DETERMINING REASONS FOR LEARNERS’ POOR COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN ENGLISH IN SOME LESOTHO PRIMARY SCHOOLS

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that DETERMINING REASONS FOR LEARNERS’ POOR COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN ENGLISH IN SOME LESOTHO PRIMARY SCHOOLS is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

................................................................. 30 April 2015
Signature                                      Date

Mamothimkhulu Nkome
Student No. 48700355
DEDICATION

My dedication goes, first and foremost to my God who made all my endeavours related to this study a success, my beloved parents, brother and sister, and my beloved husband, sons, daughter in-law and granddaughter.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor Prof. P. Sebate for his support, patience, assistance and contribution to the completion of my study.

To my husband, Maswatz Joseph Nkome, I really appreciate the great support you have given me. I also acknowledge the financial and moral support you have given me to accomplish my goals. I really am honoured to have you as my husband.

To my sons, Mothimkhulu and Tsekedi, thank you very much for your support.

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The Berea Education office and Ministry of Education and Training for permitting me to conduct my research at the three primary schools in Berea District.

The grade six learners and their educators for their willingness to participate in my study.

To all whose names are not mentioned and who have contributed to this study, special thanks.

Above all, I thank Almighty God for the perseverance, patience and strength He has given me to complete the study.
ABSTRACT

Learners in Lesotho Primary Schools struggle to communicate in English as a second language. The effect of this problem is observed in schools, national tests and examinations. This study focused on determining reasons for learners’ failure to communicate through English in Lesotho Primary Schools. The study was conducted in three Primary Schools in Berea District. Grade six learners and grade six educators were purposively selected as an appropriate sample as they are the senior grades who have experience in primary level. A combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods was employed in this research. The purpose of using these two methods was to allow the responses from quantitative research to be illuminated by the qualitative research. The data was gathered by a questionnaire for learners and interviews for educators.

The study showed that some of the factors that contribute to learners’ failure to communicate in English are: non-implementation of English as a medium of instruction; failure to use variety of materials and methods; insufficient time to practice English components as educators teach less than six periods per week while they are expected to teach six periods per week; insufficient skills and techniques used to motivate learners to learn English as a second language; and inadequate interaction between the school and parents.

KEY WORDS:

English as a medium of instruction; English as a second language; Grade 6 educators; Grade 6 learners; Lesotho primary schools; communication; inadequate materials and methods; time management; motivation; interaction between the school and parents.
### ABBREVIATIONS

- **ESL**: English as Second Language
- **L1**: First Language (Primary Language)
- **L2**: Second Language
- **SLA**: Second Language Acquisition
- **UNESCO**: United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization
- **LX**: Mother Tongue/First Language
- **LY**: English as a Second Language
- **MOET**: Ministry of Education and Training
- **BICS**: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skill
- **CALP**: Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
- **PSLE**: Primary School Leaving Examination
- **LAD**: Language Acquisition Device
- **SACMEQ**: Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
- **ZPD**: Zone of Proximal Development
- **MKO**: More Knowledgeable Other
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1.0 CHAPTER 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.2 PROBLEM OF STATEMENT

Learners in Lesotho Primary Schools struggle to communicate through English as a second
language. The indication of this problem is observed in schools, national tests and
examinations. Nalco and Arthur (1988:50) stipulate that learners are unwilling to
communicate in English in other countries where English is a second language and is used as
a medium of instruction. Lesotho is not an exception as learners only communicate in English
when they are in class. This poses a problem since it is through the regular use of English that
learners would be able to learn language.

Lesotho’s language policy is such that learners are taught in their mother tongue from Grade
One to Grade Three. Weekly lesson time-table for Primary schools is indicated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Lesotho Primary Education: Weekly Time-table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Number of weekly periods in each standard/grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sesotho Language</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Economics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Physical Education</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Education</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine arts</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Skill</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In grades 1-3, each teaching period lasts for 30 minutes. Practically, in schools, grade one to
three learners are not taught nine periods of English per week due to Radio lessons which are
no more broadcasted since 2006. The 30 minutes and reduced number of periods of English imply that learners are not given enough exposure to English which is medium of instruction and an official language that is used for external examination.

In 1993, USAID sponsored a project called Primary Education Project (PEP) in order to improve primary education. The project was for all the learners in Lesotho who were in grade three and grade six. In this project, tests were produced (Attainment Tests) to replace end of level tests. These were produced as check points at two levels of grade three and grade six. These were for the following subjects, Sesotho, English and Mathematics which are the core subjects. In a sitting, learners were said to have mastered the test if their individual scores were 70% or higher.

The following table shows the percentage of learners who in 1996 attained a score of 70% or more in the following written subjects, as there is no oral examination in Lesotho’s educational system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sesotho</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These findings are relevant to my research as they indicate that communication through English in Lesotho Primary schools has always been problem.

In 1995, the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ), as an international non-profit developmental organisation of 15 Ministers of Education in Southern and Eastern Africa was launched. The members of this organisation decided to work together to share experiences of education planners to apply scientific methods to monitor and evaluate the conditions of schooling and the quality of education, with assistance from United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP). In 1995, the Lesotho Ministry of Education and Training did not participate in SACMEQ project due to financial constraints. The country only participated in 2000.
The 15 Ministries of Education that constitute the SACMEQ network are Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland Tanzania (Mainland), Tanzania (Zanzibar), Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The SACMEQ Assembly of Ministers emphasised that the planning of improvements in the quality of education required indicators of the literacy and numeracy skills that were acquired by learners as they moved through the basic cycles of primary education. The research focused on class 6 because they wanted to monitor the output of their primary education system before large numbers of the learner cohort began to leave school (SACMEQ, 2007).

The SACMEQ II survey of 2001 indicated that the performance of Lesotho’s standard 6 learners was lower than the learner performance from other participating countries. The organisation was concerned that the acquisition of reading and mathematics skills in the national language of instruction was necessary for a successful transition to secondary and high schooling. This is supported by Talukdar and Mc Murchy’s (1996) study in Moru (2002: 20-23), which found that the English language proficiency of learners in high schools of Lesotho was very poor. These findings imply that the quality of school instruction associated with communicative language teaching of English is inadequate and requires further investigation. These findings are relevant to my study as this indicate that there is a problem of learners to communicate through English at primary level.

The test conducted by SACMEQ II and III were placed on a single scale with scores anchored to a mean of 500 and a standard deviation of 100. The scores were scaled so that meaningful comparison could be made across countries for each project, and across projects for each country.
Achievement Levels:

Figure 3: Levels and Trends in Learner Achievement across Districts in Lesotho

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learner reading score</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berea</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>▲</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butha-Buthe</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>▼</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leribe</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>483</td>
<td>▲</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mafeteng</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>▲</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mokhotlong</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>▼</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohale Hoek</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>▲</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maseru</td>
<td>463</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>▲</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qacha Nek</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>▲</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quting</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>▲</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thaba-Tseka</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>▲</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LESOTHO</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>▲</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SACMEQ</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>▲</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Values in **Green** = 10 points or more above SACMEQ II mean of 500

Values in **Black** = less than 10 points above or below SACMEQ II mean of 500

Values in **Red** = 10 points or more below SACMEQ II mean of 500

Notes about trend:

▲ Increased by 10 points or more

► Minimal change (less than ±10)

▼ Decreased by 10 points or more

Source: Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ)
In Lesotho as a whole, the mean score for reading increased by 17 points, from 451 points in 2000 to 468 points in 2007. However, the Lesotho national mean score remained below the SACMEQ average (500) in both studies. In addition, a report of grade six learners reading scores by country based on SACMEQ Report II 2004 indicates that there is a real problem of reading as one of the communication skills which has to be mastered by learners (Junias, 2009). Fourteen countries participated, and out of these countries South Africa, Uganda, Zanzibar, Namibia, Zambia, Malawi including Lesotho scored below SACMEQ average which was 500.

Furthermore, the survey which was conducted in the 2007 Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) indicated the pass rate for the first free primary education cohort in 2006 was lower than the preceding years and it declined in 2007. There were also indicators of decline in performance in specific subjects including English (Education Strategic Plan, 2005). Moreover, although efforts are made to ensure that Basotho children master communication skills in English, that is listening, speaking, reading and writing, many Basotho complete only basic primary education and remain monolingual.

1.3 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Long before the arrival of Europeans in Lesotho, Basotho had no buildings erected specifically for formal learning to take place. However, this does not mean that Africans were not educating their children because a pattern of culture and education was firmly established. The learning of children was informal; it was oriented towards practical activities in the homes and fields. This informal type of education in Pre-colonial Africa culminated in a formal initiation school and they were taught by local leaders, traditional doctors and wise elders. They were taught through their mother tongue.

Some of the important elements of traditional education included forms of respect and communication, knowledge of clan members, elders and ancestors, family and community expectations of one’s role and work the exercise of memory and reading skills through riddles, stories and games, values of cleanliness, sharing, charity towards the stranger and the needy and cultural expression through songs, instruments and dances (Task Force 1982:1). The arrival of the missionaries in 1833 brought change. The Christian missionaries who were agents of colonialism and British imperialism used the language of the coloniser, English in education to convert the colonised people to their religion and culture.
The first Christian mission established a school for infants and adult reading centre in 1838. The primary focus of the first schools was the acquisition of literacy, the study of the Bible, the spiritual teaching of the church and participation in the Christian community. Lesotho became a British Protectorate in 1868, and English became a second official language.

English is regarded as the vehicle or tool for communication and unites different nations in metropolitan societies. In addition, Held et al. (1999: 346) explain that English stands at the very centre of the global language system. It has become a lingua franca (common language used between speakers whose native languages are different) in different countries of Africa and the world. It has become the central language of communication in business, politics, administration, science and academic as well as a dominant language of globalised advertising and popular culture. Globalization also affects education in the form of expanding market in cross-border study. For example, learners from Lesotho cross borders every year to acquire foreign education. Therefore, they need to know English in order to cope academically and socially. Saville-Troike (2009:9) supports this by saying English is by far the most common second language (L2).

1.3.1 Language Policy

Lesotho Constitution (1994) and the Ministry of Education curriculum and assessment policy (2008) state that Sesotho and English are the two official languages while it is acknowledged that there are other languages besides Sesotho and English. Sesotho as a mother tongue to most learners in Lesotho is used as a medium of instruction and taught as a subject as well. Throughout primary and high school levels, English is a failing subject. In order to ensure that every child has fundamental right to education, sign language has also been included in the policy.

1.3.2 Primary Education

Primary education has been recognised as a component of basic education with the purpose to help the child develop fully as an individual and become a member of society and the community and to lay a foundation for further learning and effective living. Primary Education lasts seven years and the official entry age is six years although many children enrol at 6+.
Education Act, 2010 p.165 stipulates that a learner in a primary school should be enrolled at the age of six years or in the year in which he or she will be six years of age by the 30th June of that calendar year. The primary education is divided into two cycles, namely, lower primary (grades 1-4) and upper primary (grades 5-7). At the end of grade 7 learners sit for the Primary School Leaving Examination. The examination is composed mainly of multiple choice questions except in the two official languages Sesotho and English where candidates write compositions stories and letters. Sesotho, English and Mathematics are the core subjects.

1.3.3 Curriculum Aims of Basic Education (Primary Education)

In addition to the language policy, curriculum Aims of Primary Education state that at the completion of ten years of primary education, learners should have acquired communication skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in Sesotho and English and apply them in everyday life. However, these aims have not been fulfilled as Education Survey Task Force (1982) postulate that the major problems in the education system remain the declining standards in English and Mathematics. Primary school graduates are said to be unequipped to handle the Form A syllabus and the Junior Certificate Examination examiners reports deplored the inability of candidates to understand questions. The Task Force also reported that some of the parents believed that using English as a medium of instruction was inappropriate due to the poor performance of learners.

There were strong views on the necessity for all Basotho to learn English. The international and commercial positions of Lesotho demand that all learners should be given a thorough understanding of the language. With regards to the latter, if the learners had not properly mastered the fundamental of English before they entered secondary school, they would never be able to master English. The solution was not to downgrade the status of English in primary schools but to improve its teaching and learning. However, it seems as if the findings did not serve as a wakeup call to motivate learners as there is still a problem in primary schools concerning acquisition of English as a second language (ESL).

Furthermore, English is important as it is taught across the curriculum. All the subjects are taught and examined in English and not in Sesotho. A learner has to pass at least seven subjects, six of which are examined in English, for promotion from one grade to another. This means that English has to be learnt in a rich variety of contexts and in formal class only.
1.4 RESEARCH AIMS

The aim of the study is to find out whether teachers implement the language policy effectively, and use a variety of techniques, materials and skills to alleviate the learners’ poor communication skills in English as a second language. The second aim is to find out if educators and parents are assisted by the Ministry of Education and Training in order to support the learners.

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1.4.1 To establish the extent to which educators comply with the English policy.
1.4.2 To establish the extent to which learners are practised in all English components.
1.4.3 To establish the extent to which educators use variety of materials and methods in order to effectively deliver English lessons and enhance learning.
1.4.4 To establish the extent at which teachers motivate and encourage learners to learn ESL.
1.4.5 To establish the extent to which educators and parents support learners in English activities.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study will address the following research question and sub-questions:

“Why do learners in some Lesotho Primary Schools have poor communication skills in English as a second language?”

Sub-questions:

1.5.1 To what extent is the policy that English should be used as a medium of instruction implemented?
1.5.2 Are learners given enough practise of all English components?
1.5.3 To what extent do educators use a variety of materials and methods to deliver English lessons and enhance learning?
1.5.4 To what extent do educators motivate and encourage learners to learn English as a second language?
1.5.5 To what extent do educators and parents support learners in English activities?

1.6 RATIONALE AND MOTIVATION

I have been a primary teacher since 1987 and in 2006 I was promoted as a principal after obtaining my degree. During these years when analysing the usage of English in primary schools, I realised that some of the learners hardly speak English in class when asked questions they are shy to respond for fear of committing errors and be laughed by peers as a result it makes teaching and learning difficult. This is not only common to learners in Lesotho, in fact, most of the countries which use English as second language are faced with learners poor performance in English as educators always switch to their local language when challenged by English expressions. This is supported by Clegg and Afitska (2011) when they say that “in Sub-Sahara Africa, education conducted in ESL is associated with low school achievement”. Malekela (2003) argues that if learners do not have adequate communication skills, effective learning cannot take place.

Therefore, I was motivated to embark on this study in order to establish factors contributing to learners’ poor communication skills in English as this will help the stakeholders to find a variety of appropriate techniques to assist the learners.

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study is intended to encourage teachers to review their approaches to teaching and learning. Educators need to understand the learners’ unique needs in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms which will in turn make learners’ experiences at school more meaningful and enjoyable. When this is done, the learners’ performance in all subjects will improve. The learners will also understand the importance of English worldwide.

The researcher hopes that the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) will find it necessary to hold workshops regularly to share learners’ and educators’ problems and also equip educators with appropriate skills in ensuring that learners learn.

Lastly, educators and Department of Education will realise the importance of involving parents in teaching and learning since education is seen as a three-legged pot, namely, teacher, learner and parent. If another leg breaks, the learning of the learner gets affected.
1.8 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In order to have an in-depth understanding of the study, the following key concepts will be clarified:

**Teacher/Educator:**

A teacher/educator is a person employed in a school for purposes of instruction either on a full time or part time and who has been registered in accordance with section 34. The role of the educator is often formal and on-going, carried out at a school or other place of formal education. Educators may use a lesson plan to facilitate learning, and also provide a course of study called the curriculum. In this study, the role of the educator is one of support in meeting the needs of the English language learners so that learners can develop the English proficiency that is necessary for success in school.

**Learners:**

In this study, a learner means a person engaged in learning, especially one enrolled in a school (Education Act, 2010). However, the words, students, pupils and children are normally used interchangeably to mean learners. In this study, we intend to use the term ‘learner’ for consistency and common understanding.

**Language:**

Language is a method of expressing ideas and emotions in the form of signs and symbols. These signs and symbols are used to encode and decode the information (Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Essential Knowledge, 1966; 180).

A language is not only a tool for communication but it is also a resource for creative thought, a framework for understanding the world, a key to new knowledge, human history and a source of pleasure and inspiration (Kern, 2008:367).

**An Official Language:**

It is a language that is given a special legal status in a particular country, state or other jurisdiction typically a nation’s official language will be the one used in the nation’s court, parliament, academic and administration. This language may be a foreign language or it may be a national language, which in Lesotho is English.
Language Proficiency:

Language proficiency or linguistic proficiency is the ability of an individual to speak or perform in an acquired language. Being able to speak and understand language proficiency is important for those trying to learn a second language (Wilson, 1999). It is important for those teaching a language to know their learners’ level of proficiency as it is key to helping them succeed during the learning process. The following are the levels of language proficiency:

- **Level 1-Entering/Preproduction**
  
The learner does not understand or speak English except for a few isolated words or expressions.

- **Level 2-Beginning/Production**
  
  - The learner understands and speaks conversational and academic English with hesitancy and difficulty.
  
  - The learner understands parts of lesions and simple directions.
  
  - There is a pre-emergent or emergent level of reading and writing in English, significantly below grade level.

- **Level 3-Early Intermediate**
  
  - The learner understands and speaks conversational and academic English with decreasing hesitancy and difficulty.
  
  - The learner is post-emergent, developing reading comprehension and writing skills in English.
  
  - The learner’s English literacy skills allow her to demonstrate academic knowledge in content areas with assistance.

- **Level 4-Advanced Intermediate**
  
  - The learner understands and speaks conversational English without apparent difficulty, but understands and speaks academic English with some hesitancy.
  
  - The learner continues to acquire reading and writing skills in content areas needed to achieve grade level expectations with assistance.

- **Level 5-ADVANCED**
  
  - The learner understands and speaks conversational and academic English well.
  
  - The learner is near proficient in reading, writing and content area skills needed to meet grade level expectations.
- The learner requires occasional support.

- **Level 6-Formerly Limited-English Proficient**
  - The learner was formerly limited-English proficient and is now fully English proficient.
  - The learner reads, writes, speaks and comprehends English within academic classroom settings.

**Communication:**

Communication is based on four aspects that is, understanding, speaking, reading and writing. The teacher has to increase the ability of the learner to understand a native speaker of English in any situation, increase the ability to sustain a conversation with native English speakers, and read any material in English with comprehension.

**Literacy:**

In the Lesotho context, literacy means the ability to read and write with understanding in two official languages Sesotho and English. (Education sector strategic plan, 2005-2015). Literacy rates in Lesotho are among the highest on the continent. The adult rate stood at 82% in 2008 (UNICEF), with female adult literacy in Lesotho almost twice that of the sub-Saharan African average. Furthermore, the habitually high literacy among Lesotho’s youth (15-24 years) had by 2008 risen even higher; 98% for girls and 86% for boys according to the UN World Development Indicators database (Lesotho Reviews 2011).

**Second Language Acquisition**

It is the learning and acquisition of a second language once the mother tongue or first language acquisition is established. Second language acquisition or SLA is the process of learning other languages in addition to the native language. For instance, a child who speaks Sesotho as a mother tongue starts learning English when he or she starts going to school. English is learned by the process of second language acquisition (Krashen & Terrel, 1998).

### 1.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

There are different ways in which a language can be acquired or learnt, namely L1 and L2. My study is guided by interactionist theory and Navistist theory.

**Interactionist theory:**
Interactionist researchers view social interaction as a process which takes place in a social context (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). This theory indicates that learners gain language proficiency and communicative competence by integrating and communicating. These can be promoted by using authentic materials in teaching and learning. One can say collaborative learning and peer interaction are important. This indicates that learners should be encouraged to learn with, and from each other as well as learn from the teacher. Learners have to see each other as resources and regard the classroom as a learning centre where they learn cooperatively and independently.

Navistism theory:

The philosophical position holds that children are born knowing all that they will ever know about language, this knowledge merely “blossom” as they mature biologically.

Language develops because it is part of each child’s genetic nature (Parker & Riley, 2004 in Mc Laughlin, 2006:128). This implies that learners can draw on strategies and skills which they have learnt to use in their first language to the acquisition of any second language. Learners look for gestures and actions of speakers to identify words as they would in their first languages in order to acquire the second language. Therefore, the researchers’ study intends to find whether learners need to be exposed on interdependent activities. Interactionist theories also fit into current interest in collaborative learning, suggesting that group members should have different levels of ability so that more advanced peers can help less advanced members operate within their zone of proximal development (ZPD).

1.10 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is a quantitative in nature and focuses on the learners’ poor communication skills in English in some Lesotho Primary Schools. The qualitative will also be used to support the quantitative study. The survey design has been chosen so that information about a large number of the population can be inferred from the responses obtained from a smaller sample.

The sample has been drawn from three primary schools in Berea District. Grade six learners and teachers were regarded as an appropriate sample for this research. To answer the research questions, questionnaires and in-depth interviews were used.
1.11 RESEARCH OUTLINE

**Chapter 1:** This chapter introduces the problem of the statement, the background of the study, research aims, research questions, hypothesis, rationale and the significance of the study. It also explores the key concepts and highlights theories related to the study and method which will be used to collect and analyse data.

**Chapter 2:** This chapter reviews literature on learners’ poor communication skills in English as a second language, language policy and curriculum aims of Lesotho primary education, and the theories related to the study.

**Chapter 3:** This chapter provides the research design and methodology that has been used in the study.

**Chapter 4:** This chapter deals with the description and discussion of the data collected. It also provides analyses and interpretations of the data collected.

**Chapter 5:** This chapter focuses on the summary of the research findings, limitations, conclusions and provides recommendations for further research.

1.12 CONCLUSION
In this chapter, the researcher has explored the introduction of English as a subject and medium of instruction in ESL countries. The research aims, research questions and hypothesis that sought to understand the reasons for learners’ failure to communicate through English in Lesotho primary Schools were stated to guide the research process. The rationale and motivation, the significance of the study and various relevant concepts were also explained.

Chapter Two will discuss literature review based on learners’ failure to communicate through English as a second language as a subject of this study. The different processes and theories of acquiring a second language will also be discussed.
2.0 CHAPTER 2

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.2 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed the problem statement, dealt with the background for the study and the research questions to which answers were to be provided. This chapter presents the review of related literature. The first part of literature review presents theoretical framework underlying the study and the second part is devoted to various work on studies already done on learners’ failure to communicate in English.

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Learners in countries which English is used as a second language experience problems to communicate through English (Nalasco & Arther, 1988). Millie and Villella (2009) claim that in learning the first language, people first listen and then talk before they can read and write. Therefore, they suggest that the same sequence should be followed in learning the additional language. In addition, Kurniash (2011) explains that to learn a language in order to use it as a means of communication, the pupils need to deal with the four language skills that is listening, speaking, reading and writing. By mastering these elements, the learners are expected to be able to integrate them in communication acts.

Attaining proficiency in the four language skills is not isolated process; each language process enhances learners’ ability to use others. Listening to other people use language enhances learners’ ability to speak. In contrast, reading helps students develop skills for communicating through writing. Through reading they have incidental contact with the rules of grammar. Reading also enables students to develop a sense for the structure of the language and grammar and increases their vocabulary. Eventually, writing helps in developing phonic knowledge and enhances reading fluency, because young children always associate written language with oral language they have mastered. The discussion of the four language skills in the following sections does not mean that they are isolated.

Listening:
Speaking is the most common form of communication, due to several reasons but listening is the first to master in order to be proficient in language.

• First, no one can say a word before listening to it. The teacher must take into account that the level of language input (listening) must be higher than the level of language production (speaking). Smith (1975:98-99) emphasize, “... good listeners often speak more exactly and more creatively than poor listeners, they have more words at their command.”
• Second, in a conversation, one can respond accurately only after listening precisely.
• Third, listening constitutes half of the communication process.
• Fourth, learners get the majority information through listening.
• Finally, learners spend more than half the time they are in the classroom by listening. The teacher plays an important role to achieve the aims related to listening.

Speaking:

Majority of speaking activities should be designed to enable learners to participate with a minimal verbal response. However, in the last levels for an example grade six, teachers are encouraged to begin to manipulate language and express themselves in a much more personal way (Kurniash, 2011:76).

Reading:

Reading enables learners to access information from many written texts and also contributes to one self-realisation and the development of his personal social adjustment. The factors involved in reading include sub-reading skills such as word recognition, skimming, scanning, sentence comprehension and background knowledge (Kim, 2002). Koizumi & In’nami (2013) and Johnson (2008:12) claim that limiting opportunities to engage in real reading experiences is one of the surest ways to retard learners’ reading progress and limit their intellectual development.
Writing:

It is always preceded by rich, broad and meaningful programme in oral expression and sensible and interesting reading activities (Johnson, 2008:7). According to Koizumi & In’nami (2013:910) and Gordon (2010:96), second language literacy experts recommend that literacy instruction should start early in the ESL classroom, before learners develop full proficiency in a second language.

The foundation for many of the pedagogical practices, strategies and methodologies used in English as a second language classroom are derived from theories. I have selected aspects of Nativist and interactionist theories which are directly relevant to my research as they both make reference to acquisition of second language.

Nativist Theory

The term ‘nativist’ is derived from the fundamental assertion that language acquisition is innately determined; it is in our genetics (Brown 1973). In addition, the philosophical position holds that children are born knowing all that they will ever know about language. This language merely “Blossom” as they mature biologically. Language develops because it is part of each child’s genetic nature (Parker & Riley, 2004) in (Mclaughlin, 2006:128). Chomsky (1965) has done many studies on this and has the greatest influence on this theory. He theorised that people possess a Language Acquisition Device (LAD) which makes them able to understand utterances that they have not previously heard. The first language is acquired with no direct instruction, no practise, no drills and with correct input, the LAD predisposes all people to the acquisition of a second language in basically the same manner. However, with many ESL learners, the process does not seem to happen naturally or automatically and it can be associated with many negative experiences (Escamilla & Grassi, 2000).

Krashen (1977, 1981, 1982, 1985), one of the theorist in the language acquisition, developed his Monitor Theory based on Chomsky’s concept of a LAD. The fundamental claim of Monitor Theory is that conscious learning is available to the performer as a Monitor. Utterances are initiated by the acquired system. Our fluency in production is based on what we have “picked up” through active communication.
Our formal knowledge of the second language, our conscious learning, may be used to alter
the output of the acquired system, sometimes before and sometimes after the utterance is
produced. The Monitor theory is composed of four hypotheses:

- The Input Hypothesis;
- The National Order Hypothesis;
- The Affective Filter Hypothesis, and;
- The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis.

**Input Hypothesis**

Escamilla and Grass (2000) postulate that Krashen proposes that comprehensible input
activities the LAD in order for the learner to begin acquisition of a second language.
Comprehensible input is language (either written or heard) that is understood by the ESL
learner. Input becomes comprehensible when the teacher uses strategies such as showing
visuals to accompany new vocabulary words and communicative concepts and designing
lessons with hands-on activities and manipulative. Making lesions comprehensible also
involves assessing a learner’s level of academic vocabulary.

Cummins (1979) discusses two forms of language developed in the acquisition process: Basic
Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
(CALP). BICS is the first type of language a learner acquires and is often referred to as
“playground Vocabulary” or survival vocabulary. It is the language that a person needs to
function in society or to socialise with family and friends. It usually takes a learner 2-5 years
to acquire a high proficiency in BICS. Learners with advanced BICS skills are familiar with
the target language slang and idiomatic expressions, but these learners may have great
difficulty in academic areas that require a different type of vocabulary that require a different
type of vocabulary that is CALP.

Cummins (1992) explains CALP as formal academic learning. It includes listening, speaking,
reading and writing about subject area content material. This level of language learning is
essential for students to succeed in school. Students need time and support to become
proficient in academic areas. Academic language acquisition is not just the understanding of
content areas vocabulary. It includes skills such as comparing, classifying, synthesising,
evaluating and inferring. Academic language tasks are context reduced.
To make sure that ESL learners succeed, teachers need to directly instruct learners using comprehensible input strategies in the academic vocabulary and language patterns necessary to comprehend the content area lesson. If the teacher uses comprehensible input in the lessons while simultaneously developing CALP vocabulary and most of the learners will meet the cognitive challenges presented by teachers. Krashen suggests that providing learners with meaningful comprehensible input that contains grammar, but focusing on commutation, will enable learners to naturally acquire the necessary grammar. He further explains that teachers can assist students in their classes who are experiencing difficulties related to CALP by developing academic skills in English, that is:

- Building on prior knowledge by making connections to the students’ previous experiences and cultural backgrounds.
- Highlighting and expanding on key vocabulary required for development of the topic.
- Using advanced organisers (structural overviews, diagrams, charts, graphs when presenting new materials).
- Assisting students in developing strategies which will help them become independent learners (asking questions for clarification, seeking help from peers and good study habits).
- Modifying assignments to ensure that students meet success.
- Using strong visuals (graphs, time lines, charts) to reduce the print load and help students understand and remember concepts being presented.

In order to assure both cognitive and academic success in learning a second language, the learner must be taught in his/her first language to a high cognitive level so that the learner can develop the necessary competence and performance in the second language.

**Natural Order Hypothesis**

Krashen hypothesises that every language learning person will acquire it in a predictable order. For example, learners learning English, regardless of their cultural and linguistic background will acquire the plural “s” (doors) before the third person singular “s” (breaks). The learners will not use the grammatical aspects in target language conversations until they have naturally acquired it. Krashen also states that natural order learners benefit from
frequent communication with speakers who are either native speakers of the second language or others more fluent in it as a second language.

**Affective Filter Hypothesis**

Krashen claims that all people possess a filter, namely, a high affective filter and a low affective filter. A low position allows language to enter the person’s LAD and be acquired. Conversely, a high position prevents language from entering the LAD thereby restricting acquisition. In addition, a low affective filter occurs when the learners is confident and motivated in the learning environment. In contrast, a high affective filter occurs when a person is threatened by outside factors which include a stressful environment such as too much instructional focus on error corrections, pronunciation and form. It is important to maintain a conducive and enjoyable learning environment.

**Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis**

According to Krashen, there are two independent ways of developing skills and knowledge in a second language, namely, the acquisition and learning process (Krashen & Terrell, 1988:18). The acquisition system naturally occurs when a learner receives plenty of comprehensible input, has a low affective filter, and the focus of the language lesson in on communication and meaningful use of the language. If all these are met, language enters the learner’s LAD and is acquired into the mind; this is an unconscious process. Acquiring a language becomes part of the linguistic system of the learner and can be automatically used in communication and conversation with target group.

The learning system is different from acquisition as it is the product of formal instruction. It means that one has to know the rules and have a conscious knowledge about grammar. According to Krashen and Terrell, learning is less important in developing communicative ability in second language.

Many researchers believe that acquisition is responsible for the ability to understand and speak second language easily and well. Language learning may only be useful as an editor or monitor.
Interactionist Theory

Interactionists argue that language is both biological and social. They argue that language learning is influenced by the desire of learners to communicate with others. The main theorist associated with interactionist theory is Lev Vygotsky. Vygotsky (1978) believes that social interaction is the key to language processing and input from social interactions provides a model for negotiation opportunities. Interaction learning with older people can help learners both cognitively and linguistically. He further clarifies that important learning by the learner occurs through social interaction with a skilful tutor. The tutor may model behaviours and or provide verbal instructions for the learner. Vygotsky refers to this as cooperative or collaborative dialogue. The learner seeks to understand the actions or instructions provided by the tutor (often the parent or teacher) then internalises the information, using it to guide or regulate their own performance.

In order to understand Vygotsky’s theories on cognitive development, one has to understand two of the main principles of Vygotsky’s work: the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). MKO refers to someone who has a better understanding or a higher level than the learner, with respect to particular task, process or concept. Although the implication is that the MKO is a teacher or older adult, this is not necessarily the case. Many times, a child’s peers or an adult’s children may be the individuals with more knowledge or experience.

Zone of Proximal Development:

The concept of the more knowledgeable other is integrally related to the second important principle of Vygotsky’s work, the Zone of Proximal Development. The concept relates to the difference between what a learner can achieve independently and what a learner can achieve with guidance and encouragement from a skilled partner.

Vygotsky (1978) sees the Zone of Proximal Development as the area where the most sensitive instruction or guidance should be given allowing the learner to develop skills they will use on their own developing higher mental function. Vygotsky also views interaction with peers as an effective way of developing skills and strategies.

He suggests that teachers should use cooperative learning exercises where less competent learners develop with help from skilful peers within the ZPD. The teacher has to view ZPD as part of a chain when employing it in the classroom.
Teachers should be aware that learners need to be taught how to collaborate. For that collaboration to be successful, it needs to be part the classroom ethos.

One would say the aetiology of learning, according to Vygotsky, is social interaction: a concept is first presented to a learner socially (inter psychologically) either by parent, peer or teacher, later to appear inside the learner through the process of internalisation. As a result, educators must strive to promote social interactions that are as conducive to learning as possible. Learners should be encouraged to experiment with the language and learn that it is okay to discover for themselves how to combine words and phrases to form full sentences and dialogues.

2.4 RELATED LITERATURE REVIEWED

2.4.1 Mother Tongue (First language/ Primary language)

Duminy and Steyn (1990:69) indicate that not one of the indigenous African languages have developed to the stage where it can serve as a teaching medium at highest levels of instruction. Somewhere along the line in South Africa including Lesotho at present between grade 2 and 5 the mother tongue is replaced as a medium of instruction by English for the following reasons:
• The mother tongue does not possess the scientific and technical terminology necessary for the use as the teaching medium at secondary and higher levels of education.
• There is lack of literature in general and academic text books in particular, in the mother tongue.
• The mother tongue is still associated with former period of isolation from the main cultural trends of the world.
• The vernacular does not provide a medium of communication with the rest of the world, although contacts with other countries are growing rapidly.
• In a large area of the country the mother tongue is not recognized as one of the official language.

Zhang (2009) argues that mother tongue is part of a learner’s personal, social and cultural identity. It is this identification we get from speaking our mother tongue that enforces successful social patterns of acting and speaking. Our different social backgrounds make us unique and appealing in society. The mother tongue is an indispensable instrument for the development of intellectual, physical and moral aspects of education. Weakness in the mother tongue means a paralysis of all thought and power of expression.

UNESCO (2007) research shows that fluency and literacy in the mother tongue lay a cognitive and linguistic foundation for learning additional language such as English. If children are forced to switch abruptly or transition too soon from learning in their mother tongue to school in a second language, the first language acquisition may be weakened or even lost. More detrimentally, their self-confidence as learners and their interest in what they are learning may decline, leading to lack of motivation, school failure and early school dropout.

Many researchers argue that the learners’ L1 is an important determinant of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). The L1 is a resource of knowledge which learners use either positively or negatively to help them shift the L2 data in the input and to perform as best as they can in the L2. If SLA is viewed by some linguists such as Krashen, (1982) and many others as a developmental process the L1 can be viewed as a contributing factor to this development.
Heugh (2005 in Masilo 2008:18) states that research in Psycholinguistics and SLA indicate that the models inherited in Africa students are expected to learn the second language before they have proficiency in their mother tongue.

She further argues that even for countries where there are well trained teachers, adequate classrooms and textbooks, pupils take between six and eight years to learn a second language before they can use it as a medium of learning.

The purpose of her study was to investigate standard four teachers’ curriculum development experiences of the transition from the mother tongue to English as medium of instruction.

Her findings revealed that teachers’ professional development for transition class, that is class 4 needs to be considered and it was evident that the language policy used presents challenges for teachers. Teachers indicated that they were not sufficiently competent to identify and make the curricular and pedagogic moves that were required to teach at this level. The study has not addressed the stated objectives of my study as one has to find out whether the teachers fulfil the policy of language that grade 1 to 3 the medium of instruction is Sesotho and English is taught as a subject and that from Grade four, English is used as a medium of instruction and taught as a subject.

In addition, according to Krashen (2004), research has shown that many skills acquired in the first language, for example, if a learner has developed good reading skills in L1, she is likely to be able to apply these skills when reading English. In the early stages, reading in the first language can profoundly accelerate the development of reading ability in second language. This is because:

- reading skills transfer from language one to language two.
- reading provides knowledge of the world that makes second language texts more comprehensible.
- the pleasure of the reading habit itself transfers to the second language.

The way in which the teaching of and in the mother tongue proceeds during the first years at school largely determines how good and fast the progress in ESL is realised. It has been said that the first five years of schooling are a period of fundamental language formation. Van Bergeijk and Prins in Duminy and Steyn (1990) point out the effect of poor training in the mother tongue during these years: “when language formation is not up to standard, one cannot, for example, expect much from instruction in ESL.” They further argue that teachers
in primary schools who are not aware of this fundamental truth and who rush through the mother curricula in order to start with language medium are doing their learners a great disservice.

Akinnaso (1988:9 in Mwamwenda1995:170) also explains that “the mother tongue education facilitates cultural transmission cognitive development and communicative ability.” Theoretically, there is a stable of interdependence in acquisition of ESL where Bilingualism or multilingualism is involved.

It can be argued that proficiency and skills in both mother tongue and ESL in school languages are interdependence (Danesi, 1988:400). Cummins (1984:143) postulates that “to the extent that instruction language 1 is effective in promoting proficiency in language 1, transfer of this proficiency to language 2 will occur provided that there is adequate expose to language 2 (either in school or in environment) and adequate motivation to learn language 2.”

2.4.2 Size of the classroom

Large classes are a problem for most of the developing countries and Lesotho. UNESCO (2001) indicates that an average of 1:43 ratio of teacher-pupil is expected in African countries. Benbow et al. (2007 in Senekane 2010:7) add that classes are regarded as large if the teacher-pupil ratios exceed 1:40 and such classes are mostly found in developing countries. The research conducted by Mubarak Saeed (2011), a teacher of English at King Saudi University in Saud Arabia and Held et al. (1999) indicate that the number of learners in the class should be reasonable to enable the teacher to easily handle them. A class which is relatively small gives the teacher the opportunity to teach well and, therefore monitor the progress of learners. If there is any problem in the learning process it can be solved at the initial stage. They also affirm that in crowded classrooms learners are not given much time for speaking and as a result hinder their performance. Ning (2007) also believes that in large classes teachers cannot easily give each learner the individual attention they need. If teachers are unable to assist individual learners when they have problems of understanding, it would also be a challenge for them to consider learners’ interest, talents and aptitude as they plan and present their lessons.

In his findings, Govender (2009) reports that “since the publication of education White Paper 6 (South African Department of Education 2001:20) which stipulates that the general education curriculum be made accessible to all learners, including learners with special needs
which increase the number of ESL learners, teachers are facing a dilemma of meeting the educational needs of diverse learners in their classrooms. In Lesotho, the number of learners has also increased. The large classrooms are due to the call for improving education access for all children in the world (Benbow et al., 2007). Goals were set on how to improve education access and equity. One of the goals was to eliminate school-fees, which was implemented by most of the countries including Lesotho. In 2000, the government of Lesotho introduced Free Primary Education and it covered the full primary cycle in 2006.

Senekane (2010) affirms that the teachers of secondary schools in Lesotho meet challenges in English classrooms of about 50-60 learners. The study shows that the participants experienced various management and instructional challenges such as noise interference, inability to remember and use students, names, difficulty in managing behavioural problems and the abuse of mobile phones in the classroom, and lack of classroom and school resources and inadequate time to help learners on an individual basis. As already stated this study aims at determining reasons for learners’ poor communication skills in English, which might be relevant to this matter.

Furthermore, Sawir Erlenawati (2005) in his studies of international studies, in particular, those in Australia, indicates the problems as coping with English, both academic and conversational English in the field of education. These difficulties were felt especially in relation to speaking and writing. This was made clear in evidence of learners themselves. The learners emphasise that due to crowded classrooms a large time is devoted to the teaching and reading and writing in order to pass the examination only. Learners are not given time to talk and listen to one another in class.

### 2.4.3 Students' attitude towards the language

Krunger, Smith and du pre le Roux (1996:152 in Mzokwana 2008) define attitude as a general feeling of favourableness or unfavourableness towards an object, person or event. Mohami (2002) and Mubarak (2011) explain that in “language learning it is attitude that determines success.” Attitude has been identified as being critically important to second language acquisition. Studies have consistently shown that a genuine interest in the language itself is more effective. In their research, they found that most of the learners think it is not necessary to learn English and as a result, they are not motivated to devote their effort to
learn the language. This negative attitude frustrates the teachers and impacts negatively on their enthusiasm. A teacher who knows that he or she has to face a group of disinterested learners will obviously lack motivation to optimise his teaching and learners become losers in the process. Mubarak Saeed (2011) further explains that the teacher should create a classroom situation wherein learners will feel motivated and encouraged to learn the language. In addition, Khati also asserts that English learning can be improved in Lesotho by changing attitudes towards it. It should be considered positively as a global language that is here to stay and all those who teach English should strive to create communicative atmosphere for the students.

The researcher will further investigate the extent to which teachers in Lesotho motivate and encourage learners to learn ESL.

2.4.4 Cultural Factors

Culture is a social heritage transmitted from one generation to another and shared, composed of skills, beliefs, knowledge and products that are commonly shared by a number of people and transmitted to their children. It is the part of the environment which man himself has made. Culture can be material or non-material traits (Wikipedia English-The Free Encyclopaedia, 2008).

In her project, Mohami (2002) found that Basotho children do not have a culture of reading. Nevertheless, they do not want to use English language despite the teacher’s effort to make them to use it every day, at school and at home. Majority of them prefer to communicate in their own languages so they fail to communicate through English. Furthermore, she argues that learners do not want to participate in English activities such as debating clubs, essay writings and other they do not care to gather enough vocabulary. When given a novel to read in two weeks’ time, they have not been able to finish it. She further explains that it is not only in primary school or secondary schools where the reading culture is on a very low level but also in the universities. This is also supported by Masilo (2008) when she says it is important that we give our children the opportunity to practise the use of the language not only in the school but also in their homes. If parents are illiterates, they should encourage the children to pay more attention to the use of the language in their school, reading newspaper, and listening to good users of the language. Walts-Traffe and Truscott (2000: 258-263) maintain that in addition the challenges involved in learning a new language such as English is that
learners are also faced with challenges of learning a new culture. Language and culture are related. In order to study English or to study a language one should know the culture and customs of that language and apply the language in real situation. Govender (2009) indicates that during the research he conducted with isiZulu speaking learners, teachers indicated that the learners in their culture do not look at adult’s eyes to eye, that as a result, they encounter problems when they have to use gestures to explain some of the English concepts.

2.4.5 Success in language

Walqui et al. (2000) Ramizez (1995) and Verplaete (2008) argue for the importance of contextual factors in second language learning. They emphasise those factors such as language (language distance, native language proficiency and language attitude) learner (diverse needs and goals, role models and support) and learning process (Learning styles, motivation and classroom interaction) need to be considered. These point to the importance of formal instruction and classroom practices in shaping learners second language learning. In her research to inquire into the use of the learner-centred teaching approach in the teaching of languages (both Sesotho and English) in secondary schools in Lesotho, Matsau (2007) found out that teachers did not use variety of learner-centred methods. For example, graphic designs were not used which are applicable in language. Graphic designs such as Venn diagrams, the web or the table can be used when teaching parts of speech. There are myriads methods of teaching language such as audio-lingual method, translation method, and direct method. The researcher intends to find out the extent which teachers in Lesotho primary schools give learners enough time to practice English concepts and use of variety of material and methods to accommodate all learners.

2.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided an overview of the existing literature and concept related to the study. The chapter focused on literature on learners’ failure to communicate through English as a second language and addressed issues of mother tongue, size of the classroom, students attitude towards English, cultural factors and success in language acquisition.
3.0 CHAPTER THREE

3.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY, DESIGN AND METHODS

3.2 INTRODUCTION

This chapter endeavours to explain the methodology used in conducting the field component of this study, by presenting an outline of the research design, participants, research instrument, procedure, ethical consideration and method of data analysis.

3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Winberg (1997:14) defines methodology as a high intellectual human activity used in the investigation of the nature and matter and deals specially with the manner in which data are collected, analysed and interpreted. Different paradigms have been explored for one to select and define problems for inquiry. Choosing a paradigm is the first step as it sets down the choices of methodology, methods, literature or research design.

3.4 RESEARCH PARADIGMS

According to Terre Blanche and Durrhem (1999) and Neuman (2000), the research process has three major dimensions, namely: ontology, epistemology and methodology. They argue that research paradigm is an all-encompassing system of interrelated practice and thinking that defines the nature of enquiry along these three dimensions. The term paradigm originated from the Greek word paradeigma which means pattern and was first used by Kuhn (1962) to explain a conceptual framework shared by the community of scientists which provided them with a convenient model for examining problems and finding solutions. Kuhn (1910) defines paradigm as the assumptions and intellectual structure upon which research and development in a field of inquiry is based. Ontological and epistemological aspects concern what is commonly referred to as a person’s world view which has significant influence on the perceived relative importance of the aspects of reality. Two possible world views are objectivistic and interpretivistic.
Ontological assumptions concerning the nature of social reality:

According to Eusafzai (2014), ontology refers to the study of what exists or what is real. Ontological position is therefore concerned with the nature or essence of things; so, ontological assumptions about social reality focus on whether a person sees social reality or aspects of the social world as external, independent, given and objectivity, real or instead of socially constructed, subjectivity experienced and the result of human thought as expressed through language. Basically, if the social world is seen as given and independent, then it can be observed and accounted for through objective, quantifiable data. However, if a social constructivist position is taken, it is necessary to collect subjective accounts and perceptions that explain how the world is experienced and constructed by the people who live in it.

Epistemological assumptions concerning the bases of knowledge:

Epistemology is the theory of knowledge. Thus, epistemological assumptions concern the nature and form of knowledge and what it is possible to know and understand and represent (Eusafzai, 2014). The purpose for doing research is to get knowledge and to communicate that knowledge often with the ultimate view of informing practice or policy and improving things in some way. When engaging in research, one has to be concerned with epistemology and with epistemological questions and issues. Most importantly, the central concern is the truth in terms of how the data that research procedures obtain corresponds to and reflects the knowledge it claimed and truth in terms of how the researcher communicates and represents the knowledge they get from their research. In terms of research design and choice of procedures, if the assumption is that knowledge is real, objective and out there in the world to be captured, researchers can observe, measure and quantify it. However, if it is assumed to be experiential, personal and subjective, they will have to ask questions of the people involved. These differences are much the same as those identified with regard to ontological assumptions (Sikes, 2004).

The overreaching paradigm of this research is positivism although elements of interpretive were employed as open-ended questions were included for the participants to give their own meaning (s) to their social reality. Based on the paradigm used, this research could be classified as fundamentally quantitative. Quantitative research methods numerically explain matters as they are.
3.4.1. Positivism

Positivism is a philosophical system developed by August Comte. According to Comte, positivism is concerned with positive facts and phenomena; the first verified by the methods of the empirical science and the second explainable by scientific laws. It is a position that holds that the goal of knowledge is simply to describe the phenomena that we experience. The purpose of science is simply to stick to what we can observe and measure. In a positivist view of the world, science was seen as the way to get at truth, to understand the world well enough so that we might predict and control it. We use deductive reasoning to postulate theories that we can test. The positivist believes in empiricism, the idea that observation and measurement was the core of the scientific endeavour (Eusafzai, 2014 and Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004).

According to Walsham (1995b), the positivist position maintains that scientific knowledge consists of facts while its ontology considers the reality as independent of social construction. Positivism shifted into what we term post-positivism. Conversely, post-positivism is a wholesale rejection of the central tenets of positivism. In addition, post-positivism rejected the ideas that any individual can see the world perfectly as it really is. Their hope was to achieve objectivity by triangulating across multiple fallible perspectives. Thus, objectivity is not the characteristics of an individual. It is inherently a social phenomenon. The best way to improve objectivity of what we do is to do it within the context of a broader contentious community of truth seekers. Furthermore, Neuman (2006) argues that modified objectivist claims that although the object of our inquiry exists outside and independent of the human mind, it cannot be perceived with total accuracy by our observations, that is, complete objectivity is nearly impossible to achieve, but still pursues it as an ideal to regulate our search for knowledge. Thus, the positivist focus on experimental and quantitative methods have been complemented to some extent by an interest in using qualitative methods to gather broader information outside of readily measured variables (Sikes, 2004). In addition (Creswell 2003) postulates that when the research includes determining or reducing or an empirical observation and measurement or theory verification, then the type of knowledge is positivism. This implies that the study has the elements of positivism ontology as the study is determining reasons for learners’ poor communication skills in some Lesotho primary schools.
3.4.2. Interpretivism

Opie (2004:18) indicates that the interpretive paradigm seeks to understand the meanings which people give their own social interaction.

In addition, the interpretive paradigm uncovers how individuals or group’s interpretations and understandings of the world influence their intentions and action (Eusafzai, 2014). This paradigm uses meaning (Versus measurement oriented methodologies) such as interviewing or participant observation that relies on a subjective relationship between the researcher and subjects. The elements of interpretive paradigm were also employed as the educators were interviewed in order to make a follow up to certain responses of the questionnaires. This paradigm allows the greater interaction between the researcher and the participants, and facilitates the researcher in understanding the participants’ perspectives (Eusafzai, 2014).

Table 3.1

Summary of research paradigms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Positivism</th>
<th>Post-positivism</th>
<th>Interpretivism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ontology</td>
<td>Realism</td>
<td>Critical realism</td>
<td>relativism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epistemology</td>
<td>Objectivist dualistic findings true</td>
<td>Modified objectivism</td>
<td>Subjectivist created findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Experiments and surveys</td>
<td>Experiments surveys observation studies</td>
<td>Phenomenology case study Ethnology Grounded theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>Measurements observation structured questionnaires and interviews</td>
<td>Measurements observation structured questionnaires and interviews</td>
<td>Open ended questions, collection of qualitative data, recording of observations and impressions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Eusafzai (2014) and Guba (1994)
3.5 RESEARCH METHODS

3.5.1. Quantitative research method

According to Schumacher and McMillan (2010:21), “quantitative research design emphasises objectivity in measuring and describing phenomena”. As a result, the research designs maximise objectivity by using numbers, statistics, structure and control. The final written report has a set structure consisting of introduction, literature and theory, methods, results and discussion (Creswell, 2008).

Quantitative methods such as structure questionnaires with closed-ended questions had allowed the researcher to gather data in order to determine factors influencing learners’ poor communication skills in English in some Lesotho primary schools.

3.5.2. Qualitative research method

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995:22) describe qualitative methods as approaches that enable researchers to learn at firsthand about the social world they are investigating by means of involvement and participation in that the world through focusing on what individual actors say and do. They also characterise element of this method to describe the world in “natural language rather than in terms of numbers.” Open-ended questions enable respondents to explain things in their own words. Therefore, qualitative research had been used to permit educators to express their feelings about the learners’ poor communication skills in English as a second language.

A combination of quantitative and qualitative research method had been employed in this research. This is deemed necessary in order to allow the responses from quantitative research to be illuminated by the qualitative research.

Both quantitative and qualitative research studies are conducted in education. Neither of these methods is better than the other, the suitability of which needs to be decided by the context, purpose and nature of the research study in question; sometimes one can be an alternative to the other depending on the kind of study. Some researchers prefer to use mixed methods approach by taking advantage of differences between quantitative and qualitative methods and use these two methods in single research project. The researcher also took advantage of using both methods as each method has its own inherent strengths and limitations, therefore
using both may emphasize each one’s strengths and minimize their limitations. Table 3.2 is relevant to the study as it compares both methods.

Table 3.2 below shows a summary of major differences between quantitative and qualitative approaches to research.

**Table 3.2: Differences between quantitative and qualitative approaches (Schumacher, 2010:12)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orientation</th>
<th>Quantitative</th>
<th>Qualitative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assumption about the world</td>
<td>A single reality, for example, can be measured by an instrument.</td>
<td>Multiple realities, for example, interviews of principal, teachers and students about a social situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research purpose</td>
<td>Establish relationships between measured variables</td>
<td>Understanding a social situation from participants’ perspectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research methods and processes</td>
<td>-procedures are established before study begins; -a hypothesis is formulated before research can begin; -deductive in nature.</td>
<td>-flexible, changing strategies, -design emerges as data are collected, -a hypothesis is not needed to begin research, -inductive in nature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher’s role</td>
<td>The researcher is ideally an objective observer who neither participates in nor influences what is being studied.</td>
<td>The researcher participates and becomes immersed in the research/social setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generalisability</td>
<td>Universal context free generalizations</td>
<td>-detailed context based generalizations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
De Vos (2005:132) define a research design as “the plan or blueprint according to which data are collected to investigate the research hypothesis or question in the most economical manner.” Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:63 in de Vos 2005:132), in contrast, defines research design as “a specification of the most adequate operations to be performed in order to test specific hypothesis under given conditions”. They further add that colloquially a research design is an action plan for getting from here to there, where ‘’here’’ may be defined as the initial set of questions to be answered and ‘’there’’ is some set of conclusions.
Table 3.3 Research design

This research is based on the structure of a research design as presented by Mohale (2009:41).

This study is located in the positivism paradigm and adopted a quantitative design. The quantitative component of the research consists of survey. A survey is a type of non-experimental design. Non-experimental research describes phenomena and examines relationships between different phenomena without any direct manipulation of conditions that
are experienced (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:22). In a survey research design, the investigator selects a sample of subjects and administers a questionnaire or conducts interviews to collect data. Surveys are used to describe attitudes, beliefs, opinions and other types of information (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:22). This research is designed so that information about large number of people (the population) can be inferred from the responses obtained from a smaller group of subjects (the sample).

3.7 INSTRUMENTS FOR DATA COLLECTION

In this study, the researcher used both open-ended and close-ended questionnaires; interviews were also used, specifically constructed to determine reasons for learners’ failure to communicate through English.

3.7.1 Questionnaires

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:196), a questionnaire is “a set of questions on a form which is completed by the respondent in respect of a research project”. De Vos et al. (2005:166) mention that although the term questionnaire suggests a collection of questions, a typical questionnaire will probably contain as many statements as questions, especially if the researcher is interested in determining the extent to which respondents hold a particular attitude or perspective. The basic objective of a questionnaire is to obtain facts and opinions about a phenomenon from people who are informed on a particular issue. Questionnaires are probably the most generally used instruments of all.

Hurter (1988:6 in Mohale 2009:45) is of the opinion that a questionnaire is used to gather research-relevant information with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions, testing hypothesis between variables. Questionnaires consisting of close-ended and open-ended questions were distributed among the respondents. Hurter (1988:7) defines closed-ended questions as questions which offer the respondent the opportunity of selecting according to instructions one or more response choices from a number provided to him/her.

Open-ended questions, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:197), allow the respondent to make any response he/she wishes and in his/her own words. Open-ended questions further permit the respondent to express feelings and to expand on ideas.
The close-ended questionnaires were chosen because of myriad advantages associated with them:

- Large amounts of information can be collected from a large number of people in a short time and in a relatively cost effective way.
- They can be carried out by the researcher or by any number of people with limited affect to its validity and reliability.
- The results of the questionnaires can usually be quickly and easily quantified by either the researcher or through the use of a software package.
- They can be analysed more scientifically and objectively than other forms of research.
- When data has been quantified, it can be used to compare and contrast other research and may be used to measure change.
- Positivists believe that quantitative data can be used to create new theories and or test existing hypothesis.

However, closed-ended questionnaires also have certain disadvantages. In this regard, Creswell et al. (2007:164) argues that the questionnaires may be:

- inadequate to understand some forms of information that is changes of emotions, behaviours and feeling.
- no way to tell how truthful a respondent is being.
- a level of researcher imposition, meaning that when developing the questionnaires, the researcher is making their own decisions and assumptions as to what is and is not important therefore they may be missing something that is of importance.

The process of coding in the case of open-ended questions opens a great possibility of subjectivity by the researcher. Mohale (2009:40) is of the opinion that open-ended questionnaires can give honest answers and detail, their thought processes are revealed, complex questions can be adequately answered; questionnaires allow for self expression and respondents can clarify their answers.
However, the possibilities of open-ended questionnaires are not unlimited. They require a higher educational level and good writing skills and require much more of a respondent’s time.

3.7.2 Interviews
Interviews are methods of gathering information through oral quiz using a set of pre-planned core questions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Depending on the unstructured, structured and semi-structured with individuals or may be focus group interviews. In order to make a follow-up of questionnaires unstructured type of interviews were used. Unstructured interviews pose open-ended questions. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010) these are classified as in-depth interviews.

In-depth Interview

According to de Vos et al. (2005), an in-depth interview is an open-ended discovery oriented method to obtain detailed information about a research. In-depth interviews are a qualitative research method, and their goal is to explore respondent’s point of view, experiences, feelings and perspectives.

Advantages:

- **Depth**: In-depth interviews can uncover valuable insights and enables one to find out “the real story” from the people in the know.
- **Disclosure**: Respondents are most likely to open up on a one-on-one basis.
- **Quality of data**: Skilled interviews are able to respond to questions and probe for greater detail. Questions can be added or altered in real time if needed.
- **Short timelines**: Data can be collected faster than other research methods, usually within a few weeks.

Disadvantages:

- Analysis can be challenging, time consuming: Qualitative data can be ambiguous, resulting in a more difficult analysis, particularly for less experienced analysts.
- Interviewing requires a high level of training and skill: It is important to have well trained, highly-skilled interviewers conducting this type of interview. Using less skilled interviewers increases the possibility of bias.
Small numbers: Given the length of each interview and the associated costs, the number of in-depth interviews one will complete for a research project will be small (there is no standard number of interviews would not be uncommon).

### 3.8 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

In quantitative studies, the group of subjects or participants from whom the data are collected is referred to as a sample (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:129).

Sampling involves decisions about which people, settings, events, behaviours and social processes are to be employed in this study is purposeful sampling.

Purposeful sampling is a type of non-probability sampling sometimes called purposive sampling. In purposive sampling, the research selects particular elements from the population that will be representative or informative about the topic of interest. Non-probability sampling is the most common type of sampling in educational research.

Lesotho is a small, mountainous, landlocked, overwhelmingly rural country with a total land area of 30,355 km² and about 1.8 million inhabitants (Mundi, 2012). It is surrounded by the Republic of South Africa. The country is divided into ten districts, namely, Butha-Buthe, Leribe, Berea, Maseru, Mafeteng, Mohale’s Hoek, Quthing, Qacha’s Nek, Thaba-Tseka and Mokhotlong. Berea (as in figure 1 below) is considered in this study. The schools are sampled without regard to whether they are church, government or community schools.
The sample had been drawn from three primary schools in Berea district. Grade six learners and teachers in schools A, B and C were regarded as an appropriate sample for this research as they are seniors of all grades with wealth of experience in primary level. The purpose of the sample is to identify factors that influence primary learners to fail to communicate through English. The sample will consist of 150 learners as the maximum teacher and learner ratio is 1:50. I chose these schools which are easy to reach by mode of transport as dictated by their geographical location and poor roads infrastructure.
3.9 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Validity and reliability are two of the most important concepts in the context of measurement. Measurement consists of rules for assigning numbers to objects so as to represent quantities or attributes numerically. This means that numbers are assigned to objects in a consistent manner. To ensure that data are valid and reliable, the researcher has to make sure that the measurement procedures and the measurement instruments to be used have acceptable levels of reliability and validity (de Vos et al., 2005:160).

3.9.1 Validity

According to Babbie (2004:148), validity refers to the extent to which an empirical measure accurately reflects the concept it is intended to measure. Similarly, Gravetter and Forzano cited in de Vos et al. (2005:161) indicate that validity of a measurement procedure is the degree to which the measurement process measures the variable it claims to measure. Validity has two aspects: that the instrument actually measures the concept in question, and that the concept is measured accurately. It also refers to the extent to which it correlates with some criterion external to instruments itself.

Koshy (2005:157) and Best and Kahn (2006:295) cited in de Vos et al. (2005:115) explain the three types of validity in quantitative research:

- **Content validity** has to do with whether a measuring device covers the full range of meanings or forms that would be included in a variable being measured. This means that a valid measuring device would provide an adequate or representative, sample of all content, or elements or instances of the phenomenon being measured. They further argue that to determine content validity we ask two questions: Is the instrument really measuring the concept we assume it? Does the instrument provide an adequate sample, of items that represent that concept?

- **Criterion validity** is established by comparing scores on an instrument with an external criterion known to, or believed to, measure the concept, trait or behaviour being studied. It is important that the criterion should be valid and reliable and free from contamination. If the researcher chooses a criterion that is inaccurate or unreliable, he/she would be unable to validate the instrument adequately.
• Construct validity is concerned with the meaning of the instrument that is what it is measuring and how and why it operates the way it does. It does not only involve validation of the instrument but also of the theory underlying it.

Validity indicates whether the instrument is reflecting the true story. The validity of the questionnaires as a research instrument reflects the truthfulness which conclusions can be drawn.

3.9.2 Reliability

According to MacMillan and Schumacher (2010:179), reliability refers to the statistical concept and relates to the consistency of measurement that is similar over different forms of the same instrument or occasions of data collection. It is primarily concerned not with what is being measured but with how well it is being measured. The more reliable our instruments and observations, the more consistent and dependable our results will be. They further explain that qualitative approach is conceptualized as involving trustworthiness, rigour and quality. They distinguish the following types of reliability:

• A coefficient of stability (test-retest) is obtained by correlating scores from the same test on two different occasions of a group of individuals.
• In split-half reliability, the items of a test have been administered to a group and are divided into comparable halves and a correlation coefficient is calculated between the halves.

According to Creswell (2003) when the researcher has used both quantitative and qualitative approach he or she should consider both quantitative and qualitative validity strategies and mix both in a way that best works to build credibility trustworthiness of data, data collection and outcomes of the study. Opie (2004) also argues that although reliability and validity are two different characteristics of measurement, they “shade into other”. In order to achieve reliability in this study, trustworthiness was ensured by piloting the questionnaires in order to detect problems that the respondents were to encounter when responding to the questionnaires. The researcher also spent sufficient time with the interviewees to develop a sound understanding of them. In both questionnaires and interviews pseudonyms were used throughout the study.
Creswell (2009) stipulates that triangulation adds validity to a study and that is a way of collaborating findings. Therefore, the researcher engaged multiple methods of searching or gathering data such as interviews and recordings, transcribing the interview verbatim and questionnaires to acquire valid, reliable and diverse construction of realities. Terms were clearly defined so that they have the same meaning to all the respondents.

3.10 LIMITATIONS

The logistical difficulties inherent in gathering a sufficiently large sample can sabotage the study before it even gets off the ground. Larger samples also tend to be more expensive. The misuse of sampling and weighting can completely undermine the accuracy, validity and major project ability of a research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:16). Limitations can be due to complex human characteristics, as well as thinking and problem-solving skills.

In addition, to measure achievement, intelligence, leadership style, group interaction, or readiness skills involves formulating conceptual definitions and deciding issues of validity can lead to limitations due to methodological difficulties.

The researcher’s position as a friend, teacher, principal, colleague, parent and supervisor need to be fair and neutral to make sure that the results are valid. However, some learners might not give honest opinions about information they are asked about because of being scared that they will be victimised or seen as not cooperative by their teachers. The researcher’s workload and pressure to meet the due dates, the learners’ emotion, and parents’ feelings about the school’s operational requirements, may affect the research results.

3.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Educational research deals with human beings, therefore, it is necessary to understand the ethical and legal responsibilities of conducting research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:117). The ethics apply to all participants in the research enterprise, from data collectors to archivists to secondary analysts who use such data in their research.

The researcher has to take into consideration ethical issues such as confidentiality and anonymity. A researcher should treat information collected with confidentiality. This means that the researcher should not state that a particular respondent made certain statements. The other ethical issue to observe is anonymity whereby the respondent should not give their
names or reference numbers that may identify them as the particular individual that gave the information (Punch, 2005). The participants should also be briefed on the purpose of the study and also how the information will be recorded (Fowler, 2008).

The researcher also needs to get the necessary permission from relevant authorities before the study begins. The researcher had applied for permission from the Ministry of Education and Training and the concerned principals, as well as parents’ consent.

3.12 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the researcher discussed the research methodology and explained how the project will be approached. The chapter elaborated on the quantitative and qualitative methods and different instruments to be used along with how to promote the validity and reliability of these methods. It explained how data will be gathered to answer the research question about learners’ poor communication skills in English as a second language. Details on how to obtain ethical matters and limitations was considered. In the next chapter, the researcher discusses collected and analysed data.
4.0 CHAPTER 4

4.1 DATA ANALYSIS

4.2 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter dealt with data gathering methods, this chapter focuses on presentation of the data collected in three primary schools. As has been indicated, a questionnaire was constructed for Grade 6 learners and in-depth interview questions were used to collect qualitative data in order to illuminate the questionnaire. The data will be analyzed separately.

Among the three schools named A, B and C involved in this study were two government schools and one church school. The three schools are in the semi-urban areas. The data obtained from the questionnaire were subjected to descriptive analysis. Descriptive analysis refers to procedures and methods used to organise, summarise, tabulate, depict and describe collection of data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:151). The goal of descriptive analysis is to provide a presentation of data in tabular, graphical or numerical form of the results research.

4.3 QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Quantitative data in professional research can be analysed manually or by computer. If the sample is relatively small, statistics can be performed manually with calculators. Software programs for personal computers can be used for larger population. Data analysis in the quantitative paradigm does not provide the answers to research questions. The researcher has to describe, analyse the data and then interpret the results of the analysis (Kerlinger, 1986:125-126 in De Vos et al., 2005:218). Analysis means the categorising, ordering, manipulating and summarising of data to obtain answers to research questions. The purpose of analysis is to reduce data so that relations of research problems can be studied and tested, and conclusions drawn.

The simplest form of data analysis is univariate analysis. All the data gathered on a particular variable is summarised for easy comprehension and utilisation. The summary can be in different forms, such as a tabular or graphic display of visual presentations. In addition, graphic presentations had been used. They are pictorial devices to illustrate data. Graphic presentations are visually effective and easy to interpret; therefore, this type of presentation is
often used instead of tables for frequency distribution (Roger, 1998:440). The graphic presentation will enable the researcher to comprehend the essential features of frequency distributions. There are six principal types of graphic presentations, bar graphs, dough nut graphs, histograms, frequency polygons, pie charts and pictograms (de Vos et al., 2005:227). The researcher used the following graphic presentations: line graphs, bar graphs and pie charts and percentages were used to analyse results.

The data was collected by using questionnaire. The researcher was able to collect sufficient data about learners’ opinions regarding communication through English in their primary schools. The questionnaire was administrated personally by the researcher in all the three schools.

4.3.1 Presentation of the results

The purpose of the three line graphs below was to show medium of instruction used in the classroom, which addressed the following first question on the questionnaire: Which medium of instruction is used in the classroom?

Graph 4.3.1(i)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medium of instruction used in School</th>
<th>A Class room</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Both English and Sesotho</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sesotho</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: Languages spoken: English, Sesotho, Other.
Graph 4.3.1(ii)

Medium of Instruction used in School B
Class Room

% OF STUDENTS

Both English and Sesotho
English
Sesotho
Other

Key: Languages spoken: English, Sesotho, Other.

Graph 4.3.1 (iii)

Medium of Instruction used in School C
Classroom

% OF STUDENTS

Both English and Sesotho
English
Sesotho
Other

49
Key: Languages spoken: English, Sesotho, Other.

The graph for school A shows 57% of the learners agree that the medium of instruction used in their classroom is both Sesotho and English. With regard to their perceptions of learners in school B, 50% of learners said that the languages of instruction used in their classroom are both Sesotho and English and 70% of learners in school agree that the medium of instructions used in their classroom is both Sesotho and English. In the three schools, learners seem to agree that English is not used as a medium of instruction. In this situation, learners are encouraged to use English and Sesotho interchangeably as they communicate and that neither assists them to master English nor perform well in the examination.

The purpose of the next three line graphs below was to show the language spoken by learners within the school yard, which addressed the second question on the questionnaire: Which language do you speak within your school yard?

**Graph 4.3.1 (iv)**

Key: Languages spoken: English, Sesotho, Other.
Graph 4.3.1 (v)

Language Spoken within School B Yard

Key: Languages spoken: English, Sesotho, Other.

Graph 4.3.1 (vi)

Language Spoken within School C Yard

Key: Languages spoken: English, Sesotho, Other.
In response to question 2, the line graph for school A shows that 74% of learners in grade 6 indicate that they speak both English and Sesotho in the school yard, 22% said that they speak English, 42% of learners in school B indicate that they speak both English and Sesotho, 42% said they speak Sesotho and 16% agree that they speak English. The results for school C indicate that 100% agree that they speak both English and Sesotho in the responses clearly indicate that the learners are encouraged to use English and Sesotho interchangeably.

The aim of the three line graphs below was to indicate how many English lessons are offered per week according to the time-table, which addressed the third question on the questionnaire: How many English lessons are offered per week according to the table?

Graph 4.3.1 (vii)

Key: Number of scheduled English lessons per week: Less than 6, 6, More than 6
Graph 4.3.1 (viii)

English Lessons offered per week in School B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lessons per Week</th>
<th>% of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 6</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 6</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graph 4.3.1 (ix)

English Lessons offered per week in School C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lessons per Week</th>
<th>% of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 6</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: Number of scheduled English lessons per week: Less than 6, 6, More than 6
The graph shows that 78% of the learners in school A said that less than 6 periods are offered per week, 50% which is half of the learners in grade 6 in school B said they are offered less than 6 periods per week and 80% of learners in school C said they are offered less than 6 periods per week. These indicate that less than 6 periods are offered per week in the three schools. The results revealed that the learners are not given time to practice all the components of English, such as grammar, literature, composition and comprehension. As they are not doing English every day as per the requirements of the syllabus, they are not assisted to master English as a medium of instruction and means of communication.

The intention of the following three bar graphs was to show variety of materials and methods used to deliver English lessons, which addressed the fourth question on the questionnaire: Are variety of materials and methods used in English lessons? For example group discussions, debate and pictures.

**Graph 4.3.1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variety of materials and methods used in School A English lessons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>% OF STUDENTS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: Use of variety of materials and methods to deliver English lessons: Very Poor, Poor, Average, Good, Very Good
Key: Use of variety of materials and methods to deliver English lessons: Very Poor, Poor, Average, Good, Very Good
In response to question 4 whether variety of materials and methods are used in English lessons, in school A, 57% of the learners as shown in graph 4.4 agree that variety of materials and methods are used averagely in English lessons. In school B and school C 58% and 60% of the learners respectively agree that variety of materials and methods are used averagely in English lessons. This means that the variety of materials and methods are fairly used and educators need to put more effort as learners learn effectively when different materials are used as they are self-explanatory and arouse learners’ interest. If learners’ interests are not aroused, they do not enjoy learning and grasp concepts. Variety of materials and methods cater for all the needs of different learners. In addition, if they are exposed to collaborative working, their self-esteem towards English is boosted. For example, Ying-Chuan (2013) asserts that communicative task-based activity into classroom increases opportunities for learners to interact with each other to improve their communicative competence.

The purpose of the following three bar graphs was to address the fifth question on the questionnaire: How much do you participate in English activities in the classroom?

Graph 4.3.1 (xiii)

![Bar Graph](image)

**School A learner participation in English activities**

Key: Amount of participation in English activities: Very Little, Little, Average, Much, Very Much
Graph 4.3.1 (xiv)

**School B learner participation in English activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of Participation</th>
<th>% of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Little</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Much</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graph 4.3.1 (xv)

**School C learner participation in English activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of Participation</th>
<th>% of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Little</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Much</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: Amount of participation in English activities: Very Little, Little, Average, Much, Very Much
Question 5 was aimed at eliciting the learners’ opinions about the extent in which they are involved in English activities. According to the responses, 40% of the learners in school A agree that they averagely participate in English activities in the classroom. In both school B and C, 50% of the learners said they fairly participate in English activities. These indicate that there is an effort made by educators to involve learners in English activities although it is inadequate based on the requirements on syllabus. As learners do not practice English at home, they have to be given adequate activities to build their confidence in communicating through English.

The aim of the following three bar charts was to address the sixth question on the questionnaire: How much support do your teachers give you when you have difficulties in learning of English?

**Graph 4.3.1 (xvi)**

Key: Amount of participation in English activities: Very Little, Little, Average, Much, Very Much
Key: Amount of participation in English activities: Very Little, Little, Average, Much, Very Much
Question 6 was aimed at determining the extent to which educators support the learners with difficulties in English lessons. In school A, the graph shows that 69% of the learners indicate that the educators support the learners with difficulties and 31% feel that the learners with difficulties are neglected. In school B, 68% affirmed that the educators support them and 32% said they are neglected and school C learners, 70% said educators seem to be doing well in this area. They assist learners with difficulties. School A: 31%, school B: 32% and school C: 30% respectively agreed that the educators are not assisting them well. If effective teaching and learning is to be obtained the other percentage of neglected learners should be attended in order to make them feel that they are capable of achieving something if they apply themselves.

The following three pie charts were intended to address the seventh question on the learners’ questionnaire: How much support do your parents or guardians give you with English homework?

Graph 4.3.1 (xix)

![Pie chart for School A parents/guardians support in learners' English homework]

Key: Amount of parents/guardians support in learners’ English homework: Very Little, Little, Average, Much, Very Much
Graph 4.3.1 (xx)

**School B Parents/Guardians support in learners English homework**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of Support</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Little</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Much</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graph 4.3.1 (xxi)

**School C Parents/Guardians support in learners English homework**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of Support</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Little</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Much</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: Amount of parents/guardians support in learners’ English homework: Very Little, Little, Average, Much, Very Much
The intension of the question was to find out how much support learners get from their parents or guardians with the homework given by educators. The opinions of learners in school A indicate that 9% of the learners get full support from their parents, 22% are fairly supported, and 69% receive little support. In school B, only 4% of learners receive full support from the parents, 12% are fairly assisted, and 73% receive little support. In school C, the pie chart indicates that 5% are fully helped with the homework, and 95% receive little support. This scenario makes learners conclude that English is the language for school environment only. As soon as they leave school environment, their attitude towards using English as means of communication changes. This denies them a chance to progressively improve more on English speaking and writing when they are outside school environment. This being the case, these learners cannot perform well in all the subjects taught and examined in English, with the exclusion of Sesotho, their vernacular.

The purpose of the following three pie charts was to show performance of learners in English tests, which addressed the eighth question on the questionnaire: How do you perform in English test?

**Graph 4.3.1 (xxii)**

Key: Learners’ performance in percentage (%): 0, 0, 8, 35, 57.
Graph 4.3.1 (xxiii)

School B Learners performance in English test

Key: Learners’ performance in percentage (%): 0, 5, 15, 15, 65.

Graph 4.3.1 (xxiv)

School C Learners performance in English test

Key: Learners’ performance in percentage (%): 0, 10, 10, 20, 60.
The graph for the school A shows that 43% of learners perform well and 57% of learners perform fairly. In school B, 80% of the learners do not perform well in English tests, 15% perform fairly and only 5% of the learners perform well. At school C, 60% indicated that they do not perform well in English tests, 20% perform fairly and 20% of the learners perform well. This scenario also reflects at the end of grade 7 examinations. This indicates that all aspects of English as a subject, medium of instruction and means of communication are not well done at schools.

The aim of the following three pie charts was to address the ninth question on the questionnaire: Which subject do you like most?

Graph 4.3.1 (xxv)

The subject learners like most in School A

Key: The subject learners like most in percentage (%): 0, 0, 5, 17, 78.
Key: The subject learners like most in percentage (%): 5, 5, 11, 20, 59.
In response to question 9, the subject that they like most, the pie chart for school A indicates that 78% like Mathematics the most, school B, 46% of the learners like Mathematics and school C, the subject that they like most is also Mathematics. Few learners like English, school A; 17%, school B: 23% and school C: 11 percent like English the most. This clearly indicates that the learners have the negative attitude towards English as a second language. The learners’ achievement in learning a second language is related to their level of motivation to learn the language.

4.4 QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

4.5 INTRODUCTION

The focus of the previous section, 4.3 was on the responses of grade 6 learners to the questionnaire on the “Learners’ poor communication skills in English in some Lesotho primary schools.” These responses were analysed quantitatively. In addition to the quantitative investigation, a qualitative investigation was also undertaken with grade 6 educators.

Interviews were conducted to understand educator’s opinions of how they felt about certain issues in teaching and learning of English as a second language. An interview is regarded as a professional face to face conversation between two or more people where the researcher generates information from interviewee that may help in answering the research questions (Cohen et al., 2007 in Masilo, 2008: 2).

In this study, in-depth interviews were used and they were relevant in generating information from educators in relation to the type of experience and their perceptions on the acquisition of English as a second language and the implementation of the Lesotho language policy. The interview data was recorded and then transcribed. The data was classified into chunks of themes to formulate conclusions from each categorisation (Neuman, 2006).

4.5.1 Data analysis and interpretation

This section provides a description of how data was analysed thematically. Firstly, codes were developed. These codes were based on the main question of the study. The data were collected from a homogeneous group; they were all Sesotho speaking. Thematic analysis in
its simplest form is a categorising strategy for qualitative data. Researchers review their data, make notes and begin to sort it into categories. It helps researchers to move their analysis from a broad reading of the data towards discovering patterns and developing theme. The results and interpretation of the findings are discussed below according to the themes that emerged from the data.

**4.5.1.1 Theme 1: Implementation of English Policy**

**Appendix A**

**Question 1**: What do you do in order to comply with the requirements of English policy?

**Question 2**: How many hours have been allocated in the time-table for English per week?

The educators of school A and C said they have some class regulations whereby learners are to speak English in the school campus and claimed that the instructions are given in English. The educators from school C stated that sometimes it becomes difficult for learners to follow the instructions and has to explain in mother tongue. In school B the educator stated that learners are taught the four skills as stipulated in the syllabus.

She further explained that even though English is used as a medium of instruction from grade 4, they also have regulations in classes that the learners should speak English they clarify certain English concepts that are not understood by learners in their mother tongue, which is Sesotho.

When asked whether educators speak English among themselves at school, they stated that they use both languages, that is, English and Sesotho. The interviews of educators from the three schools revealed that as most of the educators their first language is Sesotho they are tempted to use Sesotho which is also the learners’ mother tongue when explaining certain English concepts. The excessive use of the first language by learners results in their inability to express themselves in the second language. Furthermore, English as a medium of instruction should be implemented by all the educators and hence persuade learners to speak English during school hours. Although educators indicated that there are written class regulations that learners should speak English the data collected indicated that they use Sesotho and English interchangeably when they communicate among themselves.

**Question 2**: How many hours have been allocated for English per week?
The educators from school A, B and C declared that English has been allocated six periods per week to enhance the policy that English must be used as a medium of instruction, but they indicated that they hardly follow the time-table as they are expected to teach many subjects per day. The time-table states that they should teach 8 subjects per day and in all, the subjects that are taught in grade 6 are eleven (11). This has been admitted by the learners as their responses indicated that they are taught English less than 6 periods per week. This supports the views that there are factors which affect learners to communicate in English.

4.5.1.2 Theme 2: Teaching methods and materials

**Question 3:** How do you deliver the following lessons to your learners’?

a. Comprehension:
   The educator from school A and C said when teaching comprehension they first read aloud, the learners’ follow what has been read, then allow them to read silently on their own. Learners are randomly asked to read aloud. The questions are read to the learners’ and then they write the answers in their exercise books.
   The educator from school B explained that the learners read and write unfamiliar words and phrases then they guess their meaning; thereafter, they verify the meanings in their dictionaries. The educator asks the learners questions and they discuss the answers with the learners. Lastly, they summarise the text. It seems the three educators preferably use reading and answer methods.

b. Literature:
   The educator from school A said that they read the story in chunks, that is, paragraph by paragraph. She teaches grammatical structure using the passage text for an example, synonyms, antonyms, adverbs, adjectives and figures of speech use new words in sentences then summarise the text. The educator from school B stated that they read and also write the unfamiliar words phrases and use the dictionary for further explanation then summarise. The educator from school C indicated that they read, check for new words in the dictionary and learners’ summarise what they have read, then answer given questions in their exercise books. Based on these responses, the three educators implied that they teach literature in context, but however, there are still other methods which can be used; methods such as role playing or dramatising the text, and real objects can also be used to explain new word.
c. Grammar:
The educator from school A stated that she uses pictures and read objects; for an example, when teaching singular and plural form she uses objects like a pen and books, “This is a pen”, it is a singular form, “This are the books”, plural form.
The educator from school B said real actions are done in the classroom; for an example, “I am jumping”, and the educator from school C declared that materials are used to enhance teaching and learning. Almost all of them emphasised that they use authentic materials when teaching grammar in context.
One would say certain learner-centred strategies and other methods are used by the educators. Even though multiple of materials are used, the three educators did not mention some of the methods such as Venn diagrams, the web or tables which can be used to teach parts of speech. It is important that the educators use different methods of teaching to suit the diverse needs of learners.

4.5.1.3 Theme 3: Motivating learners

Question 4: How do you motivate learners in English lessons?

Motivation is the key to all learning. It has been accepted that the learners’ achievement in learning a second language is related to their level of motivation to learn the language. The purpose of motivation is to capture the learners’ attention and curiosity and channel their energy towards learning. An intrinsically motivated learner studies because he/she wants to study. In addition, the material is interesting, challenging and rewarding and the learner receives satisfaction from learning. An extrinsically learner studies and learns for other reasons. A learner performs in order to receive a reward, like graduating or passing a test or getting presents from parents or to avoid a penalty like a failing grade. When intrinsic motivation is low or absent, extrinsic motivation can be used.

The educator from school A indicated that she motivates the learners by allowing them to work in groups and often gives them class work and homework. Educators from school B and C motivate the learners who lack concentration in English lessons by involving them in English games and the learners work in groups. From the answers given by educators, they seem to prefer group work to motivate learners. For learners to be motivated, a variety of techniques have to be used, some of the learners need rewards or tangible things to be motivated. Very often when educators find a good technique, they use it more and more and
come to depend on it. Eventually, learners become bored doing the same things and this wonderful technique no longer looks very good. In reality the technique is still good, but variety is required to keep learners’ attention. (Gardner, 2006: 243) explains that learners with higher levels of motivation do better than learners with lower levels. He further adds that if a learner is motivated, he/she has motives/reasons for engaging in relevant activities, expends efforts, persists in the activities, attends to the tasks, shows desire to achieve the goal and enjoys the activities. Gardner also considers attitude as components of motivation language learning. He refers to motivation as a combination of efforts plus the desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favourable attitudes towards learning the language.

There is an evidence that learners are not motivated to communicate through English, this was indicated by their response to question 9 “Which subject do you like most?”, 17 % of learners from school A, 23 percent from school B and 11 % from school C like English, which indicate that few learner’s like English and this is also supported by question 8, appendix which the response showed that the learners do not perform well in English test.

4.5.1.4 Theme 4: Support that educators get from parents and the school

**Question 5:** What support do you get from both parents and the school in your English teaching?

The educators from school A, B and C agree that they get support from the parents as when they are requested to provide the learners with the newspapers, magazines and supplementary books they do, although they encounter problems with supplementary books as most of the parents are not working. Three educators complained that the parents are not assisting the learners with the homework as the learners always report that parents do not give them enough time to do the homework and also indicate that the parents complain that they are wasting fuel for light when they read. This was also indicated by learners’ responses in their questionnaire that they get little support from parents with the given homework.

One would say that, in general, parents are not expected to become directly involved in their children’s homework. Parents can be involved by providing a quiet, well-lit study space and ensuring that all required materials such as books, paper, pens or pencils are available. Parents can help with time management to ensure that the children set aside time for homework and that the work is not put off until the last minute. Parents can also model
attitudes and behaviours by expressing positive attitudes towards homework and doing homework at the same time as their children, for example, reading the bible, paying bills or doing other paper work.

In response to the educator from school A regarding the support they get from the school in English teaching, she said there are library books which assist learners. In addition, educators from school B and C indicated that the staff holds mini-workshops to support each other in different methods, resources and activities. It is clear that the schools allocate time for mini workshops. This is recommended as the teachers will have time to present their problems and share the solutions with their colleagues. This can develop the confidence of educators in teaching English as a second language. There is also a need for educators to discuss their expectations with the parents.

4.5.1.5 Theme 5: Empowering parents to support their children

**Question 6**: How does the school empower parents to enable them support their children in learning of English?

The educator from school A declared that social openings are held end of every quarter to discuss the problems of the learners regarding English as a second language. Furthermore, the reports for performance of the learners are issued quarterly. The educator from school B said the school holds parents’ meetings and discuss the problems towards English, the educators also discuss the individual problems of learners with parents. Parents are also encouraged to provide learners with reading materials and assist them with given homework. The educator from school C stated that they meet with parents to discuss the learners’ performance at the end of every session and encourage them to motivate the learners to read different books.

Parental involvement in their children’s school work activities is beneficial to learners. Proper parental involvement can contribute significantly to better learners’ outcomes, including higher achievement, fewer discipline problems, and more positive attitudes towards school. However, parental involvement becomes stressful when parents feel they lack the knowledge and time. Parents have to be empowered with family-school partnership skills, for an example, acknowledging each child as a learner by valuing the importance of education, homework, a preventive, solution-focused approach in which the educators and the parents attempt to develop learning communities that support learning and development, and address barriers of learning as they arise.
4.6 CONCLUSION

The study aimed to “determine reasons for learners’ poor communication skills in English in some Lesotho primary schools”. The study answered the following research questions:

- To what extent is the policy that English should be used as a medium of instruction is implemented?
- Do learners receive enough time to practise English components?
- To what extent do educators use a variety of materials and methods to motivate the learners’ in English as a second language?
- To what extent do educators motivate and encourage learners to learn English as a second language?
- To what extent are educators and parents assisted to support learners’?

In order to achieve this aim, the researcher used questionnaire for learners. To highlight and clarify certain issues raised by the responses to the questionnaire, an interview with grade 6 educators was conducted. The data generated indicated that educators were faced with various challenges in teaching and learning of English as a second language. From the data results it has been concluded that the problems identified are the following: non-implementation of English as a medium of instruction, failure to use variety of materials and methods, insufficient skills and techniques used to motivate learners’ to learn English as a second language, inadequate interaction between the school and parents. The next chapter, Chapter 5, entails the summary of findings, limitations, recommendations and conclusion drawn from the data collected.
5.0 CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 SUMMARY OF FINDING, LIMITATIONS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the data collected in the study was presented and analysed. The data were collected by using nine questionnaires for grade 6 learners and six interviews questions for grade 6 educators which were organised into themes informed by the research questions. This chapter presents the results of the research findings obtained in the study, the findings will be summarised, and the researcher will also discuss the limitations of the study and draw conclusions. From these findings, the recommendations will be made on how to address those factors that contribute to learners’ failure to communicate in English in Lesotho primary schools.

5.3 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

Language is the centre of human life. It is one of the most important ways of expressing ourselves, communicating with people, planning our lives, remembering the past, exchanging ideas and preferences. The ability to do so in more than one language multiplies the opportunities for people to experience all these functions and even master them as well as advancing their career opportunities. Lesotho as the ex-colony like most African countries uses English language as an official language and the language of teaching and learning. This is emphasised by the “The language policy in the Lesotho constitution (1994)” and the Ministry of Education Policy Document (1995) that English is an official language concurrently with Sesotho.

The study was guided by the general research question, “Why do learners in Lesotho primary schools fail to communicate in English”, as well as the research sub-questions. The findings of this study revealed the following:
5.3.1 Non-implementation of English as a medium of instruction

It is stipulated that from grade 4 upwards, English should be used as a medium of instruction and taught as a subject as well. Throughout primary school levels, English is a failing subject. The investigation revealed that although English is officially known as a medium of instruction, the policy is not implemented. In their responses, learners indicated that they use English and Sesotho interchangeably as they communicate. This means that the three schools unanimously agreed that English is not used as a medium of instruction. The educators also agreed that they use both English and Sesotho in class. In order to implement English as a medium of instruction, the speaking of English should be compulsory to all educators and learners. Mzokwana (2008:60) suggested that effectiveness of teaching and learning, English speaking during school hours should be compulsory except for LI period and that educators do not excessively code-switch with LI.

5.3.2 Insufficient time to practise English components

According to the weekly time-table and the syllabus, grade 4-7, six periods have been allocated for English in order to have enough time to practise English components. On the contrary, the results of the study showed that the educators do not follow the syllabus requirements as they teach less than six periods of English per week. Educators’ responses with regard to number of periods taught for English concur very well with those of learners where learners said that they are taught less than six periods of English lessons per week. The results indicated that in school A 75%, agree that less than six periods of English are offered per week. In school B, 50% agreed while school C 80% agreed that there are less than six hours for English lessons. Educators in the three schools also admitted that they do not abide by the requirements of the policy and syllabus that English must be taught for 6 periods per week.

5.3.3 Failure to use variety of materials and methods

The findings revealed that certain methods and materials are used in order to enhance teaching and learning during English lessons, meaning that variety of materials and methods are not used in the English lesson. The use of various methods, teaching and learning materials assist educators to meet individual differences. If variety of teaching and learning
aids is not used, educators may use the same textbooks for all the learners in the class not catering their differences and ignoring the policy that the classroom should be inclusive.

In addition, Krashen proposes that acquisition of second language naturally occurs when the learner receive plenty of comprehensible input. He further stipulates that input becomes comprehensible when the educator uses strategies such as:

- Showing pictures or visuals to accompany new vocabulary words and communicative concepts.
- Incorporating gestures, drama and music into lessons; listening to rhythms and music and physically acting out situations make a lesson more comprehensible and memorable.
- Designing lessons with hands-on-activities and manipulative; An English lesson can utilise pictures and props to support the new vocabulary and the plot of story. To check for comprehension, the educator might have learners place the pictures in order and describe the pictures using the newly learned vocabulary.
- Repeating new vocabulary; The educator repeats vocabulary crucial to the understanding of the lesson in variety way: (1) games where learners place the written vocabulary word on the corresponding picture or write the word as the educator holds up the picture, (2) board games such as trivial pursuit, vocabulary, scrabble, boggle or hangman, (3) computer assisted lessons that incorporate the new vocabulary.
- Translation; when the second language group is homogeneous, the educator can quickly translate key concepts to make the lesson comprehensible. However, the educator should not come to rely upon translation as a common teaching tool in her second language classroom, as the educator will learn to direct their attention to the translation rather than the target language.

5.3.4 Insufficient skills and techniques used to motivate learners to learn English as a second language

The learners’ achievement in learning a second language is related to their level of motivation to learn the language. Motivation is a kind of internal drive that encourages a learner to pursue a course of action and is responsible for initiating the learning and later the driving force to sustain the learning process over arduous years to learn the language.
It is believed that without sufficient motivation no other factor on its own can ensure learners’ achievement (Masilo, 2008). The educator must be creative and flexible. Depending on the nature of the class and learners’ level, the dynamics of the class must be appropriate, as motivation is the backbone of any classroom. According to the results of the study, insufficient skills and techniques are used to motivate the learners to like to learn English as a second language, few learners seemed to be interested in ESL, and they chose other subject. Surprisingly, learners said they like Mathematics and yet it is one of the subjects that learners fail. Learners also seem not to perform well in English tests. More effort has to be taken by the educators, to encourage learners to like English. An educator’s positive energy could lead to learners becoming more motivated. If the learners see that the educator is happy to be in the classroom and excited to teach them, then the learners can learn, for an example, a smile is contagious. The educators from the three schools seemed to prefer group work to motivate learners. Group work is one of the motivating methods but variety of methods has to be used to cater diversity of learners.

5.3.5 Inadequate interaction between the school and parents

Parental involvement in homework activities has been shown to be beneficial to learners, but inappropriate parental involvement can interfere with learners rather than sustaining it. In addition, parents require guidance from educators on how their efforts can best be directed. Lack of communication becomes a source of stress when parents encounter difficulties in their homework involvement. Furthermore, parents may be provided with information and ideas about how to help learners at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions and planning, information on homework policies and how to monitor and discuss school work at home. Parents have to be included in school decisions, for an example, networks to link all families with parents’ representative. The study indicated that parents do not participate in assisting the learners with homework. According to the results of the study, learners’ opinions showed that 9 % from school A, 4 % from school B and 5 % get full support from the parents with homework.
5.4 LIMITATIONS

The participants that are the grade 6 learners and educators from the three chosen schools, who are a homogeneous group as they are all Basotho who speak Sesotho and use English as the second language and also a medium of instruction.

The educators and learners differ in their school cultures, community backgrounds and educators’ educational backgrounds. Through the interviews and questionnaires, the participants gave their personal experiences, which may affect the generalising of the findings as only three schools were selected among many primary schools in Lesotho. However, the researcher believes that there would be similar responses in other schools which did not participate.

5.5 CONCLUSION

English as a second language in Lesotho primary schools is inundated with numerous challenges that impact on learners’ communication skills in English. The study aimed to determine reasons for learners’ poor communication skills in English in some Lesotho primary schools. The participants were grade 6 learners and educators from the three schools. In order to achieve this aim, the researcher used a questionnaire for learners and interviews for educators to back-up the questionnaire. As a result, the researcher discovered that using qualitative data analysis techniques is helpful in quantitative study and that certain research questions can only be answered by using both analytic approaches.

The findings of the research imply that although policy in Lesotho states that from grade 4 English should be used as a medium of instruction, the educators do not abide by the policy. Educators used English and Sesotho as they teach in their classes. It also showed that educators do not follow the syllabus requirements that grade 6 learners should have six English lessons per week, they teach less than six periods per week. Educators do not encourage learners’ to communicate in English as they do not give them adequate activities. Findings further show that educators do not vary teaching and learning methods and materials which would surely motivate the learners. These weaknesses on the side of educators promote negative attitude towards communicating in English on the side of learners. The parents have to be fully involved in their school education as education is a three-legged pot, parents, school and learners. If the other leg breaks, the achievement of the learner declines.
Lastly, one would say some of the reasons that contribute to learners’ poor communication skills in English are; non-implementation of the language as a medium of instruction, failure to use variety of teaching and learning materials and methods, insufficient time to practise English components, insufficient skills and techniques used to motivate learners to learn English as a second language and inadequate interaction between the school and parents.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.6.1 English as a medium of instruction

Based on the participants’ responses, it is evident that English as a second language has multiple challenges and factors that contribute to learners’ poor communication skills in English. The district education officers and school board have to ensure that English as an official and medium of instruction from grade 4 is well implemented. It is of significant importance that the educators empower parents to participate in learning of their children.

5.6.2 Time-management

Educators do not meet requirements that learners should be taught six periods per week which does not give learners enough time to practise all English components. Educators need time-management skills that can improve them to abide by the time-table as expected.

5.6.3 Methods of teaching and learning

There are many methods of teaching and learning. Therefore, learners have to be exposed to various methods and materials as the use of teaching and learning materials and methods facilitate the active participation of learners which can lead to learners being the central point of teaching and learning activities. Teaching and learning materials include audio-visuals, computer, television, which should be provided to schools for learners’ to have a better understanding. To promote reading and research skills, school libraries should also be established. Other methods by which English language can be developed in second language are games, role-plays, debate, KWL strategy (Know, Want to know, and Learned) and visual imaging strategy.
According to Ogle (1987), KWL strategy can be used to teach comprehension and literature. It is an approach that can be used to focus attention, stimulate metacognitive reflection, address listening, induce competition and arouse interest. Learners reflect on what they already know about the text, and decide for themselves what they would like to find out about a certain subject. Having been exposed to the learning materials, the learners’ then reflect and decide what they have learned. In simple terms, KWL is a constructivistic scaffold that enables learners to build new knowledge. On a more sophisticated level, KWL allows learners’ to think creatively and to generate open questions that require further probing or elaboration.

Visual imaging is a strategy in developing spelling. It is a cognitive function which generally refers to the ability to recall visual experiences. Writing words is impossible if this ability has not yet developed, and the learner is therefore not able to use the written word.

5.6.4 Parental involvement

Tompkins (1997:32) stipulates that effective educators involve parents in the literacy programme and extend their literacy programmes from the classroom into the home. Educators should communicate the importance of parent involvement to their learners’ studies, view parents as teaching partners and understand that even parents with limited education or cannot communicate through English are valuable resources. Since new methods are implemented for teaching and learning the new materials are often unfamiliar to parents. Therefore, educators need to provide literacy information to parents in variety of ways such as:

- Back to school nights.
- Newsletters.
- Conferences with parents.
- Workshop on strategies for working with young readers and writers.
- Homework telephone hotlines
- Telephone calls and notes with good news.

In parents’ workshops and other information sharing sessions, educators may use video-tapes, demonstrations and guest speakers to provide information about ESL development and the programmes in their classrooms.
Educators should encourage parents to buy magazines, newspapers and books written in their mother tongue. In this way, a linguistically-enriched environment is created.

This in turn has a positive effect on language development in general. If learners master their mother tongue, it is easy to cope with foreign language; this was also confirmed in the literature review.

5.6.5 Motivation

Motivation is the backbone of any classroom. The educator’s positive attitude is a must for a successful learning atmosphere. To promote self-confidence, it helps if the educator is self-confident. Positive approval and praise for learners’ effort is very effective, even if the learner is wrong. Let the learner know that you are glad they tried and being wrong is not such a big problem and the learners’ would not be reluctant the next time they are called on to participate.

Furthermore, proper classroom explanation is needed by the educator so that the learners can well understand what is expected of them. In the ESL classroom, this is more important to create anxiety because the explanations are given in another language that takes even more effort by the learner to comprehend than their own language. A well-planned lesson is essential. The lessons must be very simple yet fun and interesting, with many changes from a writing exercise, to a speaking, a listening, back to writing, all in the same class.

Lastly, increased parental awareness is also crucial to learners’ motivation. To support motivation, parents must participate actively in the learners’ life. The same set of goals and practises at school that promote motivation should be followed at home. Gardner (1985) proposes that motivation = effort + desire to achieve a goal + attitudes.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

1. What do you do in order to comply with the requirements of English policy are implemented?
   
2. How many hours have been allocated on the time-table for English per week?
   
3. How do you deliver the following English lessons to your learners?
   a. Comprehension
   b. Literature
   c. Grammar

4. How do you motivate learners in English lessons?
5. What support do you get from both parents and the school in your English teaching?

6. How does the school empower parents to enable them support their children in the learning of English?
APPENDIX B

LEARNERS’ QUESTIONNAIRE

- Answer the following questions as honest as possible.
- Choose one suitable answer by ticking where various answers have been provided.
- Do not write your names on the questionnaire.

1. Which medium of instruction is used in the classroom?
   (a) Both English and Sesotho
   (b) English
   (c) Sesotho
   (d) Other

2. Which language do you speak within your school yard?
   (a) Both English and Sesotho
   (b) English
   (c) Sesotho
   (d) Other

3. How many English lessons are offered per week according to the time-table?
   (a) Less than 6
   (b) 6
   (c) More than 6

4. Are variety of materials and methods used in English lessons? For example: group discussions, debate and pictures.
   (a) Very poor
   (b) Poor
   (c) Average
   (d) Good
   (e) Very good
5. How much do you participate in English activities in the classroom?
   (a) Very little
   (b) Little
   (c) Average
   (d) Much
   (e) Very much

6. How much support does your teacher give you when you have difficulties in learning of English?
   (a) Very little
   (b) Little
   (c) Average
   (d) Much
   (e) Very much

7. How much support do your parents or guardians give you with English homework?
   (a) Very little
   (b) Little
   (c) Average
   (d) Much
   (e) Very much

8. How do you perform in English Test?
   (a) Very poor
   (b) Poor
   (c) Average
   (d) Good
   (e) Very good

9. Which subject do you like most?
   (a) Sesotho
   (b) English
   (c) Mathematics
   (d) Science
   (e) Social studies
APPENDIX C: THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION LETTER OF PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE SELECTED SCHOOLS IN Berea District

LESOTHO

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING – BERE A

05/12/2013

University of South Africa
P.O. Box 392
UNISA 0003
South Africa

To whom it may concern

Dear Madam/Sir

Re: Permission for Mrs. Mamothimkhulu Nkome to conduct a research in the Berea District.

The above matter bears reference

Mrs Mamothimukhulu Nkome has been granted a permission to conduct a research in the Berea District Schools, specifically in Teyateyaneng Primary Schools chosen in her study. Your good masters office is humbly requested to assist the above mentioned teacher with all the necessary requirements to fulfill her Med. in Inclusive Education.

Thank you in advance.

Mamoeketsi Letsie  S.E.O (ai) - Berea

MIN. OF EDUCATION & TRAINING PRIMARY INSPECTORATE
C 5-12-2013
P.O. BOX 581 • BERE A 200
TEL: 228000235/228000323

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APPENDIX D: THE LETTER TO SCHOOLS REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

LESOTHO

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING – BERE A
05/12/2013

The Principal

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Permission for Mrs Mamothimkhulu Nkome to conduct a research in your school.

The above matter bears reference.

Your good school is hereby humbly requested to grant Mrs Mamothimkhulu Nkome a permission to conduct a research in your school as a partial fulfillment of her Med. in Inclusive Education.

Thanking you in advance

Mamooketsi Letsie S.E.O. (ai) Berea
My name is ‘Mamothimkhulu Nkome. I am presently studying for Masters in Inclusive Education with the University of South Africa. As part of the coursework for the degree it is the requirement to conduct a study. I request your permission to conduct my study in your school. The study will involve Grade 6 English teachers and Grade 6 learners. The title of my research is “Determining reasons for learners’ poor communication skills in English in some Lesotho Primary Schools”. Learners will respond to structured items in the questionnaire educators will answer interview questions. My research supervisor is Professor Phaladi Seb ate who is the chair of Department of Language Education, Arts and Culture at the University of South Africa. The purpose of this study is to assist in finding possible solutions to improve learners’ communication skills in English. This study will begin in April, when they shall have settled into the New Year. If you allow me to use your school I will share the findings with your school.

Furthermore, I would like to indicate that disruption of the school’s, teacher’s and learner’s time will be limited. I wish to ensure you that the name of your school will not be divulged. Confidentiality will be highly guarded; pseudonyms will be used in order to protect your school and educators. Please complete the attached consent form and the researcher will collect it. You are welcome to contact the researcher at 58054004.

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

Yours Sincerely

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Mrs Nkome ‘Mamothimkhulu
APPENDIX F

LETTERS OF INFORMED CONSENT REQUESTING PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY OF GRADE SIX ENGLISH TEACHERS AT BEREA DISTRICT IN LESOTHO

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is ‘Mamothimkhulu Nkome. I am presently studying for Masters in Inclusive Education with the University of South Africa. As part of the coursework for the degree, it is the requirement to conduct a study. The study involves grade 6 learners in your school. The title of my research is “Determining reasons for learners’ poor communication skills in English in some Lesotho Primary Schools”. My research supervisor is Professor Phaladi Sebate who is the chair of Department of Language Education, Arts and Culture at the University of South Africa. The purpose is to assist in finding possible solutions to improve learners’ communication skills in English. I request you to participate in this study.

It you make a decision to participate in this study you will be requested to participate in the interviews while the learners complete the questionnaire. The interviews will be audio-recorded. The name of your school your identity will not be revealed. The findings will be sent to you and your school. Your participation will be highly appreciated as it may contribute in the improvement of learners’ to communicate effectively in English.

I would like to indicate that the disruptions of lessons will be limited. There will be a meeting to explain the objectives of the study and other issues relating to the research. You are free to withdraw from the study at anytime. Please complete the attached consent form and the researcher will collect it.

I will be grateful to work with you and if you need any clarification about this study you may call me at 58054004.

Yours faithfully

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

‘Mamothimkhulu Nkome
APPENDIX G

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

I .............................., the principal/ the Grade six educators, have read and understood the content of the request that was given to me by Mrs ‘Mamothimkhulu Nkome. I fully agree to participate in the research in which she will be “Determining reasons for learners’ poor communication skills in English in some Lesotho Primary Schools”.

Signature ............................

Date .................................