

Challenges faced by Tshivenda-speaking teachers when instructing
Grade 4 learners in English.

by

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Declaration of authorship

I, Ipfani Nthulana, hereby declare that this dissertation submitted for the degree of Masters in Education in the Department of Humanities Education at the University of Pretoria is my own work and has not been previously submitted in any form whatsoever, by myself or anyone else, to this university or any other educational institution for any degree or examination purposes.

I therefore acknowledge all sources used in this work.

Signed

Date.....

Abstract

The South African Constitution promotes multilingualism while acknowledging the maintenance of home languages. Meanwhile the language-in-education policy (Department of National Education, 1994) declares that every learner has the right to receive education in the language that he/she understands best where this is practicable. According to programme requirements of the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4–6), two official languages must be selected by a learner of which one should be the home language and the other one used as a first additional language. One of these languages will serve as the language of learning (Department of Basic Education: Programme and Promotion Requirements, 2011) This study outlined the challenges that Grade 4 teachers in the monolingual rural area of Niani face when teaching through English. This case study was designed as a qualitative research underpinned by Krashen's theory of second language acquisition (1982), which underlines the importance of interaction.

The literature reviewed showed how teachers developed strategies to cope when a second language is used as the medium of instruction in monolingual societies. The participants of the study include six Grade 4 teachers who are mother tongue speakers of Tshivenda and two curriculum advisors of Niani in Limpopo province. Data were collected via classroom observations and interviews in order to establish the challenges teachers face when they switch from using Tshivenda to English once the learners move to Grade 4 and how these teachers cope. The findings indicate that teachers in rural monolingual communities in Niani find it difficult to meet the curriculum demands in terms of the medium of instruction. Grade 3 learners move to Grade 4 with little English vocabulary and this makes teaching problematic. Teachers spend most of their time translating the lessons into Tshivenda, a strategy which further limits both teachers' and learners' English exposure. Teachers too were found not to be sufficiently proficient in English. The significance of the study relates to the educational issues of rural schools that are ignored by officialdom, including the fact that teachers are not adequately prepared to teach in English. In addition, learners transitioning to the medium of English are not sufficiently supported. Hence, policies need revision and interventions to address linguistic shortcomings of teachers and learners ought to be designed and implemented if English remains the medium of instruction.

Keywords: code switching, deep rural, Language-in-Education Policy, English as medium of instruction, monolingual community, transition

Tshipida tsha manweledzo

(Abstract in Tshivenda – a language dominant in Limpopo province)

Ndayotewa ya Afurika Tshipembe i tutuwedza na u khwathisa nyambo zwi hulwane u dziela nzhele luambo lwa damuni. Mulayo wa nyambo siani la muhasho wa pfunzo u amba uri mugudi munwe na munwe u na pfanelo dza u guda na u funzwa nga luambo lune a lu pfesesa khwine. Uya nga ha mbekanyamaitele ya mirole ya vhukati, mugudi u dinangela nyambo mbili dzine khadzo luambo luthihi lu tea u vha lwa damuni ngeno ulu lunwe lu tshi tea u vha lwa tshiofisi. Luthihi kha lwolwo lu tea u vha luambo lwa u guda nga lwo. (Department of Basic Education, 2011).

Ngudo iyi i bvisela khagala khaedu dzine vhadededzi vha Gireidi 4 vha tangana nadzo musi vha tshi shumisa luambo lwa English kha u funza khathihi na ndila dzine vha dzi shumisa u lingedza u lwa na khaedu idzo.

Ngudo iyi yo shumisa lushaka lwa (Qualitative) ndi uri, ndila ya u wanulusa yo livhiswaho kha u disendeka kha zwine vhavhudziswa vha amba, vhudipfi na mihumbulo yavho. Ngudo iyi yo disendeka nga zwine munwali Krashen (1982) ari luambo lusili lu gudwa nga ndowendowe ire na u tanganelana ha tshifhinga tshothe. Manwe manwalwa a litheretsha a sumbedza ndila dzine vhanwe vha dededzi vha dzi shumisa u lwa na khaedu idzi dza u funza nga luambo lwa English.

Thoduluso yo itwa kha vhadededzi vha rathi na vhaeletshedzi vha magudwa vha vhili vha Niani Vunduni la Limpopo. Inwe thoduluso yo itwa ngomu lufherani lwa u gudela musi pfunzo i kati u itela u wana vhutadzi ho dalaho ha nyito.

Mawanwa a sumbedza uri vhadededzi vha Niani vha a kundelwa u swikela thodea dza magudwa (curriculum) dza u funza nga luambo lwa English kha Gireidi 4. Vhadededzi vha fhedza vha tshi talutshedza ndaela dzothe nga Tshivenda. Izwi zwi fhungudza khonadzeo ya u guda luambo lwa English.

Zwivhuya zwa ngudo iyi ndi zwo livhiswaho kha thaidzo dza vhadededzi dzine muhasho wa pfunzo a uri tshithu nga hazwo zwine zwa vha; u pfumbudza vhadededzi nga ha ku shumisele kwa luambo lwa English kha u gudisa kha Gireidi ya 4 na ndugiselo kha vhana vha Gireidi 3 vha tshi ya kha Gireidi 4 hune vha guda nga luambo lwa English. Ndi vhudifhinduleleli ha vhadededzi ha u gudisa vhana luambo lwa English.

Khono dza maipfi: u tanganyisa nyambo, vhudzulapo ha mahayani, pfunzo dza vhukati, muhasho wa pfunzo na luambo, luambo lwa u guda, tshigwada tsha vhatu tshi shumisaho luambo luthihi, u pfukekanya.

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Above all, I would like to give praise to God Almighty for it is by His grace that I have achieved this.

Dedication

I also would like to dedicate this dissertation to my family, especially my mother Vho-Naledzani. I would not have completed this study and other earlier academic programmes successfully without her support and encouragement. There are no words that can adequately describe her valuable support and love.

To Seani my daughter, I would also like to express my gratitude and love for her respect she shows for everything that I have done and still do. I am particularly pleased and grateful for the fact that she has renewed my pride in being a mother.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

ACE	-	Advanced Certificate in Education
BICS	-	Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills
CALP	-	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
CAPS	-	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
CAQDAS	-	Computer Aided Data Analysis Software
CD	-	Computer Disc
CUP	-	Common Underlying Proficiency
ECD	-	Early Childhood Development
ECE	-	Early Childhood Education
LEP	-	Language in Education Policy
LOTL	-	Language of Teaching and Learning
MTE	-	Mother Tongue Education
NCS	-	National Curriculum Statement
NEPI	-	National Education Policy Investigation
OBE	-	Outcome Based Education
PANSALB	-	PAN South African Language Board
RNCS	-	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SGB	-	School Governing Body
UNISA	-	University of South Africa

Chapter one: Overview of the study

1.1 Introduction

Since the dawn of democracy in 1994, many changes have taken place in South Africa. These changes have been intended to establish a society based on democratic values, social justice, fundamental human rights and a move to embrace a diversity of views and languages. In this context, the South African Constitution promotes the establishment of a multilingual society and cultural diversity underpinned by respect for all languages, with the acknowledgement that the home language should be maintained in the process. (Alexander 2003).

The South African National Language Policy Framework (2002) requires that the medium of instruction be the mother tongue in the Foundation Phase (from Grade R to Grade 3), with a switch to English from Grade 4 for those learners whose mother tongue is neither English nor Afrikaans. Learners in the deep rural areas generally learn in a monolingual context. In South Africa, many societies residing in the rural areas are communities that use a single language to communicate. Their daily activities are carried out through their mother tongue and they therefore find it unnecessary to use other languages (Alexander 2003).

The environment in which learners in the deep rural area of Niani in Limpopo find themselves is generally monolingual, with the result that it becomes difficult for them to make the required adjustment from the mother tongue (Tshivenda) to the medium of English, It therefore becomes difficult for teachers in the deep rural areas when imparting academic content through the medium of English to Grade 4 learners who have been taught in their mother tongue for three years with limited exposure to English.

1.2 Rationale and purpose of the study

I have been teaching Grade 3 in the Foundation Phase for 15 years at Mutuwafhethu Primary School in Limpopo province of South Africa. At the beginning of each year, the Grade 3 and Grade 4 teachers at the school meet to discuss teaching and learning strategies and to share information about what happens in the Foundation Phase and the Intermediate Phase context. The general complaint from these teachers, who teach in a rural area is that teaching becomes problematic after learners have been promoted to Grade 4.

This study therefore investigated why teachers experience difficulties at this point, on the assumption that the medium of instruction was the key issue that was creating the challenges experienced when learners move into the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4–6). The study also identified the strategies teachers use to deal with these challenges.

The use of English as a medium of instruction affects the way different learners react and adjust, while teachers have to find a means to deal with the challenges they and the learners encounter.

One of the major changes that disrupt the lives of young Grade 3 learners is the transitioning from the mother tongue as the medium of instruction to the use of English as the medium of instruction in Grade 4.

Heugh (2006) has shown that this transition that Grade 3 learners have to undergo is being imposed on them, without actively involving them or their teachers. In view of the many changes that these learners are exposed to when moving to Grade 4, they are in great need of support.

There is also a lack of clarity on the practicality of using English as the medium of instruction in Grade 4. Moreover, the qualifications and training of the teachers involved cannot be left unquestioned. Since Grade 3 and Grade 4 are distinct academic phases, especially with regard to medium of instruction, this study investigated how Tshivenda speaking teachers operate in this situation. The study also aimed at ascertaining the teachers' perceptions and understanding of the transitioning in terms of the medium of instruction, when both learners and teachers are involved.

1.3 Literature review

Existing literature on this topic was reviewed to present a synopsis of the research that has been conducted on learning through a second language and transitioning from the medium of the mother tongue to a second language medium. The term “transitioning” suggests a physical transfer from one place to another; a discontinuation and a new beginning (Amest & Rojas, 2010, pp. 9, 19). In this study, transitioning refers to a path between Grade 3 and Grade 4, that is, the journey Grade 3 learners undertake when they move from a mother tongue medium to English as medium of instruction in Grade 4. The literature review also presents the South African language policy in terms of education, historical background and the current situation.

A discussion of the background to language in South Africa will help in tracing the language planning milestones in the development of the new legislative framework on language matters since 1994. The South Africa Constitution states in this regard that there are 11 official languages in South Africa (Afrikaans, IsiNdebele, IsiXhosa, IsiZulu, Northern Sesotho, Setswana, SiSwati Tshivenda, Xitsonga, and English, Afrikaans) and that they each have apparently equal status. Certain language institutions such as Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB) and the National Language Service in the Department of Arts and Culture have been established to uphold multilingualism (Alexander, 2003).

The literature review also highlights proficiency on the part of teachers, as well as the educational issues in the rural areas, as having an influence on learners transitioning experience.

1.4 Research problem and questions

The National Curriculum Statement states that the medium of instruction in the Foundation Phase should be the mother tongue, while the medium of instruction in the Intermediate and Senior Phases should be English. However, English is often an unfamiliar language to many learners. Therefore, the transitioning of learners from the Foundation Phase to the Intermediate Phase is frequently not smooth. The South African school calendar consists of four school holidays. The last holiday of the year usually commences in early December and ends in the second week of January the following year. Therefore, when the Grade 3 learners return as Grade 4s they “jump” abruptly into the new phase which is largely unfamiliar and which I shall elaborate on later. The greatest change, however, is the medium of instruction (from Tshivenda to English) which further compounds matters.

Neither teachers nor learners receive any support from the government to ready them for the shift from Tshivenda to English as the new medium of instruction. Consequently, teachers are expected to teach in a language they do not have full proficiency in and learners are expected to learn through the medium of English before they have sound mastery of it (Evans & Cleghorn, 2010, p. 143). Phatudi (2007, p. 57) claims that such an abrupt transition not only affects academic performance, but also brings about disparity and reorganisation of the inner feelings and emotions of those that undergo it, which are exacerbated by the fact that this transition of Grade 3 learners is on their behalf and possibly even parents’ without actively involving them in the decision-making (Prout & James, 1997).

English as an additional language is supposedly introduced slowly from Grade 1, with more emphasis on listening skills, giving simple instructions, repeating sounds and rhymes and reading simple texts. Yet, immediately following their transitioning to Grade 4, they are expected to do far more complex academic tasks in all subjects in a language in which they have limited understanding.

David (2003) found that the appropriateness of the learning and teaching approach has an influence on learners' ability to understand instructions when they move from the mother tongue as medium of instruction to English. For effective cognitive development, learners need a good foundation in the second language, in this case English (Netshitomboni, 2003).

The implementation of English as a medium of instruction in teaching Mathematics and Science has also raised concerns in Malaysia (Sue, 2007, p. 10). There will always be problems with proficiency in the second language medium. The medium of instruction should be an effective tool to acquire knowledge; therefore, lack of linguistic capacity in learners will always be problematic. Learners at primary school level often lack the ability to engage in abstract thinking thus hampering their ability to cope with academic demands and rendering learning ineffective and problematic.

In this study I illuminate the challenges that Tshivenda-speaking teachers from Niani face when teaching Grade 4 learners through the medium of English. Against this background, the purpose of the study was to identify the challenges and determine the factors that contribute to the difficulties that teachers face when English becomes the medium of instruction for Grade 4 learners.

The academic situation that Grade 3 learners face when moving to Grade 4 differs from their Foundation Phase experience in terms of the curriculum, the settings and the people involved. Whenever there is discontinuity in the setting and environment, an adjustment has to take place in the classroom. And such adjustments result in puzzlement and dissonance for those affected by the changed context.

In line with the research problem outlined above, the following research questions were posed:

Main question

- Why do Grade 4 content teachers find their learners' transition from the Foundation Phase problematic?

Sub questions

- What are the linguistic challenges that teachers face when Grade 3 learners move to Grade 4?
- How do teachers address these challenges?

1.5 Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative approach since it was aimed at gaining more understanding about the uniqueness of a particular situation. The details of the context of the case studied here include those pertaining to the site and the concomitant economic and social factors.

A case study design was used because the study focused on a system comprising a particular group of individuals, namely, rural Grade 4 teachers. Niani is situated about 100 kilometres from the nearest towns, Thohoyandou and Musina.

1.6 Research site, participants and sampling

The study focused on three primary schools in Niani circuit. A non-probability sampling strategy was used because the population under study was not likely to be found anywhere else and the findings cannot be generalised. The site of the study is Niani which is part of Limpopo province.

My population comprised Grade 4 teachers in rural Niani, whose mother tongue is Tshivenda, as well as Intermediate Phase curriculum advisors. I interviewed two curriculum advisors. A total of six teachers were, two teachers from each school were observed. This population was chosen for its convenience.

1.7 Data collection

Non-participant observation was conducted. The purpose and focus of observation were linked to the research questions which were intended to identify the means that teachers use to cope when they are faced with challenges. The lessons were observed in their natural environment and the participants' anonymity was protected that is, pseudonyms were used. (Cekiso & Madikiza, 2014). Observations in the Grade 4 classrooms took two hours, during

which an assistant was brought along to help operate the video recorder in order to obtain a rich and authentic experience of the classroom situation.

Interviews were conducted with six teachers and two curriculum advisors. The interviews lasted for about an hour each. The main objective of interviewing the participants was to see the world through their eyes. Kvale (1996) is of the opinion that interviews uncover scientific explanations, in this case about knowing how teachers face their challenges as well as the strategies they use. Interviews also allow the interviewer to repeat the responses back to participants in order to seek clarity from the participants.

1.8 Data analysis and storage

I replayed the recorded interviews several times in order to transcribe the data in Tshivenda and then translate it into English. I read the transcribed data line by line several times and assigned codes to each response. The codes comprised descriptive words which were related to the aims and objectives of the study, as well as the research questions.

After coding, I tried to summarise and organise my data by identifying the frequency of these codes. I used words related to my research question from the text to establish the categories; I then grouped the codes into these categories as appropriate (Creswell, 2005.p. 238). The raw data were stored in the form of hard copies, while the analysis was stored electronically on a disc with a PIN code for security. After the 15-year period has lapsed, the disc will be destroyed by breaking it and recycling the pieces.

1.9 Trustworthiness

I let the participants know where I came from, and explained the purpose and benefits of the research. I encouraged the participants to be frank throughout the research process and ensured that bias during data analysis was minimised by focusing only on the participants' point of view. In order to ensure credibility after the interview, a summary of the discussions was read to the participants to confirm the accuracy of the written report. I used both the interview and the observation data to help increase the trustworthiness of data collection. The participants were from three schools, all in a similar environment. The original meaning of what the participants said was presented and their points of view were reported accurately.

1.10 Ethical issues

The study was conducted in public schools and, accordingly, ethical issues required attention. Permission was sought from the University for ethical clearance. I sent letters requesting permission to conduct the study to the relevant decision-makers, for example school principals, circuit manager, teachers, school governing bodies (SGBs) and subject advisors, parents and learners. I explained that the purpose of the study was to identify challenges teachers face when using English as a medium of instruction in teaching Grade 4 learners. I told the participants from the beginning that they were free to withdraw at any point without disclosing the reason for such withdrawal and that neither the researcher nor the school management team would pressurise or influence them.

Before commencing the study, I explained its benefits, for example potentially minimising the challenges. The adult participants were given a letter of consent to sign in private and were encouraged to ask for clarity if needed. The participants were told that they had the right to privacy and that their anonymity would be protected; therefore no identifiable information has been reported.

In the case of the parents and learners, I followed the same procedure but this time the language used was the mother tongue of the participants. With regard to learners, as they were minors, permission was also sought from their parents, who were requested to sign a consent form. An assent form was translated by the teachers into Tshivenda and was read out to the learners. Parents and guardians were free to ask questions before signing the letter of consent and I asked the teachers to help those that had trouble in signing. They were given three days to consider the matter before signing. Once I had obtained the ethical clearance from the university, I sent the application letter and the consent form to the circuit manager, school principals, teachers and parents of those learners who were going to be observed. After getting the responses, I visited the schools before commencing the research in order to develop rapport with the participants.

1.11 Anticipated constraints

Some constraints were anticipated during the study: site-related constraints, affordability, and the willingness of participants whereby some teachers may not be willing to be interviewed or observed. As I was conducting fieldwork more than 100 kilometres from where I live and work, I had to find accommodation because I was not able to travel to and from in one day. I

also made arrangements with my school management and my colleagues to ensure that my lessons continued during my absence.

1.12 Scope and boundaries of the study

The scope of the study was to investigate challenges that teachers face when instructing grade 4 learners through the medium of English and finding out the way they cope with the challenges. The study focused only on Grade 4 teachers from three primary schools, all of whom experience the same socioeconomic conditions. The study focused on Grade 4 teachers in public schools only and the teaching strategies applied during the lessons conducted through the medium of English.

I chose public schools because they are strictly governed by the stipulations of the South Africa Language Policy in Education in terms of the medium of instruction. Not all public schools were sampled, as it would have been too costly and time-consuming to have sampled all Niani public schools.

1.13 Conclusion

This chapter has given a comprehensive overview of the trajectory of the study, as well as the rationale, the aims of the study, and a brief discussion of the literature review related to the research questions and the research problem. The chapter also indicated the research methodologies that were used. Chapter two highlights the related literature as well as other studies that have been conducted previously on transitioning and medium of instruction.

Chapter two: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present a synopsis of research that has been carried out in the domain of transitioning, Language-in-Education-Policies. The study investigated Tshivenda learners' transitioning from Grade 3 to Grade 4 in the rural monolingual community of Niani in Limpopo province. The focus is on the transitioning for the teacher, with special reference to language-related issues. The chapter will also present the South Africa Language Policy with regard to education and will discuss the historical background and the current situation regarding language policy in the country. The conceptual framework which underpins this study will be presented and discussed.

2.2 Conceptual framework

The literature review is underpinned by the following concepts which will be discussed in this chapter: transitioning, language acquisition, mother tongue education, rural educational issues, language proficiency, teaching strategies and South African language policy. Figure 1 below presents an illustration of these concepts and this is followed by a brief discussion on the relationships between them.

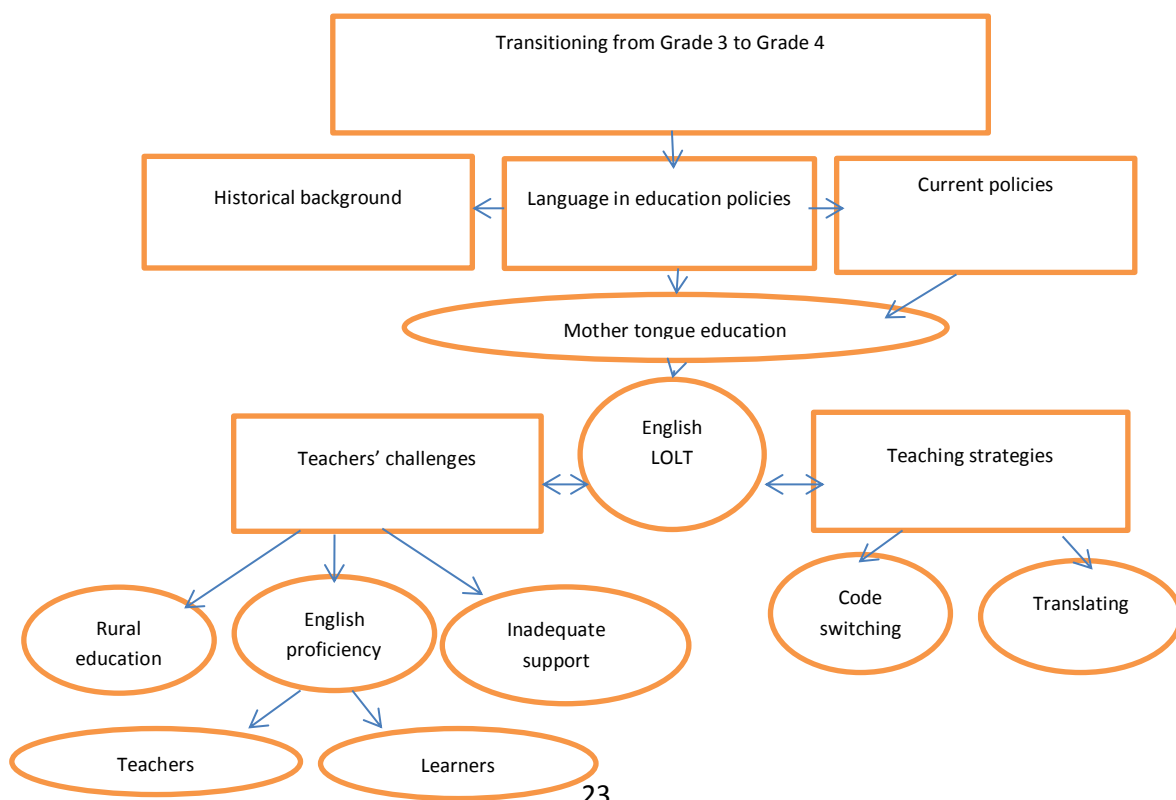


Figure 1: The concepts that underpinned the study

These concepts are recursive and holographic because one concept can refer the reader back to a previous one. The relationship between the concepts is discussed in the following sections.

2.3 Transitioning

Transitioning is a physical transfer, a discontinuation or a new beginning (Amest & Rojas, 2010, pp. 9, 19). The term means to crossover, a process that requires an ongoing, and not a once-off, adjustment which is accompanied by many expectations.

Furthermore, it is a period of change that children go through in their education journey. Grade 3 learners are expected to meet Grade 4 requirements during medium of instruction transitioning. When learners fail to meet the Grade 4 academic expectations, teachers bear the responsibility for helping the learners to make the necessary adjustment (Research Division, Entry of Education, 2008).

Transitioning involves stages such as starting nursery, primary or secondary education and changing schools or leaving school. It also involves a change in routine with new rules and changes in learning activities accompanied by greater expectations. It requires the self-care and social skills needed to adjust better, with more stable relationships and better school attendance (Giallo, 2010, pp. 1–17).

My study, in its education context, uses transitioning to refer to an abrupt change from the mother tongue medium of instruction (Tshivenda) to the second language medium of instruction (English). In this study, transitioning refers to a path between Grade 3 and Grade 4. Due to this abrupt change, learners move to the next grade with limited vocabulary to cope with the relevant academic requirements.

Although transitioning is intended to yield positive results, if not properly managed it could possibly have an adverse effect on the learning process, which could result in lasting learning difficulties and poor academic progress.

According to Fox (2009, p. 7), poor transitioning results in time loss. Learners use learning time to adjust themselves to the new learning environment and its expectations. Niesel and Griebel (2005) indicate that transitioning is a life change with several developmental

demands. Therefore, maladjustment during transitioning may lead to lasting learning difficulties. Heugh (2006) states that no early exit to English has shown any lasting academic achievement in the majority of learners; therefore transition to English after the Foundation Phase slows progress in Grade 4 learners who do not succeed in early transitioning to English without effective scaffolding.

Clarke (2005) found that learners have difficulties in transitioning because it involves moving from familiar activities to unknown, unfamiliar contexts that may be uncomfortable. This may have an effect on an individual's psychological resources. The immediate experience often results in loneliness, shock and fear. Learners feel trapped and find it difficult to adapt to the changed learning environment. Learners need to feel comfortable and secure during transitioning. This is important because if they struggle to adjust in the new setting, teaching and learning become more stressful and challenging to both the teachers and learners. Teachers need to come up with strategies to cope, which takes time. Teachers also need to take into consideration the needs of learners with regard to the language of instruction and should develop an understanding of the complexity of transitioning (Amest & Rojas, 2010).

Transition takes place on two levels. The first transition will be moving from one phase to another with increased academic demands. Secondly, Grade 4 learners have only been taught English as a subject in the Foundation Phase, and now English becomes their language of learning in the Intermediate Phase. According to the 2013 calendar of the Limpopo Provincial Government, the actual number of school days in a year is ±199 (Department of Education).

Table 2.1: Instructional time allocation in the Foundation Phase according to the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) (2011).

Subjects	Hours per week Grade R	Hours per week Grade 1–2	Hours per week Grade 3
Home Language (Tshivenda)	10	7/8	7/8
First Additional Language (English)	–	2/3	3/4
Mathematics	7	7	7
Life Skills	6	6	7
Total	23	23	25

In Grade 3, the total number of teaching hours conducted in English becomes a minimum of 126 and a maximum of 168 hours per annum.

Therefore Grade 3 learners move from learning four subjects (Mathematics, Life Skills, English (First Additional Language) and Tshivenda (Home Language) to learning six subjects, which are Tshivenda (Home language), English (First Additional language), Mathematics, Life Skills, Natural Sciences and Technology. These subjects are usually taught by different teachers, unlike in Grade 3 where, normally, one teacher teaches all the subjects throughout the year. Learners thus need to adjust to the methodologies and approaches used by different teachers unlike in Grade 3 (Department of Basic Education, 2011).

When learners transition to the medium of English in Grade 4 with inadequate English vocabulary, it becomes a challenge for teachers because learners may then progress to other grades with inadequate vocabulary having been acquired in the previous grade. According to Oliver (2007), an unfamiliar medium of instruction in the primary school perpetuates learning difficulties and slows progress during transitioning, which affects both teaching and learning in other higher grades.

Lammers and Kissoek (2010) show that difficulties during transitioning can be associated with learners' readiness and this will always influence the teaching approaches which the teachers may adopt.

2.4 Language policy in education in South Africa

2.4.1 Historical background

A look at the historical background relating to language in South Africa will help in tracing the language planning milestones that occurred prior to the development of the new legislative framework on language after 1994.

Between 1652 and 1795, Dutch was the language of administration. When Britain occupied the Cape in 1795, the British rulers made English the language of administration and of the courts. Subsequently two republics were established by the Boer settlers, namely, Orange

Free State and the Transvaal. Between 1899 and 1902, the British dissolved the two Boer republics and introduced English as the sole official language

Afrikaans originated from Dutch and was influenced by indigenous Khoikhoi who picked up the primitive Dutch and English trade jargon. When slaves began arriving in large numbers, there was a need of a common language through which all the diverse groups could communicate. As a result the slaves developed their own Dutch pidgin. In addition, Dutch became simpler because of the Malayo Portuguese spoken by slaves (Giliomee, 2003, p. 5).

Giliomee (2003) states that as Afrikaans evolved it was not accepted as a language among the educated Dutch. They saw Afrikaans as an embarrassment and considered it a miserable bastard jargon and felt that it should not be called a language.

During the national conversation of 1908 to 1909, the issue of language became critical and, as a result, a new constitution was drawn up. General J. B. M. Hertzog, an Afrikaner nationalist, proposed that English and Dutch should have equal status. Subsequently, the two were declared official languages. At the time, the civil services were dominated by English speakers. The Afrikaners wanted Dutch to be used in parliament and in schools. However, there was not enough literature in Afrikaans since it was regarded as a low status language (Netshitomboni, 2015).

According to Netshitomboni (2015), Jacob Langenhoven argued that Afrikaans should replace Dutch, believing that it would serve the needs of all Afrikaners. In 1912, Langenhoven began writing articles and books in Afrikaans, spreading the gospel, "Afrikaans is our own". In 1925, D. F. Malan introduced a bill that added Afrikaans to Dutch and English as official languages. Later Afrikaans replaced Dutch. After that most white schools and some universities had a single medium of instruction. By 1933, Afrikaans had spread and became advanced enough for the Bible to be translated into Afrikaans.

The missionaries, who were mainly Protestants, sought to use the languages of the local people when evangelising. Netshitomboni (2015) states that this led them to start the process of codifying (recording or writing down) the languages of the communities they were working with. This resulted in varying orthography of the languages that were within the same language group. For example, the Nguni orthography wound up with different orthographies from isiZulu, isiXhosa, SiSwati and isiNdebele, while the Sotho group had different orthographies for Sesotho, Sepedi and Setswana, with the exception of Tshivenda and Xitsonga, which do not fall within these two groups and are mutually unintelligible (Evans & Cleghorn, 2012). Otto (2011) adds that these languages were then used in the

education of black Africans in the missionary schools as the initial medium of instruction before a transition to English as the sole language of education.

This language set-up remained static until 1955. In 1948, the National Party came into power in the election that followed the Second World War, after which way large numbers of Afrikaans-speaking intellectuals moved to the National Party. In 1950 the nationalists were satisfied with the status of Afrikaans. When the Bantu Education Act of 1953 came into being, also referred to as the Native Education Act, it further cemented the already segregated education system (Netshitomboni, 2015).

When the National Party came to power in South Africa in 1948, the process of developing and instituting apartheid policies began. These policies influenced the political and economic life of South Africa until the early 1990s. What resulted from these policies was the separation of the Anglo, Afrikaner, coloured, Indian and the nine black groups from each other on the basis of race, culture, religion and language and ethnicity.

The Bantu Education Act, 1953, stipulated that black learners should receive mother-tongue teaching in the lower and higher primary grades with a transition to English and Afrikaans thereafter. The Act enforced the provision of mother tongue instruction at primary level (up to Standard 6).

In 1975, a white Afrikaans cultural organisation called on the government to promote Afrikaans effectively in black and Asian schools. According to the Bantu Administration and Development, the government had the right to decide the medium of instruction even in black schools. In Soweto, Transvaal inspectors instructed black schools that Mathematics and Arithmetic would be taught through Afrikaans only. On 16 June 1976, Soweto students protested violently against this decision. Placards stating, “Down with Afrikaans! If we are to do Afrikaans, Vorster must do Zulu” were paraded through the streets. The upshot was that this order was rescinded and schools could choose either English or Afrikaans as the language of instruction. Most black schools chose English as the medium in higher grades.

2.4.2 Language policy in South Africa: the current situation

The South African government as stipulated in its Constitution Act no 108 of 1996 has afforded opportunities to its citizens to have access to information in the languages they understand irrespective of their level of education, religious and linguistic backgrounds. This ambition is further entrenched in section 8(e) of the Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 (Act

No. 12 of 2012), and the National Language Policy Framework, which state that every national department must promote the use of official languages in facilitating access to services and information. Hence, it is important to look here at the language that is used to facilitate access to information.

The South African Schools Act no. 84 of 1996 empowers the National Policy for Language in Education to acknowledge that in line with the Constitution, the cultural diversity in South Africa should be of value. The policy stipulates the approval of multilingualism and the development of official languages, including sign language.

The following are the main features of the South Africa Schools Act, 1996:

- To respect all languages and promote multilingualism in line with the South Africa Constitution.
- To allow society to participate through meaningful access to education and working towards the support of teaching and learning in all languages spoken by communities in South Africa.
- To encounter and monitor disadvantages resulting from different needs or mismatches between home languages and languages of teaching and learning.
- To develop programmes for the redress of the causes of disadvantaged languages.

The question remains as to whether all the official languages have been developed or come into use since 1997. When learners switch from mother tongue instruction to a second language medium of instruction it implies moving to the “better” medium of instruction or rather to a well-developed medium of instruction. If this were not so, the education policy in terms of the medium of instruction would not have stipulated the necessity of a sudden change of medium in Grade 4.

As indicated in the South African Schools Act, 1996, the national policy for Language in Education attempts to eliminate the discriminating policies that have affected most South African learners’ education and their success. Almost all South African learners now have access to education but the language of teaching and learning in Grade 4 becomes a problem as it hinders the success of those who are not mother tongue speakers of it - generally English. Although education is a means to improve the situation, it is of different issue in a rural monolingual society. The move from the mother tongue medium to the second language medium has been problematic for both teachers and learners in the rural areas.

In terms of the Language in Education-policy section 3(4)(m) of the National Education Policy Act (Act 27 of 1996), the principle that underpins the language policy is the retention of the learners' home language for learning and teaching purposes and to encourage learners to acquire additional languages as well. The Department of Arts and Culture (2002) and the Department of National Education (1994) have indicated that the Language in Education Policy states that the acquisition of a second language should be taught effectively.

As indicated in the 1999 UNESCO report, children in Cameroon who were taught in their local language showed a marked advantage in achievement in reading and comprehension compared with children taught only in English. The report further supports the view that mother tongue-based multilingual education has a positive impact on the acquisition of a second language. Globally, there are initiatives aimed at enhancing the quality of learning and promoting inclusive education by taking language into consideration. These include a strategy for culturally relevant textbooks and learning materials in the languages the learners understand. This has resulted in recommendations for influencing educational policies and practices worldwide.

As mentioned by Taljard (2015), UNESCO's support for mother tongue-based bilingual or multilingual approaches in education is further articulated by the theme for UNESCO's International Mother Language Day for 2015: "Inclusion in and through education: Language counts." Taljard (2015), in her article, "Language counts in education", argues that although UNESCO and the language policy in education in South Africa support a multilingual approach in education, in reality academics and teachers are struggling to implement this approach.

One of the anomalies of post-apartheid South Africa, as pointed out by Taljard (2015), is that the only learners who are currently enjoying the privilege and benefits of mother-tongue education from their initial entry into the schooling system up to university level are those with English and to a lesser extent, Afrikaans. What is interesting about this set-up is that these two groups are the same ones who were linguistically privileged during the previous political dispensation. Little has thus changed in terms of improving access to education through the use of all official languages, especially African languages.

The preceding discussion proves the fact that language cannot be looked at in isolation from its context, as in most, if not all cases, language is an enabler in education acquisition, as well as access to health or basic services, the conservation of history and cultural heritage, and in facilitating transformation.

Section C of the South Africa Schools Act, 1996, empowers school governing bodies (SGBs) to determine the language policy of their schools within the guidelines set nationally and provincially. In terms of the subject allocations and the medium of instruction, most SGBs in rural monolingual societies are limited in their choice of the language of learning and teaching because the content text books as well as learners work books are in English. Parents in many cases find it better for their children to learn through the unfamiliar medium of a second language (English). They believe that English is the best language for business because it is used internationally and tertiary studies are completed through English.

Netshitomboni (2003) found that although parents may be interested in their children learning English, this does not mean that everything runs smoothly. It is the duty of the SGB to stipulate how it is going to promote multilingualism, but parents choose the language of learning on behalf of their minor children. When the language is not available, parents may request the provincial education department to make provision for it. Such a provision may be made, taking into account the evidence provided by the SGB. The department should be aware that the decision does not perpetuate racial discrimination but is intended to work towards the achievement of equity and the consideration of learners' rights. Where there are fewer than 40 learners in Grades 1 to 6 and fewer than 35 in Grades 7 to 12, the head of the provincial department will see how the needs of such learners could be accommodated.

Although the SGB needs to take into account various factors in choosing the LOLT, in many rural monolingual societies in South Africa, the language of teaching becomes a barrier to learning from the Intermediate Phase where textbooks are in English. Obviously, the language to be chosen will be in line with the language of exams and textbooks and that is, the language used when setting the examination question papers and the language used on the prescribed textbooks. Obviously most of the rural SGBs have a limited choice. According to Foley (2010, p. 10), English needs to be taught effectively during the initial years of schooling to minimise tension during transitioning. He further states that the desire of parents for their children to be taught in English will always have an influence on teaching and learning in South Africa.

Teachers also believe that there are no resources for African languages and have the same idea as the parents when it comes to the use of English as a medium of instruction. Although teachers in a rural monolingual society are faced with challenges when teaching Grade 4, they prefer English as a medium of instruction. They think by so doing, children will be able to compete both nationally and internationally (Netshitomboni, 2003).

Bogale (2009) found that although English is said to be a language which may offer access to higher education and international opportunities, in countries such as Ethiopia, English is

used by an Ethiopian minority of politicians and the educated. This is largely because English does not enjoy a high status in other African countries.

Section 29(a) of the Bill of Rights states that, everyone has the right to basic education. The Language-in-Education policy states that every learner has the right to learn in the language of their choice. It remains questionable as to whether Grade 4 learners in rural Limpopo have any choice in the medium of instruction (Alexander, 2003).

According to the South Africa language policy in education, it is understood that the right to choose the LOLT is vested in the individual. However, Grade 3 learners have the option to be instructed in English as soon as they move to Grade 4. This could also be discussed with regard to the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). CAPS was implemented in Grade 4 to 6 and 11 in 2013, as well as in Grades R to 3 and Grade 10 in the same year. It was further implemented in Grades 7 to 9 and 12 in 2014. CAPS was introduced after a review of the NCS, in terms of which teachers were faced with various implementation challenges. Accordingly, the Minister of Education constituted a task team because the effect problems with the NCS were having on the quality of education in schools. As a result, the task team recommended a five-year plan to support the implementation of the NCS. After the review there was, among other things, a recommendation to reduce the number of learning areas in the Intermediate Phase and English was to be taught as a First Additional Language from Grade 1 (Department of Basic Education 2011).

According to the programme requirements for Grades 4 to 6 in terms of language of instruction, two official languages are selected by the learner, one of which should be used as a home language and the other one as a first additional language, and one of these two languages should be used as the language of learning (Basic Education: Programme and Promotion Requirements).

The above statement indicates that either the home language or the first additional language could be used as a medium of instruction. This, however, is contradictory because the teaching and learning materials in Grade 4 are only available in English. In addition, exam question papers are in English. The same applies to the language policy in education, which stipulates that a learner has the right to choose to be taught through the language that he or she understands better where this is possible.

At least one approved language as a subject is offered in Grades 1 and 2. In Grade 3 at least one additional approved language is offered as a subject. From Grades 1 to 4, promotion is based on one language and Maths. The LOLT should be an official language.

The CAPS came about as a means for the Department of Basic Education to develop a clear and simple five-year plan to support the implementation of National Curriculum Statement R–12 in schools and also to refine curriculum documents (Basic Education: Questions and Answers).

The use of the second language as the medium of instruction is an international problem though it cannot be seen as the sole cause of academic failure.

According to a study conducted by Kasule and Mapolelo (2005, p.603) in Northern Botswana teaching Mathematics in a class where the medium of instruction is not the mother tongue of the learners presents several professional challenges for teachers. This implies that in order for teachers to address the challenges as well as strategies to overcome the challenges, they must come up with different teaching strategies, for example, twining strategy where by a certain teacher who is an expert on a certain area of the content helps other teachers. According to the Ethiopia Language Policy of 1994, the switch to English takes place in Grade 5, 7 or 9, depending on the region. English is considered to be more foreign than a local second language, and is not frequently used outside the classrooms. Therefore, learners do not have an opportunity to learn the language elsewhere except in the classroom. When learners are not sufficiently proficient in English, their education is always affected negatively because they end up rote learning and not being creative in participating (Bogale, 2009).

In Nigerian, the Language-policy-in Education stipulates that English should be introduced in year 4 as a medium of instruction. Some concepts in content-based subjects like Mathematics and Science cannot be explained well in the medium of English and teachers code switch from English to the mother tongue according to learners' needs (Jegede, 2012, p. 43).

In Zimbabwe Nyaungwa (2013) found that language is the key to understanding. The language of instruction should be the language to impart knowledge. As a result, teaching is always difficult especially when the language is also unfamiliar to the teachers.

The Malaysian government decided to change the language policy and introduce English as a medium of instruction at all levels of the education system. The main reason was to uplift the standard of English in Malaysia. Certain learning models were put in place to examine the problems and challenges of implementing the policy for the teaching of Science and Maths in English. The first programme, which entailed maximum exposure, was introduced into the national schools and Tamil schools. The second programme of bilingual education was introduced into Chinese schools. Maximum exposure is one of the Malaysian learning

models in terms of which learners have total exposure to English as the only medium of instruction, as was done in the national primary schools and Tamil schools. It is believed that the development of linguistic skills is directly related to the degree of exposure to a language. Learners will only acquire a second language if they receive maximum exposure to such language. However, it will never be easy for a monolingual learner who resides in a rural monolingual society to fully acquire a second language with high international status.

Although the national schools and the Tamil schools used English only as the medium of instruction, there was a great need for bilingual education in the early years and learners did not have sufficient exposure to English. There was also a lack of teachers' proficiency which hampered learning. The bilingual education adopted by the Chinese schools was better than the maximum exposure adopted by the national schools and the Tamil schools because they received most of their education through their mother tongue. Although the need to acquire the second language could not be outweighed, the introduction of English as a medium of instruction came against the universal belief of the mother tongue as the best language for the medium of instruction (Sue, 2007).

On 20 March 2015 Mandarin was suggested to be added to the curriculum as a non-official language subject in Grades 4 to 9. This will only be taught at selected schools from January 2016. (Maluleke, 2015).

On 18 August 2015, Angie Motshekga, Minister of Basic Education, addressed students at the East China Normal University in Shanghai. She said:

“The agreement speaks to collaboration between our countries in a number of areas, but for us what is especially encouraging is the work we will be undertaking together in the field of Maths, Science and Technology where we have seen China excel. We hope to learn from the Chinese experience through the exchanges of knowledge and human capital which we will be extremely beneficial.”

However, rural learners are battling with learning English as their second language and medium of instruction, therefore learning other additional languages will not be easy for them. Teachers who were and still are facing challenges when teaching English and teaching through English, will face even more challenges when learning Mandarin and thereafter being expected to teach it. However, teachers unions are speaking out, saying that they will oppose the teaching of Mandarin in their schools with everything that they have, as they see this as the worst type of imperialism (Maluleke, 2015).

2.5 The effect of the current language-in-education policy on teaching and learning

From the chronological look at the language history of South Africa, one is compelled to agree with Alexander (2003) that there is no such thing as a politically neutral language planning theory. It is evident that language planning/policy in South Africa cannot be separated from politics. Therefore, it is not surprising that language planning around the 1990s was an effort to demolish the racist engineering of the apartheid era. The negotiations that took place in 1994 between the National Party (NP) and the African National Congress (ANC) were about the transfer of power which led to the formulation of the current South African language policies (Netshitomboni, 2015).

¹The Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB) was established in 1996 in terms of the Pan South African Language Board Act 59 of 1995, amended as PANSALB Amendment Act of 1999. The Board is mandated by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, to investigate complaints about language rights violations from any individual, organisation or institution to conduct hearings at which complainants and respondents are present, and may recommend steps to be taken by the department or institution concerned depending on its findings.

Furthermore, the PANSALB is also expected to initiate studies and research aimed at promoting and creating conditions for the development of all 11 official languages. Language-in-education policies is one of the foci of PANSALB. Currently a new committee has been formed as has been underperformance and non-delivery. For language services 43% of targets were not achieved and this was a core part of the mandate and operations. Lack of political will and some funding issues lie at the heart of this organisation not responding to its brief.

The Language-in-Education policy states that learners have the right to receive their education through the mother tongue in the Foundation Phase and later move to English medium in Grade 4 (National Education Act no 27 of 1996). The most distinctive feature of language is that it is an instrument of thought. Highly developed thought processes have resulted in the invention of writing, reading and complex symbolic behaviour such as logic, mathematics and art forms (Alexandra, 2003).

¹ Pan South African Language Board current issues. (03. March, 2015). P.M.C Parliamentary Monitoring Group. Arts and Culture

More importantly, language is a tool that transports knowledge. Thus, learning and teaching processes are facilitated through language. Consequently, if learners' home language differs from the language of teaching and learning, that language will constitute a barrier (Cummins, 1997). When languages that learners do not understand are used as medium of instruction, then the learning process is hampered as language becomes a barrier rather than an enabler. Therefore, emphasis is placed on the urgent development of effective and appropriate second-language curricula, materials and educators in the African languages, because knowing each other's languages can play a profound role in promoting understanding and developing social cohesion in the South African context.

In language lies the key to the meaningful development of a country, especially in education. Most local languages on the continent of Africa are not used in the public domains but are relegated to social and cultural functions. When one considers that it is through the use of languages that people understand one another and effective communication is facilitated, it becomes important to look at how Language-policy-in-Education policy affects teaching and learning.

2.5.1 Learners

Cook (1991) states that learners learn a language largely through exposure to spoken and not written language.

As indicated in Cummins (2000), It takes two years for a child to acquire basic interpersonal communicative skills and seven years to acquire the cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). It should be borne in mind that in my studies Grade 3 learners move to Grade 4 with very limited English exposure in the Foundation Phase.

Without exposure there is no chance of developing language proficiency, as Vygotsky (1986) indicated by means of three learning models, monitoring, acculturation and conversation. As a result, teachers and learners in monolingual areas are not proficient enough to use the second language as a medium of instruction due to their inadequate linguistic background in the second language. Therefore, the question remains as to whether learners in the deep rural areas who are unable to cope with English as a medium of instruction in the Intermediate Phase have been well equipped with a sound mother tongue foundation.

Collins and Ellis (2008) indicate that South African learners have problems in providing well-constructed answers to questions. They often battle to give logical responses, which they

can only do in their mother tongue. Bigg (1990) states that when instruction is given in an unfamiliar language, there will often be a misunderstanding therefore learning and teaching become more complicated. According to Heugh (2006), written instructions seem to be more complex than verbal instructions. It takes learners longer to understand and carry out instructions since learners need to have reading skills with understanding before they can carry out instructions. The current study expanded on this through classroom observation.

Onovughe and Adebaya (2011, p.292) found that second language teachers should use communicating language teaching as an approach. They go on to say that learners learn better in a non-formal and interactive environment, and therefore the classroom is not the only place where a learner can effectively learn a language. There is a great need for parental support to ensure that learners are able to learn effectively in the medium of a second language.

Genesee (1994, p. 2) found that it is not easy to provide quality education to learners who are not yet proficient in English. On the other hand, teachers are charged to develop learners' linguistic and academic proficiencies and thus lesson plans will be affected by this limitation on learners. The classroom activities will have to be adjusted. Teachers and learners are caught in the middle of an abrupt change because of authorities deciding on the language implementation in education, usually without consulting those who were going to be affected. Thaisan (1995) and Uys (2007) state that although teachers receive training on how to teach a second language, they are often not well trained in how to teach through the second language.

Onovughe and Adebaya (2011) argue that there should always be an application of language learning strategies that allow learners to improve second language proficiency. Therefore, reading problems in the second language medium hinder learners' academic performance in other subjects. Foley (2010, p.7) argues that language teaching methodology needs to be revised on a regular basis because some previous methodology might be out-dated.

Children learn better if they are exposed to the basic words that they come across all the time. Second-language learners' self-esteem and confidence to interact fade away whenever they struggle to express themselves in a language that is unfamiliar to them.

2.5.2 Teachers

In South African monolingual rural areas both teachers and learners have limited English proficiency. Many teachers in such areas have received their training at local monolingual Tshivenda teacher training colleges where it was not necessary for them to communicate in English because most of the people in that context understood Tshivenda. Moreover, teachers do not use English outside the classrooms, or even amongst themselves. Learners too are not exposed to English sufficiently even at school because it is only used to a limited extent during lessons. As a result, teachers translate almost everything into Tshivenda.

Teachers in monolingual societies are not well equipped when it comes to teaching subject content through the medium of English. The question remains as to whether further training equips teachers with sufficient language skills to teach through the medium of English and to help learners to reach the required English proficiency level (Nell & Muller, 2010).

Despite the fact that teachers receive training, there is no guarantee that they will be competent when teaching through the medium of English. The implication of this is that being a qualified teacher does not mean that the teacher is sufficiently proficient in English. Freeman (1989) states that there is an assumption that everyone who communicates well in a particular language can teach in that language. However, this would seem to be incorrect, as being a qualified teacher in English second language does not mean that the teacher is sufficiently proficient in English.

There is thus a need to upgrade teacher's cognitive academic language skills and also re-evaluate teaching methodologies. There have been many suggestions on this matter, but they have not been effective because there has never been training to minimise the problem. There has also been negligible focus on teachers' tertiary education because there have seldom been incentives in terms of further training in mother tongue education in rural education. The focus has been mainly on the science subjects. One of the main causes of under-achievement among black learners in South Africa is possibly the lack of English proficiency in teachers (Nell & Muller, 2010).

It is said that a "good teacher" must always be good in planning, that is, planning a lesson from the learners' viewpoint in terms of learning styles, and should also be able to anticipate the problems and the means of addressing those problems in advance. The teacher may adjust the sequence of content and also add some tasks. The teacher may even postpone some skills and introduce them at a later stage when learners' language proficiency has improved.

The degree of proficiency on the part of teachers generally influences the learners' English language acquisition. Teachers who are poor role models fail to help learners acquire a second language due to their own limited English proficiency.

In a study conducted in the Cape Town metro, teachers came up with a means to minimise the difficulties in teaching through a second language medium by the mixing of the mother tongue and English and found this helpful. Teachers are to be heard complaining about language and the medium of instruction since they find themselves in this situation on a daily basis. Geiger (2009, p. 3)

The second language medium (English) has not only been a concern to non-English speaking primary schools learners, but also to non-English speaking student teachers at tertiary level in South Africa. Non-English speaking students in higher education generally also take longer to complete their courses and these students are at a risk in terms of their linguistic development too. Research done at the University of South Africa (UNISA) on the limited English proficiency of final students doing Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) shows that the language proficiency of final-year teaching students will probably have an influence on learners' English language acquisition and academic progress. (Nell and Muller, 2010, p. 635)

Amin (2010) suggests on-going classroom interaction between learners and their teachers. Communication between teachers and learners plays a role in language learning because second language acquisition largely depends on how a teacher uses of teaching methods. In order to minimise the challenges when teaching in the medium of a second language, a context-embedded lesson method could be used where lessons include postures and gestures when teaching. This method could be helpful when teaching through the medium of a second language. The teacher's means of instruction influences the course of learning. Therefore, the role of a teacher should be to provide correct feedback. In addition, the learning environment should not be teacher dominated (Moyo & Beukes, 2009, p.27; Cummins, 1991).

Richards and Lockhart (1994, p.184) state that teachers must always be skilled in "negotiating the meaning"; that is, they should make sure that they are understood by learners and they should also come up with learning strategies that will make learners cope with what they are expected to do. Teachers may do so by using context-embedded instructional tasks, simple language and more common vocabulary as well as by speaking slowly (Genesee, 1994, pp. 159–182).

The findings by the National Teachers Education Audit (1995, p. 48) show that most South African teachers are under-qualified, have limited understanding of how to teach a second language and do not understand the principles of bilingual education. Sometimes teachers lack the vocabulary to explain and describe a concept. In other words, teachers are mainly taught *what* to teach *in* English rather than *how* to teach *through* English. Bigg (1990) states that when instruction is given in an unfamiliar language there will often be a misunderstanding, therefore learning and teaching become more complicated.

Pavesi and Bertacchi (2003, p.9) maintain that learning is a problem-solving activity. Therefore, if the LOLT is not familiar to teachers it becomes problematic and it is thus suggested that there should be an increased amount of exposure to a second language. The implementation of the Language-policy-in Education is crucial in rural monolingual societies since there are factors that influence implementation and vice versa. The issue of language proficiency in both teachers and learners needs to be taken into consideration when the language of teaching and learning is unfamiliar to both teachers and learners. South African teachers have a long way to go in terms of training in second language acquisition, as well as teaching and learning through the medium of an unfamiliar language.

2.6 Rural educational issues

Working in rural conditions has its own challenges. The meaning of the word “rural” varies from country to country. Sher (1981) describes a rural community as a community that is situated kilometres away from its nearest town. Rural regions tend to be among the poorest in a country. Other countries such as Australia define rural in terms of socioeconomic circumstances and population, while New Zealand and the United States define rural as the open countryside and as places comprising fewer than 1000 residents (Sher, 1981).

Rural primary schools are generally smaller than urban primary schools and they usually have a small number of relatively homogenous learners. Most schools continue to operate because there are no other alternatives. Although both primary and secondary learners travel some distance to their schools, primary learners usually travel less than secondary learners. Because of the long distances, transportation costs are higher and there is also the issue of poorly maintained roads. As a result, learners are sometimes unable to go to school, especially during severe weather like heavy rain.

The National Board of Education in Sweden has recommended that a one-way journey to school should be no more than a 45-minutes car ride. Travel to rural schools is costly and therefore it is expensive to educate rural children (Sher, 1981, p. 29).

South African people in the rural areas are generally not exposed to a second language. It is very rare to find an English-speaking person in these areas unless such person is doing business in that area. Nevertheless, it is not guaranteed that they would use English to communicate; they would probably try to speak the local language spoken in that community. The only exposure that teachers in the rural area have to English is through the media.

This study defines a rural area in terms of its geographical isolation, that is, in terms of being far from the nearest town, and far from modern structures and other facilities and technologies. Rural communities are often monolingual and use a common language to communicate, usually a mother tongue, and it is generally not necessary to communicate in a second language. Teachers in rural monolingual areas due to cost and logistics usually attended colleges in the rural monolingual areas. Because almost everyone at the colleges understood the mother tongue, it was not necessary for them to use a second language to communicate.

As Sher (1981) indicates, rural teachers are often ill prepared, underpaid, overloaded and isolated. This problem is still prevalent because even today, a rural teacher is expected to be a janitor, a ground keeper, an accountant, an administrator, a nurse, a social worker, a psychologist and a disciplinarian, as well as a pillar of the community, with the added expectation that she or he teaches the whole range of the subjects. Most learners in rural areas live with parents whose schooling never went beyond primary school. This implies inadequate second language exposure which complicates second language acquisition. Under these conditions, the teacher is expected to survive and still provide quality education.

Although teachers are better prepared and less isolated today, they are still expected to perform a range of tasks that would be seen as extraordinary in large metropolitan schools (Sher, 1981, p. 65).

Teaching in the rural areas can be an intense experience, both personally and professionally, if the working conditions are enjoyable and rewarding. But it can also be frustrating if the conditions are unfavourable.

Sher (1981) indicates that teachers who are “home bodies in the rural monolingual communities” lack a background of experience in, for example, speaking other languages.

These are teachers who grew up in monolingual rural areas and teach in the same environment.

Although some young individuals may come to the rural areas voluntarily, may have the potential to be energetic, innovative and willing to shake up the status quo, they will not be very sensitive to rural or local customs and may not have the values of patience and commitment needed to understand the community. This will remain an issue because there are no colleges that offer special training courses on teaching in rural areas.

Gautama (2005) presents the findings of the Janshala Programme conducted in India, which targeted an education system for a marginalised population, that is, learners in remote areas, in order to improve their attendance and performance. The findings of the programme were that there was a high dropout rate because of the medium of instruction since it was unfamiliar to learners; the textbooks were written in an unfamiliar regional language; and the teachers employed did not speak the learners' language, therefore, they could not understand the learners and the learners, in turn, could not understand the teachers.

Later, there were some improvements in rural education as a result of the national policy in education, which also included the materials for the initial stages of the programme, which entailed preparing learners and teachers to switch to the second language as the medium of instruction. Some other interventions included the provision of teachers who were speakers of both the mother tongue and the second language at the beginning of primary education. A suitably adapted curriculum was also introduced using locally relevant teaching and learning materials (Gautama, 2003).

Sher (1981) has shown that there is also a need to address issues related to teachers' attitudes towards the medium of English. Again, the South African education programme needs to pay attention to the ecological and cultural characteristics of rural children and to match their lifestyles. A positive mind set should also be developed in learners in terms of second language medium teaching. Most of South African learners attend rural schools, which are poorly resourced and located in isolated areas with high levels of poverty and unemployment.

There is also a lack of economic resources and poor employment opportunities in rural areas. Thus, parents and learners lack sufficient exposure to English. Reading materials are limited to school textbooks since school libraries are rare. The social background of learners affects their capacity to understand the LOLT because these learners hardly interact with English speakers except during school hours..

According to the Human Science Research Council and the Education Policy Consortium (2005), rural learners frequently attend poorly resourced schools situated in isolated areas with high levels of poverty. The communities lack economic capital because of the high rate of unemployment. The home social capital, which can be referred to as transmission of parental attitude and knowledge and the need to succeed at school, is limited. For example, poorly educated parents in the deep rural areas are less likely to receive the financial benefits of their children's regular school attendance or academic success.

In terms of cultural capital, parents, teachers and learners in the deep rural areas lack sufficient exposure to English; hence there are limited opportunities to practise communicating in English. Although parents may wish their children to be taught in English, the problem is that the language is foreign to the community as well. Although there are television and other media, they do not provide many opportunities to learn the target language because television does not interact in an authentic way (Sher, 1981, p. 29).

Krashen's theory of second language learning (1985), states that interaction enhances second language acquisition and fluency; however, this is not applicable to the rural monolingual areas. There is no interaction with English language speakers in most rural monolingual areas in South Africa. Communities in rural monolingual areas find it unnecessary to speak any other language because almost everybody understands the language that is used, which is probably the mother tongue of the people in the area. This becomes a problem because learners in the area will not be sufficiently expected to a second language orally or in print thus affecting the acquisition eventual proficiency of the target language. When rural monolingual learners switch from the mother tongue medium of instruction to English, it consequently becomes a problem, as learning and teaching become more stressful and challenging for the teachers. The historical background of both learners and teachers in rural monolingual societies thus perpetuates their difficulties in learning or teaching through the unfamiliar medium of English. Meanwhile in attempting to overcome the language barrier, we should look at how a second language could be developed from an interactionist perspective. When exploring a position in which equal weight is given to both the learner and the situation, this position is known as interactionism. Put in terms of second language acquisition we have, on the one hand, the learner's contribution to learning while, on the other, we have the learning situations in which the learner finds him/herself whether inside the classroom or outside. The learner makes a diverse range of contributions to learning – motivation to learn the language, level of cognitive development, strategies for language learning and for communication and many others. A rather obvious point about any form of learning is that it consists of an interaction between the learner and the environment.

“Knowledge of grammar, and of language, develops in the child through the interplay of genetically determined principles and a course of experience” (Chomsky, 1980).

Krashen’s (1985) theory of second language learning states that interaction enhances second language acquisition and fluency, and that learning should be facilitated in a manner that enables the message to be understood; and thus provides a means of self-expression and enables negotiations with meaning. Krashen (1985) also indicates that second language learning depends on the amount of comprehensible input. In this regard, his theory maintains that a second language is acquired unconsciously, similar to mother tongue. Vygotsky (1982), also an interactionist, found that second language learners learn the language through interaction with the speaker of the language.

Although it is possible for a child to learn to speak an additional language in two years, basic interpersonal communicating skills (BICS) make language acquisition unconscious, furthermore, Cummins (1979) states that there is a common underlying proficiency (CUP) based on the development of the mother tongue and the second language. This implies that people learn the second language in the same way as they learn their mother tongue; and that all languages are learnt in the same manner – through exposure. Cummins (1994) maintains that conceptual knowledge in the mother tongue will help a learner in learning the second language. Since the mother tongue is learnt through exposure, there is also a great need for exposure to the second language (English).

The second model is the acculturation model in terms of which Schumann (1978, in Cook, 1991) shows that social and psychological integration is the chief cause of success or failure in second language learning. The degree to which a learner acculturates to a second language group of speakers will control the amount of language learnt. Acculturation can also be influenced by cultural and political factors; that is, the attitude and the relationship between the learner and the speaker of a second language will always influence the learning.

As Schuman (1976, p. 141) has shown, assimilation between the learners and the speaker of a second language enhances learning especially if one group intends to remain for a longer period.

The last model is conversational analysis. Hatch (1978) shows that in learning a language there should be more conversation between the learner and the speaker of a targeted language. The two groups should interact verbally as he believes that through conversation some syntactic structures in the target language will develop.

When considering the three learning models, it would seem that the BICS requires exposure rather than intelligence (Geiger, 2009). The teaching and learning environment may also contribute to learners' insufficient acquisition of a second language. In this regard, learning will always be less satisfactory if it is not related to real-life experiences. Children learn better if they are exposed to basic words which they come across all the time. Jerry (2006), Linehan (2005) and Chulau (2010) show that learner learn best through a social strategy, that is, learning by interacting with others, and by engaging in group discussions. Peer conversations help to improve fluency in a second language.

BICS and CALP need to be taken into account when a second language is used as a medium of instruction. There is a difference between knowing a language for communicating and knowing the language for academic purposes. Knowing a language does not give one a guarantee that one will perform better academically. Moreover, it does not mean that the child can use the language academically because greater cognitive demands are made on the learner who is taught in and has to learn through a second language (Cummins, 1979, p. 1).

On the other hand, Nunan (1999) shows that learners who are not fluent with the second language may be mistakenly identified as learners with learning inability, by focusing on proficiency than learning abilities. Nunan (1999) indicates that this mistakenly discriminates against rural learners. Gamaroff (1995) argues that being incompetent in a second language does not mean being incompetent academically, though it can lead to academic failure. Nunan (1999) further states that learning through a second language is an international problem but it cannot be the sole cause of academic failure (Gamaroff, 1995).

It must also be taken into consideration that it takes about seven years to acquire the CALP which enables one to cope with academic demands of school. Cummins (2000) further shows that if a child's development in learning the mother tongue is good, their development in learning a second language will also be good. If learners know how to convert grams into kilograms in the mother tongue, they will be able to convert grams into kilograms in the second language, meaning that there are intellectual skills that are relevant to both languages.

Brown (2007) shows that there are other factors besides teacher proficiency that complicates learning through the medium of English for non-native speakers of English such as learning process and the age of the learner. Mc Laughlin (1987) and NEPI (1991) indicate that learners learn better while they are still young. This assumption has however been questioned. Marinova (2003, pp. 61, 67, 870) argued that age has nothing to do with the best

outcomes in second language acquisition but exposure and access to good second language inputs and instructions. If Cummins (2000) says that it takes two years for a child to acquire Basic Interpersonal Communicating Skills on the mother tongue, this has nothing to do with the age but the exposure therefore any person of any age can acquire any language. In other word, almost every learner is born with the same ability to acquire the language except in case of some disability related to language learning.

The development of linguistic skills is directly related to the degree of exposure to a language. Learners acquire rich discourse when they interact among themselves. This means that teaching grammar does not help learner to have communicative competence.

Orosco and O'Connor (2015) applied some theory related to the family environment, arguing that the social capital of the home and school can motivate language acquisition together with the material enrichment and social networks. There are differences between learning difficulties (difficulties in learning the subject content) and language-based difficulties where learning is difficult because the language that is used to learn is unfamiliar. In rural monolingual areas, not only do the learners have limited English proficiency but so do the teachers. Both teachers and learners who live in rural monolingual conditions are affected by the language policy in terms of the second language medium.

Cook (1991) says that the effectiveness of teaching through the medium of a second language depends on how the teacher utilises the teaching materials in order to achieve the intended learning outcomes. It should be noted that even with the availability of teaching and learning materials, without proper teacher training on how to utilise them, their utilisation will be compromised. There is a need to apply multiple approaches in order to support the changing needs of the learners

Since the mother tongue is learnt through exposure there is a great need for exposure to English. Therefore the lack of exposure to English in a monolingual rural society has an impact on learning and teaching.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter presented a review of relevant literature in order to provide context for transitioning and the concepts framing the study. There have always been some contradictions and a lack of clarity in terms of language policy in education. Consequently, a brief outline of the way the study is related to previous ones was discussed. Chapter three will provide an outline of the research process and related activities that took place and

explains the procedure and manner in which the data were collected. The research questions will be analysed in relation to the data collection strategy. Validity and ethical considerations will also be outlined.

Chapter three: Research design and methodology

3.1 Introduction

In order to obtain insight into the challenges that teachers face when a second language (English) is used as the medium of instruction in a rural monolingual society, such as the case of Niani; and to understand how Grade 4 teachers address the associated challenges, a qualitative research methodology was used. According to Leedy (1993), the methodology applied helps in explaining the nature of the data to be collected in order to answer the research questions. The research was carried out in an authentic context – the classroom. This was done to understand the phenomenon being studied, namely, how the teachers address the challenges they experience when they teach through English. Details relating to the context, such as the physical environment and the existing economic and social factors, were provided in order to present a picture of the environment being studied. It is envisaged that this will help readers have a fair appreciation of the context of the study.

3.2 Research design

The study used a case study methodology. This approach is useful when attempting to understand how participants interact with each other in a specific situation. In addition, in a case study the why of a particular phenomenon or a group is asked (Babbie, 1993).

According to Merriam (2009, p. 40), a case study “fences in” what a researcher is going to study and analyses the phenomenon under investigation.

A case study was selected in order to understand the challenges Tshivenda speakers teachers encounter when they teach Grade 4 learners and how they address those challenges. The case study opens opportunities for voiceless and marginalised groups. In order to strengthen the case study, more than one technique was used in the data collecting process. The data gathering tools included semi-structured interviews and also observations to verify the interviews. This helped to gain an understanding of the learners’ transition from Grade 3 to Grade 4 with reference to English as medium of instruction. The study also attempted to identify the challenges that rural teachers face when teaching Grade 4 learners in English and to explore the strategies they use in order to address these challenges.

Below is the discussion of the research questions that underpin the study.

Why do Grade 4 content teachers find the transition of their learners from the Foundation Phase problematic? The above research question consists of two sub questions, which are listed below. These were dealt with in order to answer the main question.

What are the linguistic challenges that teachers face when Grade 3 learners moves to Grade 4? This question is key to understanding the challenges that teachers and learners experience in Grade 4 classrooms when lessons are conducted in English. Semi-structured interviews with subject advisors helped to obtain an understanding of the subject advisors' familiarity with the challenges that teachers face and to verify what teachers claim. Therefore, semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers who had at least three years' teaching experience in Grade 4. Later, classroom observations were carried out when lessons were conducted in English.

How do teachers address the challenges? This question forms part of the exploration of the way teachers understand and facilitate lessons when Grade 3 learners move to Grade 4. This focused mainly on strategies employed by teachers when lessons are conducted in the medium of English. Classroom observation was also applied. This question was used to find out exactly what happens (what do teachers do) when they are faced with challenges related to the medium of English.

3.3 Research site

In South Africa the deep rural areas are those areas that are found long distances away from the cities or towns. Niani is situated in Limpopo province (see Fig 1.3), approximately 90 kilometres from Thohoyandou, which is the nearest town in the Vhembe district. It is situated about 180 kilometres from Polokwane and about 140 kilometres from Beit Bridge (Zimbabwe border). It is located next to the Tshikondeni coal mine and close to the Kruger National Park. The Tshikondeni mine employs about 770 mineworkers who are local residents. Niani experiences very low rainfall, especially in winter.

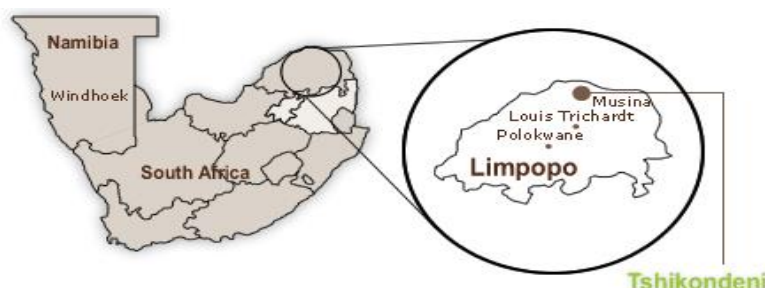


Figure 2: Location of the research site

People in deep rural areas usually have to struggle in order to reach modern facilities, for example big supermarkets, banks and entertainment centres. There is a lack of transport and people spend much money to travel to such destinations. Although most of the schools in the area have been provided with new classrooms, the old classrooms are still in use owing to the increase in learner enrolment. Some of these schools have electricity and some make use of solar power. For sanitation these schools use pit toilets. Although there are water pipelines, they are usually dry and therefore the schools depend on boreholes. Most learners travel in excess of three kilometres on foot in order to get to school. In addition, they have to perform domestic chores after school, for example collecting firewood, taking care of the herds and fetching water from some distance away.



Figure 3: Activities in the rural area of Niani

In figure 3, photo on the top left shows the route that learners walk on their way from home to their schools. These Grade 1 learners have to walk about two kilometres way every day. On the top right the photo shows how they access water. This boy is carrying a 25-litre drum on a wheelbarrow. In the middle are boys on their way from collecting grass to thatch the roof at home. The one in school uniform has just got a lift home. On the bottom left, the little girl has to accompany her granny to collect firewood from the forest. The bottom right shows a boy herding the cattle. This routine is performed in rain and in shine. The herd normally goes out until sunset.

The community depends on natural resources such as wood as a source of energy, as well as depending largely on livestock for subsistence. They also trade mopani worms and firewood. Teachers in the rural areas usually reside in the local communities, although some reside in nearby townships, which are also monolingual areas. These teachers are mother tongue speakers of Tshivenda.



Figure 4: Some of the features of the rural area around Niani

In figure 4, learners on the far top left are on their way home from school. As a result of the long walk they are thirsty and they drink water from a community tap. The photo in the top row on the left shows some of the dwellings in the rural areas. On the far top right are some of the livestock around the home stead. The flock of sheep on the bottom is left on its own but will have to be herded home later in the day. The bottom middle picture shows how food

is usually prepared using firewood. Although there is electricity in most of the rural areas, people still prefer to use fire when preparing most of the food. On the bottom right, learners are playing on their way back home. They sitting packed together on the branch of a tree and are seesawing.

3.4 Participants and sampling

Patton (2001) maintains that sampling entails the selection of a subgroup, that is, a representative subsection of the population. A sampling design refers to the procedure or plan through which the researcher selects research participants from a population. The appropriate sampling strategy will also be guided by the research questions. A non-probability sampling strategy was used because the selection was not likely to be found anywhere else and the results cannot be generalised.

The study focused on three primary schools in Niani circuit and all six teachers interviewed were from these three schools. The schools are referred to as school A, school B and school C. I believe that the number of schools served the purpose since this was classroom-based research with the intention of understanding the challenges that teachers face and how they address these challenges when a second language (English) is used as the medium of instruction for Grade 4 learners (Patton, 2001).

The sample does not represent all the Niani Grade 4 teachers. Six teachers aged between 35 and 55 years, three males and three females, were interviewed and three were observed, since they were more experienced in the Intermediate Phase and had some defining characteristics which made them suitable for the study. The characteristics include teaching in the rural environment, teaching Grade 4 learners, having little exposure to the second language (English), and being professionals.

All teachers were mother tongue speakers of Tshivenda, and had experience of teaching content subjects. The focus was on teachers with a minimum of three years' teaching experience in the Intermediate Phase and the teacher should have regularly attended at least 70% of the professional development programmes.

Two curriculum advisors were interviewed in order to find out whether they were aware of any challenges that teachers face and to find out what strategies they used to help teachers address the challenges. These curriculum advisors were responsible for content subjects in the Intermediate Phase. The relevant curriculum advisors were identified by the circuit

manager. To ensure trustworthiness, I used multiple methods of data collection (Cekiso & Madikiza 2014).

3.5 Data collection: process and tools

The data were collected by conducting in-depth interviews with six Grade 4 teachers. Other in-depth interviews were conducted with two curriculum advisors. Later, three classroom observations were conducted, this time as verification of the prior interviews.

3.5.1 *In-depth interview*

Interviews are considered appropriate for gathering qualitative data because the participants are in a position where they best describe their opinions and feelings about the situation in their own words. Thirty-four questions were asked. The questions were arranged in five sections. Six questions sought to ascertain biographical and background details, eight covered teaching experience, and seven covered teaching methodology. As indicated, the interviews uncovered explanations of knowing how teachers face the challenges and the strategies they use. It also allowed the interviewer to summarise the responses and to seek clarity on them (Kvale, 1996).

Only reasonable questions were asked in order to get valid answers. For transparency, I made the aim of the interview clear and the information that I wanted to gather from the participant. For clarification I used probing questions. The interview questions were written down. I piloted the interview questions with my colleagues at my school beforehand in order to see if they made sense and would elicit the responses that I was expecting.

The interview was semi-structured and explored in detail the participants' own perceptions. This technique was used to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation where second language (English) is used as a medium of instruction in a rural monolingual society. I started with general questions using everyday vocabulary. I arranged with the participants to record the interviews and explained why the audiotape is best; that is, to record their views correctly.

Teachers were interviewed at their schools as agreed. The interviews took about 60 minutes for each teacher. The questions were asked in English. I read each question but teachers had their own copies of them and were able to ask for the clarity on the questions before

they answered. They were also allowed to answer in the language of their choice to ensure that they could express themselves well.

I wrote notes during the interview while recording the conversation. After the interview I stopped the recording machine and chatted with the interviewees. This helped me find out whether they were inhibited by the recording.

I also made arrangements to interview the curriculum advisors. The interview with these advisors was conducted at the circuit and lasted 45 minutes. Curriculum advisors were presented with their written questions, which were intended to help me find out how they advise teachers in addressing the challenges. They were given a chance to ask for clarity on these questions.

I recorded all my notes and the events in an orderly fashion. Leaving wide margins in case I remember something later (Kadek & Ketut, 2007).

3.5.2 Non-participant observation

The three conducted observation helped me understand fully the complexities of the phenomenon being studied and overcome discrepancies between what the participants say and what they actually do. It was also meant to help to uncover some of the behavioural patterns that teachers were not aware of. The purpose and the focus of observation were linked with the research questions. The lesson was observed in its natural environment in which I always remained an observer. The participants' anonymity was protected by giving them a pseudonym (Cekiso & Madikiza 2014).

A pre-observation session was organised two days before the observation commenced. This was done in order to get an overview of the daily teaching situation. In Grade 4 classrooms where the medium of teaching was English. An observation schedule was used for this process. I entered the classroom and took a seat at the back, accompanied by my assistant who helped me with the recordings. When the lesson started I observed how frequently the teacher used the English language, and when the learners responded whether it was in Tshivenda or English. The classroom observations in the Grade 4 classrooms took approximately two hours.

In order to get the full picture of the classroom situation my assistant operated the video recorder. Both a phone for audio recording and a video recorder were used to accommodate possible technical errors after observation. The researcher was mindful of the possibility of

what is called the “Hawthorne effect”, that is, the possibility of both learners and teachers changing their behaviour in the researcher’s presence (Kumar, 2011, p. 141). This was effectively managed through a pre-observation visit to establish rapport with teachers and ask them to explain to learners what was going to happen. Although the entire lesson was observed, the focus was on a specific aspect, that is, the challenges that teachers face and how they address them in the teaching process.

The following areas were focused on during the observation:

- Observing teachers’ strategies when the teacher introduced a lesson.
- Observing how the teacher used English vocabulary to explain the content and activities.
- Observing how the teacher explained the new topic at the learners’ level of understanding.
- Observing whether learners interacted well with the teacher (learner involvement).
- Observing how the teacher handled disruptive behaviour during the lessons and the potential to handle problems that might arise during the lesson that is whether teachers use Tshivenda or English to handle misbehaviours

3.6 Data analysis and interpretation

As advised by Taylor-Powel & Renner (2003), my data came from a single case of Tshivenda speaking teachers in the rural monolingual society of Niani. The data comprised the narrations of six Grade 4 teachers and two curriculum advisors, as well as information gleaned from three classrooms observations. Interviews were first conducted with six Grade 4 teachers and later with two curriculum advisors from Niani circuit.

The data were produced in the form of word-for-word transcripts. The interviews were first transcribed into Tshivenda and later translated from Tshivenda into English. The classroom observations were also in the form of narratives, but were in English apart from the direct quotes of the teachers observed. The data were analysed and interpreted in terms of the basic elements of narrative data analysis and interpretation based on Taylor-Powel and Renner (2003). I listened to the recorded interviews with the six Grade 4 teachers and the

curriculum advisors several times. I noted down some impressions that I came across when listening. For example, I noted that Mukondeleli has never participated in attending fulltime education, and that Malume had had a bad work experience I then played the recordings made during the classroom observations several times.

My analysis was limited to rural Tshivenda-speaking Grade 4 teachers and their classroom interactions, experiences, teaching methodologies, linguistics background and personal growth plans. For the curriculum advisors, analysis was limited to their curriculum management and delivery with regard to teachers. With the classroom observations, I focused on the challenges experienced when English is used as the medium of instruction and the way teachers address the problems related to English as medium of instruction.

I identified the questions I asked on the basis of the research question I wanted my analysis to answer. What problems do teachers face when teaching Grade 4 learners? In terms of classroom challenges, how do teachers handle the situation? I looked at the transcripts of how six Grade 4 teachers, two curriculum advisors and the three classroom observations responded to these questions. I organised the data relating to these questions looking at all participants, thereafter I identified the similarities and differences. I then grouped the same data for each question together. I used a green pen to highlight all the information pertaining to what happens when English is the medium of instruction in Grade 4 classrooms; a purple pen to highlight all the information on how teachers address the problem; a red pen to highlight information on the role that a rural environment plays on English exposure, looking in particular at the teachers' tertiary education and their biographical information; and a yellow pen to highlight the level of English exposure.

Although not part of the research questions, the level of English exposure for both teachers and learners and role that the rural environment plays in exposure to English was answered. I then explored the connection between these questions. The question on the level of exposure is related to the problem that teachers face when English is used as the medium of instruction. The strategy to solve the problem came after teachers were experiencing problems with the English medium. The rural monolingual environment can also be related to the lack of English exposure. Accordingly, I used these questions to form my themes and then organised these into categories.

Table 3.1 Themes and categories

Questions	Categories: based on responses to questions	Subcategories
What challenges do teachers	Responses related to carrying out	- English medium

face when teaching Grade 4 learners?	instructions	- Tshivenda medium
In terms of difficulties, how do teachers handle the situation?	strategies	- Home - School
What is the level of English exposure	Teachers Learners	- Home - School - Home - School
What role does Rural environment play in English exposure?	Teachers Learners	

I wrote the categories on a chart and then cut them and sorted the categories into piles, each which represent a category. In this way, information relating to these themes, as obtained from the interviews and the classroom observations, was grouped together.

I did not generalise but provided an understanding from the participants' points of view. The findings of the study cannot be generalised to other schools that were not part of the study. Although it is possible that the outcomes may have policy implications beyond the selected schools. These are to be communicated with the relevant representatives of the Department of Basic Education.

3.7 Data storage and capturing

In terms of data storage my supervisor has kept a copy which will be stored in the stockroom of the Humanities Education Department, in the Aldoel building on the Groenkloof campus of the University of Pretoria for a period of 15 years. The disc containing my research was handed to my supervisor prior to final submission. The raw data is stored on hard copy while the analysis is stored electronically on a disc with a PIN code for security. Once the 15-year period has lapsed, the disc will be destroyed by breaking it and recycling the pieces.

3.8 Ethical considerations

The research was conducted in public schools with government employed teachers. Therefore, issues around ethics needed attention. Ethical clearance and permission to conduct the study were sought from the University. Prior to the commencement of the study, I established a rapport with the participants of the study and sent letters requesting the

relevant decision-makers and participants for permission to conducting the study. I explained that the purpose of the study was to find out how Tshivenda-speaking teachers cope with the challenges they face when teaching Grade 4 learners. I told the participants from the beginning that they were free to withdraw at any point without disclosing the reason for such withdrawal and that neither the researcher nor the school management team would pressurise or influence them in any way.

I also explained the benefits of the study, for example minimising the challenges experienced. The adult participants were then given a letter of consent to sign in private. The participants were allowed to ask for clarity and were told that they had the right to privacy and that their anonymity would be protected. No identifiable information would be reported.

In the case of the parents and learners, I followed the same procedure but this time the language used was the mother tongue of the participants. With regard to learners, as they are minors, permission was sought from their parents. The parents of the minor participants were requested to sign a consent form. This consent form was also written in English but explained in Tshivenda, while the assent form, on the other hand, was in Tshivenda and was read to the learners. Parents and guardians were free to ask questions before signing the letter of consent and I asked the teachers to help those that had a problem with signing. They were given three days to consider whether to sign the form. The participants were then informed about the study to ensure that they knew about the purpose of the interview. This was done before the study commenced.

Once I had received ethical clearance from the university, I sent the application letter and the consent form to the circuit manager, school principals and teachers, as well as the parents of those learners that were going to be in the class during the classroom observations. After receiving the responses, I visited the schools before the research commenced in order to develop a good relationship with the participants.

3.9 Ensuring trustworthiness

I let the participants know where I came from, and the purpose and benefits of the research. I encouraged the participants to be frank throughout the research process and ensured that bias during data analysis was minimised by focusing only on the points of view of those teachers and curriculum advisors who were interviewed. In order to ensure credibility after the interview, a summary of the discussions was read to the participants to confirm the accuracy of the written report. I used both the interview and the observation data to help

increase the trustworthiness of the data collection. The fact that I used participants from three schools in a similar environment was meant to verify the findings. I asked some of my relatives who hold PHD degrees and who had done social research before to help me scrutinise my work since I am a non-native speaker of English. The original meaning of what the participants said was presented and points of views the participants were reported accurately.

3.10 Anticipated constraints

Some constraints were anticipated during the study, a few of which were unanticipated.

Site related: I conducted my fieldwork more than 100 kilometres from where I live and work. I had some plans for finding accommodation because I thought it would not be easy for me to travel to and fro in one day. I made prior arrangements with my school management and my colleagues to ensure that my lessons continued during my absence.

Affordability: I stayed over for a day before realising that I could manage the travelling if I got up very early in the morning. There were days that I had to travel to and fro and that was too expensive, as I did not have any financial assistance during my fieldwork. That unfortunately delayed my progress because I sometimes had to arrange to obtain money for fuel in order to access my research site.

Ethics approval: An administrative hitch related to an online change. It took a long time to get approval from the ethics committee to conduct my research because of changes to the ethics application system from hard copy application to online application.

3.11 Conclusion

Chapter 3 explained and outlined the way the research questions that were analysed in relation to the data collection strategy. The chapter described the research site, the sampling procedures, the process and the activities which took place and explained the procedures for data collection and the manner in which the data were collected in detail. The next chapter presents the data which were obtained from the interviews and the observations.

Chapter 4: Data presentation

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data collected from the participants through interviews. These data will be presented in two sections, namely, the narratives related by the participants in the interviews and the information obtained from the classroom observations. This chapter is intended to provide a rich description of the challenges teachers face when English is used as a medium of instruction in Grade 4, and how teachers address these challenges. The data below presents the participants profiles.

4.2 Participants' profiles from interviews

The following sketch illustrates a summary of teachers' profiles. The names appeared on the sketch are participants' pseudonyms used on the transcripts and narratives.

Table 1.3: Summary of the participants' profiles (Participants were uncomfortable to reveal their exact age, estimations were made. My participants were between the age of 35 and 55)

Participants	Gender	Qualifications	Year obtained	duration	Institution	Distance living away from school	Subject taught	Home language
Makhadzi	F	BEd	2008	4 years	University of Venda	30 kilometres	Maths	Tshivenda
Malume	M	Primary Teachers Diploma	1993	3 years	Tshisimani College of Education	25 kilometres	Maths	Tshivenda
Maseo	F	Primary Teachers Diploma	1989	3 years	Tshisimani College of Education	10 kilometres	English	Tshivenda
Maswoi	M	Primary Teachers Diploma	1994	3 years	Tshisimani College of Education	20 kilometres	Maths, Science	Tshivenda
Mukondeleli	F	Abet certificate	2008	1 year	UNISA	300 metres	Maths, life skills	Tshivenda
Mutshinye	M	Primary Teachers Diploma	1986	3 years	Tshisimani College of Education	30 kilometres	English, EMS	Tshivenda

It was established from the data obtained from the interviews with the teachers that four teachers had completed their tertiary education at Tshisimani College of Education and one at University of Venda in Limpopo. Mukondeleli, a female teacher, had obtained her tertiary

education qualification at UNISA studying part time and had also completed her ABET certificate through UNISA. All these teachers are the qualified teachers who met the SACE requirements and they are qualified for the subjects they are teaching. They are also experienced teachers; however, the majority of students who attended and are still attending the University of Venda and Tshisimani were the mother tongue speakers of Tshivenda. Apart from UNISA, all of these institutions are found locally in the Vhembe district of Limpopo province. The dominant language used on campus was and still is Tshivenda; therefore it was not necessary for the students to communicate in any other language besides Tshivenda. Moreover, it was also unnecessary for students at that time to engage in a second language outside the lecture rooms or even during study discussions, because almost everyone understood Tshivenda.

Of the six teachers only three are still furthering their education: Maswoi, Maseo and Mukondeleli. The rest said that they are tired and find it a waste of time because qualifications are not considered in teaching. Although she is still furthering her education, Maseo also complained too that she was not motivated because even when she has completed her degree, her salary will not change. The detailed narratives will be presented below.

4.3 Interviews: Teachers personal narratives

The narratives below are presented from the participants' point of view and are not based on the researcher's point of view or ideas. The narratives were taken verbatim from the transcripts. The anonymity of the participants was ensured and only the pseudonyms given to the participants were used. The participants' stories will be narrated in alphabetical sequence of the letters used to distinguish between the six teachers. In parts, teachers words are reported verbatim. The participants were referred to as teacher A, B, C, D, E, and F together with the pseudonyms.

Teacher A

Malume, a male teacher who teaches Maths, has been teaching for 17 years. He does not live near the school but has lived in the district since he was born. His mother tongue is Tshivenda and he also speaks English, Afrikaans and Tsonga comfortably. He learnt to speak English while he was doing his tertiary education at the Tshisimani College of Education in 1993.

After qualifying as a teacher, he went to work in a private factory in Gauteng but he was not happy with the wages. Moreover, the owner of the factory had his own way of doing things unlike in the education sector.

I cannot say exactly what is good about teaching, but it's not the same as in the private factory where the owner of the factory wants his/her project the way she/he likes because one has his or her own way of working. I once worked in Gauteng after I have qualified but we were getting a very little wages. But here in teaching it is much better but ...

He enjoys teaching because he has some freedom, but he is concerned about the amount of paperwork and the curriculum that keeps on changing.

He found work in the school he is teaching at because there was a post available. This was his third year in Grade 4, which was not his choice but he was placed there because there was a need. He is currently also teaching Grades 6 and 7 and finds teaching the younger ones different. He realises that there is a difference between Grade 4 and the other classes in that Grade 4s have more difficulties in terms of English than those in the upper classes, as Grade 4s often fail to understand instructions and he also says that Grade 4s are slower, they don't respond that much.

Yes! There is a difference, in Grade 4 children are still ... are not yet knowing, it means that it's like there is too much work unlike in other higher grades because when you begin to they do understand , here in lower grades they are still battling with it too much, too much! And when they come to Grade 4, it's like they are a bit confused because before they were they were not taught by many teachers. Teaching in Grade 4 left me with no negative impact, it uplifted me, and this made me to grow.

We use both because when you start speaking in English you will see when children are unable to understand and is then that you will be able to explain in Tshivenda that they will understand"

He sees this as helpful to learners because it makes them understand better.

For you to tell a child in such a way that he/she understands, you have to explain in Tshivenda for an example, in faces and edges, is like when you say that face it is the space where we can write on, but edge is where we cannot write on.

He uses both languages to teach, that is, English and Tshivenda, since he has no specific method except that when he sees that learners do not understand while teaching in English, he switches to Tshivenda and explains to learners. They then understand:

Let's take for an example if you are explaining fraction, you will be explaining to the children that these are those numbers which when they are divided by, they do not leave any remainder, children will not understand this through English but if we go to the Tshivenda, they can understand. If a child understands that in Tshivenda, those English words she will grab and even though you ask a child what is a fraction in English, you will find him/her knowing he/she will never forget, he/she will be knowing exactly that, it is a part of. Even when it's like that, for you to teach a child something like 3 - Dimension, we switch to Tshivenda. Or you can say that fraction is a part that can be cut into equal parts like bread, if you say it like that, you will find a child understanding that much better.

It is language, because they are used to their own language. In grade 4 children still have some difficulties unlike in Grade 7, learners still have some difficulties. It is there where there are some difficulties because most learners don't understand the instructions, and they even say, "Teacher, I don't understand" but after explaining, they do understand.

I feel it is inappropriate, we will not be able to, even myself this maths I am used to it in English, we would fight against that, some of these words are difficult for us to say them in Tshivenda.

He thinks it is a good idea for Grade 4s to switch to the medium of English as it will help them learn another language. He rated his English proficiency 5 out of ten. Many of his learners do struggle to speak English. On the other hand he feels that it will not be wise to teach through Tshivenda because he has never taught maths in Tshivenda.

He suggested that teachers should talk to the learners in English and also find creative ways to help them learn better. The support they get from the Department relates to what and how to teach a particular subject but not to how to use English as a medium of instruction when teaching other subjects.

Teacher B

Mukondeleli, a female teacher who teaches Maths and Life Skills in Grade 4, resides in the local community and has lived in the district since she was born. She worked in Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) for eight years but has been teaching Grade 4 for three

years. She also teaches Grades 6 and 7. Her mother tongue is Tshivenda. Mukondeleli has never attended any full-time secondary education classes.

Therefore she did not learn to speak English at a specific institution but studied it on her own.

Mm! I cannot say there is a specific place because I studied on my own doing part time when I was furthering my studies. Even at the college I corresponded, I did not attend any class. I passed and after that I did ABET, because someone has to be courageous so I always did self-studies up to this date.

Because I cannot say exactly where I ever stood in front of anyone and speak in English. I did self-study. During this self-study I did a certificate, ABET certificate and I also did a diploma. While trying to look around and investigate I found that there is ECDP and then I made some follow-ups and I did that through UNISA because there was this ego. Is just that I got married at an early age and during that time there was this cultural myth that if a female child go to school, she will get mad. But after getting married I found out that there are some who were continuing with their school while married and I admired them. Now I am doing ACE specialising in maths maybe in the coming years one will be doing (Hons) degree.

She likes being with children but she complains about the clashes in the work schedule. She thinks that the Department decides on the curriculum. She likes the idea of learners switching from Tshivenda to English medium in Grade 4 because it makes learners learn another language.

The major problem that she faces when teaching Grade 4s is that of language (English). She says only a few of her learners speak English.

It is the issue of not knowing the English language and again these children spent most of their time being taught in Tshivenda in the Foundation Phase.

She uses both Tshivenda and English to teach. She prefers this because she thinks it works and whichever the way she uses to teach, it is personal. However, she says that teaching through English is more problematic for learners.

Just that mmh, when you teach in Tshivenda, they understand better because it is through their language that is familiar to them, they know the language and they speak it daily.

She always shares this language problem with her colleagues and helps these learners by giving them extra work and by referring them to the Foundation Phase teachers. She finds teaching through the medium of English to be time consuming because learners take time to catch up, unlike when teaching through Tshivenda.

She could not rate her English proficiency when teaching them through English although she could see that her English is not perfect compared to some children that she teaches. *“But unlike when I am reading, I will understand but it is so hard to say in English what I have been reading.”*

She says that she would opt to teach through the medium of Tshivenda if that were possible. She suggested that in order to minimise the English problem, learners should be taught through English as early as possible and that is in the Foundation Phase. She seeks help from the curriculum advisors. They help her with how to teach through the medium of English but she says that if there were such workshops on how to teach through English that could be helpful.

Teacher C

Maseo, a female teacher who teaches English in Grade 4, does not live near the school although she has lived in the district since birth. Her mother tongue is Tshivenda and she also speaks Sesotho and Sepedi fluently. She learnt to speak English while she was doing her tertiary education in North West at the Tshisimani College of Education in 1989.

She has been teaching for 18 years and works at this school because there was a shortage of teachers. She has been teaching Grade 4 for 11 years. She enjoys teaching and being with the children: *“Being with kids, I enjoy when I give instructions, they obey unlike those in upper grades”*, but complains about the salary. It is her wish for teachers’ salary to be adjusted:

That which is not good? Hey! Money, money. Salary yes! It’s like when you have taught someone, immediately when she/he gets a job, they become more advanced in salary; they also pass you by the road driving those big cars. The way they change these curriculums, they don’t give us time.

She has also taught Grade 5 and has found that there is a difference:

Yes! Especially in Grade 4, yes, it is difficult these children understand during the second term and not all of them.

Maseo says it is okay for learners to switch to the medium of English because it helps them develop, although she uses Tshivenda most of the time when she teaches believing that this will help the learners. She finds this effective; although she does not use English outside the classroom, she believes that the children should use it outside the classroom. She added that the language should also be used in the Foundation Phase. She does not believe that children should be taught through the medium of Tshivenda because she believes that learners should know other languages so that they can cope in today's world.

Maseo rates herself 5 out of 10 in English and her children's proficiency less than 5. She says that the only support she gets is from the curriculum advisor but only on what to teach on a particular subject and not how to teach through a second language, and says that it would be helpful if they could get support on how to teach through the medium of English.

Teacher D

Maswoi teaches Maths and Science in Grade 4. He does not live near the school although he has also lived in the district since birth. His mother tongue is Tshivenda but he can also speak English, Afrikaans and Tsonga comfortably. He also learnt to speak English while he was doing his tertiary education in 1994 at the Tshisimani College of Education. He is still studying at the University of Johannesburg (UJ). He did not choose to teach Grade 4 but had to because there was a need; nor did he choose to teach at the school but it was where there was a post available.

He likes teaching but is not happy with class overcrowding: "*these learners are so many in one classroom, overcrowding*".

He has been teaching for 20 years. He has also taught other grades and has noticed the difference in the language of medium as a challenge in Grade 4: "*Yes maybe in terms of the language. The children are unable to understand English in grade 4 unlike in upper classes.*"

He says the department decides the medium of instruction but is guided by the education policy. Although in practice he uses both Tshivenda and English to teach and finds this helpful he sees the move from Tshivenda to English as a good option. He reckons that through this move learners will come to know English better.

He finds the specific problem with Grade 4s to be that of language and he always consults the language teacher to minimise the problem. When he tries to use English only, his lessons are slowed down, although learners are interested. He says that only a few learners respond when he teaches in English: "*Out of ten, while I am teaching let's say only 50 per cent in speaking, only few, hey! It is difficult*"

Ja, children become more interested, children become excited, it's like in Maths, children like it when you are speaking in English the same when you enter the classroom and speak in English they become quiet and it means that their interest is in English.

Although his learners seem to be positive when teaching through English, understanding is difficult. He finds teaching through the medium of English time consuming but says he would not opt to teach through the medium of Tshivenda as that would be boring. He also believes that there is insufficient terminology in Tshivenda to teach Maths.

That would be boring; normally there is little Maths vocabulary in Tshivenda language like when you teach 2D and 3D (two dimensions and three dimensions) how will I say that in Tshivenda?

He suggests that these children should be taught English thoroughly in the lower grades. Although he uses English outside the classroom, he does not always do so. He says that he does not get any support when teaching through the medium of English

Teacher E

Makhadzi, a female teacher, does not stay near the school but has lived in the district from birth. She enjoys teaching and being with children. Her mother tongue is Tshivenda but she can also speak Tsonga, which she learnt to speak while she was doing her tertiary education at the University of Venda in 2008.

She has six years' teaching experience and four years' experience in Grade 4. She has also taught another grade where she noticed the difference between the medium of Tshivenda in Grade 3 and the medium of English in Grade 4. She is currently teaching Grade 4 as a replacement for a teacher who moved to another school. She mentioned the shortage of learners' books as being a problem.

She is positive about learners switching to the medium of English in Grade 4, saying that it will help learners to speak English better. In practice she uses both Tshivenda and English. She sees this as an effective way of teaching because when she tries to teach in English, it does not help because she always has to go back and explain in Tshivenda, which takes time.

I use both because these children do not understand some of the things when you teach them through English.

She sees the use of the mother tongue in Grade 3 as having an impact on Grade 4 learners' struggle with the English medium of instruction. Although her learners are happy when she teaches through the medium of English they do not understand what she is saying. She rates her proficiency in English as five out of ten, saying that she does not use English outside the classroom and nor do her learners. She believes that teaching through the medium of Tshivenda would not be easier.

Mmmh! it will be difficult because some of the things you would know them in Tshivenda because they don't have the names in Tshivenda.

The only help she gets is from the colleagues and the curriculum advisor, but this only pertains to what to teach in a particular subject.

Teacher F

Mutshinye, teaches English and Economics Management Science in Grade 4, does not live near the school but has lived in the district since he was born and can also speak Setswana and Tsonga. He learnt to speak English while he was doing his tertiary education at Tshisimani College of Education in 1986. He likes teaching but what he does not like is the working conditions and the salary: *"Let them give us some money even the things that keep on changing, curriculums and many policies at the same time."*

Mutshinye is currently teaching at the school because it was the closest to his home. He has been teaching for 30 years and complains about the low salary: *"I have been working for 20 years but earning so little."* He likes being with the children. It is his ninth year in teaching Grade 4 and he was placed there because there was a need. He has also taught Grade 3 and has noticed that in lower grades there is a lot of monitoring to do. He supports the switch from Tshivenda medium to English medium but does not use English outside the classroom. *"This [teaching in English] is helpful, when learners are furthering their studies, they won't find it difficult. It is also helpful to us as teachers because we also practising to speak English."*

He uses both the mother tongue and English to teach and finds this helpful, as he sees it as an effective way of teaching and when he tries to teach in English, this does not help because he always has to explain again in Tshivenda so it takes time.

It is helpful because they will have an idea as to what's going on except those who are having serious learning problems.

I asked if he could explain further:

I mean those who can't even read the basics sound in Tshivenda like "uncle" and even to write their names properly; it is helpful because they will have an idea of what is being taught.

He experiences problems with teaching through the medium of English in Grade 4:

Yes! These children take time to understand, you will be trying by all means to make them understand hey! It's tough.

He always shares this problem with some of his colleagues and says that few learners respond when he teaches through the medium of English. In addition, he finds it time consuming because he has to repeat himself to make them understand. Less than 50 per cent of his learners understand English; however, he would not opt to teach through the medium of Tshivenda.

Ha! Can it work? What will we call some of the things? This will be laughable during the first time, some of the word we don't know them in Tshivenda.

He suggested that there should be parental involvement. He also said that the only workshops he attends are those that are about how to teach a specific matter in a specific subject.

All teachers share the common challenges and common way of addressing the challenges. From the data presented, teachers code switch and translate the instructions during the lessons so that learners could understand what they are teaching. Teachers are not exposed to English and said that teaching through English is time consuming. They also share linguistic profile. The next section will reveal how the presented data on teachers are related to the data on the curriculum advisors.

4.4 Interviews: Curriculum advisors

Mr X is a male curriculum advisor who lives in a monolingual rural area; he has been a curriculum advisor for eight years. He often goes to schools to assist teachers. Because of the shortage of the curriculum advisors, he works for two circuits, namely, Niani and Vuwani. In the Niani circuit he just goes there to assist due to the shortage of Curriculum advisors. He says that during his visits some teachers welcome him but others have a negative attitude and misinterpret what is said by their unions.

Mmh! It is the problem of attitudes, and ... those who will be acting on what their unions are saying, and even misinterpret what their unions have said.

He is also aware of the language problem related to transitioning. He says that Grade 3 learners come to Grade 4 with very little vocabulary that would help them to cope when English is used as a medium of instruction.

Learners do not come with mm ... learners do not come into Grade 4 with adequate elementary knowledge of English because educators are forced to teach in Grade 3 ... in the mother tongue so that these learners understand.

He says that this is because teachers are forced to teach through the medium of Tshivenda in the Foundation Phase. He also says that teachers should help learners by translating the instruction during formal tasks and should first teach through the medium of Tshivenda and then gradually introduce English as the medium of instruction.

They don't understand English! And should be helped whenever they are given a formal assessment. The teacher must first read the instructions and interpret into the mother tongue to make them understand.

These learners do not cope with curriculum demands in Grade 4. At first I think they must use the mother tongue and gradually introduce English fall and instead of going on with the grade 4 curriculum, they must first teach the ... Elementary part of the curriculum that is (a e i o u). Mmh. Like at the beginning, they must teach sounds and alphabets to make them cope.

He says that learners lack English exposure because they live in a rural area where they hardly ever meet someone who speaks English. Although are exposed to English through TV.

No ... [pauses], they hardly try. Mmh ... This is a predominantly rural area where they will never meet a white person. No h... Mmh. Perhaps the only exposure that I know of is that of a television but eh ... Television does not communicate its only characters.

Mr X says that even some of the teachers struggle to speak English although others do try.

Mrs X is a female curriculum advisor who lives in a monolingual rural area. She has been a curriculum advisor for five years. She goes to schools in order to monitor the teaching and learning and also help where there is a problem. She says teachers welcome her visits

although at first it was not plain sailing. She says they used to think that she was there to blame them for their mistakes.

She is also aware of the transitioning language problem. She says that Grade 3 learners come to Grade 4 with little vocabulary and this causes a problem when they are being taught in English. She says this problem is prevalent throughout the rural areas where parents are generally unable to support their learners educationally:

This is a serious problem everywhere teachers are complaining, grade 4 is worse because they are from the foundation phase where they were taught in Tshivenda”

She said that teachers need not to give up by try by all means to help this learners because if they don’t, this problem will affect them later even at the universities

These learners can’t even answer a simple question paper but in upper grades is far much better because they are beginning to have an idea.

She says that she is aware of this problem because she was a teacher at several primary schools before she became a curriculum advisor. She goes on to say that these learners do not use the language at home and that is the reason why they struggle to understand English.

The curriculum advisors where aware of the challenges and they suggested that teachers should help learners by reading instructions and the translating them into the mother tongue, especially when they are writing formal tasks.

The following observations were conducted in order to verify the data presented through the interviews. Observations were also conducted to examine the interaction between the learners and the teachers that might not have become apparent during the interviews.

4.5 Classroom observations

Classroom observations were done as verification. The additional use of observational data was intended to establish the nature and the extent of the challenges that rural Niani teachers face when they teach through English. By so doing the study is supported by both the physical evidence and the participants’ point of views. The information was collected in the same manner in all the classrooms. Although the focus of the study was on the teachers, the audio tapes and the recordings were done with permission and the anonymity of the

schools was assured. My assistant helped me with the recording. No other challenges have I noticed either than that of linguistic.



Figure 5: Some features of School A

On the left are Grade 4 learners during break queuing to get their food. The middle photo shows the kitchen where the learners' food is prepared. On the right is the Grade 4 teacher during the Maths lesson.

Observation was done in a Grade 4 classroom during a maths lesson. The period lasted for an hour. The class consisted of 48 learners.

Malume entered the classroom and greeted the learners in English and the learners responded in English. He began the lesson by asking a question on the previous work. He wrote a sum on the chalkboard and asked learners to complete it,

“What must we do now?” Learners keep quiet, he goes on trying to explain in English again, then he asks Pfano to give an answer and Pfano gives the wrong answer, then Malume said: “No! We must bringing down another digit here”, he tries to show the learners. “We have to bring this three down here to make what! heh! We have to bring this three down here to make what? Now we have this 33 what must we do”? What must we divide; we can say 15 goes how many times into 33, don't say “*i ya lungana*” [how many times does it goes in, you must say it goes twice, trying to advise one of the learners].

Malume always tries to speak or teach in English but he was not giving enough guidance to help learners to understand better. From the observation it would seem that he also battled with the language when trying to give a detailed explanation in English.



Figure 6: Some features of School B

On the left are Grade 4s during a maths lesson. In the centre are learners during break time. On the right is the road the learners travel daily from home to school .

Observation of a Maths lesson was done in a Grade 4 classrooms with 45 learners. The period was scheduled for an hour.

Makhadzi entered the classroom and greeted the learners in English. Learners responded in English. She started the lesson by asking questions on the previous lessons.

She always first asks the question in English and there afterwards rephrases the same question in Tshivenda. “Write the place value of two thousand and fifty-two, the underlined number is five, what is the value of five? *Uhone ri vhudzeni place value ya five*” said Makhadzi in Tshivenda (meaning *Uhone tell us the place value of 5*). Uhone was battling to answer when a group of learners started to make noise.

“*Ni khou ri fhunga mani,*” [meaning you are making noise] and learners continue to make noise, and one said “*u khou nwala assignment!*” “*Mara u tshi ri nwalani a ni nwali zwone, hey!*” [Meaning, but when I tell you to write you do not want to.] *No fhedzisela no zwi pfa thi, zwi khou konda, a zwi vhuyi zwa konda* [This is the last one, is this difficult, no this is so simple.] “Now write the following in metres and centimetres 1237 *kha ri pfe, I khou ni balela?*” [Tell us is it difficult for you?]

When she first asked the question in English only a few learners raised their hands but immediately when she asks the same question in Tshivenda, several learners raised their hands showing excitement and also making a noise to get the teacher’s attention.

Whenever she wanted to calm the learners down or discipline them she used Tshivenda. And when she wants to explain she always uses Tshivenda. Throughout the whole lesson learners did not utter a single English word when talking to each other. I also observed both

teachers and learners while changing classrooms at the end of the period. All communications were done in Tshivenda.



Figure 7: Some features of School C

On the left are learners performing a traditional dance called Tshifasi. This is offered as an extracurricular activity. In the centre is the Grade 4 teacher during the lesson. On the right are learners during the lesson. The boys' hair cut was done because these two were going to dance Tshifasi.

Observation was done in a Grade 4 classroom during a Life Skills lesson. The period was scheduled to last an hour.

The class consisted of 35 learners. When Mukondeleli entered the classroom the learners were quiet. When starting the lesson, she asked the learners a few questions from the previous lesson and read from the textbook. She then code switched, asking questions "most of them came from Britain, *vha bva ga?*" [She code switches], Britain. She then read a paragraph from the textbook and then spoke in Tshivenda giving some examples.

"*The Venda lady is wearing Venda traditional clothes making some clay pots*", she read from the textbook. "*Vha vha vha khou zwi ita nga heyi ndila*" [meaning this is how they do it], "She went to the window and picked a clay pot. *Ni khou zwi vhona, no no vhuya na shumisa khali? Rine ro vha ri tshi bika nga dzo hedzi khali.*" [Meaning, can you see this, have you ever used these pots, we used to cook with pots like this.].

When she wanted to send a message or talk about something she always used Tshivenda. Throughout the lesson learners did not utter a single English word when talking to each other. I observed both teachers and learners while changing the classes at the end of the period. All communications took place in Tshivenda. The teacher code switched and interprets throughout.

Teachers battled with English. They all were battling to give further explanation in English and ended up giving the detailed explanations through the medium of Tshivenda. Teachers

always code switches during the lessons. Whenever they give examples, they used Tshivenda. Teachers always translate the questions they ask from English to Tshivenda for learners to respond.

During the classroom observation, learners' were also communicating among themselves in Tshivenda. Throughout all the observation not a single word was uttered in English amongst learners. Whenever learners needed clarification, or asked for something they used Tshivenda.

I immediately gained the impression that there was a big difference in learner discipline between the three classes. Fortunately all my data provided me with information that added value. In other words, they were quality data sets.

4.6 Conclusion

Chapter 4 presented the participants' point of views on what they perceived to be the challenges they face when teaching through the medium of English in Grade 4. Given their background, they highlighted the challenges and applied their personal strategies in order to address them when they teach through the medium of English.

All teachers supported the need to switch from the mother tongue medium of instruction to English, saying that this would help learners when they meet with other people who do not understand their language. They also had a number of complaints; among other things, they complained about the paperwork and the rapid changes in the curriculum. The curriculum advisors agreed that teachers are facing challenges when lessons are conducted through the medium of English in Grade 4. The next chapter presents a discussion and an interpretation of the data presented.

Chapter 5: Data interpretation and discussion

5.1 Introduction

The study used a narrative method to present the data. The data were analysed through the use of multiple codes. Significant sections of the participants' statements were also selected. This has been done to ensure consistency between the data presented, the findings and interpretations of the study.

English proficiency of both teachers and learners will be discussed, as well as teachers' and learners language background and the level of English exposure. In addition, the impact of the language background when it comes to second language proficiency (English) in a rural monolingual community will be discussed and interpreted. Learners' inadequate English vocabulary will also be discussed as it pertains to readiness to learn through the medium of English. Teachers "personal" teaching strategy will also be discussed from the participants' point of view.

5.2 Emergent narrative threads shared by participants

Looking at the presented narratives, all the participants have some common characteristics when it comes to the challenges they face in Grade 4 with teaching in English. In this section, the common narrative threads will be discussed.

All six teachers claimed that learners battle when English is used as the medium of instruction and all six teachers had developed a personal teaching methodology that involved translating and code switching. Teachers justified this interpreting as being one way to minimise the challenges. Teachers do not use English often but nevertheless support the move from Tshivenda to English medium, although they see English as being the main challenge. The curriculum advisors also support a code switching and interpreting methodology, regarding it as a means to help learners understand instructions.

5.2.1 Common thread 1: Teachers' linguistic profile

The data show that all these teachers are part of a monolingual Tshivenda-speaking community with very limited exposure to English. Mukondeleli, who was enrolled at UNISA at

the time of this study, has also been living in a rural monolingual Tshivenda-speaking community since birth. The only exposure she had had to English was in her study material and exam question papers.

When teachers were asked if they use English outside the classroom, all six of them said no. Mukondeleli said: *“No! I only use Tshivenda; it’s that I am too much Venda.”*

Five teachers said that they had learnt to use English when they started their tertiary education, but it could be that they did not apply the English because the majority of their fellow students were monolingual Tshivenda speakers. Mukondeleli, who has never attended a tertiary institution on a full-time basis, said that she could not say where she had learnt to speak English because she never uses it except to read her study material and answer her assignments and exams. She even completed her high school education through correspondence.

Teachers’ English inadequacy cannot be left unquestioned when it comes to learner English inadequacy. Therefore an overview of the role that language proficiency plays when a second language (English) is used as a medium of instruction is presented below.

It is telling that four teachers rated their English ability as five out of ten, another rated her ability as lower than her learners, while only one rated himself a seven out of ten. If, as teachers claim, they need to code switch and interpret when they teach, this could also sustain a poor English proficiency on the part of both teachers and learners. Although teachers were not clear on the inadequacy on English vocabulary, Mukondeleli admitted her inadequacy. *“Truly speaking I feel that I cannot speak it (English) because I cannot say exactly where I ever stood in front of anyone and speak in English. I did self-study and after that I did ABET. Again when teaching them through English I could see that my English is not much perfect as compared to some children that I teach. But unlike when I am reading, I will understand but it is so hard to say in English what I have been reading.”*

In other words the only time that these teachers use any English is when they teach. Although they use English in the classroom, it is not really effective because all these teachers use both their mother tongue (Tshivenda) and English to teach.

In the rural area of Niani, the ability of the school to serve as a place to practise English for both teachers and learners is never fully utilised. Accordingly, teachers’ limited vocabulary, which they have acquired at the tertiary education level has fossilised. This fossilisation and the fact that teachers have not been doing enough to help improve learners’ English proficiency has a negative effect on the learners’ English proficiency.

Since rural learners in Niani are not exposed to English at home, school should at least be the place where they can learn English. Unfortunately, learning English at school for rural Niani learners is not effective. In addition, this is the place where learners should acquire sufficient vocabulary to be able to deal with teaching that takes place in English. What in reality happens is that teachers spend most of their time communicating with learners through Tshivenda. Thus learners are deprived of exposure to English by both their environment and their teachers. Moreover, teachers deprive themselves of the opportunity to use English. Hence, after claiming that learners are failing to understand their instructions, teachers came up with their personal strategy of code switching.

5.2.2 Common thread 2: Breaking policy: justifying code switching as a means of coping.

Rural learners in Niani usually do not speak any language at home other than their mother tongue and school is the only place that they encounter English. Therefore, these learners are having a problem understanding English, which they only come across at school when they are taught in English. Since a lack of understanding makes teaching and learning difficult, teachers come with ways to address such challenges as a means to cope.

Teachers minimise the tension by code switching because they see this as a means of building up learners' confidence and understanding and thereby bridging the conceptual gap. Code switching refers to the use of two different languages in a sentence and also the substitution of words (Duran, 1994; Oyeomoni, 2006). In trying to minimise the situation, teachers came up with what they call personal teaching strategies. All six teachers seem to have departed from the prescribed methodology of the English medium in Grade 4. They say they are forced by circumstances to do so because they want learners to understand. And they said that they find their method of translating works because after they translate into Tshivenda learners are able to carry out the instructions. They say they do this after they have instructed learners in English. Learners did not respond when instructed to do something in English, but when they rephrased the same question in Tshivenda most of the learners would respond. Therefore in order to get a response, teachers turn to translation.

The curriculum advisors also find it necessary for teachers to translate the instructions for learners and said that because they do not understand English, they should be helped whenever they are given a formal assessment. *"Teachers first have to read the instructions and then translate these into the mother tongue to make learners understand."*

All teachers gave strong reasons why it is important to use both Tshivenda and English to teach in Grade 4. For example Malume says that some concepts in content-based subjects like Mathematics and Science could not be explained well in English. He gave the example of explaining the fractions in Maths. He said that such concepts could only be explained clearly using the language that the learner knows best. He went on to say that if the learner knows fractions in Tshivenda, it will be easy for the learner to know them English.

From what I observed, it seemed that Malume used both languages to teach. Whenever he asked a question in English and learners did not respond, he repeated the same question in Tshivenda and it was then that the learners responded. Whenever he gave a detailed explanation he used Tshivenda and when he wanted to keep discipline he did that in Tshivenda as well.

As Kasule and Mapolelo (2005, p. 603) indicated previously, code switching and translating are strategies that teachers use in particular as transitioning strategies with regard to the medium of instruction in teaching Mathematics in the primary schools. This strategy was introduced in Burundi and it was found to be so successful that it was proposed that it be used for both the spoken and the written word. Throughout the study, however, evidence of various strategies was found that teachers use in order to minimise the problems during the lessons conducted in English.

Gibbons & McGee (2003) found that teachers use translation as a means to simplify learning and teaching. Teachers say that when they ask learners to give their answers in English, it is a problem because only few will respond immediately; however, when they allow them to give answers in Tshivenda, almost the whole class will raise their hands. Teachers embark on this because they find that works. *“We use both because when you start speaking in English you will see when children are unable to understand and is then that you will be able to explain in Tshivenda that they will understand”*. Therefore, the only problem that is solved here is that of understanding the instruction; meanwhile the problems of language proficiency and adequate English vocabulary are not addressed and are therefore prolonged.

Polland (2002) discourages code switching, saying that it is a bad practice as it tends to be detrimental to both languages and that interpreting brings insufficient basics for the development of language. As a result, learners may not be able to communicate effectively. Jegede (2011, p. 43) shows that code switching could also be a means to cope or to address the challenges that teachers face when a second language is used as a medium of instruction. As the language of instruction is the means by which knowledge is imparted and

the intellectual potential of learners developed, such a language should be understood by both teachers and learners. Code switching may thus help to supplement the mother tongue so that there may be a better understanding between learners and teachers.

Mukondeleli said that when she teaches in Tshivenda, learners understand better because it is a language that is familiar to them, they know the language and they speak it daily. Mukondeleli uses both Tshivenda and English to teach and prefers this because she sees this working. Whichever way she uses to teach, it is personal. She says that teaching through English is more problematic for learners because only few learners do understand.

Malume uses no specific teaching method except that when he sees that learners do not understand when being taught in English, he switches to giving an explanation in Tshivenda. Generally, they then understand. Hence the major problem faced when teaching Grade 4s is that of inadequate proficiency and comprehension of English.

Mutshinye uses both the mother tongue and English to teach and finds this helpful because learners then have an idea as to what is going on, except for those with serious learning problems. He also mentioned that there are learners in Grade 4 who cannot read. When the curriculum advisors were asked if they are aware that Grade 4 learners do not understand English, they answered in the affirmative and suggested that learners have some difficulties with English. They are also aware that teachers come up with the means to cope so that they can help learners to understand the lessons.

Maswoi finds the specific problem in Grade 4 to be that of language and always consults the language teacher to help minimise the problem. And although his learners seem to be positive when being taught in English, understanding is difficult. He finds teaching through the medium of English time consuming and he says that only a few learners respond.

When learners do not have enough vocabulary or sufficient communicative skills to perform well academically and to cope when English is used as a medium of instruction, this will have an impact on teaching and learning. Learners' environment and past experience, in this case learning through the mother tongue in the Foundation Phase, has an influence on the teaching approach. Teachers need to come up with strategies that will help them to cope with the challenges they face when instructing Grade 3 learners whose medium of instruction was Tshivenda in the Foundation Phase.

Although when teaching through a second language learners often do not understand fully, teachers say that it is much better in higher grades, because whenever they begin to say something in English, unlike in lower grades some learners understand.

5.2.3 Common thread 3: Teachers' attitude towards English as medium of instruction

All six teachers were positive about the move from Tshivenda to the medium of English. They say that learners should not know their mother tongue only but should also learn other languages. They all said that this would help them to communicate when they travel. All six teachers regard English as an important language, one that is spoken internationally and that offers many opportunities. Despite the fact that Mukondeleli said that learners are happy and show an interest in learning English, learners do not understand what is being taught.

Malume sees the move from teaching through the medium of Tshivenda to English as a good option, as he believes that this will mean that learners know English better. Makhadzi is positive about learners switching to the medium of English in Grade 4 saying that it will help learners to speak English better, even though, in practice she uses both Tshivenda and English and sees this as an effective way of teaching. Nevertheless this is a problem because she has to go back and explain in Tshivenda and this takes time.

5.3 The main pedagogical challenges after transitioning to Grade 4

Based on the data presented, the following root causes of the challenges that Grade 4 teachers in rural Niani encounter when they teach through the medium of English may be suggested.

5.3.1 Learners' are not exposed to English efficiently

All teachers agreed that grade 4 learners had little exposure to English because the only exposure they had is through. When asked to tell more about it, all teachers said that Grade 4 learners do not understand when instructed in English and they agreed that they therefore need to explain in Tshivenda so that they could understand. Each new concept that is introduced in English is again explained in Tshivenda. Some of those teachers continued to say that some of the learners are unable to write even their mother tongue; therefore they are bound to explain to learners each time they teach. When teachers were asked to rate their learners' English proficiency, they rated them below five out of ten. Only one teacher rated them higher than herself.

Maswoi In practise uses both Tshivenda and English to teach and finds this helpful. When he tries to use English only his lessons becomes slower. He finds the specific problem I grade 4 is that of language and he always consult the language teacher to minimise the problem. And although his learners seem to be positive when teaching through English,

understanding is difficult. He finds teaching through the medium of English time consuming. He says that only few learners respond when teaching through the medium of English “out of ten, while I am teaching let’s say only 50 per cent in speaking, only few, hey! It is difficult”

Maseo Teaching becomes slower whenever she teaches through the medium of English because learners have the English problem and only few do respond. Unlike she is using Tshivenda. Therefore second language learners’ self-esteem and self-confidence fade away whenever they struggle to express themselves in a language.

5.3.2 Teachers’ inadequate proficiency in LOLT

Evidence from the data presented shows that teacher’s English proficiency is not good enough although some teachers try to speak English but to some it is still difficult. And they still commit grammatical mistakes when communicating. Maswoi rated himself 7 out of 10 on English proficiency, the rest rated themselves five and below. Mukondeleli ended up saying that she could not rate herself because she does not know English

“*Zwavhudi-vhudi a thi i koni*” meaning “*Truly speaking, I cannot speak it*” she said. Yet this same teacher was observed trying to teach through it during the lesson, she would ask the question in English and rephrase it in Tshivenda. She would introduce a matter in English, and code switch. For further explanations and giving examples she used the Tshivenda language.

She says that some learners speak English better than herself, meaning those learners whom their parents took them to private pre-schools. Mutshinye a male teachers who also rated himself 5 out of ten said that one should be careful when speaking English because one could be embarrassed if one made a mistake. The above statement shows that there is lack of confident among teachers. Therefore if teachers are not confidence, they would not be able to make learners confidential enough to use English. Therefore teachers’ attitude as well as confidence has an influence on learners learning the second language.

Malume rated his English proficiency 5 out of 10. And many of his learners do struggle to speak English. But on the other hand he feels that it will not be wise to teach through Tshivenda because he is used to teach his maths in English. He gave the reason that Tshivenda lacks vocabulary. The reason given needs further investigation. During the observation, the lessons introductions were done in English but the details of the lessons where interpreted into Tshivenda.

Teachers own English could not be left unquestioned. The claim for the need to code switch and interpret could also be that teachers themselves are not confident enough to use English. Therefore lack of English proficiency of teachers will also lead to lack of proficiency on learners as Gibbons (1998) argues that teachers are the role models on language learning. Learners learn well when they are in an environment that supports their diversity and culture. If learners are taught in a language that is unfamiliar to them, this may have a negative impact on their learning. They may fail to demonstrate their understanding therefore language becomes a barrier and even more so when the teacher is not proficient enough in that language (Desai, 2012).

Mukondeleli says that she does not know English that could mean that what she does not know is whether she knows English. She could also be telling that she can try but she is not proficient enough. On the other hand these could also mean that she is not confident. Therefore lack of self-confidence on teachers may also leads to lack of language proficiency.

When the curriculum advisors were asked how well their teachers speak English, one of them said that "some are good and some are not good". The other one was reluctant to state his views out loud about teachers' linguistic ability in English because "they may report you to their unions".

Although teachers are not proficient enough they still prefer English as the relevant language to teach when looking at their attitude. Some of the teachers were silent about overcrowding and the salary issue,

5.3.3 Learners' linguistic under-preparedness

The rural learners and the urban learner both have the ability to acquire the basic Interpersonal Communicating Skills through exposure. Therefore learners' under-preparedness, or level of readiness, could be related to the amount of exposure as well as the level of proficiency on the part of both teachers and learners. It could be the end result of a lack of English proficiency which came about because of the lack of the language exposure and vice versa.

Lammers & kissoek (2010) shows that the minimisation of difficulties during transitioning can be associated with learners' readiness, because learners' readiness will always influence the teacher's teaching approach; that is, if learners do not have sufficient vocabulary and communicative skills to perform well academically and to cope when English is used as a medium of instruction. Learners have problems in providing well-constructed answers to

questions. They battle to give logical responses, which they could do in their mother tongue. The classroom observations conducted for this study serve as an example, because they showed that teachers give instructions in English and later translate the instructions into Tshivenda.

Of the six teachers in this study, five, also taught other higher grades. On being asked if there is any difference between Grade 4 and other higher grades, they all said they had noticed that in the upper grades, most of the learners cope with the demands of English even though they do not meet them completely, but better than in Grade 4.

The curriculum advisors reported that teachers complain that learners do not come into Grade 4 with adequate knowledge of English because educators are to follow CAPS requirements of teaching through the medium of Tshivenda in the Foundation Phase, and English is only taught as a subject.

From what I have observed, learners kept quiet when the teacher asked something in English but as soon as the teachers rephrased the same question in Tshivenda, learners responded in large numbers.

5.4 Means to minimise the challenge for teachers

Another strategy that could enhance the acquisition of a second language is when a teacher creates a friendly learning atmosphere that includes teaching techniques that are playful; these strategies need a wise mind. For an example, Makhadzi included some rhymes and traditional songs during the lesson and that helped learners to participate more. It is probable that the teachers themselves did not enjoy a friendly learning environment during their training. Teachers need to have a relationship with the learners' culture and language as teaching a total stranger is not easy.

According to Krashen (1982), teachers need to talk and teach through a second language up to the learners level of understanding and not jump into interpreting or code switching. An environment that is rich in second language leads to good exposure. Teachers need to come up with a model teaching approach since this will mean that learners follow what the teacher is saying step by step.

When teachers were asked if they had any other suggestions about making the move from Grade 3 to Grade 4 easier for both teachers and learners, one of the teachers said that

teachers should speak more with these learners through English. She suggested that even in the lower grades there should be used more often.

The curriculum advisors said that when learners first come to Grade 4 they must be first taught through the mother tongue and then English should be gradually introduced. Instead of going on with the Grade 4 curriculum, they must first teach the elementary part of the curriculum (a e i o u), that is, sounds and the alphabet to help learners cope. They went on to say that, *“because they don’t understand English, they should be helped in whenever they are given a formal assessment; teachers must first read the instructions and interpret into the mother tongue to make them understand”*.

Malume suggested that teachers should speak a lot with these learners in English. From what I have observed, Malume used both languages to teach: if he asked a question in English and the learners did not respond he repeated the same question in Tshivenda. It was then that the learners responded. Whenever he gave a further explanation he used Tshivenda. When he wanted to keep discipline he did that in Tshivenda too. This suggests that Malume knows the right thing to do but he does not practise what he preaches.

The curriculum advisors said that learners do not come into Grade 4 with adequate elementary knowledge of English because educators are to teach in the mother tongue in Grade 3 so that these learners understand. Therefore when the language policy in education says that learners in the Foundation Phase are to be taught through the medium of the mother tongue, this was also intended to help learners understand better. When the language policy in education says that learners in the Intermediate Phase are to be taught through the medium of a second language (English) one may ask if this was also to help learners understand better. The question remains as to whether the learners actually understand better when they are taught through English. From the findings of my study, it would seem that learners are failing to understand English when it is used as the medium of instruction.

Although all six teachers turn to translating during the lesson as a means to address the challenge, Mukondeleli a female teacher, showed that there are those that do not cope even when one teaches them through Tshivenda, therefore she turns to the Foundation Phase teachers so that they can help them.

5.5 Summary of the findings

The findings suggest the following in answering the research main question and the sub questions:

Why do content teachers find the transition of Grade 3 learners to Grade 4 problematic?

- Rural learners still have a long way to go. They first need to understand the English language so that they can carry out instructions. They have to learn how to speak the language and also be able to read the language with understanding and finally be able to write it.
- Teachers said that they do not get any help from the Department on how to teach through the medium of English but they do attend the workshops on particular content subjects. The workshops specifically focus on what to teach and how to teach such subjects. Furthermore, they also do not get any orientation on how to teach through the medium of instruction when learners transit from the mother tongue medium to the English medium. All the curriculum advisors are aware of the problem and agreed that this is a challenge especially for rural learners.

What are the linguistic challenges that teachers face when Grade 3 learners move to Grade 4?

- Learners come to Grade 4 with very little English vocabulary. The curriculum advisors are also aware of this problem: when they were asked about their concerns about English as the medium of instruction, they said that learners do not come into Grade 4 with adequate elementary knowledge of English because in Grade 3 learners are taught through Tshivenda. They are aware that this will always have an impact on teaching and learning.
- Another of the challenges relates to the fact that the exposure to a second language that teachers acquire during their tertiary education is fossilised by the environment they find themselves in. This is also problematic for Tshivenda-speaking teachers in a monolingual area such as Niani, because up to today they have not been sufficiently equipped when it comes to teaching subject content through the medium of English.
- There is a “language battle” going on for both teachers and learners, although the manner differs. Learners battle with English in terms of understanding instructions. Learners do not understand the medium of instruction because they come into Grade

4 with insufficient vocabulary to cope. Both teachers and learners do not have enough English exposure and therefore they lack adequate English proficiency. Moreover, a good relationship between the curriculum advisors and teachers is lacking. Teachers tend to see the curriculum advisors as fault finders and witch hunters. On the other hand, the curriculum advisors may visit the school with a lack of trust in the teachers. Therefore there is a great need to improve relationships between the two parties.

- Although the curriculum advisors offer some help, it is not sufficient. Not enough has been done by the government to prepare both teachers and learners in monolingual rural areas during the transitioning in the medium of instruction.

How do teachers address the challenges?

- Teachers code switch and translate. The findings obtained from the data revealed the possibility that even though the personal teaching strategies of code switching and translating sound like a good idea, it interferes with the only small chance that rural learners have to learn English because the time allocated for learning English and for gaining some vocabulary is limited.
- The personal strategies of code-switching and translating teachers came with as means of addressing the challenge they face also fossilise English proficiency on both teachers and learners, therefore teachers' personal strategies add to the shortfall in language exposure.
- On the other hand, the question remains however as to whether the teachers' training has indeed equipped teachers with enough skills to teach effectively through the medium of English (Nell & Swanepoel, 2010, p. 47).

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the findings identified from the data in order to answer the research questions for this study. The challenges that rural teachers face when they instruct learners through English were illustrated. Teachers tried to address these challenges through their personal teaching strategies of code switching and translating. A brief summary of the findings was presented in this chapter, which represents most of the challenges that rural teachers face when instructing Grade 4 learners. The next chapter will focus on the implications of the findings, the significance of the research and recommendations made on the basis of the findings.

Chapter 6: Implications, significance and recommendations

6.1 Introduction

After all the discussions on the data presented, this chapter concludes the study by giving an overview of the implications of the findings. The significance of the findings, as well as some ideas on the way forward in trying to identify strategies which could minimise the challenges, as discussed. In addition, based on the findings, this chapter makes a number of suggestions and recommendations for further studies.

6.2 Overview of study

Chapter 1 provided an outline of the background to this study. The focus was mainly on the problem statement, the research problem which provided the context in which the study was conducted, the rationale for the study, the research objectives, the research questions and the research methodology. Chapter 2 presented an overview of the literature on issues surrounding second language teaching and learning. This section also covered the legislative provisions with regard to language issues. Chapter 3 focused on the research design and methodology of this study, as well as detailing the procedure that was followed in data collection. Chapter 4 presented a discussion on the data and. Chapter 5 presented the overall interpretation of the research findings. Chapter 6 now provides a summary of the research, with particular reference to the significance, implications, conclusions and recommendations flowing from the findings of the study.

6.3 Summary of findings

Flowing from the findings on the study, all the research questions have been answered. The research questions will be dealt with individually to ascertain how they were answered in the findings.

- *Why do Grade 4 content teachers find the transition of their learners from the Foundation Phase problematic?*

Grade 4 teachers in rural Niani find it problematic to meet the curriculum demands in terms of the medium of instruction in Grade 4. Grade 3 learners come into Grade 4 with insufficient

vocabulary to understand when English is used as a medium of instruction. Teachers lack English exposure and they are part of a monolingual Tshivenda-speaking community with very limited exposure to English. They have been living in a rural monolingual Tshivenda-speaking community since birth. They also do not use English outside the classrooms. In other words the only time that these teachers use any English is when they teach. Although they use English in the classroom, it is not really effective because all these teachers use both their mother tongue (Tshivenda) and English to teach.

Teachers said that they had learnt to use English when they started their tertiary education, but it could be that they did not apply the English because the majority of their fellow students were monolingual Tshivenda speakers. Therefore they are also not proficient in the medium of instruction (English) used in Grade 4.

- *What are the challenges that teachers face when Grade 3 learners move to Grade 4?*

There is a lack of learners' readiness when they abruptly transit from the mother tongue medium of instruction to English medium of instruction. When teachers speak in English very few learners respond. Therefore teachers spend more time speaking Tshivenda than English during lessons. Learners use Tshivenda when they ask questions and when they talk to each other even during lessons. Teachers depend on a single strategy, that of interpreting and code switching, to help learners understand. Teachers do not receive any training on how to teach through a second language when learners transit from the mother tongue medium to English.

- *How do teachers address the challenge?*

In order to explain, teachers translate what they have said in English into Tshivenda and also code switch to help learners understand better. Teachers go against the curriculum demands in terms of the medium of instruction in Grade 4. Teachers also depend on their personal teaching strategies to make learners understand. Teachers use Tshivenda when interacting with learners outside the classroom. They elaborate on concepts in Tshivenda and also use that language when keeping discipline. In addition, teachers use Tshivenda outside the classroom with colleagues.

6.4 Significance of the study

This study's contribution was based on the educational issue of lack of training on how to teach in English, which has not been paid sufficient attention in connection with teaching and

learning. Teachers attend language workshops which do not provide specific training for teachers on how to teach through the medium of a second language; they merely cover how to teach a specific subject.

The teachers also play a role in the lack of second language exposure for learners. The abrupt change without preparation promotes the challenges in Grade 4.

Learners' lack of exposure occurs not only at home but also at schools. However, the Department has no future plans to minimise the challenges. This implies that teachers will have to find their own way out without any policy guidelines on suitable teaching strategies. There should be some guidelines on alternatives strategies to help learners in rural monolingual areas to cope when English is used as a medium of instruction for the first time in the Intermediate Phase. Currently there is no monitoring of teachers' personal strategies. Something should be done by the Department to minimise these challenges. All these indicate that there is still a long way to go in terms of getting rural monolingual teachers to cope with the demands of Grade 4 in terms of the medium of instruction.

6.5 Implications

After all, whatever the findings have suggested, much still needs to be done concerning the issue of dealing with the challenges that rural teachers experience when instructing Grade 4 learners in monolingual communities. There is a conflict between theory and practice in terms of the medium of instruction in the Intermediate Phase, which includes Grade 4. The conflict lies in the difficulties in policy implementation. For example, the textbooks are in English whereas the language policy in education states that each learner has the right to receive education through the language he/she understands better (Alexander, 1993). Teachers battle to teach through English such that learners cannot understand the lessons. In other words, there is "language battle" being waged by both teachers and learners.

Learners do not understand the medium of instruction because they come into Grade 4 with limited vocabulary to cope with the demands of the Grade 4 curriculum. Neither teachers nor learners have had adequate exposure to English and therefore have limited comprehension. In other words, they lack the means to cope with the challenges related to the issue of language proficiency and language exposure in the rural learners.

There is a great need to build a good relationship between teachers and curriculum advisors since that seems lacking. Teachers generally regard curriculum advisors as faultfinders and

“witch hunters, while the curriculum advisors seem to have a lack of trust in teachers. Therefore, there is a great need to build up a good relationship between the two parties.

Teachers need more support and training in teaching methodology, especially when the medium of instruction is unfamiliar to them and the learners. Therefore, there is a need to upgrade teachers’ cognitive academic language skills and re-evaluate teaching methodologies. There have been many suggestions on this matter but these have not been effective because there has never been training to try and improve teachers’ English proficiency.

Teachers have a huge role to play in helping learners to become proficient in the second language. If teachers speak with learners in English outside the classroom, this can help learners in monolingual areas. Teachers need to be trained before they teach learners through the medium of instruction during transitioning.

6.6 Recommendations for further research

Based on the findings, issues were identified that would benefit from closer attention. There may be other ways available for dealing with language exposure as a root cause of the challenges that rural teachers encounter when instructing Grade 4 learners.

Although the focus of this research was on the Grade 4 teachers, a brief investigation on Grade 3 teachers and the way they introduce a second language might be helpful and this could be useful for future research projects.

Grade 4 was the focus of the study. However, it became evident that the challenges experienced in Grade 4 could be carried over into the upper grades.

Future research could also look at why teachers do not use English outside their classrooms. What other strategies could help teachers improve learners’ lack of English vocabulary in a monolingual rural area? What measures could the Department of Education take to these areas to help minimise the challenges that teachers face when they teach Grade 4 through the medium of English. What other strategies are available to improve both learners and teachers English proficiency? Are teachers not part of the reason for learners’ lack of English vocabulary?

Further research could also be conducted on how teachers voice their complaints and whether they are heard when they complain about language and the medium of instruction, since they are the ones who experience this on a daily basis.

There is a need to look at other alternative strategies besides translating and code switching as a means to cope with the challenges. Teachers need to build up their self-esteem and self-confidence so that they are able to help build learners' confidence in the second language by interacting with learners as often as possible in English.

Teachers as role models should come up with other means to improve their level of proficiency as well as that of the learners. The way teachers' personal strategies have long-term significance in terms of uplifting English exposure needs to be examined in detail. What role can parents play in minimising the challenges? What initiatives have been undertaken for teachers' development and support? What procedures should be followed in order to enhance and expand the effectiveness of teachers in terms of long-term teaching strategies? Schools should be the place to offer language exposure.

6.7 Conclusion

The study investigated the challenges that rural teachers face when instructing Grade 4 learners as well as the strategies used to cope. It has become evident that learners do not understand when taught through the medium of English and that learners come to Grade 4 with limited English vocabulary and exposure. The study indicated how teachers cope when teaching and learning becomes difficult in a monolingual rural environment. It is important to note that teachers devised their own personal strategies to cope with teaching and learning difficulties. For further investigation, it could be interesting to look at the impact of the teaching strategies devised by the teachers. The study also outlined the way the teachers' linguistic background hampers the instructional context and how the monolingual environment plays a role in language exposure.

It is hoped that the findings of this study could contribute to addressing the challenges experienced by both teachers and learners in monolingual rural schools.

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ADDENDUM A

Draft structured interview schedule

Teachers

Draft protocol: Pre-observation structured interview

Biographical data and background

- Do you stay near the school?
- How long have you been staying?
- What is your mother tongue? How many other languages do you speak comfortably?
- Where and when did you learn to speak English?
- Do you have your own children? Tell me more.
- Where did you study? During which years? Have you done any more studying since then?

Teaching experience

- Why did you choose to teach at this school?
- For how long have you been a teacher?
- For how long have you been teaching grade 4?
- Why did you choose to teach grade 4?
- Have you ever taught any other grades?
- Is there any difference you can remember between these grades?
- What do you enjoy about teaching?
- What would you like to change?

Teaching methodology

- Who decides the medium of instruction to be used in grade 4?
- What is your opinion about switching from Tshivenda to English in Grade 4?
- In practice which language do you use to teach?
- Could you please explain why you prefer the language?
- Do you have any specific methodology when teaching through the medium of English?
- Is the methodology prescribed or personal? Is it effective?
- How does using English to teach influence your lessons?

Classroom interactions

- Do you experience any problems when instructing Grade 4 learners? Please tell me more.
- What do you do about these challenges?
- How do your learners respond when being taught in English?
- Is teaching through the medium of English more time consuming than teaching in Tshivenda? Why?
- How do you rate your English proficiency?
- How well do the learners understand English? And speak it?
- If you were allowed to teach in Tshivenda, would you change and why?

- Are there any other suggestions about making the move from Grade 3 to 4 easier for the teachers? And the learners?
- Do you also use English outside of the classroom?

Personal and external growth plan

- Do you get any support in terms of teaching through the medium of English?
- Have you ever attended any support workshops on teaching through English?
- Have you attended any workshops about the transitioning of learners from the Foundation phase to the Intermediate phase?
- How useful has it been for you?

ADDENDUM B

Draft structured interview schedule

Curriculum advisors

- How long have you been a subject advisor?
 - How often do you go to the schools?
 - What is the purpose of your visits? What do you expect to find?
 - How do teachers view your visit each time you get to their schools?
 - To what extent are your visits fruitful?
 - Could you please describe your relationship with the teachers?
-
- What are the concerns about English as a medium of instruction during the transitioning period in Grade 4?
 - What difficulties have you noticed that are experienced by teachers who teach Grade 4s?
 - What difficulties are you aware of that Grade 4 learners experience?
 - How did/do you intend to deal with the difficulties?
 - And what could be the cause of such difficulties?
-
- How many professional development workshops have been hosted in this area?
 - When was the last workshop hosted?
 - What support do teachers get to help them teach in English?
 - Are there any special programmes planned in future to support both learners and teachers during language transitioning?
-
- How well do teachers speak English?
 - How well do learners speak English in Grade 4?
 - What exposure do learners have to English in this district?

ADDENDUM C

Draft observation schedule

Name of school (code).....

Observation Date.....

Teacher (code).....

Observer's name

Subject observed.....

Lesson started at Lesson ended

Number of learners in class

1. Lesson presentation

How does the teacher link the old and the new lesson	What are the challenges on instruction	Strategies in managing the challenges	What are the outcomes of the strategies
--	--	---------------------------------------	---

2. Questioning skills

Teacher asks variety of open ended questions	Teacher asks many open-ended questions and some closed ended questions	Teacher asks simple or recall questions	Teacher does not ask questions
--	--	---	--------------------------------

3. Learners' involvement during lessons

All learners pay attention, participate and listen to instruction. They seem to understand everything the teacher says	Some learners pay attention and listen to instruction. Some understand	Some learners pretend to pay attention and listen but do not understand	Most learners not paying attention or listening to instructions
--	--	---	---

4. The use of another language to enhance understanding

The teacher mostly uses Tshivenda to teach	The teacher mostly speaks Tshivenda and sometimes a bit of English	The teacher mostly speaks English and sometimes code switches	The teacher only speaks English.
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5. Use of different strategies

The teacher uses more than two strategies that involve learners	The teacher demonstrates or uses pictures or draws on the board	The teacher uses a strategy that involves learners	The teacher only talks
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6. Teacher response to learners' answers

The teacher redirects the question to other learners first	The teacher elaborates on the answer	The teacher acknowledges the response but does not follow up	The teacher gives no feedback or praise
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7. Learners' responses

All learners communicate comfortably in English	Most learners communicate through the medium of English	Few learners communicate though the medium of English	All learners communicate in Tshivenda
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ADDENDUM D: CONSENT LETTERS

Addendum D1: letter of consent: District senior manager office Limpopo province



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Faculty of Education

30 April 2015

Dear Sir/Madam

LETTER of CONSENT: DISTRICT SENIOR MANAGER OFFICE LIMPOPO PROVINCE

As part of my post-graduate studies I am currently preparing to engage in research related to transitioning, with special reference to challenges of transitioning from Grade 3 to 4. This letter serves as a formal request to conduct data collection for this research at your school.

Title

Challenges faced by Tshivenda speaking teachers when instructing Grade 4 learners in English

Purpose

The purpose of the study is to identify the challenges that rural teachers face when teaching Grade 4 learners. The study will also explore the strategies that teachers use in order to address these challenges in the classroom.

Research questions

Questions that frame this study are

- *Why do content teachers find the transition of Grade 3 learners to Grade 4 problematic?*
- *What are the challenges that teachers face when Grade 3 learners move to Grade 4?*
- *How do teachers address these challenges?*

Research participants:

I wish to observe and interview Grade 4 teachers who have at least three years' teaching experience. It does not matter what subject they teach. I hope to spend a day at three schools in your district observing at least three Grade 4 lessons. This may make the learners a little excited but should not disrupt normal teaching. I shall try to ensure that their curiosity is addressed and intend to be as unobtrusive as possible by just sitting at the back of the class watching the teacher present the lesson. Although learners will obviously be present during the lessons, they are not the focus of the study at all.

Data collection process:

Classroom observations will be conducted by me but I shall have a friend operating a video camera and tape recorder. This equipment will only be used with the teachers' prior permission. The teachers who participate may be asked to view and comment on the video clips from the recorded

observation at a later stage. I shall also interview the participating teachers twice; once prior to the observations and once again after the observations. These interviews should take roughly 45 minutes each and will be conducted in private after school at a time and place convenient to the teacher. Teachers may use their mother tongue to answer my questions.

Ethical principles

I need to apply for ethical clearance from several authorities amongst others the university and provincial education department before engaging in any form of data collection. Once I have been given such clearance, I will approach participants for their informed consent.

Below is an outline of internationally accepted ethical principles that I shall adhere to when working with human participants:

Autonomy and voluntary participation

Teacher, learners and the adults legally responsible for them have the right to decide on their participation. No participant will be co-erced. This means that neither the researcher nor the school management team may exert inappropriate pressure or undue influence to recruit or retain participants. Everyone will have all the information in order to make an informed choice. Parents and teachers will hear an explanation of my study in a language and fashion that they can understand. They will have time to reflect on the information and ask for clarification. I shall try to answer any questions truthfully and accurately in a reasoned response. They will have 3 days to think about their involvement before signing the consent form. They also have the right to withdraw at any stage of the project without any negative consequence or penalty.

Anonymity and confidentiality

Although this study does not plan to delve into sensitive or personal issues, participants have a right to privacy and their anonymity will be protected because no identifiable information will be reported either in writing or orally. Codes and pseudonyms will be used to hide their identity. They also have a choice of whether their responses and instructional behaviour be known to more than my supervisor and myself. The name of the school will also be changed to protect the identity of all concerned. All information will be stored in a password-protected computer to which only I have access. The information will only be used for research purposes.

Full disclosure

The participants will be provided with sufficient information about the proposed activities, the expected benefits, or anything that might influence their decision to participate or not. They will be debriefed after the conclusion of the project. They may also have access to a summary of the research findings.

Benefits

By participating in this research, participants will get a chance to learn more about themselves and the way in which they teach by sharing their experience with the researcher. Their participation may help them address the challenges that they come across when teaching grade 4 classes.

Risks

Participants will not be at physical or psychological risk or harm of any kind. This means that they will not be placed in circumstances which may cause undue stress, embarrassment, or loss of self-esteem. There are no direct risks to participating in this study although teachers may experience some performance stress due to the visitors watching them teach.

Trust

I shall report my findings in an honest way without any misrepresentation using formal yet comprehensible English. I will not fabricate data or alter findings to suit interest groups. I shall give credit and acknowledgements appropriately and disseminate the practical implications of my research in a comprehensible way. I shall not deceive or betray anyone in the research process or its published outcomes.

Time frame

I would like to visit your school to do the observations and interviews in July 2015. I would like to see as many Grade 4 teachers teaching as possible in one day. The principal and teachers will be consulted prior to my arrival and a convenient time of day and week will be negotiated with them for when I can observe their classes. I hope to finish all observations and interviews at each school on one day. I shall have until September to collect data so would be able to negotiate a convenient time for my visit. I would like to synchronise my visits with two other schools in your vicinity.

Your co-operation and consent would be highly valued. I look forward to your positive response at your earliest convenience.

Nthulana Ipfani (Miss)
Cell number: 0766647070
Email: inthulana@gmail.com

Supervisor:
Prof. Rinelle Evans
Faculty of Education
University of Pretoria
Cell number: 0837320099
Email: rinelle.evans@up.ac.za

.....Tear-off slip.....

I, (Circuit manager) agree to allow Ipfani Nthulana to conduct research in my district with the permission of principals, teachers and parents/caregivers concerned.

Please sign here

Circuit manager:

Date.....

Official stamp here please

Addendum D2: letter of consent: Circuit manager Limpopo province



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Faculty of Education

30 April 2015

Dear Sir/Madam

LETTER of CONSENT: CIRCUIT MANAGER LIMPOPO PROVINCE

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Your co-operation and consent would be highly valued. I look forward to your positive response at your earliest convenience.

Nthulana Ipfani (Miss)
Cell number: 0766647070
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Supervisor:
Prof. Rinelle Evans
Faculty of Education
University of Pretoria
Cell number: 0837320099
Email: rinelle.evans@up.ac.za

.....Tear-off slip.....

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Please sign here

Circuit manager:

Date.....

Official stamp here please

Addendum D3: Letter of consent: Principal and school governing body



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Faculty of Education

30 April 2015

Dear Sir/Madam

LETTER of CONSENT: PRINCIPAL and SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY

As part of my post-graduate studies I am currently preparing to engage in research related to transitioning, with special reference to challenges of transitioning from Grade 3 to 4. This letter serves as a formal request to conduct data collection for this research at your school.

Title

Challenges faced by Tshivenda speaking teachers when instructing Grade 4 learners in English.

Purpose

The purpose of the study is to identify the challenges that rural teachers face when teaching Grade 4 learners. The study will also explore the strategies that teachers use in order to address these challenges in the classroom.

Research questions

Questions that frame this study are

- *Why do content teachers find the transition of Grade 3 learners to Grade 4 problematic?*
- *What are the challenges that teachers face when Grade 3 learners move to Grade 4?*
- *How do teachers address these challenges?*

Research participants:

I wish to observe and interview Grade 4 teachers who have at least three years' teaching experience. It does not matter what subject they teach. I hope to spend a day at your school observing at least three Grade 4 lessons. This may make the learners a little excited but should not disrupt normal teaching. I shall try to ensure that their curiosity is addressed and intend to be as unobtrusive as possible by just sitting at the back of the class watching the teacher present the lesson. Although learners will obviously be present during the lessons, they are not the focus of the study at all.

Data collection process:

Classroom observations will be conducted by me but I shall have a friend operating a video camera and tape recorder. This equipment will only be used with the teachers' prior permission. The teachers who participate may be asked to view and comment on the video clips from the recorded observation at a later stage. I shall also interview the participating teachers twice; once prior to the observations and once again after the observations. These interviews should take roughly 45 minutes each and will be conducted in private after school at a time and place convenient to the teacher. Teachers may use their mother tongue to answer my questions.

Ethical principles

I need to apply for ethical clearance from several authorities amongst others the university and provincial education department before engaging in any form of data collection. Once I have been given such clearance, I will approach participants for their informed consent.

Below is an outline of internationally accepted ethical principles that I shall adhere to when working with human participants:

Autonomy and voluntary participation

Teacher, learners and the adults legally responsible for them have the right to decide on their participation. No participant will be co-erced. This means that neither the researcher nor the school management team may exert inappropriate pressure or undue influence to recruit or retain participants. Everyone will have all the information in order to make an informed choice. Parents and teachers will hear an explanation of my study in a language and fashion that they can understand. They will have time to reflect on the information and ask for clarification. I shall try to answer any questions truthfully and accurately in a reasoned response. They will have days to think about their involvement before signing the consent form. They also have the right to withdraw at any stage of the project without any negative consequence or penalty.

Anonymity and confidentiality

Although this study does not plan to delve into sensitive or personal issues, participants have a right to privacy and their anonymity will be protected because no identifiable information will be reported either in writing or orally. Codes and pseudonyms will be used to hide their identity. They also have a choice of whether their responses and instructional behaviour be known to more than my supervisor and myself. The name of the school will also be changed to protect the identity of all concerned. All information will be stored in a password-protected computer to which only I have access. The information will only be used for research purposes.

Full disclosure

The participants will be provided with sufficient information about the proposed activities, the expected benefits, or anything that might influence their decision to participate or not. They will be debriefed after the conclusion of the project. They may also have access to a summary of the research findings.

Benefits

By participating in this research, participants will get a chance to learn more about themselves and the way in which they teach by sharing their experience with the researcher. Their participation may help them address the challenges that they come across when teaching grade 4 classes.

Risks

Participants will not be at physical or psychological risk or harm of any kind. This means that they will not be placed in circumstances which may cause undue stress, embarrassment, or loss of self-esteem. There are no direct risks to participating in this study although teachers may experience some performance stress due to the visitors watching them teach.

Trust

I shall report my findings in an honest way without any misrepresentation using formal yet comprehensible English. I will not fabricate data or alter findings to suit interest groups. I shall give credit and acknowledgements appropriately and disseminate the practical implications of my research in a comprehensible way. I shall not deceive or betray anyone in the research process or its published outcomes.

Time frame

I would like to visit your school to do the observations and interviews in July 2015. I would like to see as many Grade 4 teachers teaching as possible in one day. The principal and teachers will be consulted prior to my arrival and a convenient time of day and week will be negotiated with them for when I can observe their classes. I hope to finish all observations and interviews at each school

on one day. I shall have until September to collect data so would be able to negotiate a convenient time for my visit. I would like to synchronise my visits with two other schools in your vicinity.

Your co-operation and consent would be highly valued. I look forward to your positive response at your earliest convenience.

Nthulana Ipfani (Miss)
Cell number: 0766647070
Email: inthulana@gmail.com

Supervisor:
Prof. Rinelle Evans
Faculty of Education
University of Pretoria
Cell number: 0837320099
Email: rinelle.evans@up.ac.za

.....Tear-off slip.....

I, (Principal) agree to allow Ipfani Nthulana to conduct research at my institution with the permission of teachers concerned.

Please sign here

Principal: Date.....

Chairperson: School Governing Body: Date.....

Addendum D4: Letter of consent: Curriculum advisor



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Faculty of Education

30 April 2015

Dear Sir/Madam

LETTER of CONSENT: CURRICULUM ADVISOR

As part of my post-graduate studies I am currently preparing to engage in research related to transitioning, with special reference to challenges of transitioning from Grade 3 to Grade 4.

This letter serves as a formal request to proceed with data collection for this research at your school.

Title

Challenges faced by Tshivenda speaking teachers when instructing Grade 4 learners in English.

Purpose

The purpose of the study is to identify the challenges that rural teachers face when teaching Grade 4 learners. The study will also explore the strategies that teachers use in order to address these challenges in the classroom.

Research questions

Questions that frame this study are

- *Why do content teachers find the transition of Grade 3 learners to Grade 4 problematic?*
- *What are the challenges that teachers face when Grade 3 learners move to Grade 4?*
- *How do teachers address these challenges?*

Research participants

My participants are two subject advisors from Niani circuit who have at least 3 years' experience in the Intermediate Phase.

Data collection process

- I understand that I will be interviewed twice on different dates at the circuit office and that will be interview before the researcher conduct classroom observation with the relevant schools and after.
- I understand that the interview may be tape recorded with my permission. I understand that the interview will last for 60 minutes.

Ethical principles

I need to apply for ethical clearance from several authorities amongst others the university and provincial education department before engaging in any form of data collection. Such clearance will only be granted if all participants have given their informed consent. There is an outline below of which internationally accepted ethical principles are applicable when working with human participants:

Autonomy and voluntary participation

As a subject advisor, you have the right to decide to participate. This means that neither the researchers nor anyone may exert inappropriate pressure or undue influence to recruit or retain participants. You will have all the information in order to make an informed choice. You are free to reflect on the information and may ask for clarification. At least, the researcher will be available to answer the questions truthfully and accurately in a reasoned response. You have 7 days to think about your involvement before signing the consent form.

You also have the right to withdraw at any stage of the project without any negative consequence or penalty.

Anonymity and confidentiality

Although this study does not plan to delve into sensitive or personal issues, you have a right to privacy and your anonymity will be protected meaning that no identifiable information will be reported either in writing or orally. Codes and pseudonyms will be used to hide your identity. You also have a choice of whether your responses and instructional behaviour be known to more than the research team. The name of the circuit will also be changed to protect the identity of all concerned. All information will be stored in a password-protected computer to which only the researchers have access.

The information will only be used for research purposes.

Full disclosure

You will be provided with sufficient information about proposed activities, the expected benefits, or material risks i.e. anything that might influence your decision to participate or not. You will also be consulted during the research process and will be debriefed after the conclusion of the project. You may also have access to a summary of the research findings.

Benefits

By participating in this research, you will get a chance to learn more about myself as a subject advisor by sharing my experience with the researcher. Participation will empower me as a subject advisor when coming to challenges on medium of a second language in our schools when Grade 3 learners move to Grade 4. This will also help me to voice out the challenges that I come across when visiting the schools.

Risks

There are no direct risks to participating in this study. You will not be at physical or psychological risk or harm of any kind. This means that you will not be placed in circumstances which may cause undue stress, embarrassment, or loss of self-esteem.

Trust

I shall report my findings in a complete and honest way without any misrepresentation using formal yet comprehensible English. I will not fabricate data or alter findings to suit interest groups. I shall give credit and acknowledgements appropriately and disseminate the practical implications of my research in a comprehensible way. As a participant, I shall not be party to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

Time frame

Observations should start in July 2015 and may continue until September 2015. They will be consulted and a convenient time of day and week will be negotiated with them for when I can observe their classes.

Your co-operation and consent would be highly valued. I look forward to your positive response at your earliest convenience...

Nthulana Ipfani (Miss)

Cell number: 0766647070

Email: inthulana@gmail.com

Supervisor: Prof. Rinelle Evans

Faculty of Education

University of Pretoria

Cell number: 0837320099

Email: rinelle.evans@up.ac.za

.....Tear-off slip.....

I, (Curriculum Advisor) agree to allow Ipfani Nthulana to conduct an interview with me.

Please sign here

Subject Advisor:

Date.....

Addendum D5: Letter of consent: Teachers



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Faculty of Education

30 April 2015

Dear Sir/Madam

LETTER of CONSENT: TEACHERS

As part of my post-graduate studies I am currently preparing to engage in research related to transitioning, with special reference to challenges of transitioning from Grade 3 to 4. This letter serves as a formal request to conduct data collection for this research at your school.

Title

Challenges faced by Tshivenda speaking teachers when instructing Grade 4 learners in English.

Purpose

The purpose of the study is to identify the challenges that rural teachers face when teaching Grade 4 learners. The study will also explore the strategies that teachers use in order to address these challenges in the classroom.

Research questions

Questions that frame this study are

- *Why do content teachers find the transition of Grade 3 learners to Grade 4 problematic?*
- *What are the challenges that teachers face when Grade 3 learners move to Grade 4?*
- *How do teachers address these challenges?*

Research participants:

I wish to observe and interview Grade 4 teachers who have at least three years' teaching experience. It does not matter what subject they teach. I hope to spend a day at your school observing at least three Grade 4 lessons. This may make the learners a little excited but should not disrupt normal teaching. I shall try to ensure that their curiosity is addressed and intend to be as unobtrusive as possible by just sitting at the back of the class watching the teacher present the lesson. Although learners will obviously be present during the lessons, they are not the focus of the study at all.

Data collection process:

Classroom observations will be conducted by me but I shall have a friend operating a video camera and tape recorder. This equipment will only be used with the teachers' prior permission. The teachers who participate may be asked to view and comment on the video clips from the recorded observation at a later stage. I shall also interview the participating teachers twice; once prior to the observations and once again after the observations. These interviews should take roughly 45 minutes each and will be conducted in private after school at a time and place convenient to the teacher. Teachers may use their mother tongue to answer my questions.

Ethical principles

I need to apply for ethical clearance from several authorities amongst others the university and provincial education department before engaging in any form of data collection. Once I have been given such clearance, I will approach participants for their informed consent.

Below is an outline of internationally accepted ethical principles that I shall adhere to when working with human participants:

Autonomy and voluntary participation

Teacher, learners and the adults legally responsible for them have the right to decide on their participation. No participant will be co-erced. This means that neither the researcher nor the school management team may exert inappropriate pressure or undue influence to recruit or retain participants. Everyone will have all the information in order to make an informed choice. Parents and teachers will hear an explanation of my study in a language and fashion that they can understand. They will have time to reflect on the information and ask for clarification. I shall try to answer any questions truthfully and accurately in a reasoned response. They will have 3 days to think about their involvement before signing the consent form. They also have the right to withdraw at any stage of the project without any negative consequence or penalty.

Anonymity and confidentiality

Although this study does not plan to delve into sensitive or personal issues, participants have a right to privacy and their anonymity will be protected because no identifiable information will be reported either in writing or orally. Codes and pseudonyms will be used to hide their identity. They also have a choice of whether their responses and instructional behaviour be known to more than my supervisor and myself. The name of the school will also be changed to protect the identity of all concerned. All information will be stored in a password-protected computer to which only I have access. The information will only be used for research purposes.

Full disclosure

The participants will be provided with sufficient information about the proposed activities, the expected benefits, or anything that might influence their decision to participate or not. They will be debriefed after the conclusion of the project. They may also have access to a summary of the research findings.

Benefits

By participating in this research, participants will get a chance to learn more about themselves and the way in which they teach by sharing their experience with the researcher. Their participation may help them address the challenges that they come across when teaching grade 4 classes.

Risks

Participants will not be at physical or psychological risk or harm of any kind. This means that they will not be placed in circumstances which may cause undue stress, embarrassment, or loss of self-esteem. There are no direct risks to participating in this study although teachers may experience some performance stress due to the visitors watching them teach.

Trust

I shall report my findings in an honest way without any misrepresentation using formal yet comprehensible English. I will not fabricate data or alter findings to suit interest groups. I shall give credit and acknowledgements appropriately and disseminate the practical implications of my research in a comprehensible way. I shall not deceive or betray anyone in the research process or its published outcomes.

Time frame

I would like to visit your school to do the observations and interviews in August 2015. I would like to see as many Grade 4 teachers teaching as possible in one day. I hope to finish all observations and interviews at each school on one day. I shall have until September to collect data so would be able

to negotiate a convenient time for my visit. I would like to synchronise my visits with two other schools in your vicinity.

Your co-operation and consent would be highly valued. I look forward to your positive response at your earliest convenience.

Nthulana Ipfani (Miss)
Cell number: 0766647070
Email: inthulana@gmail.com

Supervisor:
Prof. Rinelle Evans
Faculty of Education
University of Pretoria
Cell number: 0837320099
Email: rinelle.evans@up.ac.za

.....Tear-off slip.....

I, (Teacher) agree to participate.

Please sign here

Teacher:

Date.....

Addendum D6: Letter of consent: Explanation and request for permission



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Faculty of Education

30 April 2015

Dear Parents, guardians or caregivers

RESEARCH: EXPLANATION AND REQUEST FOR PERMISSION

As part of my post-graduate studies I am currently preparing to engage in research related to transitioning, with special reference to challenges of transitioning from Grade 3 to 4. This letter serves as a formal request to conduct data collection for this research at your school.

Title

Challenges faced by Tshivenda speaking teachers when instructing Grade 4 learners in English

Purpose

The purpose of the study is to identify the challenges that rural teachers face when teaching Grade 4 learners. The study will also explore the strategies that teachers use in order to address these challenges in the classroom.

Research questions

Questions that frame this study are

- *Why do content teachers find the transition of Grade 3 learners to Grade 4 problematic?*
- *What are the challenges that teachers face when Grade 3 learners move to Grade 4?*
- *How do teachers address these challenges?*

Research participants:

I wish to observe and interview Grade 4 teachers who have at least three years' teaching experience. It does not matter what subject they teach. I hope to spend a day at your school observing at least three Grade 4 lessons. This may make the learners a little excited but should not disrupt normal teaching. I shall try to ensure that their curiosity is addressed and intend to be as unobtrusive as possible by just sitting at the back of the class watching the teacher present the lesson. Although learners will obviously be present during the lessons, they are not the focus of the study at all.

Data collection process:

Classroom observations will be conducted by me but I shall have a friend operating a video camera and tape recorder. This equipment will only be used with the teachers' prior permission. The teachers who participate may be asked to view and comment on the video clips from the recorded observation at a later stage. I shall also interview the participating teachers twice; once prior to the observations and once again after the observations. These interviews should take roughly 45 minutes each and will be conducted in private after school at a time and place convenient to the teacher. Teachers may use their mother tongue to answer my questions.

Ethical principles

I need to apply for ethical clearance from several authorities amongst others the university and provincial education department before engaging in any form of data collection. Once I have been given such clearance, I will approach participants for their informed consent.

Below is an outline of internationally accepted ethical principles that I shall adhere to when working with human participants:

Autonomy and voluntary participation

Teacher, learners and the adults legally responsible for them have the right to decide on their participation. No participant will be coerced. This means that neither the researcher nor the school management team may exert inappropriate pressure or undue influence to recruit or retain participants. Everyone will have all the information in order to make an informed choice. Parents and teachers will hear an explanation of my study in a language and fashion that they can understand. They will have time to reflect on the information and ask for clarification. I shall try to answer any questions truthfully and accurately in a reasoned response. They will have 3 days to think about their involvement before signing the consent form. They also have the right to withdraw at any stage of the project without any negative consequence or penalty.

Anonymity and confidentiality

Although this study does not plan to delve into sensitive or personal issues, participants have a right to privacy and their anonymity will be protected because no identifiable information will be reported either in writing or orally. Codes and pseudonyms will be used to hide their identity. They also have a choice of whether their responses and instructional behaviour be known to more than my supervisor and myself. The name of the school will also be changed to protect the identity of all concerned. All information will be stored in a password-protected computer to which only I have access. The information will only be used for research purposes.

Full disclosure

The participants will be provided with sufficient information about the proposed activities, the expected benefits, or anything that might influence their decision to participate or not. They will be debriefed after the conclusion of the project. They may also have access to a summary of the research findings.

Benefits

By participating in this research, participants will get a chance to learn more about themselves and the way in which they teach by sharing their experience with the researcher. Their participation may help them address the challenges that they come across when teaching grade 4 classes.

Risks

Participants will not be at physical or psychological risk or harm of any kind. This means that they will not be placed in circumstances which may cause undue stress, embarrassment, or loss of self-esteem. There are no direct risks to participating in this study although teachers may experience some performance stress due to the visitors watching them teach.

Trust

I shall report my findings in an honest way without any misrepresentation using formal yet comprehensible English. I will not fabricate data or alter findings to suit interest groups. I shall give credit and acknowledgements appropriately and disseminate the practical implications of my research in a comprehensible way. I shall not deceive or betray anyone in the research process or its published outcomes.

Time frame

I would like to visit your school to do the observations and interviews in July 2015. I would like to see as many Grade 4 teachers teaching as possible in one day. The principal and teachers will be consulted prior to my arrival and a convenient time of day and week will be negotiated with them for when I can observe their classes. I hope to finish all observations and interviews at each school

on one day. I shall have until September to collect data so would be able to negotiate a convenient time for my visit. I would like to synchronise my visits with two other schools in your vicinity.

Your co-operation and consent would be highly valued. I look forward to your positive response at your earliest convenience.

Nthulana Ipfani (Miss)
Cell number: 0766647070
Email: inthulana@gmail.com

Supervisor:
Prof. Rinelle Evans
Faculty of Education
University of Pretoria
Cell number: 0837320099
Email: rinelle.evans@up.ac.za

.....Tear-off slip.....

I, (parent/guardian/care giver) agree to allow Ipfani Nthulana to observe the lesson while my child is in the class. I understand that the learners are not part of the project and that their learning will not be affected negatively in any way.

Please sign here

Parent/Guardian/caregiver:

Date.....

Addendum D7: Letter of consent: A friend



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Faculty of Education

30 April 2015

Dear Sir

LETTER of CONSENT: A FRIEND

As part of my post-graduate studies I am currently preparing to engage in research related to transitioning, with special reference to challenges of transitioning from Grade 3 to 4. This letter serves as a formal request to conduct data collection for this research at your school.

Title

Challenges faced by Tshivenda speaking teachers when instructing Grade 4 learners in English

Purpose

The purpose of the study is to identify the challenges that rural teachers face when teaching Grade 4 learners. The study will also explore the strategies that teachers use in order to address these challenges in the classroom.

Research questions

Questions that frame this study are

- *Why do content teachers find the transition of Grade 3 learners to Grade 4 problematic?*
- *What are the challenges that teachers face when Grade 3 learners move to Grade 4?*
- *How do teachers address these challenges?*

Research participants:

I wish to observe and interview Grade 4 teachers who have at least three years' teaching experience. It does not matter what subject they teach. I hope to spend a day at your school observing at least three Grade 4 lessons. This may make the learners a little excited but should not disrupt normal teaching. I shall try to ensure that their curiosity is addressed and intend to be as unobtrusive as possible by just sitting at the back of the class watching the teacher present the lesson. Although learners will obviously be present during the lessons, they are not the focus of the study at all.

Data collection process:

Classroom observations will be conducted by me but I need a friend to operate a video camera and tape recorder. This equipment will only be used with the teachers' prior permission. The teachers who participate may be asked to view and comment on the video clips from the recorded observation at a later stage. I shall also interview the participating teachers twice; once prior to the observations and once again after the observations. These interviews should take roughly 45 minutes each and will be conducted in private after school at a time and place convenient to the teacher. Teachers may use their mother tongue to answer my questions.

Ethical principles

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Below is an outline of internationally accepted ethical principles that I shall adhere to when working with human participants:

Autonomy and voluntary participation

Teacher, learners and the adults legally responsible for them have the right to decide on their participation. No participant will be coerced. This means that neither the researcher nor the school management team may exert inappropriate pressure or undue influence to recruit or retain participants. Everyone will have all the information in order to make an informed choice. Parents and teachers will hear an explanation of my study in a language and fashion that they can understand. They will have time to reflect on the information and ask for clarification. I shall try to answer any questions truthfully and accurately in a reasoned response. They will have 3 days to think about their involvement before signing the consent form. They also have the right to withdraw at any stage of the project without any negative consequence or penalty.

Anonymity and confidentiality

Although this study does not plan to delve into sensitive or personal issues, participants have a right to privacy and their anonymity will be protected because no identifiable information will be reported either in writing or orally. Codes and pseudonyms will be used to hide their identity. They also have a choice of whether their responses and instructional behaviour be known to more than my supervisor and myself. The name of the school will also be changed to protect the identity of all concerned. All information will be stored in a password-protected computer to which only I have access. The information will only be used for research purposes.

Full disclosure

The participants will be provided with sufficient information about the proposed activities, the expected benefits, or anything that might influence their decision to participate or not. They will be debriefed after the conclusion of the project. They may also have access to a summary of the research findings.

Benefits

By participating in this research, participants will get a chance to learn more about themselves and the way in which they teach by sharing their experience with the researcher. Their participation may help them address the challenges that they come across when teaching grade 4 classes.

Risks

Participants will not be at physical or psychological risk or harm of any kind. This means that they will not be placed in circumstances which may cause undue stress, embarrassment, or loss of self-esteem. There are no direct risks to participating in this study although teachers may experience some performance stress due to the visitors watching them teach.

Trust

I shall report my findings in an honest way without any misrepresentation using formal yet comprehensible English. I will not fabricate data or alter findings to suit interest groups. I shall give credit and acknowledgements appropriately and disseminate the practical implications of my research in a comprehensible way. I shall not deceive or betray anyone in the research process or its published outcomes.

Time frame

I would like to visit schools to do the observations and interviews in August 2015. I would like to see as many Grade 4 teachers teaching as possible in one day. I hope to finish all observations and interviews at each school on one day. I shall have until September to collect data so would be able to negotiate a convenient time for my visit. I would like to synchronise my visits with two other schools in your vicinity.

Your co-operation and consent would be highly valued. I look forward to your positive response at your earliest convenience.

Nthulana Ipfani (Miss)
Cell number: 0766647070
Email: inthulana@gmail.com

Supervisor:
Prof. Rinelle Evans
Faculty of Education
University of Pretoria
Cell number: 0837320099
Email: rinelle.evans@up.ac.za

.....Tear-off slip.....

I, (Friend) agree to participate (assist in video recording)

Please sign here

Friend:

Date.....

Addendum D8: Assent form to be explained to grade 4 learners in Tshivenda

Why am I here?

If we want to find out more about how something works, we do what is called research. This means we look for answers or solutions. My study will help us find ways to make it easier for you to learn new things in Grade 4.

Does your parent/care giver know about this research?

What I am going to do was explained to your parents/guardian and they have agreed that you may be in the classroom while I watch the class. You can decide if you want to help me find the answers. No one will be cross if you decide not to.

What will happen to you?

Nothing will happen to you. I will sit in your class and make notes while your teacher teaches you as usual. A friend of mine will also be in the class with a camera and a tape recorder and we will record the lesson.

What if you have any questions?

You are free to ask me, your teacher or your parent/caregiver any question. You may even do so after the study.

If you are happy to help me with my study, please write your name below.

Signature of a learner Date

Signature of the researcher Date