt 1990), a programme is first pilot-tested before it is implemented. There seems not to have been enough consultation made before introducing the IGCSE curriculum in the country. The Head teachers' views were rejected when they suggested that the programme be first piloted before implementing it on a full scale, (one of the Head teachers). In a Head teachers' meeting (held in March 2005) a MoE Official was heard saying, "Let's plunge into it; we are left behind, all the other countries have embarked on it and no one will set and moderate our external examinations if we continue with GCE O-Level", (Chief Inspector, Secondary, (2005). The question therefore in support of the third rationale, is whether the IGCSE's adoption was indeed intended to satisfy the "Swazi national educational needs and aspirations", (Kunene 2005) or somebody else's interests and benefits, if the practitioners have no input in the curriculum.

All stake-holders, including head teachers, practising teachers, parents and the public play a major role in the implementation of a new curriculum. Without their full understanding, involvement and cooperation, the implementation of the IGSE curriculum is not guaranteed.

The foregoing section has provided the rationale for the study on curriculum change and how teachers received the change. It is against this background that the research problem is discussed and the research aims and questions have been derived.

#### **1.4 Statement of the research problem**

According to 2003-2005 statistics from the Swaziland Examinations Council (SEC), prior to the introduction of the IGCSE in 2006 in Swaziland there were great numbers of



students failing English in form 5 in the country. In 2003, 31% of the 8020 students failed English. In 2004, 28% failed English out of a total of 8535 students. Furthermore, 23% out of a total of 9568 failed English in 2005, (Dlamini, 2005). The English language IGCSE paper failure rate was 17% out of a total of 9668 in 2007, (SEC 2008), while it was 21% out of 9101 learners in 2008,(SEC 2009). In 2009, 31% of the 9653 learners failed English, (SEC 2010) (Mazibuko, 2010). This information is shown in the following table.

**Table 1.2: Students who passed and failed English in the years 2003 to 2005 and 2007 to 2009 in Form 5 in percentages.<sup>3</sup>**

Year	Total number of students who wrote O-Level in 2003-20005 & IGCSE in 2007-2009	Number of students who passed English	Percentage that passed English	Percentage that accessed the university	% that did not access the university	Number of students who failed English	Percentage that failed English
2003	8020	5511	69%	14%	55%	2509	31%
2004	8535	6138	72%	16%	56%	2397	28%
2005	9568	7360	77%	17%	60%	2208	23%
2007	9668	8024	83%	21%	62%	1644	17%
2008	9101	7177	79%	26%	53%	1938	21%
2009	9653	6619	69%	26%	43%	3034	31%

Although more than 69% of students in 2003 and in subsequent years passed English Language, the quality of their passes in terms of attaining credits was below the level required for entry into tertiary institutions (Dlamini 2005). Some could not go to tertiary institutions because they had not obtained a credit in English. The quality of passes in English Language is not what is expected by the MoE. 14% got credits while 55% got passes in English in 2003. In 2004 out of the 72% learners that passed English, 16% got credits, while 56% could not access tertiary education. Only 17% of the learners accessed tertiary education in 2005, while 60% could not, (SEC 2006). Out of the 83% of the students who passed English in 2007, only 21% got credits and 62% were clear passes,

<sup>3</sup> 2003 to 2005 (Swaziland Examinations Council 2006), 2007 to 2009 (Swaziland Examinations Council 2010).

(SEC 2008). In 2008, out of the 80% learners that passed English, only 26% got credits and 53% were passes, (SEC, 2009). Only 26% of the learners accessed tertiary education in 2009, while 43% could not, (SEC, 2010).

The first IGCSE results were produced in 2007 in Swaziland. The 62% learners who obtained passes in 2007 could not go to the university since a pass is a poor grade; even a C is a poor grade in IGCSE. In 2008 the percentage of learners that accessed tertiary education increased by 6% in the IGCSE examination as compared to that of 2007. In 2009 there was neither an increase nor a decrease in the pass rate, 26% was maintained. Although the percentage of learners that passed English has improved, the number of those who do not access university is still high. In a context of change, exploring teachers' take up of this change constitute relevant research.

In order to address the research problem, the present study seeks to determine teachers' perceptions and understandings of the curriculum change and how the curriculum was implemented in Form 4 classrooms in four high schools in Swaziland; so as to gain insight into what takes place in the classroom situation. situation

### **1.5 Aims of the research**

Therefore the aims of the study are:

1. To examine teachers' understandings of curriculum change in English language in selected Form 4 classrooms in the Manzini region of Swaziland. Two schools are urban while the other two are schools from the rural setting.
2. To identify how the change was implemented in the selected classrooms.

### **1.6 Critical research questions**

The concerns and issues raised in the background and introduction to the study have led me to investigate the impact the curriculum change has on the teaching of English in



Form 4 classes using the IGCSE syllabus in Swaziland. In order to explore the change, the research sought to address the following questions.

1. How do teachers experience curriculum change from GCE O-Level to IGCSE with regard to English language teaching?

This question attempted to elicit teachers' perceptions on how change in English language teaching in high schools resulted from the above curriculum change.

2. How was this change implemented in the Form 4 English language classrooms?

The second critical question seeks to determine if the teachers used appropriate methods designed for teaching the new curriculum and if they were empowered and adequately trained to employ the teaching methods.

In order to answer the questions indicated above, data were elicited by interviewing teachers, observing lessons taught and examining related literature on second language acquisition and learning. Literature from contexts similar to Swaziland was examined. Furthermore, literature on literacy skills and practices, curriculum change, second language acquisition and learning, social constructivism and teaching approaches was reviewed.

### **1.7 Significance of the study**

The findings from this research could inform the Swaziland MoE about the implications of curriculum change. Teachers of English as a second language in Swaziland and elsewhere who have interest of improving learners' proficiency in English will gain some insight of the effects of some teaching approaches used in the IGCSE curriculum in order to improve them. As a Teacher-Educator of English as a second language to learners in Swaziland, I will gain a better understanding of the problems encountered by teachers when implementing a new curriculum. The findings will contribute to effective English language teaching in schools in Swaziland.

## **1.8 Outline of chapters**

The thesis comprises five chapters. Chapter 1 has provided the background to the study and presents the problem investigated in this thesis. The research questions and rationale for the study is also presented in chapter 1.

Chapter two presents the theoretical underpinnings of the study by examining some literature related to second language acquisition, constructivist learning theory, second language teaching approaches, curriculum change and literacy skills and practices. The chapter further explores literature from contexts similar to Swaziland on change from GCE O-Level to the IGCSE curriculum.

Chapter three gives a detailed account of the research methodology that was used in order to answer the research questions posed in this chapter. Additionally, it gives a theoretical justification for the methodology chosen for this study and a description of methods of data collection and analysis.

The fourth chapter not only presents and analyses the research findings, but also gives the implications of the findings. In chapter five the conclusions drawn from the study and recommendations are made.

## **1.9 Limitations of the study**

The research is a qualitative study confined to four high schools only in the Manzini Region, out of the four regions in Swaziland. As a result, the outcomes obtained from this study cannot be generalisable to other schools in the region and within Swaziland. Critics of qualitative research and case studies say it lacks generalisability. However, a qualitative study enables us to understand a context in greater detail because of its use and triangulation of multiple methods of data collection and because of a deeper exploration of issues within the study itself. Even though the claims that I made in this study may not be generalisable, they identify and illuminate similar issues in other

settings. Additionally, the findings can be a stepping stone for a larger scale study towards understanding how teachers receive curriculum change in Swaziland and elsewhere. Even though the study may not be open to cross-checking and it may be observer biased, it is strong on reality, (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). I did not include interviews from policy makers because of the brevity of the time of the study.

### **1.10 Conclusion**

This chapter has served as an introduction to the research study. It has presented the background and rationale of the study. In addition, it also provided a brief analysis of the GCE O-Level and IGCSE curricula. It defined the research problem, aims, critical questions, limitations of the study and finally a preview to the chapters that will follow.

The next chapter presents an overview of the literature related to the phenomenon under study.



## CHAPTER 2

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

In order to lay out the foundations for examining teachers' experiences of the change of the O-Level curriculum to the IGCSE English curriculum, it is important to begin with an understanding of what a curriculum is and then focus on curriculum change in Swaziland. Thereafter, the review of related literature will take into account the body of literature that relates to second language acquisition (SLA) and learning, with specific reference to social constructivism, bilingualism, communicative language teaching, task-based language teaching approaches, literacy and the genre approach to the new curriculum. These form the theoretical framework of the study. I will begin my discussion by exploring the definitions of curriculum in order to have a clear conception of the issues discussed.

#### 2.2. Definitions of curriculum

This section examines the word curriculum as perceived by diverse theorists and the implication it has for Swaziland. Different people give various definitions for the word curriculum. *Curriculum* according to Pratt (1994, in Bertram 2001:13) is a "plan for teaching and instruction". Stenhouse (1975:4) sees curriculum as:

an attempt to communicate the essential principles and features of an educational proposal into such a form that is open to critical scrutiny and capable of effective translation into practice.

This means that a curriculum has particular goals or purpose. These goals or plan are set into a clear policy that will be understood; and that the policy should provide clear guidelines for implementation.

The Working Paper Series (WPS) from the United States of America (USA) (April 2000) seem to concur with Stenhouse and renders three areas of curriculum emphasis which



are; the intended, the taught and the learned curricula. The intended curriculum refers to “the formal approved guidelines”, (WPS 2000:10) which teachers use for teaching content to learners. These guidelines are either developed for, and / or by the teachers. When the intended guidelines are in place, learning materials like textbooks and teachers’ guides are then developed. With the taught curriculum, teachers adapt the learning materials and textbook information in ways that will enhance learners’ learning (that is the pedagogy); while with the learned curriculum, teachers establish learning outcomes prior to teaching and assess learners’ performance afterward. This implies that in order for Swaziland to have a sound curriculum, she should ensure that these areas of curriculum emphasis are considered. The next section discusses the process of curriculum change.

### **2.2.1 What is curriculum change?**

This section describes the steps South Africa took when changing and implementing her curriculum. It also discusses the stages of curriculum change in effective change as reported by Fullan, (1992). The implications these have for Swaziland are also highlighted. The challenges Swaziland has faced in the process of changing her curriculum are brought to light. Curriculum change is a political process which can not be predetermined on the basis of technical decisions, (Jansen 1993), cited in Bertram (2001). In South Africa, for example, after independence (in 1994) political groups such as The National Education Coordinating Committee (NECC), the Private Sector Education Council (PRISEC), the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the apartheid state explored new curriculum options. Discussions and decisions made within adult education and training influenced the school curriculum. The National Training Board (NTB), the Congress of South Africa Trade Unions (COSATU), representatives of the state, unions, business, political and community groups were involved. The curriculum that was sought was to integrate education and training into a system of lifelong learning. Finally, an OBE framework was established. A new curriculum, Curriculum 2005 (C2005) was developed for implementation. C2005 is the curriculum plan for Grades 1 to 9 in schools (Bertram 2001). It has three principles which are a philosophy of learner-centred

education, Outcome-based education and an integrated approach to knowledge, (Chisolm *et al*, 2000). The major groups drew on policies developed in other countries like Australia, Canada and others. They introduced the concept of competence-based education and training, (Christie, 1997 cited in Bertram, (2001). Competence means the knowledge and ability to apply skills to performing a task and the ability to transfer the skills to a different context.

Fullan (1992) cited in Iemjinda (2007) has identified a number of factors for a successful curriculum change. One of them is that the need for the innovation should be understood by the people affected by the change. He argues that the need for the change could either be internal or external, or a combination of the two factors. In Swaziland the need was external. The fact that the other SADC countries like Botswana and Namibia had already adopted IGCSE prompted Swaziland to adopt the same curriculum. There was also an internal need for a curriculum that would enable Form 5 learners to pass English in order to access tertiary education. However, this study shows that the Swazi nation was not well sensitized about the need for the change.

The second feature is clarity of the change. This relates to innovation of teaching methods, the role of materials used and assessment procedures to determining learning outcomes. This implies that the teachers who are to effect the change should be aware of the reasons for the innovation, failing which, it (the change) will be inhibited. Teachers should be trained by well informed personnel in order for the curriculum innovation to be understandable.

Fulan's third principle concerns the involvement of teachers in decision making at all stages of implementation of curriculum change. He terms this as 'complexity'. He indicates that involvement includes both school principals and classroom teachers. However, this did not happen in Swaziland. The curriculum change was imposed on teachers. They did not have an input. The principals were silenced when they suggested piloting the curriculum first (chap. 1). The then Chief Inspector of Secondary Schools told them that Swaziland was already behind. All the other SADC countries were already



using the IGCSE curriculum. This made many teachers not develop commitment to the change and ownership of the curriculum. Even teacher-educators were informed about the IGCSE programme very late, a few months (two months) before its implementation.

The WPS (USA) (2000) points out that critical curriculum change that leads to improved quality education is centred in the classroom through focusing on the learned and taught curriculum; and for quality education to reach all learners; the entire education system must support curriculum change. This is the implementation support according to Fullan. Teachers need time to assimilate the rationale for the change; and “they need to know that the changes are not due to deficiencies perceived on their part” (Iemjinda, 2007:13).

The shift from O-Level to IGCSE has its own challenges in Swaziland. According to the National Report (2008), the education fraternity and the general public are still skeptical about child-centred teaching approaches. The WPS (2000) stipulates that the key issue to curriculum change is training of teachers for purposes of changing attitudes, skills and knowledge. In this case, training among other things, has to focus on child-centred approaches so that teachers have the capacity to handle the new curriculum. For Swaziland, curriculum change implies that there must be enough mass support for the curriculum review.

### **2.2.2 Curriculum change in Swaziland**

This section explores literature on the reasons behind the change of curriculum in Swaziland, the type of curriculum promoted and the approaches to be used in the new syllabus. To reiterate, in 2006 the MoE changed the curriculum from GCE O-Level to IGCSE to rectify the problem of many Form 5 students failing GCE examinations. IGCSE is a certificate offered after two years of study (chap.1). The Swaziland Education System adopted IGCSE in schools throughout the country in Form 4. In 2007 the programme proceeded to Form 5.

According to the Swaziland National Report (2008), Swaziland advocates an outcome-based curriculum (OBC) by setting outcomes to be achieved at the end of the process. Reddy (1998:6) points out that:

An outcome-based curriculum views the learning and teaching process differently from the traditional curriculum. Knowledge is not seen as being transferred intact from the teacher to the learner. Instead, knowledge is seen as being constructed in the mind of the learner. Learners make sense of new knowledge in the context of their own knowledge and then develop their original concept as learning takes place.

The GCE O-Level curriculum was traditional in that it was teacher-centred. It also focused on the teaching of reading and writing only. The IGCSE English language programme promotes the development of a wide range of problem-solving skills and child-centred approach to learning. In this programme, learners are assessed not only on content, but also on different aspects of their abilities such as their creativity and critical thinking. It also focuses on teaching the four language skills, (chap. 1).

The subsequent sections explore theoretical positions which support the OBC used in Swaziland whereby learning is child-centred and knowledge is constructed by the learner in the process of L2 acquisition and learning. I will begin with social constructivism as a theoretical approach which is advocated in the new curriculum since it promotes meaningful learning.

### **2.3 Social constructivism**

This section examines literature on how meaningful learning is constructed by the learners as they interact using the target language. Social constructivism enabled this study to access a set of assumptions about the nature of human learning that guides the social constructivist learning theory which advocates learning or knowledge that is constructed by the learner. Spivey (1997) cited in Brown (2000), defines constructivism as “an emphasis on active processes of construction of meaning, attention to texts as a means of gaining insights into those processes, and an interest in the nature of



knowledge and its variations, including the nature of knowledge associated with membership in a particular group” (Spivey, 1997 in Brown, 2000:11). The focus of constructivists is on individuals engaged in social practices.

Social constructivism draws on the developmental work of Piaget (1977), who attests that knowledge is constructed by learners through an active mental process of development. “Social interaction is claimed only to trigger development at the right moment in time”, (Piaget, 1977:54). Piaget and Krashen argue that learning occurs as a result of an active construction of meaning rather than passive reception. When learners encounter a situation that conflicts with current ways of thinking, a state of imbalance is created. Learners have to alter their thinking to restore balance by associating new information with what they already know, assimilating it into their existing knowledge and accommodating the new information. Constructivist teaching fosters critical thinking and creates an active and motivated learner, who is actively involved to reach new understandings.

Vygotsky (1978) an advocate of social constructivism, argues that social interaction and social contexts are fundamental in learner’s cognitive development. Unlike Piaget, Vygotsky rejects the notion that development precedes learning. He feels that social learning precedes development. Vygotsky states that it is children's interaction with others through language that most strongly influences the level of conceptual understanding they can reach. He points out that the potential for cognitive development is limited to a time span he calls the ‘zone of proximal development’ (ZPD), (Online Research-Questia Journal:4). The ZPD refers to the gap between what a learner is able to do alone and what s/he can do with the help of someone more knowledgeable or skilled than him/herself. This is where teachers, adults, peers and computers come in, in that they can help bring the child's knowledge to a higher level by intervening in the zone of proximal development and thus provide the child's thoughts with scaffolds. Learning occurs at this zone, according to Vygotsky. Cooperation lies at the basis of learning. He adds that full development during ZPD depends on full social interaction.

Vygotsky suggests that intelligence can be measured by what a child can do with skilled help. He believes that learners can learn from others of the same age on developmental level. These theories are relevant to the study because in L2 learning students learn through interacting with others. They become learning resources themselves. He “sheds light on consciousness which develops as a result of socialization”, (Online Research-Questia Journal:12). For him, the new language is first used meaningfully by the teacher and learners, and later it is transformed and internalized to become part of the individual learner’s language skills or knowledge.

Research by Applebee (1993) and Oxford (2006), show that the constructivist approach of teaching is most preferred by language educators because it encourages active and meaningful learning and promotes autonomy. This approach creates a learner-centred environment by using the communicative language teaching (CLT) and task based learning and teaching (TBLT) approaches. Learners learn by experimentation and not by being told what will happen. They make their own inferences, discoveries and conclusions. Reading and writing proficiency is promoted through individual activities whereby learners are encouraged to read and write their own poems and stories. Constructivism is a ‘student-centred, hands-on, practical and flexible’ approach.

Rather than treating the subject of English Language as a subject matter to be memorized. A constructivist approach treats it as a body of knowledge, skills and strategies that must be constructed by the learner out of experiences and interactions within the social context of the classroom. (Applebee, 1993:200).

The Ministry of Education in Swaziland expects that the CLT and TBLT L approaches will be used in teaching the IGCSE English curriculum since the curriculum advocates meaningful learner-centred education. The CLT, TBLTL and constructivism put emphasis on meaningful learning that is constructed by the learner. Teachers are expected to select methods that emphasize problem solving and active participation by learners. Social constructivism underpins the IGCSE curriculum together with bilingualism and bilingual education which the next section examines.



## **2.4 Bilingualism and Bilingual Education**

In this section I discuss literature on bilingualism, the strong and weak forms of bilingual education. In Swaziland the language policy specifies that bilingual education is practiced. SiSwati and English are used in the education system, (Education Resource Information Centre, (ERIC) (1990). Bilingual education according to Coulmas (1997) cited in Baker (2002), involves using two languages in instruction. This means teaching the same pupils using two languages. Coulmas postulates that bilingual education includes “teaching a second language to speakers of another language, even when the instruction takes place in the second language”, (1997:409). This simply means that the pupils have already acquired their mother-tongue, the language they know and understand best, the language of the family and community, and the foreign language is added to it. Baker (2002) has identified two categories of bilingual education namely, the strong form and the weak form which are discussed in the following section.

### **2.4.1 Additive bilingualism**

The strong form of bilingualism is the additive bilingual model whereby a second language (L2) is added to a child's first language (L1) without trying to replace the L1 when he comes to school (Baker, 2002). The child's L1 is maintained and the L2 is added and taught in an understandable way. An example of the additive model is the two-way or dual language programme in which both the child's L1 and L2 are used as mediums of instruction. The children learn from the teacher as well as from each other. Baker (1996) asserts that usually 50% of the subjects are taught in L1 and the other 50% of the curriculum is taught in L2 in this programme. Or alternatively, the languages are allocated to specific times of the day. For example, in grade 1 it could be that instruction given in mother-tongue a day is 90%, and 10% in second language. As the child progresses to the next grade, the instruction in mother-tongue decreases by 10% and in turn increases by 10% in the second language. This happens until the child reaches the fifth grade whereby both languages receive 50% of day instruction. According to Benson



(2003), chances are often higher for the low status (L1) students to learn L2 than for the speakers of the higher status language (English) to learn the other language.

This is a good programme according to Baker (1993) because the gradual introduction of certain amount of L2 enables the minority language (L1) students to survive; they are not drowned in the system and their first language is maintained. So, dual language programmes help L2 learners develop and maintain their L1, and in that way they become bilingual and biliterate and they develop intercultural awareness. The goals of additive bilingualism are communicative competence and language proficiency in two languages.

According to The Nine Year Programme of Instruction (1985) education policy for schools in Swaziland, additive bilingualism is supposed to be practised in the country. However, this is not the case in reality since siSwati is learnt as a subject from the first grade in all schools, (with the exception of the English Medium schools, they have a choice about the MoI). There are no siSwati materials for the other subject areas. In practice English is the medium of instruction from grade one up to tertiary level. This gives learners a problem because they begin instruction in English when they have not yet fully acquired their mother-tongue. Baker (1993) argues that learners are supposed to be taught in mother-tongue for the first three or four years in order for them to master and gain confidence in their own language. This could enable them to relate well to L2. This view is supported by Cummins' (2000) who argues that second language acquisition is influenced by the extent to which the first language has developed. If first language has developed sufficiently well in learners, second language may be very easily acquired. It is clear that effective and constructive learning can be possible if the learners in Swaziland can build on their home achievement to acquire additional skills in school.

#### **2.4.2 Subtractive Bilingualism**

Subtractive bilingualism is the weak form of bilingualism. It is a form of bilingualism that results in eventually replacing the learners' L1. In this model, second language

learners begin instruction immediately in the second language such as English. The materials and assessment is in the second language. The linguistic differences of the learners are not considered in the curriculum. As a result, some of the second language learners fail to learn reading skills and subject matter under the second language medium of instruction conditions and they become monolingual in the second language. This is a subtractive system as it shifts the learners from their home language and thus subtracts it. The learners develop competence in the second language at the expense of competence in their L1.

In Swaziland, learners are taught in the medium of English from the first grade and siSwati is learnt as a subject throughout the learners' education, as mentioned in 2.4.1. This happens in all the schools including government-aided and mission schools, with the exception of private schools. Learners turn to L2 early before having fully acquired language skills in L1. Benson (2003) affirms that there is a high dropout and failure rates at primary school level within this model. An example of this model is the submersion programme that Baker refers to as the "sink or swim" one, that is, children either learn the language successfully or fail (Baker, 1996). Those who swim are the ones from homes whose parents are professionals or middle class, and there is exposure to reading materials, and where there is additional exposure to the dominant language – English, outside school.

Other forms of subtractive bilingualism are the subtractive-transitional approach and the structured immersion programme. Baker (1996:174) has identified the characteristics of the subtractive-transitional approach and they are as follows:

- The first language students are taught in the second language throughout the day.
- The learners' first language is not developed since it is learnt as a subject, but it is replaced by the second language in this programme, like in the United States where English L2 learners are taught in the medium of L2 in Structured Immersion Programmes.
- Both the teachers and students are expected to use the English language in the classroom and not the home language. The learners may either 'sink or swim'.



In most Swazi high schools learners are expected to speak English as soon as they set foot in the school premises (Tsabedze, 2003). This is done ostensibly to help them practise the language. In some schools teachers go to an extent of punishing the learners for speaking their L1.

## **2.5 Second language teaching and learning**

This section explores the theories that explain how learners learn a new language. Learning through L2 involves learning “a system of written symbols, and a system of expressing meaning in another language while simultaneously focusing on the task at hand”, (Brown, 2000:36). The teachers’ task, in addition to teaching content to learners, is to teach learners’ strategies that will help them develop the ability to select and apply information in the solution of specific problems. L2 learning will be discussed briefly in this section because it is referred to throughout the chapter.

Teaching and learning are regarded as complementary processes. Brown (2000) posits that teaching is guiding and facilitating learning and setting the conditions for learning. Teaching is an act aimed at imparting knowledge as well as educating the child. Learning on the other hand is a process of acquiring language knowledge. Language is used for communication. The word ‘communication’ suggests that people talk to each other in twos, in small groups and in large groups. This means that they take an active and passive role in conversation, (Abbs and Freebairn, 1990). A communicative method encourages students to practice the language. Therefore, a language teaching programme has to consist of opportunities for using the language communicatively using all the language skills.

General education studies show that teaching is a cognitive and pedagogic activity and that teachers’ beliefs greatly impact their instructional decisions in the classroom (Stern, 2003). A research study on actual classroom practices of English language teachers was carried out in Singapore and Borg (2003) reported that teachers had a set of complex



belief systems that were reflected in their classroom practices. He viewed teaching as a complex activity and suggested that:

Teachers are active, thinking, decision-makers who make instructional choices by drawing on practically-oriented, personalized and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts and beliefs, (2003: 81).

What teachers do in the classroom is governed by what they believe in, and these beliefs act as a filter through which instructional judgments and decisions are made (Stern, 2003). This is problematic because teachers' beliefs are neither easy to define nor to study since they are not directly observable. Farrell (2003:96) also observes that "the transition from the teacher training institution to the secondary or high school classroom is characterized by a type of 'reality shock' in which the ideas that were formed during teacher training are replaced by the reality of school life". School life requires that all language skills are developed.

A learning theory which accounts for the differences in the ways in which ESL students learn the language is put forward by Oxford (1990) who argues that learning occurs when whatever a student learns relates to what he already knows. For example, if students learn narrative essay writing in English after learning it in siSwati, they will learn it faster in English. The implication of this theory to ESL learning is that, when students at school level learn a L2, they already know the grammatical rules of their L1. In the process of learning the L2, they may apply the rules of the L1 to L2 in accordance with the reception learning theory. Successful and unsuccessful learning of L2 will depend on how appropriate or inappropriate the rules applied for L2 are.

## **2.6 Second language acquisition**

This section discusses the basis of L2 acquisition. I have drawn a great deal from the work of Krashen (1981, 1982, 1984 and 1985) here. L2 acquisition is a complex phenomenon. Several theories and research paradigms are used in explaining it. Acquisition, according to Krashen is "a natural subconscious process that occurs in

informal environments when the focus is on communication or meaning. Language learning in contrast, is a conscious process that occurs in formal learning environments, as in certain activities at school, and focuses on language form and grammatical competence" (1981:84). This means that language acquisition proceeds unconsciously in the sense that children are unaware that they are acquiring a language and they cannot describe the rules for its usage. They are aware that language is used for communication, while language learning is seen as a conscious process. However, language theorists (Genesee, 1994 and Baker, 2002) assert that acquisition may also occur unconsciously in the classroom when the focus is on teaching content. SLA covers the development of phonology, lexis, grammar and pragmatic knowledge, (Ellis, 1999) in a variety of ways. SLA is both the process and study of developing the ability to use a language other than the mother-tongue.

Krashen presents his multi-hypotheses of L2 acquisition comprising; the Acquisition-learning hypothesis, the Monitor hypothesis, the Comprehensible Input hypothesis, the Natural order hypothesis and the Affective Filter hypothesis. The most basic is the 'Acquisition-Learning' hypothesis which claims that in order for acquisition to take place there must be meaningful natural interaction in the target language. Ellis (1999) argues that L2 acquisition theorists Krashen and Long (1985) have argued strongly that SLA depends on the availability of comprehensible input before learners' internal mechanism can work. The speakers consider the comprehensiveness of the message they are conveying and not the structure of the language.

Krashen also explains how a L2 acquirer develops competency over time. He (1981, 1982, and 1985) points out that, learners acquire grammatical features above their level following a natural order. However, this happens only if comprehensible language input is provided. This type of input is the condition necessary for acquisition to take place. The learners acquire L2 only when they understand language that contains structures that are a level above (but not too far beyond) their existing knowledge of L2. He defines the current level of the language learner as 'i' and the ideal level of input that facilitates learning is 'i + 1'. Long, cited in Ellis (1999), points out that input is made



comprehensible by a 'here-and-now' orientation that enables learners to use linguistic and extra-linguistic contexts, and their general knowledge to interpret language they do not know.

Another way of making input comprehensible is through modifying interactional structures of conversation, which Long considers as the most important for SLA since it occurs even when there are no formal adjustments. For Long, these two ways are the main sources of comprehensible input and they ensure that communication proceeds, while exposing learners to new linguistic material, (Ellis, 1999). For Krashen, the ability to communicate in a L2 emerges in learners when they have acquired enough comprehensible input (i+1), rather than learnt it or been taught it. Krashen stresses that learners must be supplied with comprehensible input in order for them to acquire language easily and that teaching must prepare learners for real life communication situations, such as role-playing a conversation between a doctor and a patient.

However, Krashen's theory is controversial. If comprehensible input goes according to the learners' level, they might not improve if they use it only. Learners who receive limited input from their homes and learning environments are disadvantaged because the conditions for learning the target language are slim. Depending on this hypothesis may benefit learners from middle class families since they receive enough input from parents and are aided with a lot of resources. This also depends on how the learners process the input. Teachers should pay cognizance to the type of input received by learners and must be drawn from a variety of resources including teachers, multimedia resources like newspapers, magazines, literature and to require learners to participate in discussions, debates and put language output on the lead.

According to the 'Monitor hypothesis' the language that one has acquired subconsciously is the major source for initiating the comprehension and production of utterances in L2 and is responsible for one's fluency, while the consciously learned language acts as an editor and planner when the learner has time to do so as he is concerned with the correctness of the language and also knows the rule. An example of the consciously



learned language is when writing an essay and speech. The learners use the monitor to edit and correct their language performance and give speech a polished appearance.

According to the 'Natural Order hypothesis, the acquisition of grammatical structures proceeds in a predictable order. In any given language, some grammatical structures are acquired earlier than others regardless of the first language background. However, Krashen does not mean that grammar should be taught only in the natural order of acquisition all the time.

The 'Affective Filter hypothesis' is concerned with controlling the amount of input the learner comes into contact with, and the amount of input converted into intake. It is affective because the factors that determine its strength have to do with the learners' motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. Krashen (1981) argues that learners with high motivation, self-confidence, a good self-image and a low level of anxiety succeed in L2 acquisition. But low motivation, weak self-esteem and anxiety can raise the affective filter and cause mental blockage that can prevent comprehensible input from being utilized for acquisition.

Krashen's theory would help educators understand the process of acquiring an additional language. They must understand the factors that promote learning if they are to develop effective methods and teaching strategies in their classrooms. The negative emotional and attitudinal factors that were mentioned under affective filter hypothesis must be borne in mind when learners learn English as a second language.

The Swazi curriculum at high schools aims at developing the learners' abilities and fluency to use English as a medium of practical communication using the four language skills. The Swaziland MoE adopts the communicative language teaching and the task-based approaches which I now turn to discuss. These approaches put emphasis on meaningful language learning as the learners interact in the target language doing meaningful tasks.

## **2.7 The Communicative Language Teaching approach**

One of the language teaching approaches that builds on how language learning occurs is the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. Kunene (2005), the Principal Secretary of Education, points out that in Swaziland, the MoE aims at equipping the learners with fluency and ability in the four language skills. He advocates the use of the CLT to language teaching for meaningful language usage.

This approach regards language basically as conveying meaning, rather than as a linguistic system to be conveyed to students, (Baker, 2000). It focuses on the appropriate forms of communication rather than the structure of language. Baker (2000) regards this as meaningful input for L2 acquisition. Language is for communication and competence to communicate meaning effectively is considered, rather than grammatical accuracy and fluency articulation. This approach was a reaction to the audio-lingual approach to L2 acquisition that focused on the teaching of the target language structure before grammatical concepts were taught. The communicative approach emphasizes the selection and organization of L2 input by the learner. In this approach language errors and interference are regarded as part of the learning process, (Baker, 2000). The emphasis is on L2 learners' discovering their own errors and correcting them rather than being corrected by the teacher all the time.

Communicative language teaching focuses on the learners' ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in all situations using the target language. This means using the language in a social context (for example, making an invitation, complaining about something, making a suggestion and so on). Richards and Rogers (1995) point out that communication expresses meaning and that the language structure reflects the functional and communicative use. So, communication involves transference of meaning. If the meaning is not clear or not understood, then communication has not taken place. This suggests that for the subjects of this study to be able to communicate in an understandable way, they need to be more than grammatically competent (Baker 2002),



but they should understand and produce utterances that are appropriate on many different levels to the communicative situations even those outside the classroom.

The communicative language teaching (CLT) approach advocates for the development of communicative competence as a primary goal (Baker 2002), through the extensive use of the target language as a means of communication during classroom lessons. Communicative competence means the ability to use the language appropriately to the given contexts. This means that a child “knows when and when not to speak, what to talk about with whom, when, where and in what manner”, (Hymes, 1972:277). This implies that teachers must demonstrate how language items are used, and in what situations they are appropriate. The child has both communicative competence and linguistic competence.

Linguistic competence according to Baker (1996) includes one’s ability to recognize and produce meaningful sounds, this is, phonological competence. It also involves the ability to formulate meaning from words and also manipulate them into meaningful structures, lexical and grammatical competence respectively. CLT puts emphasis on language use rather than language knowledge. Widdowson (1978) argues that teachers must teach the learners the ‘use’ of language as well as its ‘usage’, (1978:3). Likewise, the IGCSE English curriculum aims at developing the “learners’ ability to use English effectively for the purpose of practical communication; to develop an awareness of the nature of language and language-learning skills, and to promote students’ personal development”, GCSE syllabus 2008 cf. Appendix E).

A good use of the CLT approach creates an environment that is interactive and not excessively formal, but one that encourages risk taking and promotes learners’ independence. Teachers serve as facilitators, while learners are actively involved in interpretation and negotiation of meaning. This approach is learner centred not teacher centred. The next section discusses the task-based approach to language teaching. The task-based language teaching approach also advocates meaningful learning.



### **2.7.1 The Task-Based Language Teaching and Learning approach**

The steps one can take when teaching second language using the task-based approach are discussed in this section. The task-based language teaching and learning (TBLTL) approach is an offshoot of the CLT. Nunan (1989) defines 'task' as a piece of work that requires learners to comprehend, manipulate and interact in the target language focusing on meaning rather than form. In short, TBLTL is an approach to instruction in the field of language acquisition which focuses on the use of authentic language, and on learners doing meaningful tasks using the target language. Oxford (2006) defines 'task' as a structured instructional plan that requires learners to move towards an objective plan using teacher-given procedures. The task or problem is externally imposed on the learners but they have freedom in approaching it.

Tasks contain some input which is in the realm of communicative instruction. Examples are: problem-solving, decision-making, comprehension-based, question-and-answer, dialogues, role-play, reading and many more. Other types include picture stories, discussions, debates, interviews and everyday functions such as telephone conversations. Input materials used for L2 tasks include books, newspaper, video, TV and many others. If the materials are boring, too easy or difficult, learners will be demotivated to do the task, (Oxford, 2006).

In a task-based learning and teaching approach, the lesson follows certain stages namely: pre-task, task, planning, report, analysis and practice, (Willis J. 2004, cited in Oxford 2006). The instructor may use his / her discretion on how to use these stages. The teacher introduces the topic and gives learners clear instructions on what they are expected to do, in the pre-task stage. He / she may prime the learners with prime vocabulary or grammatical constructs. The instructor can also play a recording of people doing the task or present it in pictures. Learners perform the task in small groups, depending on the type of activity, in the task phase. The teacher serves as an observer or counselor since this is a learner-centred approach. Learners prepare either a written or oral report to present to the class. The teacher provides written or oral feedback and

learners observing may do the same, in the reporting phase. The teacher reviews what happened in the task, in regards to language they used during the reporting phase for analysis. Finally, the practise stage covers material mentioned by the teacher in the analysis stage. He / she emphasizes key language.

Skehan (1998) points out that when he introduces tasks such as solving a crossword and then get learners to make their own and then share it with each other, or read about a topic and watch a related video clip, learners become engaged with language and meaning as well as intensive cognitive processing which induces second language modification and development. This indicates that the L2 learners acquire the language through using it in performing different tasks.

Task-based learning is more learner-centred, allows for more meaningful communication and provides for extra-linguistic skill building, (Nunan, 1989). The engagement of learners in doing the tasks further motivates them in their language learning. Success in achieving the objectives of the tasks and in reporting back can increase longer term motivation. A natural context is created from the learners' experiences with the language that is personalized and relevant to them. The CLT and task-based language teaching approaches are included in the teaching of English in Swaziland and they are embedded in a constructivist learning approach. Literacy skills and practices which I now turn to discuss are also used in second language acquisition and learning.

## **2.8 Literacy skills and practices**

This section explores literature on literacy skills as a set of social practices with special reference to the autonomous and ideological models. Literacy skills such as reading and writing are central to education. These language skills form the base of the learning practices. Literacy skills and practices are part of L2 learning process. After making a study on how people use literacy, Scribner and Cole (1981) conclude that:



Instead of focusing exclusively on the technology of a writing system and its reputed consequences ... we approach literacy as a set of socially organized practices which make use of a symbol system and a technology for producing and disseminating it. Literacy is not simply knowing how to read and write a particular script, but applying this knowledge for specific purposes for specific contexts of use. The nature of these practices, including of course, their technological aspects, will determine the kinds of skills associated with literacy, (Scribner & Cole, 1981, in Barton, 1994: 25).

What is important here is the ability to apply the knowledge of reading and writing for specific purposes and contexts. This implies that the learners in the current study will be considered literate if they are able to think critically and go beyond the mere provision of right answers, but also argue in a critical way. Barton (1994:25) refers to this as being “competent and knowledgeable in specialized areas”.

Street *et al* (1995 in Bloch 2002:3) observe that literacy is social and cultural in nature and forms part of people’s daily practices. This means that literacy acquisition takes place where there is an interaction between people and that culture is transmitted through literacy. Street *et al* give new ideas that literacy brings about socialization among people and that literacy is action oriented. Bloch (2000) perceives literacy as a social, political and cultural activity that begins with meaningful interaction with written language. For Bloch, socialization, politics and culture are involved in literacy and they are carried out through written language, and language is the vehicle through which these are transmitted. This implies that the students as they learn literacy in L2, socialization and the culture of the L2 speakers will be promoted as well.

Street (1995) outlines two approaches to literacy that are the autonomous model and the ideological approach. According to Willey (1996), the autonomous model regards literacy as independent, that is, as an individual ability. Cognitive outcome emanates from one’s ability to use literacy rather than from the social practices in which it is used. Bloch (2002) explains that the autonomous model is made up of separate cognitive skills unconnected to any particular context that one could use after having learnt the skills. This model implies that literacy is learned in isolation, out of context. For example,



learning meaning of words out of the contexts in which they are used. This will encourage the learners to memorize the meanings without the knowledge of the usage of the words.

Bloch (2002) goes on to say that the emphasis in teaching the technical skills is on skills practice. This involves teaching the basics for reading and writing which are 'pre-reading' and 'pre-writing' skills. The skills are taught in a sequential way whereby they build upon the other, (that is, they begin with the phonics, letter formation and good handwriting). Learners are taught sequential skills like letter recognition and letter formation. In informal letter writing, high school learners are taught sequential skills like writing the address, the salutation, the body, conclusion and finally proof reading. Literacy is defined separately from the social practices in which it is used in this approach.

The ideological approach, however, views literacy as 'multiple literacies', that is, a plural set of social practices, and not as a single activity that the autonomous approach regards. Street (1984 in Barton 1994:25) contends that the meaning of literacy varies from one situation to another and is dependent "on the social institutions in which it is embedded". It also depends on the reading and writing practices that are taught in any context, as well as the institutions' educational role. Street, like Scribner and Cole, perceives literacy as social practices associated with the written word.

Street (1995); Brice-Heath (1983) and Barton (1994) argue that literacy should be perceived in context and as being peoples' social and cultural practices. Bloch (20002) states that people should engage in meaningful activities with written language from the beginning when literacy is taught as this helps them understand what is done with literacy and how literacy is used. Technical skills are learnt at the same time as they learn "to read by reading, and to write by writing", (Smith 1979 in Bloch 2002:1) focusing on making meaning. This shows that technical skills should not be viewed as separate from any context since they are learned as one uses them to do something meaningful. So, teaching literacy out of context is meaningless.

According to Barton (1994), the social construction of literacy is rooted in people's actions, attitudes and learning. Learning is associated with schooling. School literacy has reading and writing instruction and culture oriented instruction. But the world outside the school has literacy practices that are different from those of the school. They include learning the skills for a particular job like driving, marketing, farming and many others. So, literacy has a social meaning and the social approach to literacy is based on the fact that reading, writing and meaning are always socially situated, (Gee, 2000).

Reading, according to Genesee (1994), is a language process in which an individual constructs meaning through written texts that have symbols representing language. This means that for learners to become proficient readers, precise instructional methods dealing with the development of independent decoding skills should be used for students to decode meaning of unfamiliar words. With writing, one creates meaning by using the symbols to construct a written text. Writing according to Baker (2000), is shared meaning whereby one writes to inform, influence, persuade and to delight others. In both reading and writing, the text is influenced by the reader and writer's language background, personal experience, cultural framework, as well as by the purpose for reading and writing, and the audience for the piece Genesee, (1994). Willig shares the same idea with Genesee when he states that:

Writing is a key element in the search for meaning because it allows us to reflect on and order our encounters with the world and the impact they make upon us. Equally important, we write to share thoughts and feelings with others through communications ranging from hastily written notes to formal, carefully argued essays on complex issues, (in Baker, 1996:25).

This means that the ability to write well and to interpret print is built on the knowledge of the language, knowledge of the world, as well as knowledge of printed words. In the case of the present study, knowledge of print, the second language and its grammatical rules will enable the students to read fluently and with understanding, and also to write clearly and in an acceptable way. They will express themselves correctly in a proper style and in



an understandable manner, and also observe the semantic, syntactic, cohesive and morphological rules.

In the following section I discuss teaching strategies used when teaching reading and approaches to teaching writing. Strategies are crucial because they form the teaching approaches.

## **2.9 Reading teaching strategies**

This section examines ways in which the literacy skill of reading comprehension is taught. Reading comprehension means reading a passage with understanding, with the aim to answer questions on it. This is known as intensive reading. One of the ways of teaching reading comprehension, according to Ellis and Tomlinson (1994), is that the teacher first identifies the initial teaching point, that is, the lexical, structural or conceptual items that might give learners problems in understanding the passage. These items could be explained before learners read the passage.

The teacher could let the learners read the passage silently without the use of a dictionary. He / she should emphasize on finding meaning in context. The teacher could then ask them a few oral questions to enhance their understanding. He / she could then read the passage. He / she could emphasize on the answering skill, that is, discuss how to tackle different kinds of questions such as factual questions, questions requiring direct and implied meaning, inference questions and so on.

Turner (1997) suggests that a text should be read three times. In the first reading learners read for the main idea. The teacher may prepare key words and expressions to help facilitate this process. The aim should be the overall understanding of the passage and learners may disregard words that are not important for understanding.

The second reading aims at a more detailed understanding whereby the learners have to comprehend the main idea presented in each paragraph. They need to be trained to utilize

context and structural information to understand subtleties of meaning, (Turner 1997). The third reading is intended to provide the learners with a thorough understanding of the whole passage. It should be followed by activities that require inference and further expansion of content in answering the questions. Nunan (1989:66) argues that in carrying out the reading comprehension task, “learners would have been involved in recognizing and understanding script and format; recognizing and understanding key words and phrases; skimming for gist and identifying the main points in text”. The next section examines ways in which writing (literacy skill) can be taught.

### **2.9.1 Approaches to teaching writing**

Current research problematizes the ways by which writing is poorly taught in many schools and many countries, such as, Namibia, Tanzania (Mgqwashu, 2006 & Broch-Utne, 2004) and other places. Composing refers to putting together of thoughts on a topic and arranging them logically in sentences and paragraphs, (Kritzing 1995). Tribble (1996) has presented two approaches to teaching writing and they are the Process Approach and the Genre Approach.

The *process approach*, according to Tribble (1996), is an approach to the teaching of writing which stresses the creativity of the individual writer, and pays attention to the development of good writing practices rather than the imitation of models. It focuses on “the writer as an independent producer of texts”, (Tribble 1996:37) and puts special emphasis on the stages of writing.

One of the ways of teaching writing using the process approach includes learners’ choosing of the topic and determining its mode or type. They gather information about the topic and make notes about what they want to say. Learners could also brainstorm their points together in class, and the teacher writes them on the board as they are called out. This is known as the pre-writing stage, (Glencoe 2000). In the next stage the learners need to arrange and organize their ideas in a sensible order for the story so that events



follow each other in a natural way. The organization of the ideas forms paragraphs in the essay.

The next stage is writing the draft. The goal is organizing the facts and details they have accumulated into unified paragraphs, (Glencoe, 2000). They need to work out their sentences mentally before writing. They have to ensure that each paragraph has a main idea and does not bring in unrelated information. The main idea or theme must be supported by details that explain and clarify it. The length and pattern of sentences should vary to make them interesting. Each paragraph must link to the following one. Special care should be given to the opening and concluding paragraphs, making them as effective as possible.

The essay should consist of three parts namely: the introduction, body and conclusion. The introduction should appeal to the reader's interest and set the tone. It has to give the reader the main idea of what the essay is all about. Each paragraph should have a topic sentence that states the theme of the paragraph. The conclusion should give a feeling of completeness. It sums up what has been said in the body. The writer may also comment or give a personal reaction to the topic. Proofreading is the final stage whereby the writer spell checks his / her work and edits for grammar and punctuation mistakes in preparation for presentation.

Although the process approach enables writers to be more effective at generating texts, it is criticized and would be of little help if used exclusively, and if the writers are unaware of what the readers expect to find in the texts, (Tribble, 1996). According to Tribble, this approach is said to be recursive and complex whereby writers have to revisit some of the stages before the text is completed. The genre approach offers alternatives to the process approach.

### 2.9.2 The genre approach

The *genre approach* on the other hand, is an approach to the teaching of writing which puts emphasis on how language is used within a particular context (Hyland, 1992). It focuses on the interaction between the writer, reader and text. Writing is viewed as a social activity whereby the reader should see the purpose of a text for successful communication.

There are different genres or modes of essay writing and they include: narrative, descriptive, expository, persuasive writing and many others. In each genre the writer should present information in a format acceptable for the occasion. For example, an informal friendly letter or a formal letter of complaint contains elements associated with this particular social action, (Tribble, 1996). When writing to communicate the writer should say something on the topic, have a point of view and focus and be effective.

Hyland (1992), points out that a genre has a particular schematic structure; a distinctive beginning, body and ending. The structure comprises the genre of a text. The genre approach reveals the communicative processes and serves as pedagogical purpose.

One of the strategies that help make learners independent writers is writing frames. According to Farlex (2003), in this technique, the teacher uses a skeleton outline which consists of key words and phrases in which the learners have to fill in the gaps with correct information such as single words and phrases. Frames are initially used with “teacher-led discussions and modeling of the genre form that teaches vocabulary and connectives”, (Farlex, 2003:3). This strategy helps learners write coherent structures while focusing on communicating their thoughts. Learners who are competent users of the language eventually produce “fluent writing of high quality in the genre” (2003:3) without using the frame.

Narrative genres, for example, execute the purpose of entertaining through structures such as orientation, complication and resolution; while a simple report genre has a



general categorization whereby a topic is introduced and evaluated; and described, that is, where the distinctive characteristics of the topic are presented.

However, the genre approach is not concerned with the application of prescriptions of textual structures, but it is based on the analysis of how a text creates meaning in its context and the learners' use of the knowledge to write the same genre, (Farlex, 2003). The teacher is able to monitor and give possible feedback and successful discussion at each stage of the essay since information is available on the features of different genres. Learners can consult the teacher and work together to construct the genre under focus.

The genre approach has been effective across the education spectrum in the USA, (Farlex, 2003). The use of the genre approach complements the use of the process approach. For example, an awareness of a generic structure of a read text has a positive effect on future writing. When learners in the genre approach view a composition in the immediate planning stage they grasp what is expected in the genre they want to write. An awareness of the genre conventions in the draft stage helps learners in the ordering and re-ordering of text, (Dudley-Evans, 1994). Coordinating the approaches helps equip learners develop skills to produce coherent and cohesive texts. The process and genre approaches are relevant to the Swazi English L2 learners since these approaches expose them to practical writing tasks.

This section has provided an insight into the strategies and approaches used for teaching literacy skills in L2 acquisition and learning. The findings from the literature review informed the procedure for collecting the data.

## **2.11 Conclusion**

This chapter dealt with the review of theories on curriculum change and steps taken to implement effective change. It also explored the body of literature that relates to how learners learn an additional language (L2) through the additive bilingual model and how the subtractive bilingual model subtracts the learners' L1 while learning the second

language. This review is helpful since it provides a wider understanding on how second language acquisition takes place when the input provided by the context is comprehensible. Language learning occurs when learners are exposed to the target language. Adequate exposure to the additional language and its use helps the learners to learn the target language through communicative language teaching and through performing meaningful tasks. Learner-centred approaches such as communicative language teaching and task-based language teaching are examples of classroom practices that promote learners' collaborative learning which motivates learners to learn a target language as well as make them reach new understandings. Learners' ability to interpret texts created by others and those written by them shows their literacy in L2 learning. These aspects helped me formulate a focus for my research. The next chapter focuses on the research methodology and ways in which the study was conducted.



## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter begins with a discussion of the research paradigm used in this study after which I discuss the research approach used. It also describes and explores the theoretical underpinnings and arguments for my research design. It describes my sample and explains how I selected it and also explains the entire process of data elicitation. It then gives an overview of the data analysis of the study. Thereafter it explains how validity, reliability and ethical considerations were addressed in this study. Finally, a summary of the chapter is given.

#### **3.2 Research paradigm**

Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1996) define paradigm as: “All encompassing systems of interrelated practice and thinking that define for researchers the nature of their enquiry along three dimensions: ontology, epistemology and methodology”, (1996:6).

Terre Blanche and Durrheim give three types of paradigms namely; positivist, constructivist and interpretive paradigms. The study adopted the interpretive paradigm whereby the researcher believes the reality to be studied consists of subjects’ subjective experiences of the world, and may adopt an interactional stance towards reality. I wanted to find out the teachers’ experiences as they implemented the curriculum in the classrooms and how they interpreted their understanding of the change of the English IGCSE curriculum.

#### **3.3 The research approach used in the study**

A Qualitative research approach speaks to the methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation applied in the study. This study adopted a qualitative data collection and analysis approach. Maree, (2007) points out that a qualitative approach is based on the

interpretive paradigm whereby researchers seek to understand how people make meaning of phenomena in their environment. A qualitative approach to research is:

...inquiry in which researchers collect data in face-to-face situations by interacting with selected persons in their settings (field of research). Qualitative research describes and analyses people's individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions. The researcher interprets phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001:395).

Miles and Huberman (2002) argue that a qualitative approach assists researchers to see why something is the way it is. Through the qualitative approach, I was able to investigate teachers' understandings of the change of the English IGCSE curriculum in Swazi high schools. A qualitative approach provides insight, interpretative nuance and rich sensory details beyond the scope of other research models, (Best and Kahn, 1998). It is flexible in that it allows for adjustment of the direction of inquiry based on on-going experiences during data collection, (Best and Kahn, 1998).

I used qualitative methods of research in four high schools in Swaziland. Classroom observations on 8 lessons and semi-structured interviews with 7 teachers were methods of data collection used in the study. These data collection techniques are used in qualitative studies. The study was conducted in specific schools.

### **3.4 Research design**

A research design according to Mouton (2001:55) is "a plan or blueprint" in which the researcher intends to conduct the study. It indicates what can be achieved and how it can be accomplished. The researcher decides on the choice of research design and methodology to use and is guided by the following issues: specific research questions; the focus of the research that will enable the researcher to answer the questions; the kind of data to be obtained; sampling; the main methodology to be used and how the data will be gathered. The study will show how these issues guided the researcher's choice of research design.



The data for this study were collected mainly from four high schools out of 38 schools in the Manzini<sup>4</sup> region. Manzini is both a region and city situated in the centre of the country.

A Map<sup>5</sup> of Swaziland showing Manzini region where the research was conducted



<sup>4</sup> There are four regions namely: Hhohho, Manzini, Shiselweni and Lubombo.

<sup>5</sup> Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.mht

## **Administrative divisions of Swaziland**

1 – HHOHHO

2 - LUBOMBO

3 - MANZINI

4 - SHISELWENI

### **3.5 Selection of the schools and teachers participating in the study**

I chose the schools through purposive sampling. Two schools were from the urban area while two were schools in the rural setting. I engaged with these two dichotomies in order to compare the learning conditions experienced by the learners. The learners in the rural schools are disadvantaged because they do not have adequate and better learning materials and resources. Most of their parents are unemployed and they are unable to provide them with learning materials like books. Learners in the urban areas stand a better chance because their parents are able to provide them with learning materials. They have access to resources like the internet. Including both urban and rural schools in one region is balanced representation of schools in the region which is the pattern in the other 3 regions. I selected them through using the following criteria:

- that they have Forms 4 and 5 classes;
- that they represent two learning contexts, the rural and urban areas;
- that they are accessible to the researcher in both rural and urban areas, and;
- that I had access to their performance over 3 years in O-Level and 1 year in the IGCSE Examinations.

I ensured that they were either government-aided (public schools owned by the government) and or mission schools, and not private schools as this would not serve the purpose of the study. The mission schools use the same syllabi as the government-aided schools and for that reason they suited the purpose of this study. Private schools follow an extended syllabus. For example, they add foreign languages like French and Afrikaans and thus do not meet the purpose of the study.



The key informants in this study were 7 teachers, selected primarily on the basis that they had attended training workshops in 2006 and 2007 preparing for the introduction of the IGCSE English syllabus teaching and they were currently teaching English in the IGCSE level or Forms 4 and 5 classrooms; and that they were willing to collaborate with me. The following table shows the teachers' profiles. The teachers would be able to show their understanding of the change of the English language curriculum as well as their experiences, while the researcher would determine if the teachers have moved from the traditional ways of teaching to the new approaches as required by the IGCSE curriculum.

### 3.6 Profiles of the selected teachers

**Table 3.1: Number of teachers who participated in the study, their teaching experience, the subjects they taught and the lessons observed.**

The names of the schools are referred to as A, B, C and D for ethical reasons. Schools A and D were based in rural areas while B and C were urban schools. In school A one teacher was available and two were available in schools B, C and D.

School	A	B	C	D
No. of teachers interviewed	1	2	2	2
Teachers and the No. of years teaching	A: 3 years	B1: 11 years	C1: 3 years	D1: 5 years
Teaching load	English language forms 4&5 & Literature forms 1-3	English language forms 4&5 & literature forms 3-5	English language forms 2-5	English language forms 3-5 & Religious Education forms 1-3
Teachers and the No. of years teaching		B2: 6 years	C2: 9 years	D2: 12 years
Teaching load		English language forms 3-5 & SiSwati forms 1-3	English language forms 3-5 & literature form 2-4	English language forms 4&5 & literature forms 3-5

### 3.7 The instruments

In order to answer the critical research questions indicated in the table below, validity or trustworthiness of my data was ensured through the use of semi-structured interviews with teachers and classroom observations. According to Cohen and Manion (2000), triangulation is an approach that allows the researcher to use two or more methods of data collection to ensure validity of the methods. This would reduce the researcher's bias and distortions that might occur where one method is used, and also overcomes method boundedness, (Cohen and Manion, 2000).

I used semi-structured interviews because of their advantages pointed out in literature. For example, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) argue that in an interview responses can be probed, followed up, clarified, and elaborated to achieve specific accurate responses. In this study, through probing, I was able to get a deeper understanding of the teachers' perceptions of the English IGCSE curriculum change at high school, (Table 3.2 below).

Teachers were observed interacting with their learners during writing and oral lessons. Observations of taught lessons were carried out to substantiate interviews and to answer the second research question. I intended to explore the teaching approaches teachers used and to find out if they used the approaches they claimed to use in teaching and how they used them as Bell (1993) argues that it is not always the case that people do what they say they do. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) point out that observations are usually used to study language learning and teaching processes in the classrooms, and to study teachers' and learners' behaviour.

The following table (Table 3.2) shows the respondent's frequency, research approach, inquiry, context types and number of lessons observed.



**Table 3.2: Respondent's frequency, research approach, inquiry and context.**

Question 1:	Respondent's frequency	Approach	Research inquiry	Context
How do teachers experience curriculum change from O-Level to IGCSE with regard to English language teaching?	<b>Teachers:</b> 7x1 interviews	<b>Interview schedule:</b> . IGCSE versus GCE syllabi . Teaching approaches used . Learners' exposure to learning opportunities . Role of the school language policy.	Qualitative	<b>Schools:</b> 2 rural 2 urban
Question 2:	Types and number of lessons observed	Classroom observation schedule	Research method	Schools:
How was this change implemented in the Form 4 English language classrooms?	<b>4x2 classes</b> Writing school C, 2 times Oral school D, 2 times Listening school B, 2 times Reading school A, 2 times	. lessons objectives and contents of each lesson; . teaching approaches, strategies and class activities; . modes of learning and languages used, and; . guidelines given in the English IGCSE curriculum.	Qualitative	1rural 1 urban

### 3.8 Piloting the instruments

Before conducting interviews, I piloted the instruments. According to Verma and Mallick (1999), a pilot study is helpful in testing the appropriateness of instruments as in some cases researchers are inexperienced in constructing and in administering research instruments. It helps detect problems that may arise during the major investigation. It also tests the validity of the instrument(s) to be used during the main study. If any ambiguities are observed, a pilot study helps the researcher deal with them before hand (Bell, 1993).

In the pilot study, I conducted face-to-face interviews with Teacher F from a different school that is not included in the main study and also observed her teaching an English

lesson in Form 4 B. This was done in order to test what was likely to happen or not happen during the main data collection phase and also to test the validity of the instruments.

The interview revealed that I had to reshuffle questions 2 and 3 a) and b) (Appendix A) so that there could be coherence in these questions. The questions are as follows:

2. How do you see teaching English using the IGCSE curriculum as compared to the years when you used the GCE syllabus?
3. a) Have you attended workshops on the teaching of the new IGCSE syllabus? If so, how many times?  
b) Do the workshops improve your understanding of the IGCSE syllabus? If so, how do they improve it?

The lesson observation proved to run smoothly as I was able to find the methods the teacher was using when teaching summary writing.

### **3.9 The procedure followed for collecting data**

#### **3.9.1 Semi-structured interviews with teachers**

The data collection period was between 15 September and 31 October 2008 and lasted for 6 weeks. Interviews were 30 to 40 minutes in duration per teacher. The following is an outline of the interviews:

- Teachers' teaching experience;
- Availability and effectiveness of training workshops in preparation for the IGCSE English teachers;
- Teachers' understanding of the approaches used when teaching different language aspects or skills such as skills emphasized in the IGCSE English curriculum



(grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension, listening and oral skills, summary and essay writing);

- Teachers' understanding of the IGCSE curriculum change;
- How change was implemented, and;
- Their opinion of the school language policy in relation to the IGCSE English curriculum.

I was able to modify the sequence of questions, change the wording and also explain or add to them when teachers did not fully understand the question(s) or when their responses were vague. This was to ascertain that there was no misunderstanding between me as a researcher and the teachers. I transcribed or wrote down the responses in my notebook and also tape-recorded some of the responses to facilitate analysis. I used the written transcripts from my notes, listened to and transcribed the tapes in order to categorise data in preparation for analysis.

### **3.9.2 Observation of taught lessons**

I communicated with the teachers in advance regarding their time tables and arranged the times that would suit them for the observation of their lessons. To put the teachers at ease, it was explained beforehand that the notes were not going to be used for supervisory purposes but for the research purposes by the researcher. Each teacher was asked to explain the situation to the learners before hand. The following is a description of the observation schedule used.

I observed 2 lessons from each school on listening, speaking, reading and writing skills (Table 3.2) until they got used to me so that they did not teach extra good lessons just for my sake. I sat for 40 minutes single periods to 80 minutes double periods. I used non-participant observation and observed the proceedings in classrooms and also took field notes while lessons were in session without interference. Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) claim that in a non-participant observation study researchers do not participate in the activity being observed, but rather 'sit on the sideline' and watch and are not directly

involved in the situation they are observing. I used an observation schedule to capture the relevant information in my field notes, (Appendix B). I noted the atmosphere and ways of interaction between the teachers and learners. I sat and made teachers comfortable by not writing too much but quickly noted down all I remembered to have taken place. I did not use video or audio- tapes because I thought they could interfere with the natural flow of the lessons.

I observed the lesson topic, duration of lesson, objectives, introduction, content presentation and activities. I wrote in my notebook how feedback was given and the language predominantly used in the classroom. I wrote down the languages teachers used when asking questions, giving explanations and the languages learners used when making responses. The teaching approaches were mostly looked for, for example, communicative language teaching (CLT) and the task-based language teaching (TBLT) approaches and these were detected from the methods they used as approaches combine a number of methods.

### **3.9.3 Observation schedule.**

I had developed an observation schedule to guide me as I went to observe. In qualitative research it is not necessary to have presumptive categories such as in excessive filling in of forms. However, an observation schedule provides the broad categories that an observer tries to follow. The observation schedule is not exhaustive and the researcher may use it flexibly to allow him / her to be open-minded. The following is an example of the observation schedule. (Also in Table 3.2 above)

1. What the learning outcomes were.
2. How the content was delivered. For instance, through lecturing, demonstration, brainstorming, reading texts, asking questions, miming, explanation and instructing learners to discuss something and they constitute the CLT and TBLT teaching approaches.



3. Lesson tasks and aspects of language developed. For example, reading, speaking, listening, writing, grammar, vocabulary and so on, (skills enhancing the approaches or language focus).
4. Language(s) predominantly used in lessons, that is, English only, code-switching of English and siSwati and the learners' level of fluency in English.
5. Modes of learning used by the teacher, that is, teacher centred or learner-centred, (traditional or constructivist respectively).
6. Learners' participation in lessons. For example, individually, in a chorus, in full sentences, yes or no, and so on (learner response technique).
7. How feedback was given and how it was used to improve learning.
8. If all the learners had the learning materials or textbooks used and what the learners did from the textbooks.
9. What the teachers did to assess learners.

I also conducted short follow-up interviews after observing each lesson to find out the outcomes and activities the teachers had in mind when conducting the lessons, which ones worked and which ones failed. This was done in order to compare this with their previous interview responses.

### **3.10 Data analysis**

Data from research interview transcriptions addressed the first research question. I used alphabet coding whereby each school and each teacher were given identity (ID) alphabets as their codes as shown in section 3.6. Responses were organized into analytical statements and themes. Themes emerged from the questions, (Appendix A).

Analysis began with reading and re-reading interviews transcripts and field notes and replaying audiotapes for additional clarification. I wrote the teachers' responses for each question. I studied the common patterns and trends (cross-case analysis) in the respondents' answers which were then synthesized using the constant comparison method. Maykurt and Morehouse (1994) argue that the goal of the constant comparative

method is to identify themes and develop, refine and show relationships between concepts. The analysis of interview responses was made with reference to approaches of L2 teaching and learning. Reference to language teaching and learning theorists such as Moore (1998), Glencoe (2000), Richards and Rodgers (1995), Oxford (2006), were made on CLT and TBLTL and were my sources of reading data. Analysis was also made on literacy-as-social-practice teaching. Detailed discussions were done and implications were made.

The second research question was addressed by the analysis of data elicited from the observations of taught lessons. In analyzing data from lessons observed, I intended to identify the language(s) used and communication activities and discourses that occurred in the classrooms between teachers and learners. I made considerations on how the teachers used the approaches in the classrooms and the learners' competence in the target language. I analysed assessment procedures used in lessons observed. I cross-checked the teachers' interviews data to the lessons observations data. These data sets allow some diversity in data gathering to create the selection of important and relevant information.

Data were further analysed inductively (Maykurt and Morehouse 1994). This means that the statements were then synthesised according to the themes which emerged from the data which are as follows:

- Preparation of teachers for the IGCSE English curriculum;
- teaching approaches used in the English IGCSE curriculum;
- the IGCSE English curriculum and teaching of the four language skills, and;
- learners' use of English in the IGCSE curriculum in the classroom and school premises.

I further compared what the teachers did in lessons with the criteria in the English Language syllabus document (Appendix E). Conclusions were then drawn from the research findings and recommendations were made.



### **3.11 Validity**

Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) point out that validity is a construct that researchers have to take into consideration to ensure that inferences they draw from the data they collect are valid. In this study I obtained content validity of the instruments by piloting them to verify clarity, understanding of the questionnaire and the lessons observations and also to determine time taken to complete them. The input received from the pilot was used to refine the instruments and guide the researcher to be open-minded and to be aware of some external issues to the classroom context. The pilot study was conducted in a different school that was not included in the main study. Bell (1993), points out that piloting removes 'bugs' from the instrument.

### **3.12 Reliability**

Reliability refers to the consistency of answers from one administration of an instrument and from one set of items to another, (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2000). Bell (1993) argues that a researcher can get reliable results provided s/he uses a valid instrument. In this study I triangulated data from teachers' interviews with data from classroom observations to build confidence in the data or evidence (Brown and Dowling 1980). These writers confirm that triangulation is intended to compensate for the weaknesses of other methods, and it also provides deeper understanding of the complexity of human action. I followed up the lesson observation with interviews. I sat down with teachers to discuss how they felt about their lessons. I developed a relationship with the schools and invited them to contact me for anything that would be useful.

### **3.13 Ethical considerations**

All stakeholders were informed about the research. The Regional Education Officer (REO), school principals and teachers concerned and parents of learners in the classes where observations were conducted were informed about the research. I sought written permission from the REO and administrators of the schools concerned to conduct the

study in the schools. Consent forms were signed by the teachers who were interviewed, (Appendix D). The purpose of the study was explained. Caution was taken to ensure that all information was treated with confidentiality. The teachers were assured that whatever they would say would not be used against them in any way and that they would be free to withdraw their participation.

The purpose of taking notes during classroom observations was explained to the teachers in advance to put them at ease. All assistance and information that was borrowed was acknowledged. Ethical clearance was obtained from the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal ethics committee dated 17 April 2009. An ethical clearance certificate is attached to the thesis.

### **3.14 Conclusion**

The chapter has given the key elements of the research design and methodology. It has presented the type of data necessary to answer the research questions and how it was collected. The research questions were formulated from the title of the study and from the problem identified in chapter 1. I justified qualitative methods comprising structured interviews and classroom observations. I explained the instruments used and elaborated how the data were collected and analysed. The research methodologies serve as an introduction into my analysis of the results and findings of the study which follows in the next chapter.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents and analyses the results of the study. It is divided into two sections. The first section presents the analysis of teachers' interviews. The second is an analysis of data elicited from classroom observations. Data obtained from interviews with teachers were analysed in an attempt to answer the first research question namely:

1. How do teachers experience curriculum change from GCE O-Level to IGCSE with regards to English language teaching?

The analysis of lessons observations addressed the second critical question written below:

2. How was this change implemented in the Form 4 English language classrooms?

In response to critical research question 1, data (teachers' interview) collected in this study are presented in tables, analytical statements and themes emerging from the data.

The themes used in presenting the data are:

- the IGCSE curriculum;
- teaching approaches used in the English IGCSE curriculum, and;
- teachers' opinion on the school language policy.

#### **4.2. Findings in respect to critical question 1**

The issues that I investigated were as follows:

- Availability and effectiveness of training workshops for the IGCSE English teachers.
- Old versus the new curriculum in equipping learners with better learning of English.
- Adequacy of teaching of the four language skills.
- Use of appropriate teaching strategies and approaches.

- Exposure to learning opportunities in the classroom, school premises and in the extra-curricular environment.
- Role of the school language policy and the Ministry of Education's language in education policy.

In the analysis of data from teachers' interviews 6 themes emerged.

- work shopping IGCSE teachers;
- comparing pedagogies used in the two curricula;
- teaching approaches used in the English IGCSE curriculum;
- effectiveness of the approaches used;
- exposure to learning opportunities, and;
- language in education policy.

#### **4.2.1 The IGCSE curriculum workshops**

Regarding the theme of the IGCSE curriculum workshops, teachers were asked whether they had attended workshops on the teaching of the new IGCSE curriculum.

##### **Question 2 a) Have you attended workshops on the teaching of the new IGCSE syllabus?**

The following table suggests the responses on the above question.

**Table 4.1: Number of IGCSE English workshops attended**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Number of IGCSE English language workshops attended</b>
Teacher A	More than twice
B2	3 times
D1	3 times
C1	Not less than 4 times
C2	3 times minimum
D2	More than 3 times
B1	4 times.



The responses show that the teachers were oriented on the teaching of the new IGCSE syllabus and that they had attended workshops more than twice.

**Question 2 b): Did the workshops improve your understanding of the new IGCSE curriculum?**

The data revealed that 3 out of 7 teachers were satisfied with the effectiveness of the workshops. According to Teacher A from School A, the workshops were informative because *“they bring new concepts and some of them polished my understanding”*. Teacher C1 said she had not known what to look for when conducting and grading oral lessons but through the workshops she was well versed then. According to Teacher B2, not all the workshops were effective, *“there is one in particular where we were trained by the people from Cambridge on the speaking skill, on how to assess students during examinations. That one was very useful”*. This indicates that these three teachers knew what they had to do in this new curriculum.

However, 4 teachers out of 7 were not satisfied with the workshops. Teacher B2 believed that the rest were a repetition such that he felt they were not helpful when it comes to the actual teaching in class. Teacher D1 said somehow they had been useful although they had not been sufficient. *“The workshops have not helped much on the listening skill as to those skills we can implement to help the students improve their grades, it is still a challenge as to how can I teach listening comprehension successfully and effectively”*. Teacher C2 said (transcript in Appendix A) *“well yes, but not much, they don’t tend to be effective enough because even those trainers are just teachers like us, they have no experience on these things. In other areas you find that they are less knowledgeable than some of us”*. This is a problem because facilitators should be more knowledgeable than the trainees. Teachers need to be well trained for the change of any curriculum. Teacher D2 said the first workshop was fruitful. The second was not beneficial because they concentrated mainly on or reviewed the examinations, that is, how the learners had performed, rather than on the teaching of the different components. Teacher B1 said *“Yes...a little bit they do, but also consultation with other people like the facilitators during workshops and books as well for a better understanding”*.

These teachers' responses indicate that although the workshops were conducted to induct the teachers to the new IGCSE curriculum, they were not very satisfied with the effectiveness of the workshops. Teacher B2 felt that the workshop conducted by the consultants from Cambridge was more beneficial, while Teacher C2 felt that some of the local facilitators were less informed than some of the participants since they were ordinary teachers. Moreover, Teacher D1 still had a problem with teaching the listening skill even though he had attended the workshops.

The results suggest that the effect of the workshops was uneven to the teachers. It is very crucial that when any educational or curriculum change is introduced teachers are fully inducted into it. Failure to do so may result in poor implementation and may be detrimental to learners, causing them to fail and thus dooming their future.

**4.2.2: Comparison between teaching using the IGCSE syllabus and teaching using the GCE O-Level curriculum**

In the following table the teachers' responses are given on the question.

**Question 3: How do you see teaching using the IGCSE curriculum as compared to the years when you used the GCE syllabus?**

**Table 4.2: Comparison between teaching using the IGCSE syllabus and teaching using the GCE O-Level curriculum**



Name of teacher	IGCSE pedagogies	GCE O-Level pedagogies
Teacher A	<p><i>"IGCSE is good as it exposes the learners to a variety of skills. The learners are able to learn to listen from different aspects. Even with the orals they learn to articulate themselves.</i></p> <p><i>But now they are very, very limited to just one page or 200 words in essay writing. You are not able to see if the child is doing very well".</i></p>	<p><i>"It is only with the writing where I feel O-Level was best. In essay writing it promoted the learners' talents. They wrote between 350 to 600 words which were about three pages. They were able to write as much vocabulary as possible".</i></p>
B1	<p><i>"IGCS is good. The oral skill is friendly to the learners. They are credited on what they are able to do. The listening skill is really a problem to the learners. They are not able to do very well. They are disturbed by the accent, for example, 'seventy' sounds like 'seventeen' with the English first language speakers".</i></p>	<p><i>"The teachers had to be innovative and select the methods to use in order to achieve the aims in the GCE syllabus".</i></p>
B2	<p><i>"IGCSE is better because there are many writing tasks like note taking, form filling and essay writing.</i></p> <p><i>The bad thing is that the essays are of very short lengths".</i></p>	<p><i>"Learners wrote essays of adequate lengths".</i></p>
C1	<p><i>"IGCSE is better because it exposes the learners to the things they come across in their everyday life".</i></p>	<p><i>"The oral and listening skills were not taught in the GCE curriculum".</i></p>
C2	<p><i>"IGCSE is less challenging on the learners' part than the GCE curriculum was.</i></p> <p><i>The comprehensions are shallow; with some exercises it's easy to score everything because it is skimming. There is also form filling, a cheap exercise that easily boosts the learners who end up with higher scores. The change is on quantity.</i></p> <p><i>The compositions are too short".</i></p>	<p><i>"GCE was challenging and the learners received quality education. Learners read comprehension passages of adequate lengths".</i></p>
D1	<p><i>"The most challenging part with IGCSE is in the listening comprehension, the pronunciation of words by first language speakers".</i></p>	
D2	<p><i>"The learners do very well in orals, but the oral exam marks are not included in the final mark. They have separate certificates.</i></p> <p><i>Listening comprehension is very difficult because of the first language speakers' accent. There are also concepts unfamiliar to the learners, for example, sea side, town mall and unfamiliar places. Teachers too, were unable to score all the marks in the 2007 exam when given by inspectors during a workshop. I scored 3 points".</i></p>	

The teachers from school D did not have something to say on the GCE O-Level English curriculum because their memories were still fresh on the IGCSE syllabus since they had recently attended workshops on it.

The teachers' responses point out that as much as IGCSE was said to be good, it did not give the learners enough practice on the writing and reading skills. In essay writing the O-Level curriculum promoted the learners' talents. Teacher A said "*They wrote between 350 and 600 words which were about three pages. They were able to use as much vocabulary as possible, but now they are very, very limited to just one page or 200 words*". In this way Teacher A was not able to see if the learners were doing very well. Writing is a very important skill. It is the basic foundation for learning all the courses at school, university or college. It is a necessary skill which students need to acquire to enable them among other things, to write assignments, tests and examinations. Moore (1998) refers to writing as a key vehicle for assessment. Students need to express opinions, argue, explain, discuss and share their thoughts with their readers. If they are unable to write properly they will not be able to cope with the demands of their academic work at tertiary level, as well as with the demands of the life outside the school.

The problem on writing suggests that the curriculum needs to be reviewed so that writing maintains the length it had in the GCE curriculum. The same thing applies to the length of texts in reading comprehension passages; they were very short and about one page in length. The reading of short length did not give the learners quality learning. The length of reading texts is a major disadvantage or gap in the IGCSE curriculum. Incompetent readers and writers are being produced as it happened in Tanzania whereby Mgqwashu (2006) reports that the learners' literacy incompetence was detected at tertiary level. Qorro's (1999) Tanzanian study cited in Mbatha (2002) discovered a similar gap in teaching writing in Tanzanian classrooms. Qorro found that in Tanzania students were not taught writing but most writing they did was copying notes from the chalkboard, writing dictated summaries, memorable phrases and essay outlines. Qorro comments that,



under such circumstances students lack creativity and find it impossible to move away from such guidelines.

From the responses I gathered that firstly, the new curriculum is better than the GCE one since it includes life skills like filling in forms, and oral skills which are easy to pass. The most challenging aspect is the L1 speakers' accent in the listening skill. However, the short lengths of reading comprehension texts and short essay writing allow learners to pass the examination, but they do not give quality education. The problem of the reading and writing skills is thus a major finding for the study. The teachers understand this problem to be a factor that hinders learners from obtaining quality education thus affecting the learning of English Language in Swaziland by using the IGCSE curriculum.

However, the comparison between the GCE and IGCSE curriculum that the teachers highlight is content based rather than pedagogic. When I asked them to comment on pedagogy they commented on content. This shows that they understand pedagogic issues to be content.

Although learners do very well in orals, the oral exam marks are not included in the final IGCSE mark. The English IGCSE syllabus (2008:146) (Appendix E) specifies that *"Marks for the Oral component do not contribute to the overall grade candidates receive for the written components. Instead, where candidates perform to an appropriate standard, certificates record separately the achievement of grades 1 (high) to 5 (low) for Speaking"*. This was confirmed by Teacher C2 who happened to be one of the workshop facilitators as well as one of the markers. Most of the teachers were not aware of this, except those that were markers. Even the markers did not know why the oral marks were not included. This action of withholding information from the teachers supports the fact that teachers were not involved in the implementation of the curriculum (chap. 1). The act of not including the oral marks in the learners' overall grades means that the learners are given incomplete grades in this programme. The curriculum needs to be reviewed and the oral marks be included in the learners' final grades.



### 4.2.3: Teaching approaches used in the IGCSE curriculum

This section addresses critical research question 2. In respect of the above theme teachers were asked the following question.

**Question 4 a): What are the teaching approaches you use for teaching vocabulary, listening comprehension, grammar, reading comprehension, summary writing and essay writing; and what activities do you let the learners do?**

The aim of this question was to find the teachers' understandings of the change of the GCE syllabus to the IGCSE English curriculum and how they implemented the change. That is, if they used the teaching methods prescribed for the new curriculum.

#### 4.2.3.1 Approaches used for teaching vocabulary

The findings indicate that all the teachers taught vocabulary in context. Teachers A, D1 and C1 let the learners read passages from newspapers, magazines and prescribed texts and found meanings of new words. Teachers B1 and D1 let the students find synonyms and antonyms of the words and also made sentences with them. Teacher B2 said, *"I let the learners read novels and make presentations. Sometimes they write summaries"*. According to Teacher C2, *"I teach language areas where learners have problems such as antonyms and homophones. I incorporate these areas in reading comprehension and teach the words in context"*. This is the example of the task-based approach as the learners were given different tasks to perform. Vocabulary taught in context through reading gives learners more opportunities to process language at a deeper level and to develop semantic networks and other kinds of associative links that will enhance learning, (Ruddell, 1999). Ruddell believes that learning will be facilitated if the learner is able to develop networks around learned words. The CLT approach was also used since it works on the premise that vocabulary can only be learnt in meaningful language use contexts. It does not promote focusing on individual words. The CLT and TBLT approaches are advocated in the new IGCSE curriculum.

Learners learn vocabulary by using the communicative principle and the task principle. They use real activities that involve authentic communication which promotes language

learning and acquisition of new vocabulary. Similarly, in using the task principle learners are involved in activities in which language and vocabulary are used in carrying out meaningful tasks which promote the acquisition and use of appropriate vocabulary.

However, the teachers were not trained on how to teach vocabulary in the IGCSE curriculum since it did not include the teaching of the other language aspects such as vocabulary and grammar. The training catered for the listening and oral skills only. This leaves one with a question as to how the MoE could leave out crucial language aspects such as vocabulary and grammar? May be it was because the listening and oral skills were left out in the GCE syllabus.

#### **4.2.3.2 Approaches used for teaching listening comprehension**

The data indicate that the teachers used similar methods for teaching comprehension. Teachers A and B1 reported that they encouraged the learners to listen to songs and say the words. They also made the learners listen to CDs from Peter Lucantoni's<sup>6</sup> text in a quiet environment and asked them what was said. They began with short exercises requiring one word answers to lengthy conversations. Teacher D1 said, *"Sometimes I make the learners listen to news I have recorded from the British Broadcasting Channel (BBC) and let them answer questions I have formulated"*. Teacher B2 reported that *"I first explain general listening objectives and then explain the types of questions like the lifting type, summary, vocabulary and how to respond in each type. Then I give learners exercises on the different types of questions"*.

Teachers C1, D2 and C2 prepared the learners to listen as they read passages after giving them tips on how to take notes while listening. They read the passages twice while the learners listened and jotted down notes. The learners also looked at the questions from handouts or books during the reading session. The learners got the meaning in context. Sometimes the learners listened to audio-tapes or compatible discs (CDs) provided in Peter Lucantoni's textbook. They answered the questions in their exercise books after the second reading. They also brought recordings from CDs and tapes to class for the

---

<sup>6</sup> Peter Lucantoni's text is one of the prescribed textbooks published by Cambridge University Press.



learners to listen to and answer questions on what they had heard. However, the teachers were talking about assessment methods prescribed in the IGCSE syllabus (Appendix F). Teachers reported that they were not adequately trained for teaching listening comprehension during workshops. The absence of adequate training is a shortcoming of IGCSE. Teaching methods are the foundation of teaching.

Teachers revealed that the learners were exposed to listening to recorded texts by English L1 speakers. But as to how often the listening exercises were done, was not indicated. The teachers also used similar materials (books). The learners had difficulty with listening to texts recorded by first English language speakers despite the fact that they were made to listen to CDs from Peter Lucantoni's text. They were not used to the English native speakers' accent.

#### **4.2.3.3 Approaches used in teaching grammar**

The findings indicate that teachers taught sentence structures. Teachers B2, D1, D2 and Teacher A encouraged learners to form their own sentences about grammatical structures through reflecting on what they had learnt. Teacher C2 reported that *"I base my teaching on reading comprehension passages where the learners read and make sentences with new words"*. Teachers C1 and B1 used error analysis whereby they gave learners work to do and identified their errors such as first, second and third person singular and plural and tenses in essay writing, and then addressed the errors. This shows that they taught grammar by using the structural approach as opposed to the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach which the education secretary in the MoE advocates in the country. The CLT approach focuses on the appropriate forms of communication rather than the structure of language. It regards language basically as conveying meaning, rather than as a linguistic system to be conveyed to students, (Baker, 2000) (chapter 2). The CLT approach considers communicating meaning effectively, rather than grammatical accuracy and fluency articulation. The CLT that is advocated is soft on grammar but the English L2 learners need to be taught grammar. The MoE did not give guidelines for teaching grammar. Hence teachers reverted to "error analysis" a system of teaching syntactic rules when teaching grammar. This is contrary to using language to express



meaning promoted by CLT and TBLT since they are language teaching approaches used in most education systems.

The teachers did not argue why they used the structural approach nor did they show an understanding of the structural approach. Teachers are more aware that an eclectic approach involving CLT, TBLT and the Universal grammar, cognitive and explicit approaches to language teaching is necessary when teaching ESL in a context where teachers are also non-native speakers of English. According to Brown (2000:288) “a broadly based theory of SLA must encompass models of learner-internal processing as well as the socially constructed dynamics of interpersonal communication”. SLA is an interdependence cycle.

#### **4.2.3.4 Approaches used in teaching reading comprehension**

The findings show that there was a range of methods used. B2, B1 and D1 teachers first read the passages then the learners read them silently and answered the questions. Sometimes the teachers discussed the questions before the learners answered them. Teacher D2 had this to say, *“I give learners passages from books, articles and magazines to read and answer questions on”*. Teachers C1, C2 and Teacher A taught skimming and scanning and emphasized the answering skill for the ‘wh-’ questions.

Turner (1997) suggests that a text should be read three times. In the first reading learners read for the overall understanding of the passage. The teacher may prepare key words and expressions to help facilitate this process. The second reading aims at a more detailed understanding whereby the learners have to comprehend the main idea presented in each paragraph. The third reading is intended to provide the learners with a thorough understanding of the whole passage. It should be followed by activities that require inference and further expansion of content in answering the questions. None of the teachers mentioned this approach. Teacher D2 said after reading the passage twice by both the teacher and the learners, he then asked them oral questions created by him to ensure the learners’ understanding of the passages before they answered the questions from the passages. But there was no mentioning of special attention given to the role of

the questions such as inference, questions requiring implied meaning and so on, from the text. These methods enhance learners' understanding of the texts read.

The teachers did not have knowledge of other methods apart from Teacher A, who used skimming and scanning. Other teachers were not conversant on how to teach reading comprehension. The scanty IGCSE workshops attended by the teachers did not benefit them in new approaches and methods of teaching this component of language. This further suggests that even during the time of the O-Level curriculum they did not teach reading comprehension very well since they did not fall back to the methods they used in the old curriculum.

#### **4.2.3.5 Approaches used in teaching summary writing**

Data indicate that the teachers' common approach was identification of key points which is the core feature of summarising. Teacher A taught learners the three different types of summarizing which are; paraphrasing, ellipsis and substitution in passages. With substitution they found synonyms of words and they paraphrased sentences. Teacher B2 taught the learners to read with comprehension and taught them to lift the points as they are. Teacher B1 explained how summary is done; he encouraged learners to look for the key words and use their own words. Teacher C1 taught it concurrently with situational writing since these two are similar. She emphasized sticking to the paragraphs from which to find the answers. Teacher C2 started from paragraph to sentence level and to the actual task. He taught paragraph summary to sentence summary and emphasized on retaining the meaning. Teacher D2 said *"I read the passages and questions with the learners. Thereafter, I analyze the questions together with the learners. I instruct them to pick the main points and write them in their own words in continuous writing and to stick to the required length"*.

Six teachers emphasised paraphrasing, that is, learners writing in their own words while maintaining the original meaning of the text. One teacher - Teacher B2 - stressed lifting points directly from the passage and writing them as they were. She said that was how she had taught for the last eleven years and her students had always got credits in English



Language. She said as one of the O-Level English language markers, she knew what the examiners looked for and that IGCSE was silent about this. Her argument was that writing the points in one's own words caused students to distort information and that paraphrasing carried a few marks compared to the lifting of information. This makes one question why and how the MoE could allow both point-lifting word for word and paraphrasing to be correct. It shows that there is not a good fit between policy and practice. Worse still, the methods of teaching summary writing were left out when the curriculum was revised and this is creating problems as teachers are not sure of the right teaching method to use.

Ruddell (1999) argues that summarizing a text involves the students' ability to identify important ideas of the writer together with essential details. It also involves the ability to place information in some sensible order and the students' ability to express the writer's ideas in their own words. Yet, as Teacher B2 said, she taught her learners to lift information (verbatim) and they still got good grades. This confirms that IGCSE is not preparing learners for real life where they may in future be required to write summaries in their own words.

#### **4.2.3.6 Approaches used to teach essay writing.**

The findings show that 6 teachers taught stages of essay writing, relevance and variation of sentence structures. This is a process approach to writing. School A, B1 and B2 teachers taught the stages like introduction such as using an anecdote, body, and conclusion and gave the learners practice. They emphasized punctuation, spelling, cohesion and the conclusion. Teacher C1 reported that *"I build up on Junior Certificate (JC) work; that is, the components like introduction, body and conclusion. Then I move on to relevance and variation of sentence structures"*. Two of the teachers went on to brainstorm topics with learners. Teachers C2 and D2 explained their expectations on essay writing and they analyzed (brainstorming) the topics with the learners. They also taught the learners the different modes of essays and read them examples. They made them practise (in stages) planning and writing the introduction, body, conclusion, topic



sentences and cohesion before they let them write the essays of about a page or 200 words. Teachers C2 and D2 employed both the genre and process approaches to writing, but the genre approach was not fully utilised. All the teachers drilled the learners on past exam papers; they let them write essays from past exams in order to acquaint the learners with the exam standard.

Teacher D1 attempted to address the genre approach to writing. He discussed the types of essay writing which are the narrative, descriptive, expository, persuasive writing and many others, and let the learners write essays on them. One wonders if discussing the essay types only without brainstorming the different topics with the learners ensures that the teacher has done a thorough job and justice to the learners. The teaching methods were not well employed in relation to Tribble (1996) who contends that writing is a social activity whereby the reader should see the purpose of a text for successful communication between the reader and writer. Learners need mastery of good writing skills to enable them access tertiary education.

Glencoe (2000) points out that when teaching essay writing; teachers should observe the pre-writing and writing stages, where the learners brainstorm their points together in class and then organize their ideas into paragraphs. They should ensure that each paragraph has a theme that is supported by details that explain and clarify it. Special care should be given to the opening and concluding paragraphs, making them as effective as possible. The results show that the teachers observed these stages, but they did not include proofreading as the final stage whereby the writer spell checks his / her work and edits for grammar and punctuation mistakes in preparation for presentation.

The teachers observed the length that is required by the IGCSE curriculum which is one page. They also met the objectives of this curriculum which are that the learners should identify, organize and present given material in a particular form and also carry out writing tasks on a wider range of topics in response to a written stimulus.

#### **4.2.3.7 Approaches used in teaching communication or oral skills.**

The responses show that the teachers used the CLT approach where the learners communicated their ideas effectively in a meaningful way in given situations like conversations, role play, discussions, debates, interviews and presentations. According to Teacher B2 *"I employ activities like debates and presentations on different topics. I give the learners guidelines of what is expected of them. I expose them to videos to view how the various activities are carried out. I also give them marking guides to assess the learners in the videos. Then I give them exercises from past exam papers like conversations to do"*. B1 teacher also demonstrated how oral assessment is carried out and let the learners do pair and group conversations. He made the others assess the presenters. The teachers also used the TBLTL approach since the two approaches emphasize the importance of meaning making in language teaching and they are both communicative in nature. This created an interactive environment. CLT focuses on the learners' ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in all situations using the target language. The IGCSE curriculum requires that the learners take an active role in the learning and use English effectively for the purpose of practical communication, something the teachers reported to be doing in the classrooms. The lessons were learner-centred. The teachers served as facilitators and *"gave learners guidelines of what was expected of them"* (Teacher B2). The teachers appeared to be observing the curriculum change in as far as oral communication teaching is concerned. However, they concentrated on teaching through assessment which is an aspect of teaching for the examination rather than teaching so that learners gain knowledge.

#### **4.3 Effectiveness of the approaches used in the IGCSE curriculum**

The data indicate that it was easier for the learners to pass the IGCSE examination than it was with GCE O-Level because of the teaching methods used. According to Teacher A *"The methods enable them to pass because those students who were taught using the same approaches passed last year"*. Teacher B1 said *"yes, not that I think but I know they have succeeded last year. The approaches are fruitful"*. Teacher D2 said they were



stipulated in the IGCSE curriculum and they were learner-centred. Teacher C2 reported that *“they are relevant to the programme because they require the learners to work hand in hand with the teacher. The approaches give the teacher and learners equal roles”*. Teacher D1 said they helped the students learn a lot of vocabulary and language skills and thus strengthened their application of the skills. They also addressed the learners’ needs and helped educators teach the language better. Teacher C1 said *“it is now compulsory to use them. The new programme calls that we use them. Somehow they are better because they are learner-centred; we have to correct the learner where he / she makes mistakes”*. The responses indicate that the teachers used the approaches required by the new curriculum and that they address the learners’ needs. These are the CLT and the TBLTL approaches. The CLT approach helps learners to communicate effectively and appropriately in a meaningful way using the target language, while the TBLTL approach focuses on the use of authentic language and to learners doing meaningful tasks using the target language. These approaches incorporate methods such as pair and group discussions, questions and answers, brainstorming, presentations and many more. They also encourage learners’ active participation and thus they constitute social constructivist approach.

The approaches are to a greater extent in line with the curriculum aims since they emphasize problem solving and active participation by learners and these are examples of the social constructivist approach. The aims are listed on pages 142 and 143 (Appendix E) of the IGCSE *English as a Second Language Syllabus* (2008).

Learners were passing also because of the short essays learners wrote, and the short and easy comprehension passages they read. Teacher B2 had this to say, *“...in the examination yes, there is no doubt about it. But my worry is if they will succeed well enough to get into institutions of higher learning like the university. If they only do the basic minimum that is required in class they might meet problems because the competition is too high”*.



The concern is whether or not the learners would get quality credits good enough to take them to the university. *“The exercises are cheap, the capable students excel here. Ours might pass. But whether the pass is good enough to take them to the university is another story”*, lamented Teacher B2. Moreover, succeeding in an examination is one thing, but becoming fluent in the language is another. Grade C is no longer an impressive credit because it comes in the fourth order: IGCSE has A\*, A flat, B and C as credits. In the GCE O-Level curriculum there were only three credits A, B and C. Teacher B2 said *“Since it is easy to score A’s and B’s, one wonders why the university should be considering students with C’s. Today’s C’s are as good as worthless”*.

I feel that teachers are not fully equipped with the pedagogic approaches to use to teach all the language skills. There are no guidelines for teaching the other aspects of language such as reading, vocabulary and writing since they were not included in the curriculum reviewing exercise. When teaching grammar for example, teachers used the structural approach as opposed to the CLT approach advocated in the syllabus. Teacher C2 reported that *“I base my teaching on reading comprehension passages where the learners read and make sentences with new words”*. Teachers B2, D1, D2 and Teacher A encouraged learners to form their own sentences about grammatical structures through reflecting on what they had learnt. So, the schools are not ready to deliver the IGCSE English Language curriculum since teachers are not adequately trained to teach all the language components.

I think detailing pedagogic methods in curriculum documents (as it is with the CLT and TBLT) is a good idea because it helps orient new teachers as to how to go about teaching some concepts. As much as there are prescribed teaching approaches, in Swaziland, I think teachers can also be free to either choose or develop their own teaching approaches in order to enhance the quality of their teaching. Every teacher, learner and context is unique. Suggestions on how the shortcomings of the IGCSE curriculum can be addressed are made in chapter 5.

#### 4.4: Exposure to learning opportunities and language practices at school

Exposure to learning opportunities and language practices at school is vital because it creates opportunities for learners to attain high levels of proficiency in English. Data indicate that 6 teachers did not allow the learners to use siSwati in the English classrooms on grounds that they wanted to inculcate the use of English in the learners as they (the learners) needed to practise and master it. Practice makes perfect, (Swan cited in Baker 2002). Teachers B1 and B2 said *"They are not allowed to speak siSwati in class. They can only use it during the siSwati periods. Using siSwati delays the students' learning of English. Students use English in the school premises"*. Teacher C2 emphasized, *"They will be assessed in English so they have to practise it"*. Teacher D1 said she allowed code switching only when learners failed to express themselves in English. She also code switched when learners could not comprehend some concepts in English. This shows the problems teachers face in some schools. The results indicate that the teachers were trying their best to expose the learners to the target language whilst simultaneously drawing on the L1 as a resource.

According to teacher A, *"Learners use siSwati informally in the school premises; they only speak English in the presence of prefects"*. Teacher D2 said, *"siSwati is spoken in the school premises; English is only used in the beginning of the year"*. The findings indicate that although the learners should use English as the medium of communication in the school premises, learners in the rural schools (A and D) used siSwati most of the school days. For the learners to be competent in the target language they need to practise it regularly. This shows that they were not adequately exposed to the target language. Insufficient exposure to English creates difficulties for the learners since the curriculum requires them to attain high levels of proficiency in English to enable them use it as a medium of instruction. It also means that they had no opportunity of using English in real life contexts as suggested by the CLT approach.

However, we should note that language learning is not confined to the four language skills in the classroom, but it should be extended outside to include the world of work, current affairs, health, welfare and travel. Also, language learning is about the learners'



communicative competence. Competence refers to the knowledge of L2 a learner has internalised, while proficiency is the learners' ability to use this knowledge in different tasks. Language learning focuses on the learners' ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in all situations using the target language. Richards and Rogers (1995) argue that using a language in a communicative context promotes learning it faster. They also point out that communication expresses meaning and that the language structure reflects the functional and communicative use.

#### **4.5 Language in education policy**

Language policy plays a major role since it determines the languages to be used in the school setting. The *dejure* policy is that English is the medium of instruction (MoI) from grade 4 in Swaziland and siSwati is learned as a subject in all the schools. However, English as a MoI is a *defacto* policy (Mbatha 2002). Six teachers were satisfied with the policy whereby English is the MoI since English is internationally recognized. They felt that learners should be exposed to it and that they should begin instruction in English at Pre-school. According to Teacher C1, *"the learners should be taught in the medium of English from grade 1 because children are able to learn a language better when they are young"*. Teacher D2 even said *"I feel mothers should speak to their kids in English even when breastfeeding them"*. This means that she was not only against the learning of siSwati altogether, but she was undermining it. Teacher B1 understood the real issues underlying English second language teaching in Swaziland. He said *"language is a controversial issue because it has to do with one's losing of his / her identity, but English should be used and reinforced since it is a global language"*.

The findings indicate that some of the teachers had a negative attitude towards siSwati and were in favour of practicing the *defacto* policy of using English as a MoI from the first grade at school. They felt siSwati could just be learned at home. Teachers need to change their attitudes because L2 learning is determined by the extent to which L1 has developed in learners (Cummins 2000). In other words, L1 is the foundation for learning L2. This view is supported by Klein et al (1996:13) who argue that "if children are denied

their first language during their formative early years, and are not yet fluent enough in the second language to form their cognitive concepts, their cognitive development remains irretrievably inhibited, they never catch up". Bamgbose (1999) shares the same view when he argues that a child's education is best begun in mother-tongue, a language in which the child can best express his / her inner feelings. Literature on the Swazi language policy is not available in journals and policy documents except that there are two official languages, each having their respective status.

The Subtractive language policy (SLP) has an effect on students' performance because they learn in the medium of the language which they are less competent in and they are also taught by English second language teachers. Worse still, English is a subject learners have to pass. Learners fail and repeat if they have not done well in English even if they can pass all the other subjects.

Teacher C2 was for the introduction of Additive bilingual education (ABE) whereby both languages were used equally. The reason she gave was that "*learners ended up having negative attitudes towards English by being forced to speak it*". However, Swaziland is not ready for bilingual education at the moment since English is valued more than siSwati. Subtractive bilingualism is practised in Swaziland whereby learners begin instruction in the medium of L2 from the first grade and siSwati is learned as a subject. They turn to L2 early before having fully acquired language skills in their mother-tongue. This subtracts the learners' L1 and devalues their home language. Additive bilingual model whereby a second language is added to a child's first language without trying to replace the L1 when he comes to school (Baker 1996), helps second language learners develop and maintain their first language, and in that way they become bilingual and biliterate and they develop intercultural awareness. The goals of additive bilingualism are communicative competence and language proficiency in two languages. The issue of language policy is another debate that Swaziland should be engaged with because the present policy seems to benefit fewer learners as shown by Mbatha (2002) in language practices and pupils' performance in Swaziland.



#### 4.6 Summary of the findings

- Teachers were not fully inducted into the new English Language IGCSE curriculum since there were no guidelines for teaching the other aspects of language such as reading, vocabulary, grammar and writing as they were not included in the curriculum reviewing exercise.
- The workshops conducted to orient teachers to the curriculum change were not beneficial to all the teachers since some of the facilitators were ordinary teachers who were less informed than some of the teachers.
- Contrary to Brown's (2000) eclectic approach teachers based their teaching on the CLT and the TBLTL approaches when teaching all the language skills. These were the only approaches advocated in the IGCSE curriculum.
- Learners were not given adequate practice in the writing and reading skills in this programme as they wrote essays of limited lengths and read short passages (section 4.2.2).
- The oral examination marks are not included in the learners' final examination marks (Appendix E, p.146).
- Listening comprehension gave learners a problem because they were not used to the native English language speakers' accent, (section 4.2.2).
- The learners in the rural schools A and D lacked exposure to the English language.
- The teachers were satisfied with the policy (*de facto*) whereby English is the MoI from grade one throughout the learners' education, on the ground that English is a global language.
- Even though it is easier for the learners to pass the IGCSE examination the concern was whether or not the learners would get quality credits that would warrant entry into the university.
- Since it is easy to score As and Bs, the university does not consider students with Cs. IGCSE does not give learners quality education.
- Some of the teachers felt the IGCSE workshops were informative. They brought new concepts and polished their understanding of the curriculum.

In the next section data obtained from lessons observations is analysed in respect to critical question 2.

**4.7 Findings in respect to critical question 2**

This section analyses and presents data from lesson observations (see Appendix C). The data were analysed according to the categories stated below. Data on bullets 1 and 2 were also discussed in section 4.2.3.

- teaching approaches and strategies;
- classroom activities;
- modes of learning used (learner-centred versus teacher centred);
- how learners answered questions;
- how teacher feedback was given;
- how assessment was carried out, and;
- use of learning materials and textbooks in lessons.

The purpose of observing lessons was to gather data to answer the second critical question reiterated in table 4.3 below:

Lessons observations and follow-up interviews served as a means of triangulation.

I observed eight lessons, two from each language skill as indicated in the table 4.3. But I analysed four lessons, two from the oral skill and the other two from the writing skill. The observed lessons lasted between 40 minutes single periods to 80 minutes double periods. In this analysis I was guided by the following topics in my observation schedule in the following table:



**Table 4.3: Types and number of lessons observed and research method**

Question 2:	Types and number of lessons observed	Classroom observation schedule	Research method
How was this change implemented in the Form 4 English language classrooms?	<b>4x2 classes</b> Writing school C 2x Oral school D 2x Reading school A 2x Listening school B 2x	. lessons' objectives and contents of each lesson; . teaching approaches, strategies and class activities; . modes of learning and languages used, and; . guidelines given in the English IGCSE curriculum.	Qualitative

The notes of observed lessons are in Appendix D.

#### **4.7.1 An analysis of a sample oral lesson 1 from Teacher B1**

In teaching oral lessons, the IGCSE English Language syllabus states that the aims of the oral lessons are to enable the learners to demonstrate competence in a range of speech activities, e.g. respond to questions on topics within a defined range such as past and present ideas, demonstrate greater flexibility in dealing with new topic, conduct a sustained conversation and show a sense of audience.

The activities that learners are expected to do include; group and pair conversations, discussions, presentations and debates. During tests and oral exams the learners are tested individually, but they may be assessed in pairs. Oral tests may also take the form of a dialogue between two people.

#### **Lesson topic: Learners' Presentations; Booking a flight ticket to a destination of your own choice**

In this lesson the objectives from the teacher's preparation book were:

In this activity learners were to:

- communicate their ideas clearly
- perform a dialogue for the class
- make vivid descriptions of places
- employ and control a variety of grammatical structures
- make sustained presentations
- respond to questions on topics within a defined range.

### ***Description of the lesson***

Firstly, Teacher B1 instructed the learners to do pair conversations on making flight bookings, in the first activity. He read them the topic from the board and called upon 3 pairs to present without telling them how they were to do it. They all told the clerk the time of their departure. The teacher corrected them that they did not have to tell the time since it would be included in the ticket. However, the learners were right because we all usually say the time when we want to travel and then we are given the time available. The teacher did not follow any guidelines for conducting oral lessons since they were given guidelines for conducting oral tests only during the workshops (Appendix D). They were only told about instances where orals could be done; like in debates, conversations, discussions and presentations. As a result, he used the assessment criteria in determining the best presenters.

The third pair demonstrated knowledge of a wide range of appropriate vocabulary. The teacher used the heuristic function of language whereby he found information through the learners' presentations and conversations. Secondly, the teacher achieved the lesson objective of responding to questions on topics within a defined range in both activities.

Thirdly, the introduction of the oral or communication skill in the IGCSE programme does improve the learners' ability to communicate in English since the learners were able to respond to the question and used the language freely to express their ideas. The



listening and speaking skills were integrated in the conversations which are situations that allow and encourage genuine communication. Byrne (1988) points out that learners should be taught how to keep the channel of communication in such situations by, for example, asking for repetition and clarification, signaling agreement or disagreement, things which were not detected in the lesson.

### ***Teacher's comments obtained after the oral lesson***

The teacher said his aim was to develop the learners' oral skills and that at the workshop they were told that most of the work should be done by the learners. "*IGCSE is learner-centred and the teacher acts as a facilitator*". He said he accomplished his objective partly as only 1 boy presented in activity 2.

Even though the learners were able to express themselves freely in the target language, the fact that the teacher used the assessment criteria specified in the IGCSE syllabus in determining the best presenters due to the fact that there were no guidelines given to teachers for teaching this skill, is a major drawback of the curriculum. Secondly, even though the learners were not taught channels of communication as suggested by Byrne (1988), the teacher achieved his objectives and the IGCSE syllabus aims as the learners were flexible in dealing with the topics. He could detect the language aspect he had to remediate the second pair on, i.e. tenses.

It might seem as if the learners were communicating in cognitively undemanding tasks, as there was nothing challenging from their presentations. Krashen posits that comprehensible input takes place when learners learn something slightly above their level, (i+1). But it is not the case with these presentations because an oral lesson is about fluency and not necessarily 'knowledge building'.

### ***Analysis of the lesson***

#### ***Learners' participation***

The learners exchanged greetings. They did pair conversations on flight bookings. They told the clerks the time of departure and their destinations. The clerks told the participants the right time, size of luggage to carry (25 kg), traveling documents to take with them and refreshments to be obtained in the plane. The learners conducted sustained conversations and showed a sense of audience. In activity 2, the boy made vivid descriptions of the things, places and people (the monarch) he wanted to see in England, for example, the two prominent Manchester United players. The speaking, listening, creative and thinking skills were developed.

#### *Mode of learning used*

All presentations were in English. The third pair used a variety of a wide range of vocabulary. The lesson was learner-centred and the learners communicated their ideas freely and clearly.

#### *Provision of feedback*

The teacher corrected the learners that they did not have to tell the clerks the time of their departure. In the second activity he commended the boy for making a good presentation. Unlike what he had said during the interviews, he did not let the other students assess the presenters. This shows that teachers sometimes do not do what they claim to do in class. The teacher met the assessment objective of employing a variety of grammatical structures with the first pair. There were no grades assigned to the learners since not all lessons lend themselves to the assignment of grades.

#### *Learning materials*

There were no learning materials used in this lesson. There was not even a chart with flight schedules.

#### *Teaching approaches and strategies used in the lesson*

The strategies were: giving instructions, individual presentations, and dialogue. These strategies form the TBLT approach as learners were given instructions to carry out and presentations to make. Furthermore, the strategies also form the CLT approach since the



learners communicated their ideas freely through dialogue and presentations. The next lesson was also conducted by Teacher B1.

#### **4.7.1.1: An analysis of a sample oral lesson 2**

##### **Topic: Learners' assessment**

The teacher selected two students, a boy and a girl from a class of forty students and told them that they were going to do an oral test; she would test one person at a time.

In this lesson the objective was:

- To assess the learners' abilities to communicate clearly and accurately through employing a variety of grammatical structures.

##### ***Description of the oral test***

Firstly, the teacher did not explain to the learners how an oral test is conducted, nor did he tell them the aspects of language he would be looking for in this particular test as specified in the IGCSE guidelines (Appendix C). He followed all the other steps like welcoming the student, warming up where he asked him a few questions about himself and the career he would like to pursue in future. However, this section took five minutes instead of two or three minutes. The boy was given another five minutes for organizing himself after getting his topic on "A career in the police force" (Appendix F, p. 166). The teacher allowed the boy to jot down points he would discuss yet this is not permissible according to the regulations. The teacher asked the learner questions and probed when initiating the discussion which the learner answered in full sentences.

##### ***Teacher's comments obtained after the oral test***

When I asked the teacher at the end of the test why he graded him out of 10 instead of 30 marks according to the regulation specified in the syllabus, he said that he was

concentrating on one aspect of language, which is expression of grammatical structures, since it was the first time for the learners to encounter this exercise. He would include the other language aspects the following year. The teacher showed some autonomy in how he handled this lesson. However, he had not explained in the beginning the language aspect he would be looking for.

When I asked why he had allowed the student to jot down some points when the instructions did not permit it, he said it was because it was his first time to do such an exercise; he was just acquainting him with it.

The teacher said he met the objective he had at the beginning of the lesson since the boy managed to communicate his ideas clearly and to express himself fluently and even used a variety of structures. This is what he had set to assess. The boy was able to converse with the teacher freely like when seeking help from him as to whether he would show him where criminals would be concentrated. However, time elapsed before the second student was tested.

### ***Analysis of the lesson***

#### *Learner participation*

The boy carried out the teacher's instruction and told about himself and the career he would like to pursue. He answered the teacher's questions in full sentences and wrote the points he would use. The student was able to converse with the teacher and tell him about his intended career. He was able to influence the direction of the conversation. He led the conversation and also asked the teacher questions. The speaking, creative and thinking skills were developed.

#### *Mode of learning used*

English was used throughout the lesson by both the teacher and the learner. The learner dominated the discussion and the teacher had little to say. The lesson was learner-centred as he could think and tell about what was good for him in future. He communicated his



ideas in an understandable and meaningful way. The teacher met the objective of communicating clearly and accurately through employing a variety of grammatical structures.

#### *Provision of feedback*

The teacher assigned the learner 8 marks out of 10 for his ability to employ a variety of grammatical structures and expression.

#### *Assessment strategies*

The teacher tried to show the learner how assessment is carried out by first asking the learner to grade himself out of 10 marks. However, he had not told the learner the aspects of language he would be looking for. The teacher concentrated on one language aspect, that is, grammatical structures. He allowed the learner to jot down points, something that was against the rule.

#### *Learning materials*

The teacher gave the learner a card (Appendix F) with the topic to discuss, that is, “A career on the police force”.

#### *Teaching approaches and strategies used in the lesson*

These were: conducting a test, asking questions, conversation. The TBLT and CLT approaches were detected in this lesson since the learner could communicate his ideas and ask the teacher questions.

### **4.7.2 An analysis of an essay writing lesson 3 from Teacher C2**

The IGSCE English syllabus states that the aims of essay writing are to enable learners to carry out simple writing tasks such as completing forms, writing postcards or short letters in an appropriate and accurate form of English in response to a written stimulus, identify, organize and present given material in a particular form, carry out longer writing tasks on

a wider range of topics in response to a written stimulus. The lesson was observed at School C taught by Teacher C2

**Lesson topic: How to cook thin porridge: the recipe genre.**

In this lesson the objectives were:

Learners should be able to;

- brainstorm, organize and present given points in a chronological order
- describe how thin porridge is prepared, in a chronological order
- observe conventions of paragraphing, grammar, punctuation and spelling.

***Description of the lesson***

It is worth noting that Teacher C2 involved his learners as a group, by discussing what they did at home when they were preparing thin porridge. He used the heuristic (finding information through questioning) function of language. He asked them questions to find out how thin porridge is cooked, and they in turn answered in full sentences. During the interviews the teacher had said he analyzed (brainstorming) topics with learners and taught planning, something he did. He had also said he taught the components, modes of essays and read them examples. But he did not do these things in this particular essay.

I believe the lesson was well taught because the teacher did all the stages used for teaching writing using the process approach suggested by Glencoe (2000) (chap 2). However, the genre approach is criticized on grounds that it is teacher-led with formal recipes, as opposed to the process strategy whereby learners' creativity is enhanced and they are guided on how to refine their writing. Britton et al (1975) cited in Farlex (2003:5) put emphasis on the importance of "expressive language" whereby the learners' writing goal is to generate and explore new ideas and thoughts through the use of the process technique which has several stages. Hyland (1992) justifies the genre approach and argues that a teacher can provide guidance and constructive input in the classroom through selecting the different types of genres from a variety of sources and read them to



the learners as models, (as the teacher had said he did in the interviews). Positive feedback and discussion at each stage of the essay can be done.

### ***Teacher's comments obtained after the essay writing lesson***

The teacher said he met his objectives as confirmed by the work that he marked; about 75% of the learners were able to tell how thin porridge was prepared in a sequential order. He said the arrangement of the points helped a lot because the learners did not have a tough time thinking what should follow. He said most learners punctuated their work properly with correct spelling.

Even though the lesson was well taught, but the recipe genre approach used was cognitively undemanding for the learners because they used points that were already given, yet at this stage (Form 4) they were supposed to generate their own points and arrange them. They needed not to be guided since they were being prepared for tertiary education and the world of work.

### ***Analysis of the lesson***

#### ***Learner participation***

The learners were able to communicate their points effectively with the teacher and could also arrange them in their order of sequence, something which is in line with the aims of the IGCSE syllabus which specifies that the learners should be able to identify, organize and present given material in a particular form. This promoted collaborative emphasis in the development of writing. They described how thin porridge is prepared. They also observed conventions of paragraphing, grammar, punctuation and spelling. The speaking, re-arrangement of points and writing skills were developed.

#### ***Mode of learning used***

English was used throughout the lesson and the learners showed competence in it. The lesson was practical as the learners were able to bring their daily experiences to the

classroom, something that motivated them greatly as they felt that what they did at school was not foreign. The lesson was learner-centred as learners carried out the different tasks mentioned above.

#### *Provision of feedback*

The teacher gave verbal positive feedback for a correct response made and said 'yes'.

#### *Assessment strategies*

The teacher gave feedback through marking the learners' work. Hyland (1992) points out that teachers can suggest strategies for improvement based on the requirements of the texts. In this particular lesson this was not done since the learners had done very well. There were no learning materials used.

#### *Teaching approaches and strategies used in the lesson*

The teachers used: group discussion, asking questions, brainstorming. These strategies were used effectively. The learners were able to write the steps taken when preparing thin porridge. The CLT was spelt out here. The following lesson was also taught by Teacher C2.

### **4.7.2.1 An analysis of an essay writing lesson 4**

#### **Topic: The day I will never forget: the genre approach**

In this lesson the objectives were:

Learners should be able to:

- identify between narrating a story in a sequential way and using a flashback
- write a narrative essay in a chronological order.

#### *Description of the lesson*

Two learners, that is, a boy told the class how his father beat him, while a girl narrated her experience about how her mother scolded her. Farlex (2003) argues that the genre approach allows learners to exploit authentic materials. The use of the anecdotes



motivated the learners. Their interests and awareness were captured when they saw that language could be used on things outside the classroom. The learners could distinguish between telling a story in a chronological way and by using a flashback. Moreover, they were provided with an insight into how to use the past tense as the anecdotes they told and the texts they wrote on “The day I will never forget” were in the past tense.

Contrary to Farlex’s (2003) argument that the use of authentic material in the genre approach is flexible enough to cater for different levels of learners, I feel that the teacher used a weak approach for the level of the learners since it was not their first time to do a narrative genre. They had already done it at Junior Secondary level.

Furthermore, the teacher concentrated on teaching the narrative genre in both lessons when there are different types of genres such as expositions, reports, arguments and many others. These varieties have specific characteristics. For example, they have organizational stages such as beginning, middle and end (chap. 2). Each of them varies according to topic, purpose and audience, (Hyland, 1992).

However, the written work was too short; the learners were instructed to write only two paragraphs yet narrative genre writing lends itself to extended writing so that the teacher is able to help the learners where they are weak. How are the learners expected to learn the target language with such short written essays? This point was also raised during teachers’ interviews. The two paragraphs would be acceptable if perhaps the teacher was concentrating on only two stages like the introduction and the beginning of the body. The IGCSE aim of carrying out longer writing tasks was not carried out in this lesson.

#### ***Teacher’s comments obtained after the essay writing lesson***

The teacher said “*Even though I have not marked the learners’ work, I can tell from the two learners’ story telling that I have achieved my objective since they showed familiarity with narrating events in a sequential order. I have no doubt that the learners will do a good job, since they were instructed to do a similar task*”.

In spite of the teacher's confidence that he had achieved his objectives, the fact that learners are not given adequate practice in free writing is a cause of concern and the fact that they were not the processes of writing each genre. In order to make sound future citizens learners should write (expository) essays of adequate lengths. Writing is very poorly taught and teachers were not trained how to teach it since writing was left out when the curriculum was revised. This method of teaching is inadequate to equip learners with the proper writing skill. It does not show writing as a process or as a political project and writing should be taught very often. Learners have to communicate their ideas clearly, accurately and effectively. They have to employ and control a variety of grammatical structures and employ various register. If the teaching methods teachers use do not improve the teaching of writing in the IGCSE curriculum, it means that learners will have a tough time in coping with the demands of tertiary education. Learning to write is a process that needs to be well taught using an approach that will firmly ground learners in writing, for example, as suggested by Glencoe, (2000) (chap.2).

### ***Analysis of the lesson***

#### *Learners' participation*

Noteworthy is that the three language skills of listening, speaking and writing were developed. All the learners participated in the lesson. They told anecdotes and wrote a narrative essay in chronological order. They exploited the past tense.

#### *Mode of learning used*

English was used throughout the lesson and the lesson was learner-centred.

#### *Provision of feedback*

Feedback was given through praises as the teacher complemented the boy who made a positive response.

#### *Assessment strategies*



There was no assessment in the form of marking done in this lesson since the teacher did not mark the learners' work. However, he could tell that he had achieved his objectives from the anecdotes the two learners told through using formative or continuous assessment.

#### *Teaching approaches and strategies used in the lesson*

The teacher used the following: asking questions, story telling, instructing learners to tell (formative evaluation) and write stories, explanation and giving a feedback through praising. These strategies are learner-centred and comprise the constructivist approach. Worthy of note is that the teacher attempted to use the CLT approach as both the teacher and learners used English language for communication. It is very uncommon for a teacher to use the communicative approach to teach writing. That is why writing fails and the alternative is to use the genre approach which Ken Hyland has adequately detailed in his 1992 article. The narrative or anecdote genre was also used whereby he first told the class how he lost his cell-phone.

### **4.8 Summary of findings**

The following were findings derived from lesson observations. They respond to the second critical question posed in chapter 1. They show the manner in which the curriculum change was implemented, that is, if the teachers used the approaches designed for teaching the new curriculum. The approaches teachers used were determined among other things by; the teachers' choice, the teaching material used and the lesson taught.

#### **Teaching approaches in oral lessons:**

- The teachers used verbal feedback, explanation, class discussion, questions and answers, individual presentations, dialogue, group discussion, brainstorming and presentations. These reflect CLT and the TBLTL approaches advocated in the IGCSE curriculum.

**Assessment of oral lessons:**

- The assessment lesson on the oral skill was well conducted since the teacher carried out all the steps specified in the syllabus. The teacher was able to execute the curriculum change. Assessment is very crucial in terms of monitoring learners' progress.

**Teaching approaches to teaching writing lessons:**

- Teacher C2 used the task-based language teaching approach when teaching writing whereby learners were able to communicate their points effectively with the teacher in the first lesson and could also arrange them in their order of sequence, something which is in line with the aims of the IGCSE syllabus which specify that the learners should be able to identify, organize and present given material in a particular form.
- However, the recipe genre was not utilised effectively for the level of the learners.
- Furthermore, in the second lesson the teacher used a weak (narrative / anecdote genre) approach for the level of the learners since they were used to narrative writing.

**Length of writing tasks:**

- The length of the essays was too short. The learners were instructed to write only two paragraphs. The learners were not given adequate practice in this skill. The teacher was not able to see if the learners had grasped enough vocabulary and if their performance was improving. This problem was also detected in the teachers' interviews. This implies that the learners are being deprived the opportunity of learning English as writing is a very important aspect in language learning.

**Assessment of writing:**

- Assessment was not carried out in the lessons that were observed. The teacher instructed the learners to write two paragraphs as a form of evaluating his teaching and then marked the learners' work.



## **4.9 Discussion of findings of the study**

This section discusses major findings in the study which are synthesized from interviews with teachers and classroom observations. The findings are categorised into four themes that have been used in presenting the data which are as follows: preparation of teachers for the IGCSE English curriculum; teaching approaches used in the IGCSE curriculum; the IGCSE curriculum and teaching of the four language skills; and learners' use of English in the IGCSE curriculum in the classroom and school premises

### **4.9.1 Induction of teachers for the English curriculum change**

It transpired from the interviews with the teachers that the workshops conducted to orient them to the English Language curriculum innovation were not beneficial because some of the facilitators were ordinary teachers who were less knowledgeable than some of the teachers. Fullan (1992) cited in Iemjinda (2007), argues that curriculum change is about translating an idea into practice in the classroom and that the change in pedagogy should be clear to the teachers concerned. The relationship between the teacher and learners; the teaching and learning materials used as well as the role of the assessment procedure should be clear to the teachers as well. Lack of clarity inhibits curriculum change, (Fullan, 1992). Clarity according to Fullan (1992) is established through intensive training workshops for the teachers. The workshops should be well planned and provide direction for the change. They should be conducted by skilled people in that particular field. According to Fullan useful exercises for the workshops could include: "videotaping various teachers' lessons in order to evaluate their present classroom practice and to provide a foundation for discussion; using a classroom observation checklist for feedback, and; demonstration and modelling the new teaching methods under simulated conditions", (in Iemjinda, 2007:12).

#### **4.9.2 Teaching approaches used in the IGCSE curriculum**

The teachers predominantly used the TBLTL and the CLT approaches when teaching some of the language skills, as they used presentations, conversations, debates, dialogues, questions and answers and discussions. These approaches constituted the constructivist learning approach. The teachers' basing their teaching on the approaches showed their perception of the curriculum change which advocates the use of these approaches. The exercises learners did were less demanding and therefore made it easier for them to pass the IGCSE exam than it was with GCE O-Level.

The teachers also employed the process approach as they taught stages of essay writing. They even utilised the genre approach by teaching the different modes of essays as well as anecdotes. Notwithstanding, the genre and process approaches were not fully utilised as teacher C2 taught the recipe genre in the first lesson and the narrative genre in the second lesson observed, yet the learners had already been taught these genres at JC level. The teachers did not include proofreading as the final stage in the process approach during the interviews.

#### **4.9.3 The IGCSE English curriculum and teaching of the four language skills**

It seems that the IGCSE English Language curriculum does not give the learners enough practice on the writing skill. Essay lengths were reported to be only one page. The learners were instructed to write narrative essays of two paragraphs in school C and the teacher could not detect the learners' improvement. The reading comprehension passages were also too short. Teachers taught concepts of skimming and scanning instead of teaching how to use them in reading comprehension. The teachers were not given guidelines for conducting the oral skills lessons. As a result, teachers used assessment methods instead of teaching the oral skill. Yet the introduction of IGCSE aims to improve learners' performance in this skill. It also led to poor implementation of the skill. This shows that the curriculum designers did not take time to prepare for the introduction of



this programme. It was wrong to start a new curriculum without proper preparation and training of teachers for the change. This is a major contributor to the fiasco.

The IGCSE curriculum emphasizes the use of the task-based approach. The above issues are a real problem. It is therefore, no wonder that the University of Swaziland does not accept the IGCSE results at face value. Teacher training is vital because that is where teachers apply their content knowledge and pedagogic knowledge of their subjects.

Listening comprehension was reported to be the most problematic language aspect of the IGCSE English Language curriculum in the schools when learners listened to passages from tapes and CDs read by the English L1 (British) speakers as they could not understand the accent of these people. This shows that the curriculum is Eurocentric. The learners also learned about unfamiliar things and places. Even worse is the fact that the learners in the rural schools did not have an access to listening to the English radio Channel and most of them did not have TV sets at their homes. The teachers emphasized problems only with listening over and above the other areas of language teaching, but the fact remains that emphasis on language teaching is global based on competence in all the four language skills. Therefore, the IGCSE English curriculum needs to be reviewed.

#### **4.9.4 Learners' use of English in the IGCSE curriculum in the classroom and school premises**

Learners from the rural schools did not have the opportunity to practise and the necessary exposure to English since they did not speak English elsewhere besides in the classrooms, hence they could not perform well in it. Learners need to be competent in English in order for them to communicate in a meaningful way. Learners in the urban areas were at an advantage since they were exposed to English in their homes as well and in the school premises and in their environments. Tsabedze (2003) argues that extensive reading has a massive role to play in any attempts to enhance the quality of performance of learners, be it in everyday usage of English language or examination. School C learners spoke English at the hostels while school B learners used it at their churches. IGCSE does not

help improve learners' performance in the country side in this regard. For this reason, the aims of addressing the gaps in the GCE curriculum are not achieved.

#### **4.10 The effectiveness of the IGCSE curriculum in terms of its intended purpose**

The introduction of the IGCSE curriculum aimed at satisfying the national needs in Swaziland in order to provide quality and relevant education in academic and in vocational careers, (Ministry of Education's Consultative Document, 2005). IGCSE English curriculum aimed at filling the gaps that the GCE O-Level syllabus had. One of the gaps was that many learners were failing English at O-Level as a result of which they could not access tertiary education. The aim of introducing IGCSE was to provide learners with a better opportunity to improve their performance in English so as access tertiary education (Kunene 2005).

Another gap was that GCE O-Level focused on the literacy skills while IGCSE focuses on teaching the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Still, the aims are not met by the IGCSE English syllabus. The analysis shows that IGCSE English does not provide learners with quality education since the reading comprehension texts and the learners' own written texts have been reduced. In spite of these skills being at the core of learning in any institution of higher learning and in the world of work, learners are not given adequate practice in them (the skills). IGCSE English Language curriculum aims at developing the learners' abilities to use English effectively for the purpose of practical communication. Since communication is either done by speaking and writing, how are the learners expected to communicate effectively through writing if they are deprived of such an opportunity? Surely the IGCSE syllabus does not meet the learners and the nation's needs. That is why most of the learner who thought they had passed were not accepted for study at the University of Swaziland, despite the apparently good grades they obtained. IGCSE gives learners adequate practice in the oral communication skill.



#### **4.11 A serious gap of the IGCSE Curriculum**

The Swaziland education system caters for both academic and skills education through prevocational education. Because the IGCSE curriculum suits a skills-based education, it is biased because it does not cater for the academically-oriented learners. There are very limited Technical colleges and no universities of Technology in Swaziland for these learners that are being produced, at the same time the University of Swaziland does not accept learners with the C credit in the IGCSE Examination. The universities in South Africa also did not accept the IGCSE students in 2009. In this regard, IGCSE fails to offer competitive education that is accepted in academic streams such as university education in the wider global community. This marks a failure of the education system compared to the O-Level curriculum. If IGCSE does not deliver quality and relevant education in compliance with recognized educational value systems, why not find a better alternative? Even so, changing the curriculum should be strongly guided by the goals that the Swazi education system hopes to acquaint learners with. Change should not be conducted for the sake of change, but for progressive reasons. The last education review was conducted in 1985 in Swaziland (National Education Review Commission). An educational change that is not based on researched needs of a country is set to be disastrous because that change is not an informed change.

#### **4.12 Conclusion**

This chapter has presented the findings of the study in two categories namely: the findings from interviews conducted with selected teachers, and; classroom observations with four teachers.

The findings from both interviews with teachers and classroom observations showed that firstly, the teachers based their teaching on task-based language teaching and learning and the communicative language teaching approaches when teaching some of the language skills. There were no provisions made to fill the gaps created by the exclusive

use of these approaches in ESL contexts where the teachers were also L2 speakers of English.

Secondly, it was evident in teachers' classroom practices and responses to the interviews that teachers were not fully inducted into the new programme as some of the facilitators who trained them were less informed and there were no guidelines for teaching the other aspects of language such as reading, vocabulary, grammar and writing since they were not included in the curriculum reviewing exercise. As a result, teachers reverted to error analysis whereby syntactic rules were taught when teaching grammar. This is the structural approach which is in contrast to using language in a meaningful way supported by the CLT and TBLTL approaches. They did not use a broadly based theory of SLA which encompasses models of learner-internal processing as well as the socially constructed dynamics of interpersonal communication (Brown 2000).

Thirdly, it also transpired that even though the learners were passing, IGCSE failed to give learners quality education since learners read short comprehension passages and wrote essays of limited lengths. Furthermore, the tasks learners did were cognitively unchallenging. Listening comprehension gave learners a problem because they were not used to the native English language speakers' accent.

Finally, drawing from the data analysis in this chapter and literature reviewed in chapter 2, findings from the study provide a background upon which recommendations that seek to contribute to classroom practice in teaching ESL are made in the following chapter.



## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents conclusions and recommendations of the study. The results obtained from this study brought into perspective some insights regarding teachers' perceptions of the change of the curriculum from GCE O-Level to the IGCSE in the four high schools in Swaziland and how they implemented the change. Data collection and analysis were conducted in chapter 4. In this chapter I will conclude the study and give suggestions for further research.

A qualitative research approach was adopted. It used interviews with teachers and classroom observations. I analysed data according to four themes namely; preparation of teachers for the IGCSE English Language curriculum, teaching approaches used in the English Language IGCSE curriculum, the IGCSE curriculum and teaching of the four language skills and learners' use of English in the IGCSE curriculum in the classroom and school premises.

#### 5.2 Induction of teachers for the IGCSE English curriculum

The critical questions central to this study gave rise to the responses that led to the generation of the following conclusions: Critical Question 1 about how teachers experienced change was answered by reflecting on their overall attitude and acceptance of the new curriculum. The research findings revealed that teachers were not satisfied with the effectiveness of the workshops as some of the facilitators were less informed than some of them. According to Teacher C2, *"they have no experience on these things. In other areas you find that they are less knowledgeable than some of us"*. Fullan (1992) argues that teachers need to be fully aware of the reasons for a curriculum change. Facilitators should be well informed people in order for the teachers to have faith in and accept them. Teachers should use clear pedagogies in order for curriculum innovation to be carried out successfully.

### **5.2.1 The teaching approaches used in the IGCSE curriculum**

Critical question 2 was on how the change was implemented. Key findings were as follows:

The results of this research have indicated that teachers used aspects of the CLT and TBLTL approaches when teaching all the four language skills. So, IGCSE insists on all four language skills, while previously GCE O-Level emphasized on reading and writing only. The approaches are advocated by language education theorists such as (Richards and Rodgers 1986; Baker 1996; 2000; and Widdowson 1978; Nunan 1985) and found effective for meaningful language teaching and learning. Teachers tended to concentrate on the two approaches and neglected the fact that SLA is an interdependence cycle which makes use of an eclectic approach to language teaching. An eclectic approach to ESL includes both cognitive, literacy and constructivist approaches in which CLT and TBLT are only a part.

The data gathered revealed that teachers did not dominate the class but learners were actively involved in what was happening in the classrooms through answering questions, presentations, conversations, debates and discussions. In this way the learners' performance in class in the urban schools (B and C) was found to have improved since these are learner-centred approaches with constructivism learning paradigms. Curriculum innovation implies changes in pedagogies. The results indicate that the teachers understood the curriculum change and based their teaching on the prescribed approaches. The teachers reported that it was easier for the learners to pass the English IGCSE examination than it was with GCE O-Level examination system. Be that as it may, IGCSE provided learners with functional English and some of the language aspects were not included in the curriculum review exercise.

The learner-centred CLT and TBLTL approaches teachers used when teaching the communication skill (section 4.2.3.7) as opposed to teacher-centred approach are valued.



They promote learners' cooperation and collaborative involvement in class activities. Teachers can act independently, i.e. exhibit agency, and create the kind of effective language learning environment they would like and simultaneously adhere to the principles of IGCSE. The CLT and TBLT also develop key skills such as communication, group working and problem solving. They further increase learners' enjoyment of the topic at hand and enhance the desire to learn. Therefore, the teachers understand that utilising learner-centred approaches is a factor that promotes L2 learning in the new curriculum.

Results indicated that the teaching approaches and methods used enabled the learners to pass the IGCSE English Language examination. However, IGCSE is less challenging to learners since there are exercises like filling in forms as some of its teaching content which makes it very easy for learners to score full marks because the reading comprehensions texts used were shallow with cognitively unchallenging exercises on skimming that easily predispose learners to score everything correctly. The programme does not guarantee quality education, instead; it provides functional English which will not help learners when they go to the university since it does not enable them to deal with abstract concepts. The programme was best suitable for vocational students.

### **5.2.2 The teaching of the language skills in the IGCSE English curriculum and especially reading and writing**

The results pointed out that as much as the teachers said IGCSE was good, it did not give the learners enough practice on the writing skill.

- Writing forms the basis of any learning programme, especially in language learning. Essay lengths were reported to be only one page. The learners were instructed to write only two paragraphs in school C. The teacher was not able to see if the learners had grasped enough vocabulary and if their performance was improving. *"IGCSE does not give learners quality education because it is easy to pass now since there is little reading and writing yet that is what learners should be able to do without any problem when they get to the university"*, (Teacher B2).

- Teacher C2 declared: *“Teachers use the old approaches when teaching writing because writing was not included in the revision of the IGCSE English curriculum”*. This means that the introduction of IGCSE fails to improve the learners’ performance in the writing skill. The teachers revealed that this programme produces poor and inefficient writers as compared to the GCE O-Level curriculum.
- Insufficient reading and writing are factors that affect learners’ performance in the IGCSE English Language curriculum. This is the same thing as that experienced by the Tanzanian high school learners (Mgqwashu, chap.2) whose incompetence in English was reflected in their reading and writing at tertiary level. This was due to the fact that the syllabus concentrated on grammatical structures and ignored the ways in which language is used as a system of communication. The reading and writing skills problem are a main finding for the study. The teachers understand this problem to be a factor that hinders learners from obtaining quality education in the IGCSE curriculum.
- Although the oral skill was reported to improve learners’ performance in the IGCSE English Language curriculum, teachers were not given guidelines during workshops on how to teach this skill successfully. That effectively retards progress.
- Listening comprehension was reported to be the most problematic language aspect in the schools when learners listened to passages from tapes and CD’s read by the English L1 speakers. The learners could not understand the accent of these people. Some of the teachers had the same problem. This problem made the learners develop negative attitudes towards listening as the learners in school D were reported to have said that they hated the radio then. The teachers were not adequately trained for teaching this language aspect during workshops. They perceived this language component as the most challenging for both the learners and the teachers in the IGCSE English Language curriculum change. D1 Teacher even said, *“...it is still a challenge as to how can I teach listening comprehension successfully and effectively”*.



- The IGCSE English produced poor readers and writers, learners who are skills-oriented. The Swazi nation's perception is that they need academic-oriented people who will advance their education in universities – something which IGCSE seems not to provide. Moreover, Swaziland has very few Technical colleges for the IGCSE product. A higher certificate than IGCSE is needed a certificate that will be internationally recognised. Since the university cannot take these learners, then what becomes of them? The teachers perceived that the IGCSE curriculum change provides cheap and irrelevant education concerning this issue.

### **5.2.3 Learners' use of English in the IGCSE curriculum in the classroom and school premises**

There was lack of congruence between the cognitively undemanding IGCSE English Language syllabus and the language policy of using English as MoI. My findings revealed that the learners from the rural schools did not speak English outside the classrooms at the schools. But this was not different from when the GCE O-Level was in place. If the learners did not practise the language they could not perform well in it. The IGCSE English Language curriculum requires learners to attain high levels of proficiency in English to enable them use it as a medium of instruction; but insufficient exposure to English creates difficulties for them. This is especially true for the rural learners whose exposure is only limited to the classroom. However, the same thing happened during the time when GCE was in place. Urban area learners were at an advantage since they were exposed to English in their homes as well. School C learners spoke it at the hostels and churches while school B learners used it at their churches. This put them at an advantage since language is learned through practice. For that reason, I conclude just like Swan cited in Baker (2002), that practice makes perfect. That is, learners will be fluent and competent in the language through regular practice.

### 5.3 Recommendations

On the basis of the findings five recommendations are forwarded:

Firstly, since teachers were inadequately prepared for teaching the IGCSE English Language curriculum as they were only given guidance for conducting assessment in the oral skill, it is recommended that in-service workshops be conducted by inspectorate from the MoE and also by personnel who are well versed with the teaching of English Language to equip teachers with relevant approaches to teaching this skill. An appropriate English Language curriculum should be designed to close the gap identified in the study resulting from the new IGCSE English curriculum.

Secondly, the reading and writing skills were not sufficiently taught in the newly introduced IGCSE English Language curriculum and therefore teachers resorted to the old (structural) approach when teaching these skills. I therefore recommend that the syllabus be further revised in order to include teaching reading and writing language in detail as well as equipping teachers with effective teaching approaches suitable for ESL learners such as the Genre approach. Teachers should be taught effective strategies for teaching reading comprehension and those for teaching essay writing suggested as discussed in chapter 4. Furthermore, it is recommended that the length of reading passages and that of essays be increased when revising the curriculum.

Thirdly, from the stance that the learners could not understand the English native speakers' accent which was predominantly used in the Final Examination, I recommend that the MoE should assist teachers with additional resources and multimedia for teaching listening; these should include CDs and listening to radio and talk shows of people who speak English well. The teachers should find recorded talk shows of prominent local TV personalities, and obtain them from Swazi TV and SABC since viewers in Swaziland have access to other networks from South Africa, Botswana, UK and USA and many others.



Fourthly, I recommend that inspectors from the MoE visit the schools to find their problems and help rectify them. The inspectors should ensure that the schools have functioning libraries by supplying the schools with a variety of reading materials. Reading campaigns should be instituted and every learner should be required to read and report on what they read formally at school in intervals decided by every school's English department. Monitoring of reading should be implemented at both the school level and by the inspectorate. Reading and writing across the curriculum should be made a concern for all teachers and not just English Language teachers.

Fifthly, it is recommended that the curriculum should be revised immediately because the University of Swaziland no longer accepts learners with the credit C since it is a weak pass in IGCSE and it comes in the fourth order. I recommend that the learners be given a chance to choose between IGCSE and HIGSE (chap. 4) curricula based on whether they want to pursue vocational or academic careers.

#### **5.4 Further research**

On the basis of the findings of the current study and the literature review for the study, I recommend that further research on curriculum change especially in the new IGCSE English Language curriculum be extended to the schools in the other regions of Swaziland. I suggest that such research could use both qualitative and quantitative designs and also include focus-group interviews with learners. Aspects that need investigation could be:

- Factors affecting the learning of English in high schools using the IGCSE curriculum.
- Suitability and appropriateness of learning materials and resources used in the English IGCSE curriculum.

The recommended research should be conducted before localization of the SGCSE planned for 2011.

### **5.5 Concluding remarks**

The Swaziland MoE needs to make an informed decision about curricular reform. On the basis of findings of this study, I strongly feel that the MoE is not ready to localize the examinations as planned in the Education Policy documents that by 2011 the SGCSE will be in operation, unless the Ministry rectifies the problems raised in this study. It is crucial that whenever a curriculum is introduced or reviewed all stake holders are involved and that people's views are taken into consideration. Pilot testing the curriculum to assure its credibility and competitiveness is of utmost importance. Learning from the other SADC countries which were already using IGCSE curriculum before Swaziland such as Botswana and Namibia's loopholes in order to avoid them would have been a necessary process in order to minimize the problems within the present Swazi IGCSE curriculum.



## REFERENCES

- Abbs, B., and Freebairn, I. (1990). *Blue Print One: Students' Book*. Harlow, Essex, Longman.
- Applebee, A. (1993). *Literature in the Secondary School: Studies of Curriculum in the United States*. Urbana 11: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Baker, C. (1993). *The Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*. Clavedon, Bilingual Matters, 2nd Edition .
- Baker, C. (1996). *A Handbook for Literacy Educators: Research on Teaching the Communicative and Visual Arts*. New York, Macmillan.
- Baker, C. in Coulmas F. (eds) (1997). *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics*. Oxford, Blackwell.
- Baker, C. (2000). *Language, Power and Pedagogy*. Clevedon et al, Multilingual Matters.
- Baker, C. (2002). *The Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*. Clevedon, Multilingual Matters, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition.
- Bamgbose, A. (1999). *Language and Exclusion. The Consequences of Language Language Policies in Africa*: Munster, LIT Verlag.
- Barton, D. (1994). *Literacy: An Introduction to the Ecology of Written Language*. Oxford, Blackwell.
- Bell, J. (1993). *Doing Your Research Projects*. Great Britain, Open University Press.
- Benson, C. (2003). *Mother-tongue based Bilingual Education*. A Paper Written for Consultative Meeting on Bilingual Education at UNICEF, Lagos.
- Bertram, C., Fotheringham, R. and Harley, K. (2001). *Curriculum Studies*. University of Natal, South Africa.
- Best, J. M., and Kahn, J. V. (1998). *Research in Education*. Allyn and Bacon, USA.
- Bloch, C. (2002). *Literacy in the Early Years: Teaching and Learning in the Multilingual Early Childhood Classrooms*. Cape Town, Praesa.
- Borg, W. (2003). *Applying Educational Research: A Practical Guide for Teachers*. New York, London.
- Broch-Utne, B. (2004). *Researching the Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa*. Wyvern, Cape Town.

Brice-Heath, (1983). *Ways With Words: Language, Life and Work in Communities and Classrooms*. New York, McGraw Hill.

Brown, A., and Dowling, P. (2010). *Doing Research / Reading Research: re-interrogation education*. London, Routledge.

Brown, H. D. (2000). *Principles of Language Teaching and Learning*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.

Burnes, et al (1982). *Teaching Reading in today's Elementary Schools*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.

Byrne, D. (1988). *Teaching Oral English*. Longman, Singapore.

Chisolm, L. et al (2000). *A South African Curriculum for the Twenty First Century*. Report of the Review Committee 2005. Pretoria 31<sup>st</sup> May 2000.

Clark, I. (2005). *A Genre Approach to Writing Assignments*. CF 14.2. <http://compositionforum.com>

Cohen, L., and Manion, R., (2000). *Research Methods in Education*. Routledge, London.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., and Morrison, K. (2007). *Research Methods in Education*. (6<sup>th</sup> edition). Routledge Falmer, London.

Cook, V. (1991). *Second Language Learning and Second Language Teaching*. Routledge, Chapman and Hall Ltd. New York.

Cummins, J. (2000). *Bilingualism and Special: Issues in Assessment and Pedagogy*. San Diego, C A: College-Hill Press.

Cummins, J. (2002). *The Foundations of Bilingual Education*. Multilingual Matters, Clevedon.

Cummins, J. (2006). *Language, Power and Pedagogy*. Multilingual Matters LTD, Clevedon.

Dlamini, N. (2005). *The Examination Council Report*. Mbabane, Swaziland.

Dudley –Evans, T. (1994). *Functional Approach-Section 4#11*. <http://eca.stategov>

Dutcher, N. (1995) in Limage, L. (1999) (eds). *Comparative perspectives on Language and Literacy*. UNESCO / BREDA 1999: 17-30.



Education Resource Information Centre (1990). [www.bibli.u.szeged.hu/oseas-adsec/swaziland.htm](http://www.bibli.u.szeged.hu/oseas-adsec/swaziland.htm)- Retrieved 20 May 2009.

Elley, W. (1992). *How in the World Do Students Read?* The International Association for Evaluation of Educational Achievement. Hamburg, Grindeldruck GMBH.

Ellis, R., and Tomlinson, B. (1994). *Teaching Secondary English*. Longman, Hong Kong.

Ellis, R. (1999). *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford University Press, New York.

Eke, A. (2005). *Situational Analysis of Secondary Education in Botswana*. <http://www.id21.org>. Retrieved 20 October 2009.

*English as a Second Language Syllabus* (2008). University of Cambridge International Examinations. United Kingdom

Graham-Jolly, M. (2002). *The Nature of Curriculum*.

Farlex, (2003). *The Genre Approach to Writing: The Free Library*. <http://thefreelibrary.com>

Farrell, T. (2003). *Learning to Teach English During the First Year; Personal Influences and Challenges*. Teaching and Teacher Education, 19 (1), 96-111.

Flyn, and O'Neil, H. (1988). *English Examined*. Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, Britain.

Fosnot, C. T. (1989). *Enquiry Teachers, Enquiry Learners: A Constructivist Approach for Teaching*. Teachers' College Press.

Fraenkel, J., & Wallen, N. (2000). *How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education*. The McGraw Hill Companies, Inc.

Fullan, M. (1992). *Meaning of Educational Change*. New York: Teachers' College Press.

Garcia, O. (1997). *Bilingual Education*. In Coulmas F. (ed). *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics*. Oxford, Blackwell

Genesee, F. (1994). *Educating Second Language Children*. Cambridge University Press.

Glencoe, (2000). *Grammar and Composition Handbook*. Coulumbus, Ohio.

Ginindza, V. (Sunday, June 14, 2009). *Times of Swaziland*. Mbabane, Swaziland.

Ginindza, V. (July 8, 2009). *Times of Swaziland*. Mbabane, Swaziland.

Husen, T. (1978). *Teacher Training and Students' Achievement in Less Developed Countries*. Washington D.C., World Bank.

Hyland, k. (1992). *Genre Analysis: Just Another Fad*. English Teaching Forum.

Iemjinda, M. (2007). *Educational Journal of Thailand*. Vol. 1, No. 1 January-December.

Klein, W. (1990). *Second Language Acquisition*. Cambridge University Press, New York.

Krashen, D. (1981). *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning*. Pergamon Press, Oxford.

Krashen, D. (1982). *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Krashen, D. (1985). *The Power of Reading: Insights from Research*. Libraries Unlimited Inco. (SL).

Kritzinger, A. (1995). *Teaching English as a Second Language*. National Book Producers, Goodwoods.

Kunene, J. G. (2005). *International General Certificate of Secondary Education: Consultative Document*. Ministry of Education, Swaziland.

Larsen-Freeman, D. (1986). *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching*. New York, Oxford University Press.

Lochana M., and Gitoshree D. (2006). *Asian EFL Journal: English Language Teaching and Research Articles*. Volume 8. Issue 3 Aarticle 7.

Long, M. (1985). *A Role for Instruction in Second Language Acquisition*. Clavedon Avon, Multilingual Matters.

Lyle, R. (1977). *The Adult Performance Level Study: Final Report*. Washington D.C. The U.S. Office of Education.

Magagula, M. (2009, June 14). National News 'Times of Swaziland' page 12.

Map of Swaziland. Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia.mht

Maree, K. (Ed) (2007). *First Steps in Research*. Pretoria, Van Schaik.



- Marope, P. T. M. (1996). *The Impact of Educational Reforms on the Distribution of Educational Outcomes in Developing Countries: The Case of Botswana*. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 16 (2), 157-171.
- Maykurt, P., and Morehouse, R. (1994). *Beginning Qualitative Research: A Philosophical and Practical Guide*. Washington DC, Falmer Press.
- Mazibuko, E. (2008). *The Examination Council Report*. Mbabane, Swaziland.
- Mbatha, T. (2002). *Language Practices and Pupil Performance in Rural and Urban Grade 1 Primary Classrooms in Swaziland*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Cape Town.
- Mcdonough, J., and Mcdonough, S. (1997). *Research Methods for English Language Teachers*. Britain, London.
- McMillan, J. H., and Schumacher, A. M. (2001). *Research in Education: A Conceptual Introduction*. New York, Longman.
- Mgqwashu, E. M. (2006). *Language and the Post Colonial Condition*. *Journal Alternation* Vol. 13 no. 1 (298-325).
- Miles, M. B., and Huberman, A. M. (2002). *The Qualitative Data Companion: Thousand Oaks*. Calif, Sage.
- Ministry of Education (2004). *Scholarship Guidelines*. Mbabane.
- Ministry of Education's Consultative Document (2005). Mbabane, Swaziland.
- Moore, R., in Angelil, C. S. (Ed) (1998). *Access to Success. Academic Literacy in Higher Education*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press. 83-102.
- Mordaunt, O. G. (1990). *Swaziland Language Policy for Schools: Educational Studies V 16 n2 p 131 40 1990 AV: UMI*.
- Mouton, J. (2001). *How to Succeed in Your Masters and Doctoral Studies: A South African Guide and Resource Book*. Van Schaik Publishers, Goodwood, Western Cape.
- National Educational Review Commission Report, (1985)*. Mbabane, Swaziland.
- Nunan, D. (1989). *Designing Tasks for the Communicative Classroom*. Cambridge, New York.
- Nunan, D. (1991). *Understanding Language Classrooms: A Guide for Teacher-initiated Action*. Great Britain, Cambridge.

*Online Research Journals – Questia*. <http://www.ingilish.com/Constructivism.htm>

Oxford, R. (1990). *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know*. Boston, Heinle and Heinle.

Oxford, R. (2006). *Asian FLT Journal: English Language Teaching and Research Articles*. Volume 8, Issue 3, Article 5.

Piaget, J. (1977). *The Grasp of Consciousness*. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Pica, T. (1992). *Language Acquisition and Language Learning*, in *TESOL Quarterly*. Volume 10, number 2.

Pride, J. B. (1996). *Sociolinguistics Aspects of Language Teaching*. Great Britain, Oxford University Press.

Programme for International Students' Assessment (2000). *What can Schools Do to Make the Difference?* <http://www.pisa.oecd.org/knowledge.html> retrieved 20 September 2009.

Rice, J.K. (August 2003). *Teacher Quality*. <http://www.epinet.org/content.cfm> retrieved 8 June 2008.

Richards, C., & Lockhart, C. (1986). *Reflective Teaching in Second Language Classrooms*. Cambridge University Press, USA.

Richards, C., and Rodgers, T. (1995). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching: A Description and Analysis*. Great Britain, University Press.

Richards, C. T. (2001). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. C. U. P.

Ruddell, M. (1999). *Teaching Content Reading and Writing*. John Willey and Sons, New York.

Seilinker, L. (1976) in Robinett, B. and Schachter (1986). *Second Language Learning*. The University of Michigan Press, USA.

Skehan, D. (1998). *Task-Based Language Teaching and Learning Journal*. Admin, 05 March (2008). <http://www.tbtl.net> retrieved on 24 October 2009.

Stenhouse, L. (1975). *An Introduction to Curriculum Research and Development*. London, Heinman.

Stern, S. S. (2003). *Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching*. New York, Oxford University Press.



Street, B. (1995). *Social Literacies: Critical Approaches to Literacy Development*. Ethnography and Education. London, Longman.

Suffolk New College. <http://www.suffolk.ac.uk>

Swaziland Examinations Council (2006). Mbabane, Swaziland.

Swaziland Examinations Council (2008). Mbabane, Swaziland.

Swaziland National Report (2008). Mbabane, Swaziland.

*Task-Based Language Teaching and Learning Journal*. Admin, 05 March (2008). <http://www.tbtl.net> retrieved on 24 October 2009.

Terre Blanche, M., and Durrheim, K. (1996). *Research Methods in Practice: Interpretive Methods*. Chapter 7, University of KwaZulu-Natal.

*The Constitution of the kingdom of Swaziland in English and SiSwati*, (26 July, 2005).

The Ministry of Education. *The Nine Year Programme of Instruction for English*.

Thomson, G. (1991). *Evaluation in Reporting Verbs Used in Academic Papers*. *Applied Linguistics*, 12 (4), 365-382.

Tikmany, R., (2005). *The IGCSE Education: How can it Help?* <http://www.rediff.com>

Tribble, B. (1996). *Writing, Language Teaching: A Scheme for Teacher Education*. Oxford University Press, New York.

Tsabedze, C. (2003). *Thought and Impressions*. Unpublished Paper, Kwaluseni.

Turner, P. (1997). *Issues and Skills*. Scotprint Ltd, Scotland.

United Kingdom Direct Government. Cambridge, England.

UNESCO, (2002). *What is the Challenge of Education for All? Who Are the Children Who Remain Out of the School? Why is Quality so Important for Retention in the Education System?* Paris, UNESCO.

Van Hattum, T. (2006). *The Communicative Approach Rethought*. <http://tonvanhattum.com.br/comretrh.html>. Retrieved 20 August 2009.

Verma, G., and Mallick, P. (1999). *Researching Education: Perspectives and Techniques*. London, Falmer Press.

Villamy, G. (1996). *Doing Educational Research in Developing Countries*. Qualitative Strategies. London, Falmer Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind and Society: The Development of Higher Mental Process*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press.

Widdowson, H. G. (1978). *Teaching Language as Communication*. Britain, University \ Press.

Willey, T. (1996). *Literacy and Language Diversity in the United States*. California, Centre for Applied Linguistics and Delta Systems co, Inc.

*Working Paper Series (April 2000)*. Education Section Programme Division. United Nations Children's Fund. New York, USA.

*World Fact book* (July 2009). [www.populstat.info/Africa/swazilag.htm](http://www.populstat.info/Africa/swazilag.htm) retrieved on 24 October 2009.



## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### TEACHERS' INTERVIEW

**AIM:** To explore the teachers' understandings of the change of the English curriculum from GCE to IGCSE curriculum and their implementation of the change.

**Teacher's code name:** .....

#### Little speech

*Thank you for your time. I am Mrs. Mvubu from Nazarene Teachers' College. I am doing a research study which focuses on curriculum change in English language teaching and learning at high schools. I would like to ask you some questions on the approaches you use and your experience of teaching English in schools, and I would also ask to have the opportunity to observe your classes in practice, i.e. while you teach for a couple of days. Please do not feel offended. Whatever you say or give will be treated with confidentiality. The results will be useful in the development of the curricula and appropriate teaching strategies for English learners. I will let you hear about the findings. You are free to use any of the two official languages. You are also free to withdraw from participating if you feel like:*

#### Your teaching experience

1. a) For how long have you taught English and which classes have you taught?
- b) What other subjects do you teach?

#### Your practices of teaching of English

2. a) Have you attended workshops on the teaching of the new IGCSE syllabus? If so, how many times?
- b) Do the workshops improve your understanding of the IGCSE syllabus? If so, how do they improve it?
3. How do you see teaching English using the IGCSE curriculum as compared to the years when you used the GCE syllabus?
4. a) What are the teaching approaches you use for teaching the following language aspects and what activities do you let the learners do?
  - a) vocabulary
  - b) listening comprehension
  - c) grammar
  - d) reading comprehension

- e) summary writing
- f) composition writing
- g) communication skills

5. Do you think the approaches you use and those prescribed by the IGCSE syllabus can enable the learners to succeed in the English exam? Please explain your answer.
6. What language(s) do the students use informally in the school premises?
7. What is your opinion of the Ministry of Education's (MoE) language policy in education, i.e. languages of instruction?

*Thank you for your time!*



## INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT FOR TEACHER C2

**Time:** 0900 – 0940 hrs

**Interviewer:** Good morning Sir.

**Interviewee:** Morning Madam.

**Interviewer:** I am glad to meet you.

**Interviewee:** I am happy too.

**Interviewer:** I am Mrs. Mvubu from Nazarene Teachers' College. I am doing a research study which focuses on curriculum change in English language teaching and learning at high schools. I would like to ask you some questions on your experience of teaching English using the IGCSE curriculum as well as using the GCE syllabus in schools, and I would also ask to have the opportunity to observe your classes while you teach for a couple of days. Please do not feel offended. Whatever you say or give will be treated with confidentiality. The results will be useful in the development of the curricula and appropriate teaching strategies for English learners. I will let you hear about the findings. You are free to use any of the two official languages. You are also free to withdraw from participating if you feel like... Okay, then, the first question is; For how long have you taught English and which classes have you taught?

**Interviewee:** Well, a...amm... I have 9 years teaching experience in both secondary and high school levels.

**Interviewer:** Okay, what other subjects do you teach?

**Interviewee:** Well, I teach English only.

**Interviewer:** By the way, you are using a new syllabus now.

**Interviewee:** Yes, it is IGCSE.

**Interviewer:** Have you attended workshops on the teaching of the new IGCSE syllabus?

**Interviewee:** Yes I have.

**Interviewer:** How many times?

**Interviewee:** A...amm... about three times.

**Interviewer:** Do the workshops improve your understanding of the IGCSE syllabus?

**Interviewee:** I can say... well...yes, but not too much, they don't tend to be effective enough because those trainers are just teachers like us. They have no experience on these things. In other areas you find that they are less knowledgeable than some of us.

**Interviewer:** How do you see teaching English using the IGCSE curriculum as compared to the years when you used the GCE syllabus?

**Interviewee:** IGCSE is less challenging on the learners' part than the GCE curriculum was. The comprehensions they read are shallow; with some exercises it's easy to score everything because it is skimming. There is also form filling, a cheap exercise that easily boosts the learners who end up with higher scores. The change is on quantity. The compositions are too short. GCE was challenging and the learners received quality education. Learners read comprehension passages of adequate lengths.

**Interviewer:** The next question is; what are the teaching approaches you use for teaching the following language aspects and what activities do you let the learners do? The first one is vocabulary.

**Interviewee:** I teach the areas where learners have problems. I incorporate it in reading comprehension and teach the words in context.

**Interviewer:** What about when teaching listening comprehension.

**Interviewee:** Ehmm... I prepare the learners to listen as I read passages after giving them tips on how to take notes while listening. I read the passages twice while the learners listen and jot notes. The learners also look at the questions from handouts or books during the reading session. They get the meaning in context. Sometimes the learners listen to audio-tapes or compatible discs (CDs) provided in Peter Lucantoni's text. They answer the questions in their exercise books after the second reading. I also bring recordings from CD's and tapes to class for the learners to listen to and answer questions on.

**Interviewer:** What approaches do you use when teaching grammar?

**Interviewee:** I give learners work to do, identify their errors and then address them.

**Interviewer:** What about when teaching reading comprehension?

**Interviewee:** I teach skimming and scanning and emphasize the answering skill, that is, the 'wh-' questions.

**Interviewer:** What approaches do you use when teaching summary writing and what do you let the learners do?



**Interviewee:** I start from paragraph to sentence level and to the actual task. I teach paragraph summary to sentence summary and emphasize on retaining the meaning.

**Interviewer:** What about when teaching composition writing?

**Interviewee:** Well, I explain my expectations on essay writing and I analyse the topics with the learners. I also teach the learners the different modes of essays and read them examples. I make them practise in stages planning and writing the introduction, body, conclusion, topic sentences and cohesion before I let them write the essays of about a page in length or 200 words.

**Interviewer:** Now this is the last language aspect, communication skills, how do you teach it?

**Interviewee:** I employ activities like debates and presentations on different topics. I give the learners guidelines of what is expected of them. I expose them to videos to view how it is carried out. I also give them marking guides to assess the learners in the videos. Then I give them exercises from past exam papers like conversations to do.

**Interviewer:** Do you think the approaches you use and those prescribed by the IGCSE syllabus can enable the learners to succeed in the English exam? Please explain your answer.

**Interviewee:** Yes, they are relevant to the programme because they require the learners to work hand in hand with the teacher. The approaches give the teacher and learners equal roles.

**Interviewer:** What language(s) do the students use informally in the school premises?

**Interviewee:** They use English because they will be assessed in it, so they have to practise it.

**Interviewer:** What is your opinion of the Ministry of Education's (MoE) language policy in education, i.e. languages of instruction?

**Interviewee:** I feel that both languages should be used equally at school because learners end up having negative attitudes towards English by being forced to speak it.

**Interviewer:** Thank you very much for your time!

## APPENDIX B

### OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

**AIM:** To explore the approaches teachers use and if they used the approaches prescribed in the IGCSE English curriculum. To identify how they used the approaches.

1. What were learning outcomes?
2. How the content is delivered. For instance, through lecturing, demonstration, brainstorming, reading texts, asking questions, miming, explanation and instructing learners to discuss something (methods) and they constitute the CLT and TBLT teaching approaches.
3. Lesson activities and aspects of language developed. For example, reading, speaking, listening, writing, grammar, and vocabulary and so on, skills enhancing the approaches or language focus
4. Language(s) predominantly used in lessons, that is, English only, code-switching of English and siSwati and the learners' level of fluency in English.
5. Modes of learning used by the teacher, that is, teacher centred or learner-centred, (traditional or constructivist respectively).
6. Learners' participation in lessons. For example, individually, in a chorus, in full sentences, yes or no, and so on (learner response technique).
7. How feedback was given and how it was used to improve learning. For instance, the teacher might praise or let the class applaud a student for a positive response made verbally. The teacher might ask the student to try again or he / she might simply rephrase an incorrect answer. If written errors were corrected in writing or verbally. (Teaching approach to determine learners' motivation).
8. If all the learners had the learning materials or textbooks used and what the learners did from the textbooks.
9. How other resources other than the textbooks were utilized in the lesson.
10. What did the teachers do to assess learners?



## APPENDIX C

### LESSONS FIELD NOTES FOR TEACHERS D2, B1, C2 AND TEACHER A

#### 1. Oral lesson notes for B1 Teacher

In teaching oral lessons, the IGCSE English syllabus states that the aims of the oral lessons are to enable the learners demonstrate competence in a range of speech activities, e.g. respond to questions on topics within a defined range such as past and present ideas, demonstrate greater flexibility in dealing with new topic, conduct a sustained conversation and show a sense of audience.

The activities that learners are expected to do include; group and pair conversations, discussions, presentations and debates. During tests and oral exams the learners are tested individually, but they may be assessed in pairs. Oral tests may also take the form of a dialogue between two people. The observed oral lesson was conducted at School B with Teacher B1

#### **4.7.1 Lesson observation notes 1: Oral lesson 1**

**Time: 40 minutes**

**Lesson topic: Learners' Presentations: Booking flight tickets to a destination of your own choice**

*Objectives of the lesson:* In this activity learners were to:

- communicate their ideas clearly
- perform a dialogue for the class
- make vivid descriptions of places
- employ and control a variety of grammatical structures
- make sustained presentations
- respond to questions on topics within a defined range.

(These objectives were taken from the teacher's lesson preparation book).

*Presentation*

*Step 1.* The teacher told the learners that they were going to engage in conversations with their partners. After that they would do individual presentations on the work they had written on 'descriptive writing'. Then she read them the instruction.

#### *Learners' activity 1*

*Step 2. Instruction:* You go to a travel agent office in your country to get your flight ticket. With your partner prepare a dialogue and perform it for the class. One of you should take the role of the clerk in the booking office.

*Step 3.* There were three presentations made. The assessment criteria for presentations were; clear articulation and using a variety of correct grammatical structures; a sustained conversation and showing a sense of audience. The first pair made a good presentation because they spoke clearly and employed a variety of grammatical structures. There were only 2 grammatical mistakes made.

The second pair made quite a number of grammatical mistakes like tenses. The last pair made the best presentation. They communicated their ideas clearly with no grammatical mistakes. They demonstrated knowledge of a wide range of appropriate vocabulary. In all the conversations the learners told the clerks the time when they wanted to set off, like when boarding a bus. The teacher corrected them that they did not have to tell the time since it would be included in the ticket. They only had to say the date for their departure. However, the learners were right because we all usually say the time when we want to travel and we are given the time available.

#### *Learners' activity 2*

*Step 4. Instruction:* The Ministry of Tourism ran a writing competition on describing the most ideal place to visit during holidays. The prize was a holiday at a destination of your choice. Choose a place and give reasons why you want to go there.

#### *Presentation*



*Step 5.* A boy made a presentation. He said his dream place was England. He wanted to see the monarch and compare it to the Swazi monarch. He also wanted to see his favourite team, Manchester United and its two prominent players. He made historical descriptions of places. The presentation was so good that the learners applauded him without the teacher's instruction to do so. The teacher praised him. He told the class that they had to give authentic information when presenting.

#### **4.7.1.1 Lesson observation notes 2: Oral lesson 2 (Assessment)**

**School B**

**Form 4**

**Time: 40 minutes**

The teacher selected two students, a boy and a girl from a class of forty students and told them that they were going to do an oral test; she would test one person at a time.

*Objective:* To assess the learner's ability to communicate clearly and accurately through employing a variety of grammatical structures.

##### *Presentation*

The boy came and the teacher bid him good morning. He told the boy that he and the visitor (the researcher) would like to hear what he would like to say about a topic the teacher would give him. But before giving him the topic he first asked him to tell briefly about himself.

Then he asked the boy what he wanted to be when he left school. He said he would like to be a politician because he wanted to solve the country's and his society's problems. The teacher asked him if he was given a chance to change the career, what else he would like to be. He said a tourist since he liked nature. The teacher then gave him a card (with questions) he thought was suitable for him since he did not get a definite card (Appendix F) that related to his career. The topic was "A career in the police force".

The boy said he had no problem being a policeman. He was given 5 minutes to organize himself. He jotted points he would talk about.

### *Learner's activity*

**Instruction:** Would you become a police officer? Discuss this with the teacher, exploring reasons why you may or may not be interested in such a career.

He gave reasons why he liked the job. He said the job needs faithfulness for one to get promotion. The teacher asked him about dangers a police officer may face. He said a policeman might be attacked by robbers. Being a policeman needs one to be physically fit. One has to exercise patience and he should not simply resign from the force. The student then asked for assistance from the teacher to tell him whether he was fit or not for the job. The teacher told him to think if he liked the job. He further asked if the teacher would help show him where criminals were concentrated, of which the teacher agreed. The teacher asked him if being a policeman could change him for the better or for the worse. He said a person could not change him. He could not be deceived. He could not tolerate being misled.

The teacher asked the score he would grade himself out of 10 if he were the teacher. He said the score was between 5 and 6 marks. The teacher told him that he did a commendable job. He had used good structures. He had a good command of the language. The score was more than 6 marks, it was 8. The bell rang before the second student was tested.

### **2.1 Guidelines on conducting oral tests (from the IGCSE syllabus 2008:148)**

The oral test is conducted when the learners know what is expected of them. This means that the teachers explain to the students in advance how it is conducted and all the aspects of language that are looked for or tested.



When conducting this exercise, the teacher welcomes the learner and explains briefly what is going to happen in the course of the test. As a warm-up activity, the teacher conducts a general conversation by asking the learner a few questions about himself or herself, the school and so on, to give the learner time to get used to the situation, and also to put the student to his or her ease. According to the rules and regulations, this section is expected to take 2-3 minutes.

The teacher then gives an assessment card to the learner. This is a booklet with a number of topics for discussion between the teacher and the learner, together with suggestions for the development of the conversation. The teacher selects the card he / she feels is relevant to the learner's career judging from the conversation in the warm-up section.

Any necessary explanation is given at this point. The learner is given time (approximately 2-3 minutes) to read the assessment card and to prepare a response, but there should be no written notes. The learner is permitted to ask questions at this point.

Either the teacher or the learner may start the conversation. The teacher can ask questions and also make probes to guide the direction of the conversation. This section is expected to take 6-9 minutes and the test should be conducted in English throughout.

The learners are assessed on their ability to:

- employ and control a variety of grammatical structures - awarded 10 marks;
  - demonstrate knowledge of a range of appropriate vocabulary - 10 marks;
  - convey information and express opinions fluently and effectively - 10 marks.
- Total = 30 marks.

The total duration of the oral test should be approximately 10 – 15 minutes.

### **3. Personal observation notes on essay writing from Teacher C2**

The IGSCE English states that the aims of essay writing are to enable learners to carry out simple writing tasks such as completing forms, writing postcards or short letters in an appropriate and accurate form of English in response to a written stimulus, identify, organize and present given material in a particular form, carry out longer writing tasks on a wider range of topics in response to a written stimulus. The lesson was observed at School C taught by Teacher C2

#### **4.7.2 Lesson Observation 3: Essay writing**

**Class: Form 4**

## **Lesson topic: How to cook thin porridge: The recipe genre**

### *Introduction*

The teacher wrote and underlined the title on the chalkboard and asked the learners if they had cooked thin porridge, the whole class chorused to have had.

*Objectives:* Learners should be able to;

- brainstorm, organize and present given points in a chronological order
- describe how thin porridge is prepared, in a chronological order
- observe conventions of paragraphing, grammar, punctuation and spelling.

### *Presentation*

*Step 1.* The learners were asked what they did when preparing thin porridge. The teacher wrote their points on the board in the order they were given by the students. After exhausting the points, the teacher asked the learners to rearrange them in the order in which thin porridge is prepared. The teacher said 'yaa' for a correct response made. These points were written on the other side of the board and the learners were instructed to copy them into the back of their class work exercise books.

### *Learners' activity*

*Step 2.* The learners were instructed to write two paragraphs using the points, describing how thin porridge is cooked, after writing the title. The teacher went around helping and marking the learners' work.

### *Description and analysis of lesson*



1. The teacher involved his learners as a group, by discussing what they did at home when they were preparing thin porridge. He used the heuristic (finding information through questioning) function of language. He asked them questions to find out how thin porridge is cooked, and they in turn answered in full sentences. English was used throughout the lesson and the learners showed competence in it. The lesson was practical as the learners were able to bring their daily experiences to the classroom, something that motivated them greatly as they felt that what they did at school was not foreign. The lesson was learner-centred. The speaking, re-arrangement of points and writing skills were developed. During the interviews the teacher had said he analyzed (brainstorming) topics with learners and taught planning, something he did. He had also said he taught the components, modes of essays and read them examples. But he did not do these things in this particular essay. The teacher said 'yes for a correct response.

2. In my view the lesson was well taught because the teacher did all the stages used for teaching essay writing suggested by Glencoe (2000) (cf. section 4.2.4). The learners were able to communicate their points effectively with the teacher and could also arrange them in their order of sequence, something which is in line with the aims of the IGCSE syllabus which specifies that the learners should be able to identify, organize and present given material in a particular form. The CLT was spelt out here. However, the length was too short. The learners were instructed to write only two paragraphs because a recipe genre does not lend itself to extended writing.

**Teaching strategies:** group discussion, asking questions, brainstorming.

#### **4.7.2.1 Lesson observation 4: Essay writing 4**

**School C**

**Topic: The day I will never forget: the genre approach**

**Time: 80 minutes**

#### ***Introduction***

The teacher wrote the title of the essay on the board. He then told a story to the class about how he lost his cell phone three weeks ago. Then he asked three volunteers from

the class to relate their own stories, but only two learners, a boy and a girl, volunteered. The boy told the class how his father mercilessly beat him after the cattle he was looking after had destroyed a neighbour's maize field. The girl narrated to the class how her mother scolded her for her carelessness. She had left a beef stew on the stove and went to play and forgot to check the pot.

*Objectives:* Learners should be able to:

- identify between narrating a story in a sequential way and using a flashback
- write a narrative essay in a chronological order.

### *Presentation*

The teacher asked the class what the two students had been doing, and there was no response. The teacher asked and said in siSwati '*aniva yini?*' meaning '*do you not understand?*' One learner said '*they were telling us stories*'. This response was written on the board and the word '*telling*' was underlined. Then the teacher informed the class that they would learn about how to write a narrative essay, and this was written on the board. The teacher asked the class what the word 'narrate' meant. A few hands were raised and the teacher called upon a learner to give the answer, to which he answered that '*I think it means to tell a story*'. The teacher praised the boy and informed the class that there were two ways of narrating a story;

- a) by relating the events in the order of happening (sequential order) and,
- b) by beginning with the events that happened at the end (reverse order or flash back).

The learners were asked to state the order in which the three stories were narrated. The learners were able to tell that the teacher's story was in the reverse order, and that the learners' stories were chronological.

### *Class activity*

The learners were then asked to write two paragraphs narrating their own stories in the chronological order and to entitle their work: "The day I will never forget". The time



elapsed before the learners were through with their work. As a result, they were asked to finish it as homework to be submitted the following morning.

## **APPENDIX D**

### **CONSENT LETTERS**

**University of  
KWAZULU-NATAL**

**School of Languages, Literacies and Media  
Faculty of Education, Edgewood Campus**

02 July 2008

Dear Respondent

#### **LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT**

I am a student in the above school at the University of KwaZulu-Natal doing research on the learning of English language at high schools in the country for a Masters Degree. The purpose of the research is to investigate curriculum change from GCE to IGCSE with regard to English language teaching at high schools. The subject emanated from the fact that a number of learners in the country do not get an opportunity to go to the University due to the failure to credit English language.

I have purposively selected you as a potential respondent for the voluntary study that I am conducting. I would like to interview you on your approaches and experiences of teaching English in high schools. I would also like to have an opportunity to observe you teach in the classroom. Also, I would like to examine the instructional materials that you use. This exercise will take approximately seven weeks and I will make about four to five visits. I hope that my research findings will prove useful in the development of the curricula and appropriate teaching approaches for learners of English at schools in Swaziland. An audio tape will be used and the results will be available before the end of the year.

I would appreciate your participation and your permission to use your responses for official research purposes. Any information or personal details gathered in the course of this research about you and the learners are confidential and that neither yours or the learners' names, nor any other identifying information will be used or published. You are free to ask me questions about this project. You are also free to withdraw your participation any time you feel like doing so. If you have any complaints or concerns about this research you can contact the Regional Education Officer (REO) at 5052248 / 9.

If you are willing to participate, please sign the accompanying respondent statement that gives me permission to use your responses. After that we will embark on the interview exercise.



---

E. S. Mvubu

Respondent code Name:.....

**University of  
KWAZULU-NATAL**

**Letter of informed consent to be signed by all participants**

Research Project

Factors affecting the learning of English Language at high schools in Swaziland.

**Researcher:** Ms. E. S. Mvubu ; 7608960

**Supervisor:** Dr. T. Mbatha

**School of Languages, Literacies and Media**

**Faculty of Education, Edgewood Campus**

I \_\_\_\_\_ (full names of participant)  
hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the  
research project, and I freely consent to participating in the research project. I also  
consent that she interviews me and that she observes me teach in class. I understand that I  
am free to withdraw my participation in the research at any time, should I so desire.

I hereby give permission that my responses may be used in the above mentioned research  
project, provided none of my personal details will be made public in the published  
research report.

**Signature:** .....**Date:**.....



**University of  
KWAZULU-NATAL**

**Researcher:** Ms. E. S. Mvubu: 76089650

**Supervisor:** Dr. T. Mbatha

**School of Languages, Literacies and Media  
Faculty of Education, Edgewood Campus**

02 July 2008

Dear Sir / Madam

**Letter for Seeking Permission to Conduct a Research Project in the School**

I am a student in the above school at the University of KwaZulu-Natal doing research on the learning of English language at high schools in the country for a Masters Degree. The purpose of the research is to investigate the curriculum change from GCE to IGCSE in English language at high schools and the approaches used by teachers in teaching English. The subject emanated from the fact that a number of learners in the country do not get an opportunity to go to the University due to the failure to credit English language.

I would like to interview teachers on their approaches and experiences of teaching English in high schools and also to observe them teaching in class. I would also like to have an opportunity to interview the learners. Also, I would like to examine the instructional materials that the teachers use. This exercise will take approximately seven weeks and I will make about four to five visits. I would therefore be very grateful if you would allow me to do so at your school.

I hope that my research findings will prove useful in the development of the curricula and appropriate teaching approaches for learners of English at schools in Swaziland.

Yours faithfully

---

E. S. Mvubu

02 July 2008.

To Whom It May Concern  
University of KwaZulu-Natal  
Private Bag X03  
Ashwood  
3605  
South Africa

Dear Sir / Madam

**Re: Permission to Conduct the Research Project.**

This letter serves to confirm that Ms E. Mvubu has been granted permission to conduct her research in our school .....(name of school) which is focusing on curriculum change from GCE O-Level to the IGCSE curriculum with regard to English language teaching at high schools.

She has also been permitted to interview some teachers on their approaches and practices of teaching English language. We have been assured that all information given will be treated with the strictest confidentiality.

We hope that her research findings will be useful in the development of the curricula and appropriate teaching strategies for learners of English at schools in Swaziland.

Yours faithfully

---

Signature



Regional Education Office  
P. O. Box 190  
Manzini

05 June 2008

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

University of KwaZulu-Natal  
Private Bag X03  
Ashwood  
3605  
South Africa

Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN MANZINI SCHOOLS.**

I hereby write to confirm that Mrs. E. Mvubu has been granted permission to undertake a research in about four of the high schools of the Manzini Region.

I hope that the research findings will be useful in improving the education system in the country.

Thanking you in advance for your co-operation in this regard.

Yours faithfully

For REO.

**APPENDIX E**  
**IGCSE SYLLABUS**

<b>ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE 0510</b> <b>IGCSE</b> <b>FOR EXAMINATION IN 2008</b>
--

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

**University of Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) in the UK and USA**

University of Cambridge International Examinations accepts entries in the UK and USA only from students registered on courses on CIE registered centres.

UK and USA private candidates are not eligible to enter CIE examinations unless they are repatriating from outside the UK / USA and are part way through a course leading to a CIE examination. In that case a letter of support from the Principal of the school which they had attended is required. Other UK / USA private candidates should not embark on courses leading to a CIE examination.

This regulation applies only to entry by private candidates in the UK / USA. Entry by private candidates through Centres in the other countries is not affected.

Further details are available from Customer Services at University Of Cambridge International Examinations.

**Exclusions**

This syllabus must not be offered in the same session with the following syllabus:  
0500 First Language English

**You can find syllabuses and information about CIE teacher training events on the CIE Website ([www.cie.org.uk](http://www.cie.org.uk)).**



## ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Syllabus code: 0510

### CONTENTS

---

	<i>Page</i>
I INTRODUCTION	137
II AIMS	137
III ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES	138
IV ASSESSMENT: SCHEME OF ASSESSMENT SUMMARY AND DESCRIPTION OF COMPONENT	141
V CURRICULUM CONTENT	152
VI NOTES ON CONDUCTING ORAL TESTS (0510/5)	153
VII GRADES DESCRIPTIONS	159

### NOTE

---

Copies of syllabuses, past papers and Examiners' reports are available on CD-ROM and can be ordered using the Publications Catalogue, which is available at [www.cie.org.uk](http://www.cie.org.uk) under 'Qualifications and Diplomas' – 'Order Publications'.

## **I INTRODUCTION**

International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) syllabuses are designed as two year courses for examination at age 16-plus.

All IGCSE syllabuses follow a general pattern. The main sections are:

- Aims
- Assessment Objectives
- Assessment
- Curriculum Content.

The IGCSE subjects have been categorized into groups, subjects within each group having similar Aims and assessment Objectives.

English as a Second Language (E2L) falls into Group 1, languages, of the international Certificate of Education (ICE) subjects together with First Languages, other foreign languages, and Latin.

It is presumed that most candidates for English as a Second Language will have a primarily instrumental motivation – that is they will be studying the language in order to promote their education or employment prospects. The rationale for English as a second language is based on the widespread use of English as a medium of instruction and as the language of commerce or entertainment. The subject matter of the Examination material will reflect this international perspective. However, it will strive to be ‘culture-fair’ rather than ‘culture-free’ and will use authentic or ‘semi-authentic’ material from a range of sources.

Candidates will be expected to understand a wider range of social registers and styles than they can produce and to communicate appropriately.

The topics selected will relate to the interests and needs of the candidates in using English as a Second Language, e.g., education, the world of work, current affairs, health and welfare, travel, school affairs.

The kinds of settings to be used will be the ones that candidates are likely to encounter, e.g. in dealings with official and semi-official bodies, in studying for academic or occupational purposes, in places of work or in using public services.

## **II AIMS**

The syllabus assesses students’ ability to use English as a medium of practical communication, and is aimed at students for whom English is not a first language/mother tongue but for whom it is a *lingua franca* or language of study.

The aims set out below describe the general educational purposes of a course in English as a Second Language IGCSE examination, and are the same for all students. They are not listed in order of priority.

The aims are to:

1. develop the ability to use English effectively for the purpose of practical communication
2. form a sound base for the skills required for further study or employment using English as the medium
3. develop an awareness of the nature of language and language-learning skills, along with skills of a more general application
4. promote students’ personal development.

### III ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

This syllabus assesses the receptive skills of Reading and Listening, and the productive skills of Writing and speaking.

Assessment Objectives (AOs) have been grouped under skill headings, but it is recognized that these are interrelated.

#### READING

Candidates will be assessed on their ability to:

- R1 understand and respond to information presented in a variety of forms
- R2 select and organize material relevant to specific purposes
- R3 recognize, understand and distinguish between facts, ideas and opinions
- R4 infer information from texts (Extended Tier only)

#### WRITING

Candidates will be assessed on their ability to:

- W1 communicate clearly, accurately and appropriately
- W2 convey information and express opinions effectively
- W3 employ and control a variety of grammatical structures
- W4 demonstrate knowledge and understating of a range of appropriate vocabulary
- W5 observe conventions of paragraphing, punctuation and spelling
- W6 employ appropriate register/style

#### LISTENING

Candidates will be assessed on clearly on their ability to:

- L1 understand and respond to information presented in a variety of forms
- L2 recognize, understand and distinguish between facts, ideas and opinions
- L3 select and organize material relevant to specific purposes
- L4 infer information from texts (Extended tier only)

#### SPEAKING

Candidates will be assessed on their ability to:

- S1 communicate clearly, accurately and appropriately
- S2 convey information and express opinions effectively
- S3 employ and control a variety of grammatical structures
- S4 demonstrate knowledge of a range of appropriate vocabulary
- S5 engage in and influence the direction of conversation
- S6 employ suitable pronunciation and stress patterns

#### SPECIFICATION GRIDS

##### PAPER 1 (core) and 2 (extended): READING AND WRITING

The overall balance of assessment of reading: writing is 50:50 in both Core and Extended tiers.



Exercise ..... objectives	Ex 1	Ex2	Ex3	Ex4	Ex5	Ex6	Ex7
R1					Paper 2 only)		
R2					(paper 2 only)		
R3					(paper 2 only)		
R4		(paper 2 only)	(paper 2 only)				
W1							
W2							
W3							
W4							
W5							
W6							

**Paper 3 (Core) and 4 (Extended): LISTENING**

<i>Objective</i>	<i>Questions 1-6</i>	<i>Question 7</i>	<i>Question 8</i>	<i>Question 9</i>	<i>Question 10</i>
<b>L1</b>					
<b>L2</b>					
<b>L3</b>					
<b>L4</b>				<b>(paper 4 only)</b>	<b>(Paper 4 only)</b>

**COMPONENTS 5 (Speaking) and (Speaking Coursework)**

Objective	
S1	
S2	
S3	
S4	
S5	
S6	

## IV ASSESSMENT

### SCHEME OF ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

Candidates will take:

	Duration of Examination	Weighting
Paper 1 Reading and Writing (Core)	<b>1 hour 30 minutes</b>	<b>70%</b>

Or

PAPER 2 Reading and Writing (Extended)	<b>2 hours</b>	<b>70%</b>
---	----------------	------------

AND EITHER:

PAPER 3 Listening (Core)	<b>Approx. 30-40 mins</b>	<b>30%</b>
-----------------------------	---------------------------	------------

Or

PAPER 4 Listening (Extended)	<b>Approx.45 mins</b>	<b>30%</b>
---------------------------------	-----------------------	------------

Candidates who take the Core tier are eligible for the award of grades C to G. Candidates who take the Extended tier are eligible for the award of Grades A\* to E.

### Oral communication

**Candidates will normally, in addition, offer Component 5 or Component 6.** Certain categories of centre are excluded from the requirement. Marks for the Oral component do not contribute to the overall grade candidates receive for the written components. Instead, where candidates perform to an appropriate standard, certificates record separately the achievement of grades 1 (high) to 5 (low) for Speaking.

Component 5 Oral	Approximately 10-12 minutes	n/a
---------------------	-----------------------------	-----

Or

Component 6 Oral (Coursework-assessment)	n/a	n/a
---	-----	-----



## DESCRIPTION OF COMPONENTS

### PAPER 1: Reading & Writing (Core Tier)

#### General matters

Total marks: 56

Assessment of Reading and writing skills is equally weighted within the component.

Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes.

For all parts of this component, candidates write their answers in spaces provided in a question paper booklet.

Dictionaries may not be used.

The question paper is divided into 7 exercises 4 and 5 are linked. The exercises have Different total mark allocations and some are broken down into a series of sub-questions. Candidates should attempt all exercises.

#### Overview of Exercise on paper1

		Marks for reading objectives	Marks for writing objectives	Total average marks
Exercise 1	Reading (1)	6	.....	6
Exercise 2	Reading (2)	10	.....	10
Exercise 3	Information Transfer	6	4	10
Exercise 4	Note-marking	6	.....	6
Exercise 5 (linked to exercise 4)	Summary	....	4	4
Exercise 6	Writing (1)	....	10	10
Exercise 7	Writing (2)		10	10
				TOTAL 66

## Description of Exercises on Paper 1

Exercise 1 (course tier)	
Assessment Objective	R1
Task	Reading Exercise. Candidates will be required to answer a series of questions testing skim-/gist-reading skills, requiring short (single word/phrase) answers Based on a short text printed in the question paper.  Text will be one of the following types: advertisement, brochure, leaflet, guide Report, manual, instructions.
Total marks	6

Exercise 2 (Core tier)	
assessment objective	R 1
task	Reading Exercise. Candidates will be required to answer a series of questions testing more detailed comprehension, based on a text printed in the question paper.  text will take the form of a report/newspaper/magazine article, which Incorporates a graphical element.
Total marks	10

Exercise 3 (Core tier)	
Assessment Objectives	R1,R2,W1,W4
Task	information transfer. Candidates will be required to complete a form/notes template On the basis of information provided on the question paper.
Total marks	10

Exercise 4 (Core Tier)	
Assessment Objectives	R1,R2,R3
Task	Note-making. Candidates will be required to make brief notes (under a supplied Heading or headings) relating to a text printed in the question paper.
Total marks	6

<b>Exercise 5 (Core tier)</b> (linked with Exercise 4)	
Assessment objectives	W1,W2,W3,W5
task	Summary writing. Candidates will be required to write a paragraph-length summary about an aspect or aspects of the passage. They will make use of the notes they made in Exercise 4.
Total marks	4

<b>Exercise 6 (Core tier)</b>	
Assessment objectives	W1,W2,W3,W4,W5
task	Candidates will be required to write approximately 100-150 words of continuous prose, in response to a short stimulus (which may take the form of pictures) and/or short prompts printed on the paper. A purpose, format and audience for the writing will be specified.
Total marks	10

<b>Exercise 7 (Core tier)</b>	
Assessment Objectives	W1,W2,W3,W4,W5
Task	<p>Candidates will be required to write approximately 100-150 words of continuous Prose, in response to a short stimulus (which may take the form of pictures) and/or Short prompts printed on the paper. A purpose, format and audience for the writing Will be specified.</p> <p>Note: the task for Exercise 6 and 7 will be distinguished by requiring different Purpose/formats/ audiences/register. For example, Exercise 6 might be writing An informal letter to a friend describing events during a holiday, Exercise 7 a Formal article for a school newspaper arguing whether or not sports should be Made compulsory.</p>
Total mark	10



<b>PAPER 2: Reading &amp; Writing</b>
<b>(Extended Tier)</b>

### *General matters*

Total marks: 84

Assessment of Reading and Writing skills is equally weighted within the component.

Duration: 2 hours.

For all parts of this component, candidates write their answers in spaces provided in question paper booklet.

Dictionaries may not be used.

The question paper is divided into 7 exercises. The exercises have different total mark allocations, and some are broken down into a series of sub-questions. Candidates should attempt all exercises.

### Overview of Exercises on Paper 2

		Marks for reading objectives	Marks for writing objectives	Total available marks
Exercise 1	Reading (1)	8	–	8
Exercise 2	Reading (2)	14	–	14
Exercise 3	Information Transfer	6	2	8
Exercise 4	Note-making	8	–	8
Exercise 5	Summary	6	4	10
Exercise 6	Writing (1)	–	18	18
Exercise 7	Writing (2)		18	18
				Total 84

## Description of Exercises on Paper 2

Exercise 1 (Extended tier)	
Assessment Objective	R1
Task	Reading Exercise. Candidates will be required to answer a series of questions Testing skim-/gist-reading skills, requiring short (single word/phrase) answers based on a short text printed in the question paper.  Text will be one of the following types: advertisement, brochure, leaflet, guide Report, manual, instructions.
Total marks	8

Exercise 2 (Extended tier)	
assessment objective	R 1,R4
task	Reading Exercise. Candidates will be required to answer a series of questions testing more detailed comprehension, based on a text printed in the question paper.  Text will take the form of a report/newspaper/magazine article, which Incorporates a graphical element.
Total marks	14

Exercise 3 (Extended tier)	
Assessment Objectives	R1,R2,R4,W1,W5
Task	Information transfer. Candidates will be required to complete a form/notes template On the basis of information provided on the question paper.
Total marks	8

Exercise 4 (Extended tier)	
Assessment Objectives	R1,R2,R3
Task	Note-making. Candidates will be required to make brief notes (under a supplied Heading or headings) relating to a text printed in the question paper.
Total marks	8

<b>Exercise 5 (Extended tier)</b> (linked with Exercise 4)	
Assessment objectives	R1,R2,R3,W1,W2,W3,W4,W5
task	Summary writing. Candidates will be required to write a paragraph-length summary about an aspect or aspects of the passage. They will make use of the notes they made in Exercise 4.
Total marks	10

<b>Exercise 6 (Extended tier)</b>	
Assessment objectives	W1,W2,W3,W4,W5,W6
task	Candidates will be required to write approximately 150-200 words of continuous prose, in response to a short stimulus (which may take the form of pictures) and/or short prompts printed on the paper. A purpose, format and audience for the writing will be specified.
Total marks	18

<b>Exercise 7 (Extended tier)</b>	
Assessment Objectives	W1,W2,W3,W4,W5,W6
Task	<p>Candidates will be required to write approximately 150-200 words of continuous Prose, in response to a short stimulus (which may take the form of pictures) and/or Short prompts printed on the paper. A purpose, format and audience for the writing will be specified.</p> <p>Note: the task for Exercise 6 and 7 will be distinguished by requiring different Purpose/formats/ audiences/register. For example, Exercise 6 might be writing An informal letter to a friend describing events during a holiday, Exercise 7 a Formal article for a school newspaper arguing whether or not sports should be Made compulsory.</p>
Total mark	18



### **Paper 3: Listening (Core Tier)**

General matters

Total marks:30

Duration: approx.30-40 minutes

For all parts of this component, candidates write their answers in the spaces provided in a question paper booklet. Each question tests listening comprehension of recorded (e.g. dialogues, announcements, talks) on a compact disc (CD) played in the examination room. Each text is heard twice on the CD.

The CD is controlled by the invigilator of the examination, not the candidate(s). For details about room, equipment, acoustics, checking the CDs in advance and guidance on acoustics, teachers/invigilators should consult the relevant sections of the handbook for Centres about the conduct of listening tests.

Dictionaries may not be used.

Candidates should attempt all questions.

#### **Overview of Paper 3**

##### **Questions 1 to 6-7marks**

Assessment Objectives: L1, L2, L3

Six scenarios based on a series of short spoken texts (e.g. travel announcement, answerphone message, brief dialogue), requiring short answers.

Question 7 and 8-12marks

Assessment Objectives: L1, L2, L3

Two exercises testing listening for understanding based on longer spoken texts (e.g. conversation, interview, monologue, talk) requiring completion of gaps on forms/charts printed in the question paper.

Question 9 and 10-11marks

Assessment Objectives: L1, L2, L3

Two exercises based on longer spoken texts (e.g. conversation, interview, monologue, talk).  
Question will have a true/false or box-ticking format.

## **Paper 4: Listening (Extended Tier)**

### **General matters**

Total marks:36

Duration: approx.45 minutes

For all parts of this component, candidates write their answers in the spaces provided in a question paper booklet. Each question tests listening comprehension of recorded (e.g. dialogues, announcements, talks) on a compact disc (CD) played in the examination room. Each text is heard twice on the CD.

The CD is controlled by the invigilator of the examination, not the candidate(s). For details about room, equipment, acoustics, checking the CDs in advance and guidance on acoustics, teachers/invigilators should consult the relevant sections of the handbook for Centres about the conduct of listening tests.

Dictionaries may not be used.

Candidates should attempt all questions.

### **Overview of Paper 4**

#### **Questions 1 to 6-8marks**

Assessment Objectives: L1, L2, L3

Six scenarios based on a series of short spoken texts (e.g. travel announcement, answerphone message, brief dialogue), requiring short answers.

#### **Question 7 and 8-16marks**

Assessment Objectives: L1, L2, L3, L4

Two exercises testing listening for understanding based on longer spoken texts (e.g. conversation, interview, monologue, talk) requiring completion of gaps on forms/charts printed in the question paper.

#### **Question 9 and 10-12marks**

Assessment Objectives: L1, L2, L3, L4

Two exercises based on longer spoken texts (e.g. conversation, interview, monologue, talk), requiring short or sentence-length answers.

## COMPONENT 5: Oral

Oral tests are conducted during a period before the main examination session (see relevant session's timetable). Materials for the test are dispatched to Centres before this period, and once these have been opened the tests must be conducted as soon as possible, leaving sufficient time to ensure that material for external moderation is received by the advertised deadline.

At least five oral assessment cards will be issued, with an accompanying set of teacher's notes. Each card will introduce a topic for discussion between the teacher/examiner and the candidate, together with suggestions for the development of the conversation.

Each candidate will be examined using one Oral Assessment Card selected by the teacher/examiner from the range provided.

The total duration of the oral test should be approximately 10 – 12 minutes, made up of:

- non-assessed 'warm up' conversation (approximately 2 – 3 minutes)
- time for the candidate to read the Assessment Card and to prepare a response (no written notes are permitted) (approximately 2 – 3 minutes)
- assessed conversation (6 – 9 minutes).

Internal assessment will be conducted by a teacher / examiner at the Centre using the Oral Assessment Criteria and grid (*see the Notes on Conducting the Oral Tests section later in this booklet*).

The teacher / examiner will usually be someone from the Centre's English Language department, but could be someone local outside from the Centre. In either case, the teacher / examiner must have been accredited by CIE to conduct oral tests, usually through successful completion of a Distance Training Pack (DTP), available FROM CIE Publications. In some cases, accreditation may be granted on the basis of prior experience of conducting similar tests; for this, permission should be sought in the first instance by writing to CIE enclosing a CV detailing relevance experience.

The teacher / examiner will conduct and internally assess the tests, and will submit a record sample of candidates' performance for external moderation by CIE. Centres will receive a brief report on the outcome of moderation.

**Full instructions on the moderation of the oral will be found in the Teachers / Examiner's Notes accompanying the Oral Test cards. A summary is provided later in the booklet, and should be read in conjunction with general advice on submission of samples for moderation in the CIE Handbook for Centres.**



<b>COMPONENT 6: Oral Coursework [alternative to component 5]</b>
--

Centres will devise their own oral tasks. These may be carried out at any time during the year preceding the written examination to suit the individual situations of Centres, but a taped sample and the relevant documentation must be submitted to CIE by the advertised deadline (which is the same as that for paper 6).

Each student will be assessed on **three** oral tasks, which will be internally assessed using the Oral Assessment Criteria grid (*see the Notes on Conducting the Oral Tests section below*).

Examples of suitable tasks include: interviews; telephone conversations; paired or group discussions; debates. Centres are free to devise other appropriate tasks which will help candidates demonstrate the skills outlined in the Assessment Criteria grid. Further guidance on suitable types of task is given in the Distance Training Pack obtainable from CIE Publications.

The teacher / examiner for the tests will usually be someone from the Centre's English Language department, but could be someone local from outside the Centre. In either case, the teacher / examiner must have been accredited by CIE to conduct oral tests, usually through successful completion of a Distance Training Pack (DTP), available from CIE Publications. In some cases, accreditation may be granted on the basis of prior experience of conducting similar tests; for this, permission should be sought in the first instance by writing to CIE enclosing a CV detailing a relevant experience.

The teacher / examiner will conduct and internally assess the tests, and will submit a recorded sample of candidate performances for external moderation by CIE. Centres will receive a brief report on the outcome of moderation. Internal assessment and submission of samples for moderation must be conducted in accordance with the instructions in the *CIE Handbook for Centres*.

## V CURRICULUM CONTENT

Students may follow the Core curriculum only or the External curriculum which includes both the Core and the Supplement. Students aiming for grades A to C must follow the Extended curriculum.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVE	CORE	SUPPLEMENT
	<i>All candidates should be able to:</i>	<i>In addition to what is required for the Core, students taking Extended level papers should be able to:</i>
<b>1. Reading</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- demonstrate the ability to recognize public notice and signs (including timetables and</li> <li>- demonstrate the ability to extract relevant specific information from forms, letters, brochures and examples of imaginative writing considered likely to be within the experience of and reflecting the interests of young people from varied cultural backgrounds</li> <li>- scan for particular information, organize the relevant information and present it in a logical manner / given format</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- demonstrate the ability to extract relevant information from a wider range of texts, including magazines and newspapers likely to be read by young people</li> <li>- demonstrate the ability to identify the important points or themes within an extended piece of writing</li> <li>- draw conclusions from and see relations within an extended text</li> </ul>
<b>2. Writing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- carry out simple writing tasks, such as completing forms, writing postcards or short letters in an appropriate and accurate form of English in response to a written stimulus</li> <li>-demonstrate the ability to describe, report, give personal information</li> <li>-identify, organize and present given material in a particular form.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- carry out longer writing tasks on a wider range of topics in response to a written stimulus</li> </ul>
<b>3. Listening</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-demonstrate understanding of specific details, information and semiformal announcements, e.g. news weather, travel, and in interviews, dialogues and telephone conversation</li> <li>-demonstrate general comprehension of the speakers intentions where appropriate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-identify the important points or themes of the material they hear, including attitudes</li> <li>-draw conclusions from and identify the relationships between ideas within the material they hear</li> <li>-show awareness of major variations in register</li> <li>-take notes from material they have heard</li> </ul>
<b>4. Speaking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-demonstrate competence in a range of speech Activities, e.g. respond to questions on topics Within a defined range such as past and present ideas. Schooling, future plans, current affairs</li> <li>-conduct a sustained conversation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-demonstrate greater flexibility in dealing with new, topic</li> <li>-show a sense of audience</li> </ul>



## **VI NOTES ON CONDUCTING ORAL TESTS (0510/50)**

### **GENERAL**

- (i) The oral tests take place in the period before the main examination session as notified on the timetable. Each Centre decides on a convenient period within these dates for its oral tests. It is recommended that the tests are conducted within one week to allow sufficient time for a single Examiner to conduct all of the tests. (iv) below.
- (ii) Centres must ensure well in advance of the tests that a suitably quiet room is available and that recordings equipment is in good order.
- (iii) Centres must adhere to dates for completion of the oral tests and for the receipt of mark sheets and recordings to allow sufficient time for external moderation. It is vital that material does not arrive late.
- (iv) For Centres with 30 or fewer candidates, there should normally be just one examiner. Each centre will select its own examiner. This is normally a teacher within the English language department, but could be someone local from outside the centre. A group of neighboring Centres might choose the same teacher to conduct all their tests: in such a case each centre is still responsible for submitting properly completed forms and samples.

Centres with more than 30 candidates may use more than one Examiner (applying the ratio of an additional Examiner for each 30 candidates). If using more than one Examiner, internal moderation must be carried out by the Centre so that a common standard is applied to all candidates.

- (v) Centres entering candidates for the examination will receive a set of Oral Test Cards, notes about administration and forms for entering the marks. Teachers ? Examiners responsible for conducting the oral tests should familiarize themselves with these materials before the tests are held. The Oral Test Cards must remain confidential and must be kept in a secure place by the Centre until end of the examination period.
- (vi) Each Centre must send to CIE the following: (a) tape-recorded sample on cassette(s) or CDs; (b) completed MS1 Forms; (c) completed Oral Examination Summary Form(s). Please be careful to adhere to instructions given on the forms about their completion and return.

#### **(a) Tape-recorded sample**

Each Centre must provide a sample of oral tests, to be recorded on cassette(s) or CDs. The size of the sample required is given in the instructions on the back of the Oral Examination Summary Form.

Please ensure that you do not send the recordings of all the candidates (unless there are 10 or fewer) ideally the sample should be transferred to one or two cassettes or CDs.

The teacher responsible for internal standardization at the Centre must ensure that the sample covers the whole mark range of the candidates at the Centre, with marks spaced as evenly as possible from the top mark to the lowest mark. Where there is more than one teacher involved, the sample must include in equal number candidates tested by all teachers.

For instructions on recording the samples see section (xv) below. Cassettes / CDs must be clearly labelled with details of the candidates whose interviews have been recorded.

#### **(b) Form MS 1**

This is a computer-printed mark sheet which is completed by transferring the mark for each candidate from the Total Mark column on the Oral Examination Summary Form.



Please be careful to check all mark additions. The Oral Examination Summary Form must show the breakdown of marks for all the candidates, not just those selected for the sample. Please put an asterisk (\*) against the names of candidates whose interviews have been recorded on the cassette/DC.

- (vii) The sample cassette(s) / CDs along with completed MS1 and Oral Examination Summary Form should be returned as specified as soon as the oral tests have been completed at the Centre. Please do not wait until the end of the assessment period before sending them.

## CONDUCTING ORAL TESTS

(viii) The oral tests should proceed along the following lines:

(A) Start the recording. Give the candidate's name and number. Welcome the candidate(s) and explain briefly what is going to happen in the course of the test.

(B) Warm up section: conduct a general conversation by asking the candidate(s) a few questions about herself / himself, the school, etc. to give candidate(s) time to get used to the examination situation. The purpose of this section of the test is to put candidates at their ease. As a guide, about 2-3 minutes should be spent on this section.

(C) Hand the Oral Assessment Card to the candidate. This must take place AFTER the warm up has taken place. Any necessary explanation should be given at this point, followed by a short preparation period (approximately 2-3 minutes), when the candidate is at liberty to ask questions. The candidate may not make notes during this period. The recorder should be paused by the Examiner while the candidate considers the Topic Card. The Examiner should indicate this by saying the 'the tape / CD will now be paused' so that the External Moderator knows that the candidate is being given time to study the card.

(D) Main part of the test: conversation based on the Oral Assessment Card. Either the Examiner or the candidate may start the conversation. This section of the test should last approximately 6-9 minutes.

**The total duration of the oral test, from the beginning of (B) to the end of (D), should be approximately 10-12 minutes.**

**Note that only (D) is to be assessed.**

**The oral test should be conducted in English throughout.**

- (ix) Examination conditions must prevail in the area where the oral tests take place. Adequate supervision must be provided to ensure that candidates leaving the room for the oral tests do not communicate with those waiting to enter.
- (x) No other person should be present during the oral test, with the exception of another Teacher / Examiner, Moderator or representative of CIE.
- (xii) Candidates may be examined singly or in pairs.

If paired examining is used, then please note the following:

- It is important for the External Moderator to know which candidate is speaking at any one time. This should be achieved by pairing two candidates whose voices are clearly dissimilar. Avoid pairing candidates with the same first names.
- A conversation must be maintained. Do not let the candidates enter into an informal 'chat' at any time. In this respect, it may be best not to pair good friends.
- Do not let a candidate ask a series of questions. The conversation must be equal (in terms of contribution) and at no time should one candidate proceed to interview the other.
- The Examiner must maintain a stronger presence in pair-examining. It is not appropriate for the Examiner needs to direct / control / monitor the conversation more than when examining candidates singly. It may be that the Examiner needs to intervene more often to ensure appropriate and fair discussion, and to maintain the thread / topic.
- It is best not to pair a strong candidate with a weak one. Try to pair candidates of roughly equal ability.

- Think again if you are examining in pairs simply to speed up the process of completing the Oral Tests. Please recognize that the candidates should be given their best chance of success which might not occur when talking in a pair with an unsuitable partner.
  - Do not give different Topic Cards to each candidate. The conversation must be a three-way conversation based on a single topic.
- (xii) Candidates are not allowed to bring any notes into the examination room, nor are they allowed to consult dictionaries.
- (xiii) A range of Oral Assessment cards is provided, and the Examiner (not the candidate) chooses the card to be used for each candidate. As wide a variety as possible of the cards should be used during the oral tests at the Centre. In order that candidates are given every chance to do themselves justice, the Assessment Card should be selected with care. The warm-up may give the Examiner an indication of the best card to select. **Remember that the test is on of spoken language not subject knowledge: if it becomes apparent that the candidate finds the topic difficult or inappropriate, it is perfectly permissible to move into more productive areas. There is no need to stick rigidly to the Examiner prompts in such cases.**
- (xiv) The Examiner should be positioned so that s/he is facing the candidate, with a table or desk in between. Candidates should not be able to see notes made on Oral Examination Summary Forms or similar paperwork.

## RECORDING THE SAMPLE

- (XV) Centres must ensure that their recording equipment is in good working order. The recorder and the cassette(s) / CDs should be tested on site, some time before the actual oral tests, ideally with one of the candidates. The warm-up section of the test also provides an opportunity to check audibility. Where possible it is advisable to use a recorder with external microphones so that separate microphones can be used for candidates and Examiner. If only one microphone is used it should be placed facing the candidate.

It is important to check audibility levels before recording begins; adjustments to the volume control during an examination should normally be avoided. Care should be taken to avoid extraneous noise and long gaps. Checks should be made throughout the oral testing session to ensure that voices are clearly audible.

With the exception of a permitted pause between the warm-up and the main part of the test, once the oral test has begun the recording should continue without interruption.

For Centres using cassette tapes, the recording must begin at the start of Side 1, and both sides of the cassette should be used before beginning a new cassette. A candidate's Oral Test should not be started on one side and continue over to the second side. At the end of examining on each side of a cassette the Examiner should state "No further recordings on this side".

Each Cassette / CD should begin with a clear statement by the Examiner as follows:

"Centre Number:	[e.g.]	AZ 999
Centre Name:	[e.g.]	Abcxyz Academy
Examination:	0510	English as a Second Language
Examiner Name:	[e.g.]	Ms Z. Abced
Date:	[e.g.]	1 October 2008"

Each candidate recorded on the sample should be clearly indicated by the teacher as follows:

"Candidate Number	[e.g.]	1234
Candidate Name	[e.g.]	Abdi Zachariah"



At the end of the sample the Examiner should state clearly “End of Sample”.

Before the cassette / CD is dispatched, spot checks must be made to ensure that every candidate is clearly audible. Cassettes should be rewound to the start of Side 1. The contents of each Cassette / CD must be clearly labeled.

# **ORAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA GRID (0510 / 5 and 0510 / 6)**

**Give a mark out of 10 for each category (structure, vocabulary, development and fluency), and then add these marks to give an overall total out of 30.**

Mark	Structure	Vocabulary	Development and Fluency
9-10	The candidate demonstrates ability to use a variety of structures accurately and consistently. The candidate is confidently in control of the structure used.	The candidate shows enough command of vocabulary to respond with precision. Shades of meaning are achieved and some sophisticated ideas are communicated.	The candidate shows sustained ability to maintain a conversation and to contribute to some length. The candidate can respond to change in direction of the conversation.  Pronunciation and intonation is clear
7-8	Structure will be generally sound, but will not be used entirely or with consistent confidence. There will be some errors in attempting to use more complex sentences.	The candidate has a sufficient range of vocabulary to convey information and ideas with competence. Errors are noticeable, however, when attempting to use more complex and precise vocabulary.	The candidate responds relevantly and at length which makes frequent prompting unnecessary, resulting in a competent conversation.  Pronunciation and intonation is generally clear.
5-6	The candidate uses simple structures securely but has difficulty venturing beyond them.	Vocabulary conveys simple ideas and information clearly, though it is not wide or varied. There may be hesitation, repetition and searching for words.	The candidate makes an attempt to respond to questions and prompts. Effort will need to be made to develop the conversation; only partial success will be achieved. There is some lack of clarity of pronunciation and intonation, but it is unlikely to impede communication.
3-4	Structures will generally be very simple, limited and with errors, which will restrict communication.	Vocabulary will generally be inadequate to convey simple ideas.	Responses tend to be brief and widely spaced. The candidate has to be encouraged to go beyond short responses and struggles to develop a conversation. Pronunciation and intonation causes some communication difficulty.
1-2	Attempts at structured sentences will rarely achieve communication. However, some attempt at a response will be made during the discussion.	Use of simple words is the norm and there will be long gaps.	Responses are so brief that little is communicated. The candidate hardly engages in a conversation. Pronunciation and intonation patterns cause difficulty for even the most sympathetic listener.
0	Completely limited / no attempt at a response.	Completely limited / no attempt at a response.	Completely limited / no attempt at a response.

## V11 GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

---

Grade descriptions are provided to give a general indication of standards of achievement likely to have been shown by candidates awarded particular grades. The grade awarded will depend in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the assessment objectives overall, and may conceal weakness in one aspect of the examination that is balanced by above-average performance on some other.

At **Grade A** the candidate has demonstrated expertise by:

- understanding and communicating arguments, ideas and information both at a straightforward and a more complex level;
- structuring work overall so that the reader can follow the argument from the beginning to the end;
- selecting material from texts and developing it in relationship to the question, sufficient to show some independence of thought;
- describing and reflecting upon experience and expressing effectively what is felt and imagined;
- recognizing and explaining underlying meaning and the writer's attitude to the subject matter;
- varying style straightforwardly in different types of writing and giving evidence of a good range of language;
- spelling and punctuating accurately, with few, if any, mistakes;
- using well constructed paragraphs and sentences (of average complexity) and obeying standard grammatical conventions;
- speaking clearly and confidently in response to other speakers and occasionally taking the initiative;

At **Grade C** the candidate has demonstrated competence by:

- understanding the communicating arguments, ideas and information at a straightforward level;
- ensuring that all work has a clear beginning, middle and ending, and that ideas generally flow on from one another;
- selecting material from texts in answer to questions and providing straightforward explanations and developments to show relevance;
- recognizing more obvious meaning and attitudes;
- writing with some knowledge of style and the possibility of varying it according to different types of writing, using a range of language adequate to all the tasks set;
- spelling and punctuating with accuracy so that communication is not impaired;
- using adequate paragraphing and some variety of sentence construction;
- speaking clearly with some confidence to the directions of other speakers; showing a readiness to listen to others and to respond appropriately.

At **Grade E** the candidate has demonstrated a basic level competence by:

- understanding and communicating information at basic level;
- ensuring that all work has a basic sequence;
- selecting material from texts in answer to questions and providing basic explanations;
- recognizing straightforward meanings and attitudes;
- writing at least in single sentences with the possibility of sentence variety according to different types of writing; using language adequate to some of the tasks set;
- spelling and punctuating so that weaknesses do not seriously impair communication;
- Using occasional paragraphing and variety of sentence construction, with some regard to everyday grammatical conventions;



- Speaking with some confidence, but usually in response to the directions of other speakers; showing a readiness to listen to others and respond.

## APPENDIX F

### LEARNING MATERIALS

#### Oral lesson 2 (Assessment)

#### D     A career in the police force

Would you become a police officer?

Discuss this with the Examiner, exploring reasons why you may or may not be interested in such a career.

You may wish to consider such things as:

- the qualities a person needs to do such a job
- whether you feel you could do the job
- the difficulties and dangers police officers may face
- some of the more pleasant aspects about police work
- ways that being a police officer might change a person after many years in the job.

You are free to consider any other ideas of your own.

You are not allowed to make any written notes.

---

Permission to produce items where third-party owned material protected by copyright is included has been sought and cleared where possible. Every reasonable effort has been made by the publisher (UCLES) to trace copyright holders, but if any items requiring clearance has unwittingly been included, the publisher will be pleased to make amends at the earliest possible opportunity.

University of Cambridge International Examinations is part of the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES), which is itself a department of the University of Cambridge.