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Teachers' management of language transition from Grade 3 to Grade 4

by

Mmamotidi Catherine Maodi (nee Kwakwa)

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

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In

Education Management, Law and Policy

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Dr. T. Calitz

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Prof J. Beckmann

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Declaration of originality

I, Mmamotidi Catherine Maodi (nee Kwakwa), hereby declare that this dissertation submitted in accordance with the requirements for the Master of Education degree at the University of Pretoria, is my own original work and has not been previously submitted to any other institution of higher learning.

The university is therefore authorised to publish the study for worldwide access.

I also acknowledge all the sources used in this study.

Signed _____at _____ on this date_____

Ethical Clearance Certificate.

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DEGREE AND PROJECT	M.Ed
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GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

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Type of qualification	Med.
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Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

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Making education a societal priority

iv

Ethics Statement

The author, whose name appears on the title page of this thesis, has obtained, for the research described in this work, the applicable research ethics approval. The author declares that he/she has observed the ethical standards required in terms of the University of Pretoria's Code of ethics for researchers and the Policy guidelines for responsible research.

Abstract

This dissertation builds on and contributes to work in the field Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in Grade 3. In South Africa, learners in Grade 3 are taught in African languages in township schools. In urban schools, the LoLT is English, whereas the schools are multicultural, and many learners do not have English as their home language. In Grade 4, there is subject teaching and the LoLT is English.

The purpose of this study is to explore how South African teachers manage the learners' language transition from Grade 3 into Grade 4. This was a qualitative research. Two schools (township and urban) were sampled. Data was collected through individual interviews, a focus group discussion (a small number [4] of teachers from an urban school), and classroom observation (one Grade 3 and one Grade 4 classes in a township school).

The article drew strongly on the work of Pretorius (2014) who found that learners in township schools struggle when they transition into Grade 4. Whereas in urban schools the article will focus on the work of O'Connor and Geiger (2009), who state that bi-or multi-lingual learners attend school in a language that is not their home language. The study developed the conceptual framework from the socio-cultural environment of the learners from Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory.

The findings revealed that the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) provides sufficient Teacher and Learner Support Materials (LTSM). The responses revealed that the participating teachers did not have the strategies on how to manage learners' language transition from Grade 3 into Grade 4.

Key words:

Transition, language policies in South Africa, language policies in other countries, township educational issues, urban educational issues and mother tongue education.

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to confirm that the thesis titled "Teachers' management of learners' language transition from Grade 3 to Grade 4" by Mmamotidi Catherine Maodi (nee Kwakwa) was proof read and edited by me in respect of language.

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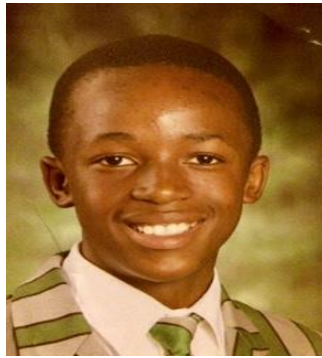
Kind regards

Anna M de Wet

BA (Afrikaans, English, Classical Languages) (Cum Laude), University of Pretoria.
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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my late son **Boitshoko**. You left me two weeks before I wrote my last paper for ACE (Special Needs) in 2012. You were the inspiration why I never stopped studying. Your intelligence was amazing. I completed my BEd (Hons) two years after your passing, and now I have completed my MEd. May your Soul Rest in Peace my son. You are dearly missed and still loved.

To my late father **Harry Kwakwa** who passed on a year before I could complete my MEd. You are dearly missed and still loved. May your soul rest in peace.

To my son **Boitshepo (Shimi)**. I know this has never been easy for you, I denied you most of the time I should have spent with you while I would be clinging to my laptop all the time studying, but you kept on supporting me where I needed it. When I got frustrated by the studies, you were always there to listen and kept me going when you always said to me: "Go tla loka Mama". Thank you very much my son and Mama loves you dearly.

To my mother **Martha Montshi Kwakwa**. Every time I graduated, when we left the graduation venue, you would ask me: "When are we coming back", like it was easy for me to study. But I would respond and say: "After two years". That is what influenced me to keep on registering after every graduation. Thank you Mmane. I love you.

Finally, to my husband **Chrisiph Maodi**. Thank you for understanding that the destiny for my studies is determined by God. The support you provided when I needed it, is highly appreciated. You understood when I woke up in the early hours of the mornings to study. I love you.

To My Almighty God of Mount Zion. "Ditheto ke tseo Morena, di a go tshwanela".

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My Heavenly Father, The Almighty God of Mount Zion for the strength, knowledge and wisdom He gave me to be able to complete my studies. Praises unto you!

List of abbreviations

DoE	Department of Education
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
LTSM	Teacher and Learner Support Material
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
SASA	South African School Act
ESL	English Second Language
EFAL	English First Additional Language
ELIP	English Language Improvement Programme
HL	Home Language
IIAL	Incremental Introduction of the African Language
LiEP	Language-in-Education Policy
NCCRD	National Centre for Curriculum and Research and Development
NLP	National Language Policy
EU	European Commission
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Skills
SBST	School Based Support Team
MOI	Medium of Instruction

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1 : CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Language difficulties are a challenge in Africa at large. For example, in Zambia, the languages like Bemba are reliable and systematic in relations to sound-related (phonemic) and spelling–related (orthographic) structures, but these languages swiftly differ from the English language which is asymmetrical and unreliable in terms of these characteristics which are crucial for the development of reading and writing skills (Mubanga, 2010). Based on this specific verbal structural difference, Grade 2s in Zambia are very likely to experience and display reading and writing problems in the Language of English as they change from Grade 1 to 2 (Mubanga, 2010).

Learners in Zambia are expected to transfer and use first language reading ability skills learnt in Grade 1 through the New Break Through to Literacy (NBTL, which is one of the literacy teaching courses) for the acquisition of L2 literacy skills (Mubanga, 2010).

The federal policy in Ethiopia demands the use of the mother tongue as medium of instruction (MOI) throughout the first and second primary cycles, which is to start from Grade 1 until Grade 8. It also demands educator training to be done in MOI of primary education. The study of English as a subject begins in Grade 1 in all regions. One example of the regions in Ethiopia is Addis Ababa where the LoLT is the mother-tongue Amharic, from Grade 1-6. Learners transition from Amharic to English in Grade 7-8. English as a medium of instruction is a challenge for both teachers and learners (Heugh, Benson, Bogale, Alemu & Yohannes, 2006).

Teachers all over the system have very limited capability in the English language, and extremely inadequate experience of English outside the classroom, regardless of implementation of the nationwide English Language Improvement Programme (ELIP). Not many can cope with the strains of educating English as a subject, and even less with the difficulties of using English to carry curricular content. It is found that, regarding the use of English as the medium of instruction for Grade 7 and Grade 8, there is also not enough teaching materials in the other languages of Ethiopia and the necessity for English as a worldwide language (Heugh et al., 2006).

Insufficient understanding of English is a problematic issue that should be handled by introducing English as MOI earlier in the educational system. Teachers feel that English should be introduced in Grade 5. Teachers regularly translate words into the

learners' languages (code-switching) to compensate for their lack of understanding when lessons are carried out in English (Heugh et al, 2006). They also discovered that learners had difficulties in re-writing English written work from the chalkboard, and their activity books confirmed that they did not understand what they have written because words were omitting letters and joint together and there were many unreadable sections.

In Kenya, teachers are facing many problems inside and outside the classroom (Anyiendah, 2017:1). Fundamental amongst them is inadequate classroom language time provided for learners to practice English. In the higher primary school, the learners' only time provided to communicate in the English language is restricted to 35 minutes per day during the English lesson (Republic of Kenya Ministry of Education Science and Technology, 2002). Furthermore, these learners are not given sufficient chances to practice English as the language inside the class when taught other subjects because of changing from one language to the other (Anyiendah, 2017, p. 1). Teachers for other subjects code switch from English, which is the MOI, to either Kiswahili or their mother tongue either because they are unskilled in the English language or to have the learners understand the subject matter (Anyiendah, 2017).

Anyiendah (2017) further states that "the learners' negative attitude towards English poses a great barrier for effective teaching. This negative attitude originates from the fact that learners have limited capabilities in the language hence this prevents them from actively partaking in classroom activities" (Anyiendah, 2017, p. 2). This means that "[g]iven that English is either a second or third language to some e learners, most of them have difficulties in comprehending its structures" (Anyiendah, 2017, p.:2).

Like other African countries, South Africa also experiences language challenges. For example, in 2000, the then Department of Education, through the National Centre for Curriculum and Research and Development (NCCRD), conducted research to inform interventions in language-related issues. One of the findings of the study was that the language proficiency of both learners and educators was inadequate. Teaching methods for fostering the academic growth of learners were also found to be lacking in a large number of contexts.

The South African Language Policy in education was presented after 1994 when South Africa became an independent state. The policy suggests that every learner has

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the right to receive education in the language of their choice where practical (South African school Act of 1996). In schools this is not practical as schools have Language 1 and Language 2. More so, Language 1 will be English in urban schools and an African language in township schools, whereby in Grade 4 in all schools the LoLT becomes English.

In 2014, the Department of Basic Education published the Manual for Teaching English across the Curriculum (EAC) to assist learners who, face barriers to learning when they learn content subjects through the medium of a language that is not their own (DBE, 2014, p. 4). The manual emphasises that every teacher is a language teacher. However, this manual is not rolled out to teachers in formal workshops, meaning, teachers are not formally trained. Teachers are given hard copies of the manual and advised to look for it on the website and read it on their own. Learners entering school can learn much easier through their mother tongue, and that additional language, for instance English, is better acquired if the learner already has a firm grasp of his/her home language (Foley, 2010, p. 1).

Township and urban schools

The literature focuses largely on language transition challenges and difficulties and not much is said on how this transition can or will be managed. While a lot of literature on learners' language transition exists, not much literature covers how teachers manage this language transition. This is the gap on which I would like to focus my study. My study is different because I want to focus more on teachers rather than on learners. How do they manage the learners' language transition? Are they getting any support from the Department of Education? Do these teachers communicate with, or prepare learners for this drastic change?

1.2 Research problem

The last holiday of the year usually commences in early December and ends in the first or second week of January the following year. Then the Grade 3 learners return as Grade 4s and they jump abruptly into the new phase (intermediate phase) which is largely unfamiliar to them (Nthulana, 2016, p. 17).

These learners experience language problems as they transition into Grade 4. In Grade 3, learners transition from four subjects (Mathematics, Life Skills, Home Language and First Additional Language [FAL]), to six subjects in Grade 4. These

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subjects are usually taught by different teachers unlike in Grade 3 where they are taught by one teacher. For foundation phase in township schools, the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) is an African language. When they move to Grade 4, the LoLT changes to English (Pretorius, 2014). In urban schools, the LoLT is English, whereas the schools are multicultural and for many learners English is not their home language.

Most learners in South Africa are bi- or multilingual and attend school in a language that is not their first language (O'Connor & Geiger, 2009, p. 1). The South African National Language Policy Framework (2002) requires that the medium of instruction should be the mother tongue in the Foundation Phase (Grade R-3), with a switch to English from Grade 4 for those learners whose mother tongue is neither English nor Afrikaans (O'Connor & Geiger, 2009). Learners experience language challenges as they transition to English as the LoLT in a township school, and in urban schools for most learners English is not their home language (Pretorius, 2014). The research focuses on how challenges associated with this language transition are managed by Grade 4 teachers.

The importance of this study is the discovery of whether teachers are preparing learners for success in the future or for failure. Could this be one reason why we end up having so many progressed (automatically promoted) learners in Grade 12? "The poor throughput rates in South African schools now, where scarcely a quarter of learners who speak African language enter the schooling system are likely to Matriculate, seem to show that the current practice of using English as the initial language of learning and teaching is at least one contributing factor to this problem" (Foley, 2010. p. 1). The study is aimed at finding out how South African teachers manage learners' language transition from foundation phase (Grade 3) into intermediate phase (Grade 4) in both township and urban schools. What are the possible challenges that teachers face during learners' transition into English as the LoLT and what strategies and resources do teachers use to facilitate this transition into English as the LoLT?

I have been teaching Grade 4 in the intermediate phase for seven years at one of the urban schools in Gauteng province. The medium of instruction for the school I am teaching at is English. The challenge the school is facing is that the school is multi-

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cultural and most learners do not have English as their home language. English is also not the teachers' home language and code switching is not possible because everyone has a different mother tongue. Teachers are obliged to make learners understand what is taught in English.

Some scholars studied more or less the same topic as mine, but not much is said about how teachers manage language transition into Grade 4. For example Pretorius (2014) states that in the South African schools where children are taught in an African language from Grade R-3, Grade 4 becomes challenging because this is where English is introduced as the LoLT. Pretorius further says, "not only do learners need to develop adequate oral communication skills in English, they also need to develop the more book-oriented academic literacy skills in the LoLT to cope with the increasing literacy challenges of the intermediate phase" (Pretorius, 2014, p. 54).

Nthulana (2016) also states that the use of English as a medium of instruction affects the way different learners read and adjust, while teachers must find a means to deal with the challenges they and the learners encounter. She further says one of the major changes that interrupt the lives of young Grade 3 learners is the transitioning from the mother tongue as the medium of instruction to the use of English as the medium of instruction in Grade 4 (Nthulana, 2016, p. 16).

1.3   Rationale

The Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) organises teacher development programmes for both township and urban school teachers. I am an intermediate phase (Grade 4-6) teacher in an urban school in Johannesburg. When we attend workshops as both township and urban school teachers, I have noticed that the teachers from both schools are expressing their concerns about the language transition of the Grade 3s into Grade 4.

The purpose/reason for this study is to determine and find how teachers manage the learners' language transition from Grade 3 into Grade 4 in selected schools around Gauteng Province. It is also to determine if there is any communication between the Grade 3 and 4 teachers as to how to prepare these learners for this drastic change. I also want to find out if there are any orientations planned for these learners on how to handle the pressure of this transition. Heugh et al. (2006) has shown that this transition that Grade 3 learners must undergo is being imposed on them, without actively

involving them or their teachers. In view of the many changes that these learners are faced with when proceeding to Grade 4, they need support. In most urban schools, the language of learning and teaching is English, and these schools are multicultural. The focus of my study is to find out how SA teachers manage learners' language transition. This study is important as it intends to find out whether we are developing these learners for success or failure. It also aims to find out whether teachers are receiving support and whether there are any teacher development programmes by the Department of Basic Education to manage this transition process.

1.4 Research questions

How do South African teachers at township and urban schools manage learners' language transition from Grade 3 into Grade 4?

Sub-questions

➢ What challenges do teachers face during learners' transition into English as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT)?
➢ What are the main factors influencing the language problems/challenges faced by learners when transitioning from Grade 3 to Grade 4?
➢ What strategies and resources (if any) do teachers use to facilitate the transition into English as the LoLT?
➢ What support or intervention programmes (if any) do schools have to manage the language transition in Grade 4 and beyond?

1.5 Research objectives

The research objectives of the study were:

a) To explore the challenges faced by teachers during learners' transition into English as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT).
b) To determine the main factors influencing the language problems/challenges faced by learners when transitioning from Grade 3 to Grade 4.
c) To identify what strategies and resources (if any) do teachers use to facilitate the transition into English as the LoLT
d) To recommend support or intervention programmes to schools to manage the language transition in Grade 4 and beyond.

1.6   Literature review

Existing literature on language challenges and difficulties faced by both learners and teachers during transitioning was reviewed. Not much is said on how this transition can or will be managed. However, literature exists on challenges faced by teachers when teaching reading to Grade 3 learners in English Second Language. While much literature exists on learners' language transition, not much literature covers how teachers manage this learners' language transition. Therefore, my study will focus more on how language transition is managed by teachers.

Transition, in this dissertation, as also stated by Fabian and Dunlop (2002), refers to the process of change and involves the proceedings and skills that occur when a child moves from one situation to another (Harper, 2015). Fabian and Dunlop (2002) refer to transition as the process of transformation that is experienced when children move from one setting to another. When Grade 3 learners transition into Grade 4, they are changing from one familiar environment of being taught by one teacher into a total new unfamiliar environment of being taught by different teachers.

Pretorius (2014) found that learners in township schools struggle as they transition to Grade 4 because in the foundation phase the Language of Teaching and Learning is Zulu; when they move to Grade 4 the LoLT is English. Nthulana (2016) discovered that the Tshivenda-speaking teachers battle with the language when trying to give a detailed explanation in English to Grade 4 learners. They always first ask the question in English and there afterwards rephrase the same question in Tshivenda to make it easier for learners to understand it with the result that a great deal of teaching time is lost.

1.7   Research design and methodology

The study was underpinned by the main research question and sub-questions highlighted in 1.4 above, with additional interview questions to collect more data. The study used a case study methodology. This approach is useful because I needed to understand how the teachers and the learners in the classroom interacted with each other in English as the LoLT. Qualitative design imitates real life and I studied the way Grade 3 and 4 teachers managed the language transition of learners from the foundation phase into the intermediate phase in the everyday work programme. I looked at how they addressed these challenges and what support, or intervention

programmes schools have to manage this transition. "Qualitative research includes the premeditated use and collection of different data" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 3). I interviewed eight teachers, two Grade 3 and two Grade 4 in two schools, urban and township. I asked assistance from the principal to select teachers as they would know their staff members better and some teachers might feel uncomfortable to participate in my research.

1.7.1   Classroom observation

To observe in a classroom situation is more than just watching. "It is looking (often systematically) and noting systematically people, events, behaviours, settings, artefacts, routines and so on" (Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Simpson & Tuson, 2003). I arranged for the observation a week prior to the visit. The tool I used as I observed the lesson was the classroom checklist. I observed lessons and the participants' anonymity was protected by giving them a pseudonym (Cekiso & Madikiza, 2014). The focus of my observations was to observe the strategies that teachers used when introducing the lesson in English as LoLT in Grade 4. I also observed how learners interacted with their teachers in English as the LoLT.

I observed in the real classroom condition as "the distinguishing feature of observation as research proposes is that it provides the researcher the opportunity to collect 'live' data from naturally occurring social conditions" (Louis Cohen et al., 2011, p. 456). In that manner, I, as the scholar, looked "straight at what was happening in the classroom rather than relying on second-hand accounts" (Louis Cohen et al., 2011, p. 456). I got real and first-hand information on how language challenges are managed, not manipulated, as it is stated that "qualitative research is based on a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context (or real-world settings) and, in general, the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest" (Maree, 2016, p. 78). I preferred using non-participant observation because professionally I am a teacher too, I therefore had to observe with my knowledge of what is taking place in the classrooms without taking an active part in the situation.

1.7.2   Research site and population

Johannesburg is the site where my research took place. Many parents take their children to urban schools in Pretoria and Johannesburg (Gauteng), where English is a medium of instruction. They do so because they want them to learn English (Monyai,

2010). The schools are therefore affected by the challenges regarding the LoLT as learners are from different home or mother-tongue languages. Johannesburg is therefore made of a site where one finds urban schools and townships, where there are township schools as well as a good number of informal settlements where learners attend schools either in townships or urban areas, depending on the distance between their settlements and the school.

I sampled one township school in Alexandra and one urban school in the inner city of Johannesburg. I sampled a total of eight participants, four teachers from a township school and four teachers from the urban school.

1.7.3 Data collection and analysis

Data was collected through interviews with the sampled participants. During the interviews only, reasonable questions were asked to get valid answers (Nthulana, 2016, p. 53). According to Kamper, Schulze and Goodwin-Davey (1999, p.295), methods for data collection in qualitative research cannot be prescribed. In their view, Kamper et al., (1999, p. 295) and Mouton (1996, p. 156) strongly support the principle of triangulation (the use of multiple sources of data collection) as it enhances the reliability of the study. I aimed at using cell phone voice recording for transcribing. Unfortunately, teachers were uncomfortable with the arrangement and I only took notes of the interviews. Two classrooms were observed in Grade 3 and one in Grade 4. When analysing data, I identified themes that emerged from the interviewee's responses.

1.7.4 Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of my research was very important. I let my participants know where I come from. The same method of research I applied in a township school was also applied in the urban school as in "ethnographic research, the trustworthiness of research results entails 'whether or not (or under what conditions) the ethnographer would expect to acquire the same result if he or she tried once more in the similar way" (Kirk & Miller, 1986, p. 69). As soon as my findings were concluded, they would be accessible to the public, for the Department of Education to strategize on how to assist the teachers to manage the language transition of the learners, with the anonymity of the participants guaranteed. As Silverman (2001) also points out, "checking trustworthiness is closely associated with guaranteeing the quality of field transcripts

and guaranteeing the public access to the procedure of their production" (Silverman 2001, pp. 227-228).

1.8   Organisation of the study

This study is organised into five chapters.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 gave a brief background of the study and presents the features of the research project. It presented the main research question and sub-questions to be investigated throughout the study.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 contains a literature review. It gives the contextual of the challenges faced by the South African school teachers regarding the language transition of the Grade 3 learners into Grade 4 and tries to identify gaps in our knowledge.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 presents the research methodology and data collection techniques the researcher applied.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 outlines the findings of the researcher's investigations and highlights the themes for the research questions and challenges faced by the teachers and learners in everyday life of learning and teaching.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 offers the researcher's recommendations to the teachers and the Gauteng Department of Education. Suggestions on how to expand or implement strategies to support teacher and learner challenges of language transition are also put forward.

1.9   Conclusion

Chapter 1 summarised the entire study and provided the overview of the whole research. It highlighted that the language challenge is not only a South African challenge but a global challenge. The whole of Africa is experiencing language challenges in schools for both teachers and learners.

2 CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the study that has been carried out by other scholars about the language transition of the Grade 3s when they move to Grade 4 and how South African teachers manage the learners' language transition in both urban and township schools. The study investigates teachers' management of language transition for learners transitioning from Grade 3 into Grade 4.

Existing literature on this topic focuses more on language challenges and difficulties faced by both learners and teachers, not much is said on how this transition can or will be managed by teachers. While a lot of literature exists on learners' language transition, not much of the literature deals with how teachers manage learners' language transition. Therefore, my study will focus more on how language transition is managed by teachers.

2.2 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework of this study is underpinned by the following concepts: transition, township educational issues, urban educational issues, mother tongue, South African language policy, language policy in other countries and Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory.

The illustrations in Figure 2.1 represent the link between the concepts.
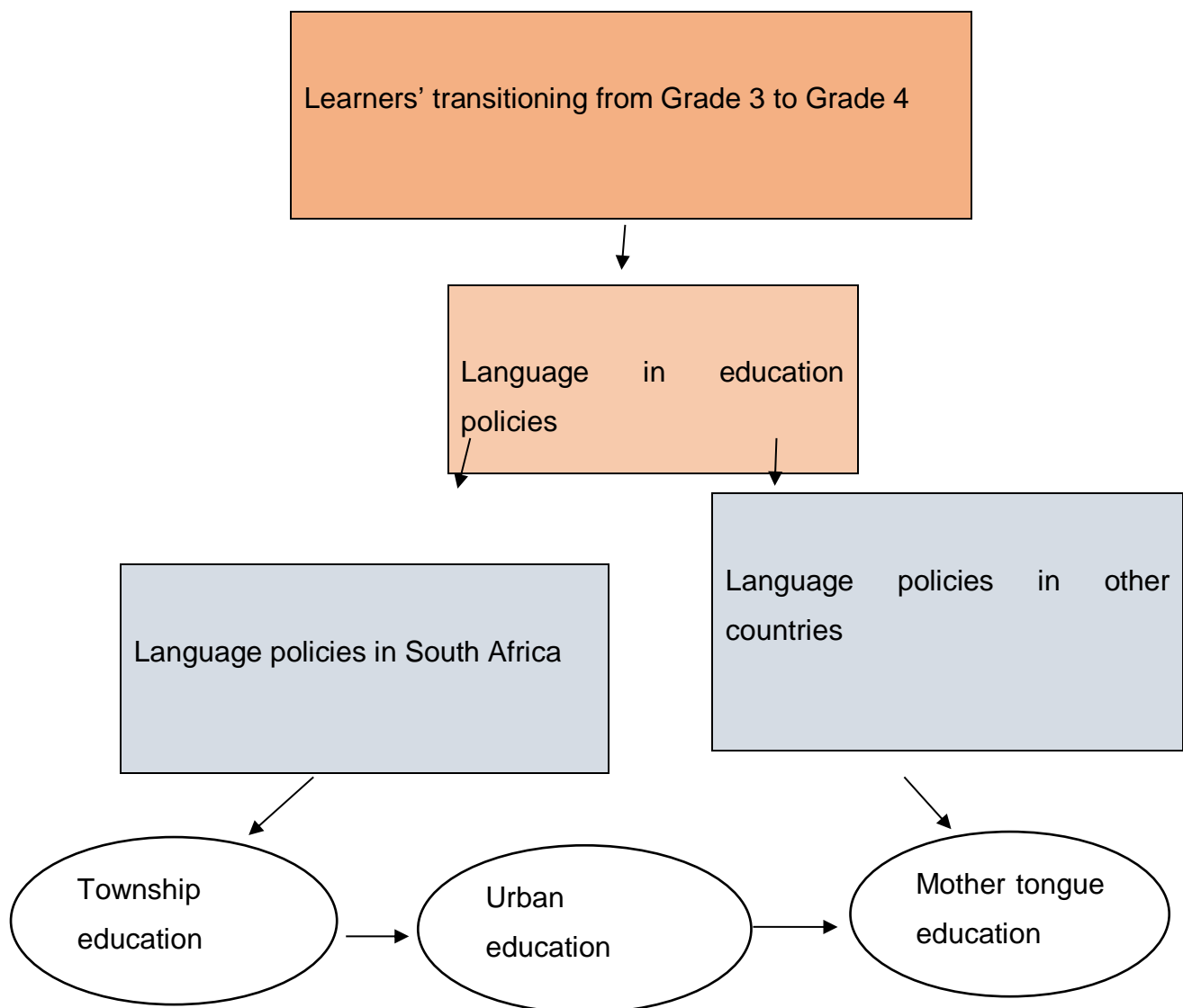
Figure 2 1: Theoretical framework of the Study

2.3 Transition

When learners move from Grade 3 to Grade 4, they experience many aspects of transition: transition from one environment to another, transition from one language to another, and transition from being taught by one teacher to being taught by more than one teacher. Clarke (2005) discovered that learners have difficulties in transitioning because it involves moving from familiar activities to the unknown, and an unfamiliar context that may be uncomfortable. He further states that immediate experience often results in loneliness, shock and fear. Learners find it difficult to adapt to transition. The

language of learning and teaching is African languages in township schools. In urban schools the LoLT is English, where most learners do not speak English as their home language (Pretorius, 2014). This transition poses a huge challenge for both teachers and learners.

Transition denotes the procedure of change and involves the events and practices that happen when a child moves from one situation to another (Harper, 2015). Fabian and Dunlop (2002) refer to transition as the process of change that is experienced when children move from one setting to another. It is a physical transfer, a discontinuation or a new start (Amest & Rojas, 2010). The other transition for these learners is that of workload; they are used to four subjects in the foundation phase (Home language, Mathematics, Life Skills and First additional language), changing to six subjects in the intermediate phase (Home language, Mathematics, Natural Science & Technology, Social Science and Life Skills). Social Science is divided into History and Geography.

2.4   The curriculum structure: CAPS

CAPS was introduced in 2010 and one unique aspect to address this challenging transition, is the minimum or maximum language time allocation or provisioning (Department of Basic Education, 2011c). This grants schools the opportunity for more flexibility regarding language time allocation to suit the needs of their learners (Steyn, 2017, p. 42).

Tables 2.1 and 2.2 illustrate the time allocation in the Foundation Phase and the Intermediate Phase, to emphasise the transitional process the Grade 4s are facing after transitioning from Grade 3 according to the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) document.

Table 2-1: Foundation Phase time allocation per week as per CAPS document

Subject	GradeR (Hours)	Grade1-2 (Hours)	Grade3 (Hours)
Home Language (H/L)	10	7/8	7/8
First Additional Language (FAL)		2/3	¾
Mathematics	7	7	7
Life Skills	6	6	7
Total	23	23	25

Table 2-2: Intermediate Phase (Grade 4) time allocation per week as per CAPS document

Subject	Hours
Home Language (H/L)	6
First Additional Language (FAL)	5
Mathematics	6
Natural Science and Technology	3.5
Social Sciences	3
Life Skills	4
Total	27,5

Tables 2.1 and 2.2 also illustrate the Grade 3s' transition from learning four subjects to six subjects. In a township school, English has been taught as a subject. Abruptly, when moving into Grade 4, English becomes the Language of Learning and Teaching in all the subjects. The workload increases. Not only are they doing six subjects; in Social Sciences, there are two subjects, History and Geography; in Natural Science and Technology, there are two subjects as well. This makes it a total of eight subjects that are merged into six. Hence all the subjects are foreign to the Grade 4 learners as

they must adjust to the new challenge. This could be one of the reasons the Grade 3s are struggling to cope with the new environment of Grade 4.

Learners will need long-term support from teachers to help them adjust with the change. Poor transitioning results in time loss. Learners use learning time to adjust themselves to the new learning environment and its expectations. If transition is not properly managed it could possibly have an adverse effect on the learning process, which could result in lasting learning difficulties and poor academic requirements. (Fox, 2009, p. 7). "Teachers feel that the government is responsible for the establishment of the transition strategies" (Phatudi, 2007, p. 130). She further revealed that schools initially had never thought of transition strategies. It only dawned upon them when it was asked what transition strategies were employed in their schools.

Transition can also be traumatic to learners and they could also experience anxiety. The literature has discovered that the transition procedure can be experienced by partakers as shocking, worrying and at the same time challenging (Broström, 2002; Clarke & Sharpe, 2003).

2.5   Township and urban educational issues

In South Africa, learners in both township and urban schools are experiencing challenges of language transition. Teachers' lack of English proficiency also contributes towards learners' language challenges. It cannot be easy for them to plan for this transition as lack of knowledge and understanding of what transition is, prevails (Nel & Muller, 2010). Teachers are accountable for an insufficient language contribution due to their own inadequate English proficiency (Monyai, 2010).

UNESCO (2007) discloses that 77 million primary school-aged children (three-quarters of them in Africa and Asia) leave school before matriculating or do not attain the required pass rate. One of numerous motives for this phenomenon, in Africa is that the main languages (viewed as the standard for schooling) are English, French and Portuguese, that are non-native languages for most of the individuals.

This transition also affects teachers as most them are not English first language speakers. Nthulana (2016) discovered that the Tshivenda-speaking teachers battle with the language when trying to give a detailed explanation in English to Grade 4 learners. They always first ask the question in English and afterwards rephrase the same question in Tshivenda to make it easier for learners to understand it.

It was discovered that the general language proficiency of Namibian teachers, as well as their reading and grammar usage are their two weakest areas (Wolfaardt, 2005). Most of them do not have a satisfactorily high ability in reading skills to empower them to study further at a diploma or advanced level. He further states that many teachers do not have any difficulties with pronunciation, terminology and instruction, but the problematic areas are grammar, elicitation methods (by which the teacher gets the learner to give information rather than giving it to them), the use of non-verbal support techniques such as resource materials, and to clarify concepts (Wolfaardt, 2005).

Nthulana also found that Grade 4 teachers in rural Niani found it problematic to meet the curriculum demands in terms of the medium of instruction. She further states that Grade 3 learners come into Grade 4 with insufficient vocabulary to understand when English is used as a medium of instruction. Therefore, to explain, teachers translate what they have said in English into Tshivenda and also code switch to help learners understand better.

Nthulana (2016) further found out that Grade 4 teachers find it problematic to meet the curriculum demands in terms of the medium of instruction in Grade 4. She further says Grade 3 learners come into Grade 4 with insufficient vocabulary when English is used as a medium of instruction. Learners are struggling to grasp the language because schools admit learners from all neighbouring provinces and countries. This affects the outcomes of the curriculum as teachers must face the challenge of making learners understand English, whereas English is not the teachers' home language.

In support of the above statement, Nthulana (2016) states that teachers lack English exposure and they are part of a monolingual Tshivenda-speaking community with very limited exposure to English. They also do not use English outside the classroom and the only time that the teachers use English is when they conduct a lesson in a classroom. According to Krashen (1981), teachers need to talk and teach through a second language up to the learners' level of understanding and not jump into interpreting or code switching.

The British Council through their English Language Teacher Development Project (ELTDP) conducted a national survey in 1991 on the English Language ability of teachers in Namibia in the three phases, namely: junior and senior primary as well as junior secondary. The outcomes across the three phases demonstrate that the junior

secondary teachers attained better results than their upper primary counterparts, who in turn performed better than their lower primary colleagues. (O'Sullivan, 2004) This finding will to some degree inform my research study, which is aiming at finding out how language transition of Grade 3 learners is managed when transitioning into Grade 4.

In addition to the above statement, Margetts (2002) states that teachers believe that it was a duty of the government to create transition approaches. They endorsed that the government required to assign somebody in charge for dealing with adjustment and learning problems. She further stated that due to lack of formal support and non-existent internal school policies about transition, they took it upon themselves to invent strategies for dealing with new school beginners. This addresses the sub-question on what strategies or intervention programmes schools have to manage learners' language transition into English as the LoLT.

Mudzielwana (2012) found that teaching reading comprehension in Grade 3 was a challenge nationally and internationally. Her study revealed the lack of learning support material and lack of variety of reading materials for learners in one of the Tshivenda-speaking schools in Limpopo. As the South African language policy increases the subjects in foundation from four to five, the work load for learners will be immense as this actually indicates that in Grade 4 the subjects will increase to seven.

Most South African learners are not English first language speakers. Therefore, teachers must struggle to make learners understand what has been said in English. It has been found that the vital component for Language 2 attainment is comprehensive contribution through teacher conversation. The teacher should communicate on the level of a learner's comprehension, that is, the learner should be able to comprehend what the teacher is saying (Richards & Lockhart, 1994)

The challenge the Grade 4 learners are facing is that the mother tongue is only implemented in the foundation phase and when transitioning to Grade 4 takes place, the LoLT changes. The sudden change from mother tongue to English as LoLT in Grade 4 in township schools has an undesirable effect on the cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) of the learner (Bitenelkome, 2010). Lack of a variety of teaching strategies could pose a challenge for Grade 4 learners to adjust to the transition. Bitenelkome revealed that insufficient use of teaching strategies by Grade

4 teachers contributes to the poor performance of the learners. She further states that there is a total absence of learning aids, class demonstrations or motivation to improve their teaching strategy.

Not many South African learners enjoy the luxury of learning through their home language. English is the preferred language. In its statement on South Africa's new Language in Education Policy [LiEP] (1997), policy procedures, concerned with portraying democratic principles, offered schools the right to select which of the country's eleven official languages to use as their language of learning and teaching (Robertson, 2015). Unfortunately, in South Africa the LoLT after Grade 3 is English, even for learners whose English is not their home language. This would seem to be against the policy. However, teachers and schools should manage this language transition to give these learners support. My study is focusing on how language transition is managed.

Most South African learners therefore face the twofold challenge of trying to be proficient in English and on the other hand learning in English (Robertson, 2015). O'Conner and Geiger (2009) state that most learners in South Africa are bi- or multilingual and attend school in a language that is not in the first instance their home language. Lafon (2009) states that the role of LoLT has not been given adequate consideration as an issue denying meaningful access to South African education. Thus by far the most learners acquire education in a language that is not their mother tongue.

Lafon (2009) concluded that to extend the use of home language in education, there seem to be two choices. These are to utilise English to an extent where it becomes a home language for an increasing number of African learners and to assimilate African languages as the LoLT beyond Grade 3. This becomes a challenge for teachers and learners as they switch to English as LoLT.

Another issue could be that South African education is facing a challenge that most foundation phase teachers are much older than their colleagues and retiring from the profession (Masola, 2010). These are the teachers who have been in the system for over thirty years and have the skills required to teach foundation phase learners reading and writing in African languages. He further states this is perhaps frightening as few young black people are interested in becoming teachers to educate African

language-speaking children in their mother tongues. As part of my research, I aim to explore whether this could be one reason why Grade 3s are experiencing language transition challenges as they transition into Grade 4 as they are used to be taught in their mother tongue in foundation phase. Not a lot of literature covers the management of learner language transition by teachers or how schools manage this drastic change for learners**.**

2.6   Mother tongue

Every individual has a specific language that they learn early from their mothers or surrounding family members and speak. It is therefore referred to as the mother tongue. The mother tongue refers to the language a child develops from childhood and brings to school with him or her (Ball, 2010).

The present study proposes that learners who are beginning school can learn better when lessons are presented in their mother tongue (Foley, 2010). The use of mother tongue plays an important role in the children's conceptual development when focus is based on initial literacy, and further exposes the children to the cultures of their communities (Schroeder, 2005).

In South Africa, educationists suggested for that for the first three years of schooling (Foundation phase) learners who are speaking African languages should be taught in their mother tongue before they could change to English in the upper Grades (Intermediate Phase). Naledi Pandor, a former Minister of Education intimated at a Language Policy conference in 2006 that the initial period of learning in mother tongue would be extended to six years i.e. (Grade 1-3 and Grade 4-6), however, this has not yet been implemented. Desai (2001) also agrees when stating that "children need to be taught in their mother tongue until the end of the intermediate phase (Grade 4-6) to have a firmer foundation in the new subjects they learn" (Desai 2001, p. 234).

Previous research done in the field of mother tongue education in South Africa found that Grade 4 learners in township schools are not yet sufficiently proficient in English to master new learning areas such as science and social sciences through this medium of instruction (Smith, 2005; Heugh et al, 1993).It is stated in the South African Language-in-Education Policy (LIEP) that the mother tongue should be the preferred medium of instruction in the Foundation Phase (Grade R-3). Currently, primary tuition

is offered in eleven South African official languages. The challenge faced in South African schools that offer African languages in the Foundation Phase is the fact that from Grade 4 onwards education is only available through the medium of instruction of English (Steyn, 2017).

In the European Union, learning in the mother tongue is reinforced by the education system. As the Eurydice study illustrates, (EACEA, 2009) this is normally not included in the curriculum. Lessons are conducted after school hours whereby the achievements towards lower and upper secondary qualifications by unqualified teachers are not commonly recognised, and reliance is placed In numerous occasions on at least one of the following: models: Volunteer staff (at times cultural groups) and joint agreements with immigrants' home-based nations.

There are some exceptions in the following countries: In Australia the mother tongue languages are offered during school periods and can be studied when the examinations are closer, in the United Kingdom, especially in England and Wales, some mother tongue languages are presented for examination when finishing lower secondary education while in Namibia the present language policy plainly states that learning in the mother tongue will be in the best interest of the learner, particularly in the first three grades of school. However, the policy accommodates misconception when it states that: "Grade 1 – 3 be taught either through the home language, a local language or English" (MEC 1991, p. 3). The selection of the medium of instruction is thus decentralised, and some schools in urban areas are choosing English as medium of instruction from Grade 1. This choice is problematic, since not every teacher is knowledgeable in English (Wolfaardt, 2005).

2.7 South African Language in Education Policy

It is a prerequisite for Education systems to pay attention to accomplish access and excellence in education. The implementation of policies of education should advise ways of having a close look at access and quality as results of all efforts that are made, such as delivery of learning resources and new practices of teaching and learning (Sampa, 2003). The language policy's objectives are to compensate for the injustice of Apartheid where English and Afrikaans were given a higher rank at the cost of other languages and to enable access to good services, knowledge and information to meet client prospects and desires (Department of Arts and Culture, 2003) Before 1994

English and Afrikaans were used as the official languages all over South Africa. The students who benefited were those with Afrikaans and English as their mother tongue (Tshotlo, 2013). Most of the people in South Africa speak an African Language as a home language and when they get to school the LoLT is not the language that they speak at home, it switches to English (Tshotlo, 2013).

Language education in South Africa is a complex issue. It is affected by various interacting dynamics regarding the language experiences of both learners and teachers that have an influence on the performance of the learners. Learning and teaching take place in a language that is not the home language for both learners and teachers (Broom, 2004). Section 29 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 stipulates that learners have the right to receive education in the official language(s) of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable.

> Subject to the Constitution and the School Act, the Minister may, by notice in the Government Gazette, after consultation with the Council of Education Ministers, determine norms and standards for language policy in public schools. The governing body of a public school may determine the language policy of the school subject to the Constitution, this Act and any applicable provincial law. No form of racial discrimination may be practised in implementing policy determined under Section 6 of SASA provides as follows:

> (1) Subject to the Constitution and this Act, the Minister may, by notice in the Government Gazette, after consultation with the Council of Education Ministers, determine norms and standards for language policy in public schools. (

> 2) The governing body of a public school may determine the language policy of the school subject to the Constitution, this Act and any applicable provincial law.

> (3) No form of racial discrimination may be practised in implementing policy determined under this section.

> (4) A recognised Sign Language has the status of an official language for purposes of learning at a public school.

6B Non-discrimination in respect of official languages.

The governing body of a public school must ensure that

(a)   there is no unfair discrimination in respect of any official languages that are offered as subject options contemplated in section 21 (1) (b); and

(b)   the first additional language and any other official language offered, as provided for in the curriculum, are offered on the same level (Republic of South Africa, 1996).)

I will now discuss how each point relates to the research:

- To respect all languages and promote multilingualism in line with the South African Constitution

Urban schools are multilingual; therefore, all languages should be treated with diversity and respect. Teachers should avoid using their own home languages and expect learners to hear and understand them. They should use the language the school chose as a medium of instruction.

- To allow society to participate through meaningful access to education and working towards the support of teaching and learning in all languages spoken by communities in South Africa.

The society or the community around the school should be given the opportunity to decide as to what LoLT is suitable for their children. This could be done by language surveys being distributed to learners to take home and parents selecting the language of their choice. The majority will rule as to which language the school could use. By so doing, the language transition could be manageable as learners would be using the language of their parents' choice.

- To engage and monitor weaknesses resulting from unalike needs or discrepancies between home languages and languages of learning and teaching.

When learners transition into Grade 4, where English becomes the LoLT, they get confused and struggle to cope with the workload in Grade 4. They confuse the LoLT used in Grade 3 with English. Most of them spell English words with the sounds of their home language or language used for teaching in Grade 4. Teachers should therefore come up with strategies to manage this mismatching between the languages.

- To develop programmes for the redress of the causes of disadvantaged languages.

For learners who are experiencing more difficulties during the language transition into English as the LoLT, teachers with the help and support from the GDE, should develop support and intervention programmes to assist such learners.

Currently there is a Compulsory African language policy for schools, which was implemented at the beginning of the year 2017 (DBE, 2017). In Gauteng schools, the Department of Basic Education has introduced a new language policy that is obligatory for all Grade 1 learners, requiring that one African language should be added to their existing subjects as a second additional language (SAL). Afrikaans still forms part of the languages existing, but as there are now three language subjects, it is a necessity that other African languages beyond English and Afrikaans must be included. The policy is called Incremental Introduction of the African Language (IIAL).

It was finalised to be commenced in 2018. The policy is trialled at twelve schools in Gauteng, our school being one of them. As my study is focusing on language transition, this policy complicates the challenges of English as first or home language. Learners are struggling to understand English; hence the Department is adding another challenge for teachers to deal with. Through this IIAL policy, there are now five compulsory subjects from Grade 1 to Grade 3. Those subjects are Mathematics, FAL, SAL, Home language and Life skills. Learners will have these subjects until they complete Grade 12 (Life Skills becomes Life Orientation from Grade 7 onwards).

There is also an exceptional post-apartheid Language-in-Education Policy (LIEP) in South Africa, amongst the most striking and practicable globally, but the policy is indissolubly tangled with the country's National Language Policy (NLP) which is broadly known not to be working. It is one of preservative multilingualism, and it is intended to produce people who are trilingual. When they complete Grade 12, learners are expected to be proficient in their home language and in a second language, as well as having a comprehensive knowledge of an additional language. For many South African learners, for instance in township and village schools, English will be their second language, while the additional language might be Afrikaans depending on the popularity and surroundings of that school, or another South African language or a foreign language. The policy is attainable and socially progressive.

2.8 Policy in other countries

There are language policies in other countries, however, Language policies differ according to different countries. The Zambian and the Malawian governments made dissimilar self-contradictory language education policy statements in January 2014. Whereas the government of Zambia publicized that they would discontinue English and use its own languages as medium of instruction from Grade1, the government of Malawi publicized that they would discontinue ciCewa and other Malawian languages and in its place start using English as the medium of instruction from Grade 1 (Banda, 2016).

As a measure to improve the quality of education being presented at primary school level in Zambia, a new language policy provides for the overview of reading and writing in Grade 1 in a local language (MOE, 1996). However, English remains the medium of instruction for other subjects and a reading and writing course called 'Step In To English' (SITE) follows in Grade 2 (Mubanga, 2010)

The state language policy for Namibian schools (MEC, 1993) dictates that the medium of instruction in the Junior Primary phase which is Grade 1 – 3, must be the mother tongue. English will be taught as a subject. From Grade 4 until high school level the medium of instruction should change exclusively to English (Wolfaardt, 2005). The Namibian language policy as published (MEC, 1993) is a mixture of an additive and subtractive model of language in education policy.

It is not unusual to find the people in Namibia changing their home language to English because they believe it is to the advantage of their children (Wolfaardt, 2005). However, for only 0,8 % of the people in Namibia English is their first language. This entails that teachers, who are not natural speakers of English in Namibian schools, teach the language. Hence, the English proficiency assimilated by Namibians is in fact at a second language level. "To support an educational system based on English as medium of instruction, a teaching corps of native English speaking or proficient second-language speakers of the global language is needed" (Alexander 2000, pp. 11-12).

"The EU is facing the challenge that refugee children who do not have the language of instruction do not reach their potential and are more likely to drop from school prematurely and have lower levels of achievement through their education" (European

Union, 2015, p. 9). It further states that: "children are not always provided with support to learn their mother tongue; and schools can reduce the difference in attainment between native children and children without the language of instruction as they progress through their education "(European Union, 2015, p. 9).

The European Commission has established a statement on Language Teaching and Learning in Bilingual Classrooms (RLMC) to deliver more direction on effectively meeting the trials posed by teaching children the language of instruction as well as building on the chances they offer to widen bilingual skills within the EU.

"The Council of the EU's decisions on the European approach for multilingualism in 2008 distinguished that the important efforts should still be made to endorse language learning and to value the ethnic features of linguistic diversity. Supporting multilingualism is of significance in promoting cultural diversity and linguistic skills as well as strongly contributing to economic prosperity and relations between the EU and the rest of the world" (European Union, 2015, p.16).

Amongst additional things, the Council decisions invited Member States to improve appreciation of the benefits of language diversity, offer training in the local languages(s) of the host country and show due regard for their host country's mother tongues. In this respect, the Council requested Member States to increase the choice of languages taught in schools to reflect the individual welfares of the learners and to value and make use of the linguistic capability of migrants.

2.9 Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory

This study viewed the concepts on the nature of transition and how it can affect learners' performance. Transitions are defined as "phases of life changes connected with the developmental demand" that are determined by communal, financial and ethnic variables in existence in the framework in which they are obtainable (Niesel & Griebel, 2005). The learner can be affected by his or her surroundings which could make it impossible for him or her to perform effectively in class. Bronfenbrenner observed human growth as a "product of interaction between the growing human organism and its environment" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 16).

Bronfenbrenner's theory of ecology is based on the evidence that an individual's growth occurs within a multifaceted system of relationships which are also affected by different stages of their social and cultural setting. He also argued that an individual is

not influenced by the direct setting only but that an individual's growth is "profoundly affected by events occurring in settings in which the person is not even present" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 3).

My study is about learners' language transition for both township and urban schools. The learners' languages from both schools can be affected by their environmental surroundings. Central to Bronfenbrenner's ecological approach, there are four interacting aspects that need to be considered to fully understand child development in context:

> *The aspects are the person, process, contexts and time factors. The procedure is known as the proximal procedure and includes forms of communications that occur between the individual and the setting or context. The interactions must invite the individual's attention, exploration, manipulation, elaboration and imagination* (Mampane 2010: 48-49; Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

He further explains the "proximal process as regular, broadminded and more multipart reciprocal interaction between a living organism and the direct setting over an extended period, for example learning a new skill, problem solving, caring for others" (Mampane 2010)

The above statement resonates with this study about the Grade 3 learners' transition into Grade 4, it is a new environment for learning new skills. Learners' characteristics differ. They are different individuals with different behaviours and attitudes. Bronfenbrenner (1979) states that a person's characteristics relate to a developmental outcome and impacts the form, influence, context and direction of proximal procedures throughout the growth. He further says that, to assure development, the person is required to interact regularly over a prolonged period with the setting (Mampane 2010).

The environment influences development, and a person's behaviour at times represents a measure and outcome of how a person interacts with and responds to a context. Bronfenbrenner (1979) explains that the context relates to the environment in which the growth happens. He refers to "many levels of influence in a person's environment where the individual is in the centre of all the interactive systems" (Mampane 2010: 49). He suggests that the environmental ecology consists of concentric layers which build outwards liable on the effect they have on the growing person.

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These surroundings vary from the direct relations the child enters with the family and the schools. The growing person is in the personal (innermost) layer which is the microsystem. The microsystem represents patterns of activities, roles and interpersonal relationships in a given face-to-face setting, for example home, school, peer group and work place. The influence of relationships at this level runs in two directions – away from the child and towards the child. For an example, the parents may affect or influence the child's beliefs and behaviour, and the child also affects the behaviour and beliefs of the parent (Mampane 2010; Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Bronfenbrenner's next theoretical layer is the mesosystem which consists of the interrelationship occurring within a situation. It refers to connections and procedures that take place between two or more microsystems concerning the developing individual, for instance, school and home and workplace (for parents). This layer provides the linkage amongst the structures of the child's microsystem, for example, the linkage amongst the child's teacher and the parents. The third layer comprises of settings and events that impact a person's growth. The fourth and the outermost layer is the macro system and contains forces more isolated to the child and family such as government policies, culture, norms and values.

This study of the language transition of the Grade 4 learners thus indicates that transition is an ongoing process. As all the levels of Bronfenbrenner's theory depend on each other, the learners' language transition as well depends on how the teachers handle and manage it.

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter presented the existing literature of the study which focused more on reading difficulties and challenges faced by the teachers when teaching reading to learners. Not much is said in the literature on how this transition from Grade 3 into Grade 4 should be managed by the schools and the teachers. There is still not much clarity in terms of policy. Each school follows its own policy and SASA states that it is the decision of the school and the SGB to determine the language policy of its school.

3   CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1   Introduction

The aspects of the methodology of this study will be outlined in this chapter which will include the research design, research site and target population, study sample and sampling procedure, data collection, class observation, interviews (township and urban school teachers), focus group discussions, limitations, ethical and political consideration and data analysis.

3.2   Research design

The study adopted a qualitative approach which is usually described as interpretative. It tried to understand the authenticity from the opinion of the participants (Bryman 2002, p. 250). Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 3). A case study design was used because the study focused on a group of individuals, being the Grade 3 and 4 teachers in selected township and urban schools around Gauteng Province. In addition, in a case study the 'why' of a phenomenon or a group is asked (Babbie, 2015). Merriam (2009, p. 40) states that a case study "fences in" what a researcher is going to study and analyse the phenomenon under investigation.

This approach is useful because I needed to understand how participants (teachers and learners in the classroom) interacted with each other in English as the LoLT. Qualitative designs study human experiences. I studied the experience of how Grade 4 teachers managed the language transition of learners from foundation phase into intermediate phase. I also studied how they addressed these challenges and what support or intervention programmes do schools have to manage this transition.

3.3   Research site and target population

Johannesburg is the site where my research took place. Many parents take their children to urban schools around Pretoria and Johannesburg towns (Gauteng Province), where English is a medium of instruction/home language. They do so because they want their children to learn English (Monyai, 2010). The other reason for parents to do so is that many schools around these towns chose English as the home language due to bilingualism. Bilingualism reading study has revealed that interpreting skills can handover across languages, as it is uniform across languages (Geva & Yaghout Zadeh, 2006; Lipka & Siegel, 2007). The research site consisted of a selected

township school where learners in Grades R-3 (foundation phase) receive education in African languages and transition to English in Grade 4 and the urban school where the LoLT is English from foundation phase into intermediate phase.

The school is a multi-African language school; there are Sesotho, isiXhosa and isiZulu home language learners. This entails that in the foundation phase there are learners who are learning in Sesotho, those learning in isiXhosa and those learning in isiZulu. However, all these learners' transition to English as the LoLT in Grade 4. The other site was an urban school where English is a home language and the school is a multicultural school. For most learners and teachers English is not their home language. Both schools are in the Johannesburg district in Gauteng province. The target population was aimed at two Grade 3 and 4 teachers in both urban and township schools respectively.

3.4   Study sample and sampling procedures

The study sample involved of two Grade 3 teachers and two Grade 4 teachers in a township school (Alexandra). In an urban school (Johannesburg inner city) the study sample also consisted of two Grade 3 teachers and two Grade 4 teachers. The two schools were randomly selected by sending emails requesting for permission to conduct research to the principals from the list of contacts for schools in the district. Attached was the ethical clearance form from the University and a consent form for the principal. A text message was also sent to selected principals to notify them of the email sent. The responding principals were the ones whose schools were considered. The principals also requested a copy of the teachers' consent form as well as a copy of the interview protocol.

3.5   Class observation

Observing in the classroom situation is more than just looking. "It is looking (often systematically) and noting systematically people, events, behaviours, settings, artefacts, routines and so on" (Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Simpson & Tuson, 2003). I observed the behaviour of the learners throughout the lessons and took some notes in a book. The observation was aimed at observing how the teachers introduced the lesson in English as the LoLT and how they interacted with the learners in English. The lesson was observed and during the observation, the researcher's role remained objective. The lessons observed were referred to as lessons A, B and C. The learners

did not take part in the research, but they were in the class together with the researcher. The identity of the participants was protected by giving them pseudonyms (Cekiso & Madikiza, 2014).

The other focus area of my observation was to observe the strategies that teachers used to facilitate the language transition both in Grade 3 and Grade 4 classes. I did this observation by observing in the real classroom situation as Cohen et al (2011) state that: ''the distinctive feature of observation, as the research proposes, is that it offers an investigator the opportunity to gather 'live' data from naturally occurring social situations. In this way, the researcher looked directly at what was taking place in the classroom rather than relying on second-hand accounts'' (Cohen et al., 2011 p. 456).

I got first-hand information on how language transition is managed and not manipulated, meaning I got the information from the participants, not hear-say, as it is stated that "qualitative research is based on a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context (or real-world settings) and, in general, the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest" (Maree, 2007 p. 78). The participants provided the researcher with copies of informal assessment of learners' work which will be regarded as confidential and anonymous.

3.6 Interviews

I conducted two sessions of individual teachers' interviews in each school. The first session was with the Grade 3 teachers and the second session was with the Grade 4 teachers. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) stipulate that ''the individual teachers' interview is a conversation, the art of asking questions and listening." They further state that ''interviewing is one of the most common and powerful ways to try and understand our fellow human beings'' Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p. 353). The interviews in a township school were conducted during the day after school. This was done in order not to disrupt teaching and learning as stated in the teachers' consent. One teacher willingly agreed to be interviewed in the staffroom during his free period. The interview was in a semi-structured form. This, according to Cantoni (2007) was done ''to obtain a representation of the interviewees' thoughts and opinions in relation to the research questions. The advantage of the semi-structured interview is that all interviews are based on specific themes that can provide a structure to make the analysis easier and

less subjective, as well as provide a foundation for detecting similarities and differences in the interviewees' answers'' (Cantoni, 2007, p. 13).

Similarly, the semi-structured interview gives allowance to work in an interviewee-centred situation, where it is more spacious to reflect and elaborate opinions. This can offer us with a clearer image of the participant's view, instead of concentrating on the interviewer's questions constructed on the concept only, which jeopardies narrowing the interview and missing the nuances of the real condition (Bryman 2001 pp. 301-307).

I interviewed two Grade 3 teachers and two Grade 4 teachers in both township and urban schools. Both schools have only two Grade 3 classes and two Grade 4 classes. During the interviews I only asked simple and straight forward questions that were not personal and sensitive to get valid answers (Nthulana, 2016, p. 53). The interviews took less than an hour and I was given the time to note the answers word by word. The questions were asked in English. However, some interviewees could speak in their home languages as they felt more comfortable with it. I translated what they were saying into English and wrote it down. Teachers were not comfortable with the fact that one of my data collection techniques was to record the interview for transcribing. Therefore, the interviews happened in confidentially without recording the conversation, even though the consent stated that the tape recorder will be accessed by the researcher and the supervisor only. However, by removing the recorder the condition became more comfortable. Therefore, I respected their decision and did not use the tape recorder.

The interview started with biographical and background questions, and later questions on how teachers manage the language transition of learners from Grade 3 into Grade 4. The two Grade 4 teachers who were interviewed were teaching different subjects. As with the observations, to maintain their anonymity, their names were referred to as Teacher A, B, C (pseudonyms "Mandisa", "Ntombi" and "Vusi") respectively.

3.7   Focus group discussion

The teachers raised a concern that they had no time for meetings, especially during that time of term assessments. The township school teachers were unavailable for discussions as I visited them in a week that there were salary negotiations with their unions, hence they were knocking off at 13:00. The focus group discussion only took

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place in an urban school with only four teachers who were available, two Grade 3 teachers and two Grade 4 teachers. I divided them into two groups, a group of one Grade 3 teacher and one Grade 4 teacher.

It is Krueger's (1994, pp. 16-20) opinion that multiple focus group interviews with similar participants are needed to detect patterns and trends across groups. The results obtained from a single group could be unreliable as one group could be unresponsive and reluctant to participate. The discussion also took less than an hour as intermediate phase teacher was only available from 14:00 since the time for teaching and learning ends at 13:45. Hence they compromised as they were also tired and had to prepare for the following day.

3.8 Data analysis

When analysing the data, I went back to my field notes to verify conclusions, also to some of the interviewees (Christelle) and collected additional data (Maree, 2016, p. 109). I preferred inductive data analysis whereby I used the themes that emerged from the data that was collected, in other words, themes were allowed to emerge from the data itself (Creswell, 2014, p. 39).

3.9 Ethical and political considerations

I received ethical clearance from the University of Pretoria. After obtaining clearance from the University, I requested approval to do research in the selected schools around from the Gauteng Department of Education. I did this by emailing a letter requesting for consent to conduct the research to relevant decision makers, the HOD of the department of education, school principals, circuit managers and the teachers. I explained that the purpose of my study was to find out how teachers manage learners' language transition from Grade 3 into Grade 4.

I made them aware that I was going to consider voluntary participation by selected participants. I ensured safety of the participants, ensuring that there was no risk of physical or emotional harm. For their anonymity I did not disclose their real identity or names, they were given pseudonyms (Cekiso & Madikiza, 2014). I ensured confidentiality i.e., I did not discuss confidential details of my research with anyone. I also established trust with the participants. I also considered race and constructed my questions in a diverse way that they did not negatively affect the participants.

3.10 Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of my research is very important. I let my participants know where I come from. They told me their real names and I assured them that only pseudonyms will appear in my study. The real identity of the school as well will remain anonymous. The same method of research applied in the township school also applied in the urban school as, in ethnographic research, the reliability of research results entails "whether or not (or under what conditions) the ethnographer would expect to obtain the same finding if he or she tried again in the same way" (Kirk & Miller, 1986, p. 69).

As soon as my findings were concluded, they would be accessible to the public or other scholars, in order to assist where possible on how teachers should manage the language transition for learners, with the anonymity of the participants as Silverman, (2001, pp. 227-8) also points out, checking the reliability was closely related to assuring the quality of field notes and assuring the public access to the method of their creation. I created a comfortable environment, communicating with the participants about my personal background, and made them aware where I come and work from. I also made them aware that I am an intermediate phase teacher who is also affected by all the challenges that they are facing.

3.11 Limitations

There were some aspects that contributed to the limitations of my research. Firstly, I did my field work during the time of salary negotiations, as such teachers were only available from 8:00 to 12:00 as they were expected to attend the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) meetings from 13:00. This made it difficult for me to conduct in depth interviews. Since a tape recording was not possible, it is clear that by taking transcripts, it was more problematic for me to focus on what the participant was saying and the fact that I had to listen, write and talk at the same time could hinder the fluency of resulting questions and immediate response from the interviewer to the participant.

During the lesson observations, overcrowding in class (consisting of sixty learners, whereas the maximum learner-teacher ratio should be 1:40) was a challenge and it limited the time of observations as at times teachers had taken more time aligning learners' discipline than teaching. In addition, there was even more pressure on the teachers as they were also to prepare for the oncoming mid-year examinations.

As planned, one of my data collection techniques was a focus group discussion. Principals warned me in advance that focus group discussions will not be possible, as for this term, teachers are claiming not to have any time for any meetings. This posed a limitation for focus group discussions in a township school.

3.12 Conclusion

This chapter explained and outlined the way the research question and sub-questions were analysed in relation to the data collection techniques. It described the research site, target population, sampling procedures and the activities that took place during data collection. The next chapter will present the data which was obtained from the interviews and the class observations.

4   CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION

4.1   Introduction

In this chapter, the outcomes of the interviews and classroom observations will be presented and analysed. The data was collected from the participants through interviews. Two classroom observations were done, one in a Grade 3 class and one in a Grade 4 class. The data will provide answers to both the interviews and the research questions. This chapter was aimed at finding out how teachers managed learners' language transition from Grade 3 into Grade 4.

4.2   Participant profiles from interviews

The following table illustrates the teachers' profiles from the interview. The names appearing in the participant's column are pseudonyms used during the interviews.

Table 4-1: Summary of participant profiles

Qualifications	Year obtained	Institution	Subjects teaching/taught	Grade	Urban or Township
"Moipone" – Female					
ACE (Special Needs) BEd Hons	2013 2016	University of Pretoria	Mathematics, Life skills, isiZulu, English	3	Township
"Christelle" - Female					
JPEFP	1972	Johannesburg College of Education	English, Afrikaans, Life Skills, Mathematics	3	Urban
"Mandla" - Male					
PDE	1996	University of Zululand	Life Skills, Mathematics, N.S. Tech	4	Urban
"Bongani" - Male					
BEd Hons	2016	University of Pretoria	Life Skills, Social Sciences, Mathematics, N.S Tech	4	Urban
"Moagi" - Male					

BEd Hons	2013	University of Pretoria	Life Skills, Mathematics, English, Afrikaans(FAL)	3	Urban
"Mandisa" - Female					
Teachers Diploma Junior Primary	1996	University of Zululand	Life Skills, English, isiZulu, Mathematics,	4	Township
"Vusi" - Male					
Higher Diploma in Education	2006	University of Witwatersrand	English, Social Sciences, Life Skills, isiXhosa	4	Township
"Ntombi" - Female					
ACE (Special Needs) BEd Hons	2012 2016	University of Johannesburg	Life Skills, isiXhosa, Mathematics, English	3	Township

4.3   A summary of each teacher interviewed.

From the data obtained from the interviews, it shows that three of the participants obtained their BEd Honours degrees from the University of Pretoria (distance learning).

"Christelle", a white female teacher completed her studies with the Johannesburg College of Education in the early 70's. She has been teaching for 43 years. She stays in another suburb around Johannesburg, about 25 km away from the school. She recalled:

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"I started teaching in this school when the school had only 210 children, with a maximum of 15 children in class. Unlike now, we have 50 to 60 learners in a class and it is not easy to manage a class with such a huge number"

She is the only white teacher in the school and she said:

> My home language is Afrikaans, but I don't mind any race or culture. Most of the times they speak in their African languages and I am left in the dark. But one of them will always remember that I am around and remind them to switch to English. I enjoy being surrounded by my colleagues, especially because I enjoy the "pap, wors and gravy" that they cook at the end of every term once we go for school holidays. I eat bare hands same as they do. (Christelle).

She gave a very nice giggle as she said that, and I giggled with her. This is her last year and last term in teaching. She will not resume duty at the beginning of term three as she will be retiring.

"Mandla" is a male teacher and is staying in a township away from the school. He is driving every morning to and from his house, about 30 km away from school and he said:

> Due to an increase in number of teachers in those years, I did not start by teaching, instead I worked for a private company for few years before I could find a post in teaching. When I resumed teaching as a career, I was employed in a senior phase, teaching Mathematics in Grade 8 for eight years in the rural areas of KZN. I then relocated to Johannesburg where I am currently working in an urban school, teaching Grade 4. My home language is isiZulu, and the learners here are multicultural. It becomes difficult when learners do not understand, and one tries to "code switch" to make them understand. Code switching in IsiZulu does not help because this school is "Africa". We have learners speaking Swahili and French". He continued by saying: "But it is good for me, coming from the rural areas of Kwa Zulu Natal to a school like this? It is an experience for me. I enjoy teaching learners that do not know English (Mandla).

"Moipone", like "Mandla" did not start by teaching after completing her University Diploma in Primary School. She is staying not far from school, about 7km away from the school.

She commented while she was busy clearing her table.

> It was those years when teachers were in access and posts were not available. I worked in a private sector for fourteen years before I could find a post. It was not easy but every year that passed I kept on trying (Moipone).

She then continued:

> But the way private sector frustrated me with long working hours, I started sending out CV's to schools until I was called for an interview. I got the job and immediately registered with the University of Pretoria to further my studies. I have been teaching for 7 years now (Moipone).

She is enjoying teaching but says she is frustrated by big numbers in classes.

> I did a certificate in special needs (ACE). I aimed at assisting learners who have learning difficulties, but I cannot help them because the classes are overcrowded. By the time I think of remedial lessons, I am exhausted and cannot be productive due to fatigue. It is terrible, the department should help us by employing more teachers to manage this overcrowding. We are going to look like we are not doing our jobs if they don't attend to this problem (Moipone).

"**Vusi**" was more interested in finding out why I am doing this research and how I can study while I was a fulltime employee. He said:

> I stay around here, just a walking distance from my home. I would also like to further my studies. You are motivating me. I have been teaching for 12 years now. It means if I thought of furthering my studies I would be far by now. I am teaching English in Grade four, but eish (Vusi).

He continued:

> Unfortunately, you may not be able to observe my lesson as we are going slow for salary negotiations. But for the interview, I am available. The

environment around here is a challenge for us as teachers and the learners. English is a foreign language for all of us, but I enjoy teaching it. You see, it always feels good to teach someone something new. These learners are exposed to all African languages around here. When they are not at school, they speak isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sesotho and they never speak English. That is why during my period, I encourage the English only rule (Vusi).

"Mandisa," a female teacher, has been teaching for seven years. She stays in another township around Johannesburg and uses a taxi to come to work.

I completed my diploma in teaching in 1996. I did not start by teaching because in the village where I come from there were no vacant posts. I waited until I moved to Johannesburg to look for any type of employment. I worked at O. R. Tambo Airport as cleaner until I got a teacher post 7 year ago. It was not easy at the beginning as we were trained in a different way and when I got employed here things were done differently due changes in times. Years back the curriculum was called the syllabus, now it has changed (Mandisa).

She paused and continued:

In KZN, the language of learning and teaching is isiZulu. Here in Johannesburg, learners are obliged to learn in English and it is not their home language. I am also not good in English because I am a Zulu and I am not an English teacher. I teach Life Skills and must make learners understand in English (Mandisa).

I stopped taking some notes and asked her: "How do you do that?"

She responded:

"I say a sentence in English and repeat what it in Zulu, it is time consuming though but what can I do?"

Due to a limited time with other participants, especially those in the urban school, I did not spend a lot of time on personal narratives. As they printed out and signed the consent forms that I emailed, they were already aware of the purpose of my visit. I

could see they took time to settle and feel comfortable. It seemed as if though they discussed their insecurity about these interviews as I noticed the same pattern of behaviour.

They were not as free and welcoming as the teachers in the township school. It became uncomfortable for me too and I started with the interviews right away. Unlike "Christelle", she was free and willing to participate as much as she could, she is the only white teacher in a school and is very comfortable being surrounded by her colleagues, despite their colour and different cultures.

4.4 Interviews: The following table summarises of teachers' responses to the research questions.

Table 4-2: Data analysis summary

Research Question 1: Management of learners' language transition from Grade 3 into Grade 4	Research Question 2: Challenges that teachers face during learners' transition into English as the LoLT.	Research Question 3: The main factors influencing the language challenges faced by learners
Theme: Do Grade 3 and Grade 4 teachers work together?	Theme: Overcrowded classrooms	Theme: Home language versus LoLT
There is no working together about facilitating transition, however, the Grade 3 teacher provide the Grade 4 teacher with learner's profiles with comments on how to work with each learner, specifically learners in need of support (Mandla, Urban, Grade 4).	Classes are overcrowded; hence it becomes a challenge for teachers to reach out to all learners (Vusi, Township, Grade 4).	Learners are bilingual. In school the LoLT is English. At home they switch to their different home languages, amongst them Swahili, French, isiXhosa and others (Moagi, Urban, Grade 3).
The Grade 3 and Grade 4 teachers do not necessarily work together to facilitate language transition. They only provide the Grade 4 teachers with learners' profiles. Discussions during SBST meetings about learners in need of support (Ntombi, Township, Grade 3).	The biggest challenge is big or overcrowded classes. We are unable to reach out to all learners (Moagi, Urban, Grade 3).	English is a subject in Foundation Phase here in a township, therefore the limited time allocated to it is influencing the language challenges. At home the learners speak their different home languages, they switch to English only when it is time for English as a subject. (Mandisa, Township, Grade 3).
There is no facilitation of language transition at all, but the Grade 3 teachers	The biggest challenge is the numbers in classes. Teachers are unable to reach	Learners here in town are bi-lingual. English is not their home language. We have many learners from

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provide the Grade 4 teachers with learners' profiles to see which learners need support. All teachers identify (Vusi, Township, Grade 3)	out to all learners due to overcrowded classes. (Bongani, Urban, Grade 4).	neighbouring countries too. When they leave school, they don't speak in English but their different African languages. (Christelle, Urban, Grade 3).
We do not work together to facilitate the language transition at all. We only get informed of the learners at risk or who are struggling to draw strategies on how to support those learners. (Moagi, Urban, Grade 3).	Not every teacher is an English teacher. Hence the language itself is not their home language as our school is multicultural. Classes have huge numbers that teachers cannot manage reaching out to all learners. (Christelle, Urban, Grade).	English is allocated very little time as a Subject. At home learners speak more of their African languages than English. Teachers themselves are not fluent in English as it is not their home language as well. (Ntombi, Township, Grade 3).
There is no communication between the Grade 3 and Grade 4 teachers about language transition. (Mandisa, Township, Grade 3).	The biggest challenge is big or overcrowded classes. Teachers are incompetent due to big numbers in classrooms (Mandla, Urban, Grade 4)	The environmental surrounding of our learners, for an example our townships is a multicultural African languages area. People around this area speak isiZulu, isiXhosa, Tsonga, Sesotho and so on. As such learners are socially communicating in all these languages, when they come to class, the LoLT is English, and however they are also not communicating in English amongst themselves during learning. (Vusi, Township, Grade 4)

RQ 4: Strategies and resources teachers and schools use to facilitate the transition into English as the LoLT	RQ 5: The school's support and intervention programmes to manage the language transition
Theme- Teachers Code Switch, LTSM	Theme, Workshops and School Visits

I code switch, but here in our school, code switching does not help because learners are multicultural. I speak in IsiZulu and it only helps those who can understand isiZulu. We have learners who are Swahili and French speakers here (Mandla, Urban, Grade 4)	No support given on language transition. The department only offer teacher development workshops on curriculum in general, at least once per quarter (Moagi, Urban, Grade 3).
My home language is Afrikaans and I speak fluent English. I cannot code switch as learners here are multicultural and I cannot speak either of their languages. However, I use pictures, posters, flashcards, objects and simple games. I also teach those sounds and letters of the English language. (Christelle, Urban, Grade 3).	Not that I know of. Nothing about the transition at all (Mandla, Urban, Grade 4).
I use story telling with pictures and encourage learners to interact in English outside the classroom. The school is allocated the LTSM budget from the DoE, hence buy learning and teaching resources (Vusi, Township, Grade 3).	The DoE schools with the DBE (Department of basic Education) books, however they are not addressing the language transition of the learners. (Christelle, Urban, Grade 3).
I use readers, phonic charts, pictures and alphabetic charts. I also encourage my learners to join reading clubs around the area. (Ntombi, Township, Grade 3).	Although the Department subject advisors visit schools for support, they only concentrate on curriculum in general, not Grade 3's transition into Grade 4. (Bongani, Urban, Grade 4).
I encourage the spirit of "English only" during school hours. Our school is running stringent reading programme in which every child in the last 30 minutes of the day reads quietly under strict supervision of a teacher. (Bongani, Urban, Grade 4).	The department organises workshops for teachers for every term, however these workshops do not cater for language transition. They address what is expected to be covered in as far as the curriculum is concerned. (Vusi, Township, Grade 3)
	There are cluster meetings to discuss the challenges teachers are facing, but they are not addressing the issue of language transition from Grade 3 into Grade 4. (Ntombi, Township, Grade 3)

4.5 (RQ1) Management of learners' language transition from Grade 3 into Grade 4

The above statement addresses the main research question. As mentioned earlier, the township school is using three African languages in Foundation Phase (Sesotho, isiZulu and isiXhosa). The urban school is a multilingual school with English as a home language. In both schools, I found out that learners' language transition from Grade 3 into Grade 4 is not specifically managed. However, the Grade 3 teachers communicate with the Grade 4 teachers about the learners' profiles. More attention is given to the learners who are progressed (could not repeat a class due to age cohort or have already repeated a phase) and learners with learning difficulties than managing language transition. The Grade 3 teachers only make the Grade 4 teachers and the School Based Support Team (SBST) coordinator aware of such learners and they all draw up strategies on how to support such learners.

One of the participants (Vusi) mentioned qualifications as the key to successful teaching, that teachers should be qualified to teach a subject. However, participants raised a concern that they are facing a challenge of being given different subjects to teach every year which has an impact on the language challenges teachers and learners are facing, according to Vusi.

4.5.1 Findings and responses on themes:
Theme 1: Do Grade 3 and Grade 4 teachers work together?

The study intended to find out if the Grade 3 and 4 teachers work together to support the learners who move into Grade 4 through transition. Participants gave personal views about this and their responses were the same. Mandla responded that there is no working together about facilitating transition, however; the Grade 3 teacher provides the Grade 4 teacher with learner's profiles with comments on how to work with each learner, specifically learners in need of support.

The Grade 3 and Grade 4 teachers do not necessarily work together to facilitate language transition. They only provide the Grade 4 teachers with learners' profiles.

"We also discussed during SBST meetings about learners in need of support and draw up strategies on how to assist/support them", said Ntombi.

Vusi is a grade 4 teacher who mentioned that there is no facilitation of language transition at all, but the Grade 3 teachers provide the Grade 4 teachers with learners'

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profiles to see which learners need support. All teachers identify learners who need support and draw up the strategies on how to support those learners. Nothing about transition from Grade 3 into Grade 4.

Moagi also felt that they do not work together to facilitate the language transition at all. They only get informed of the learners at risk or who are struggling and the purpose for this information is to enable them to draw strategies on how to support those learners.

Mandisa did not hesitate to answer this question and gave a very quick and brief response that there is no communication between the Grade 3 and Grade 4 teachers about language transition. According to the responses that I got from the participants I reached a conclusion that the teachers were not working together to manage the transition. Hence working together to support learners who need support.

4.6   (RQ 2) Challenges that teachers face during learners' transition into English as the LoLT.
Theme 2: Overcrowded classrooms.

The biggest challenge that I discovered during the lesson observations is the way the classes, both Grade 3 and Grade 4 are overcrowded. Vusi confirmed that the classes are overcrowded; hence it becomes a challenge for teachers to reach out to all the learners in class. Moagi agreed with Vusi when he stated that the biggest challenge is big or overcrowded classes. We are unable to reach out to all learners. When I interviewed another participant Bongani, it was the same response. I found that the biggest challenge is the numbers in classes. They are unable to reach out to all learners due to overcrowded classes.

Christelle pointed out the language of learning and teaching is not their home language as their school is multicultural. She mentioned that classes have huge numbers so that teachers cannot manage teaching time and reaching out to all learners at the same time.

Mandla confirmed my observation when he pointed at the classrooms and said that the biggest challenge is big or overcrowded classes. Teachers are incompetent due to big numbers in classrooms. Indeed, I found it very overwhelming when I observed the way a teacher would struggle to settle the overcrowded class before he/she could

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commence with the lesson for the day. This also affected the teaching time allocated for the subject to be taught.

4.7 (RQ 3): The main factors influencing the language challenges faced by learners.

Theme 3: Home language versus LoLT

In this regard, teachers from both township and urban schools had the same view, however they had different opinions about the factors influencing the language challenges that were faced by learners. Moagi said that learners are bilingual. In school the LoLT is English. At home they switch to their different home languages, amongst them Swahili, French, isiXhosa and others. Mandisa supported Moagi's statement by saying that English is a subject in Foundation Phase there in a township, therefore the limited time allocated to it is influencing the language challenges. She further added that at home the learners speak their different home languages, and that they switch to English only when it is time for English as a subject.

Learners in the town are bilingual. English is not their home language. We have many learners from neighbouring countries too. "When they leave school, they don't speak in English but their different African languages", said Christelle.

Ntombi raised a concern about time allocated to English when she said that English was allocated very little time as a subject. She further supported Moagi and Mandisa's view that at home learners speak more of their African languages than English. She further raised a concern that teachers themselves are not fluent in English as it is not their home language as well.

Concerning the socio-cultural environment of learners, people around this area speak isiZulu, isiXhosa, Tsonga, Sesotho and so on. "As such learners are socially communicating in all these languages, when they come to class, the LoLT is English, and however they are also not communicating in English amongst themselves during learning", said Vusi.

In accordance with Bronfenbrenner's theory, an individual's growth happens within a complex system of relations which are also affected by various levels of their communal and cultural setting. He also said that an individual is not influenced by the direct setting only, but that a person's development is "deeply affected by events

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happening in settings in which the person is not even present" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 3).

4.8 (RQ 4): Strategies and resources teachers and schools use to facilitate the transition into English as the LoLT.

Theme 4: Teachers code switch and LTSM

As I was determined to find out and understand the strategies and resources that the schools and the teachers are using to facilitate the transition into English as the LoLT, the word code switch was repeatedly identified from the responses I got from the participants. When responding, Mandla said that he code switched, but there in their school, code switching does not help because learners are multicultural. He also said that he speaks in isiZulu and it only helps those who can speak isiZulu, and that they have learners who are Swahili and French speakers.

Christelle's home language is Afrikaans and she speaks fluent English. She cannot code switch as learners there are multicultural, and she can neither speak no write either of their languages. However, she uses pictures, posters, flashcards, objects and simple games. She also teaches those sounds and letters of the English language.

Vusi uses story telling with pictures and encourage learners to interact in English outside the classroom. The school is allocated the LTSM budget from the DoE, hence buy learning and teaching resources. Ntombi, like Christelle uses readers, phonic charts, pictures and alphabetic charts. She also encourages learners to join reading clubs around the area. Bongani said that he encourages the spirit of "English only" during school hours. Their school was a stringent reading programme in which every child in the last thirty minutes of the day reads quietly under strict supervision of a teacher.

Neither of the teachers mentioned how and what their school is doing to assist them to facilitate this transition. I could identify it myself that the schools have and are providing the necessary teaching resources as every teacher mentioned them, such as charts, posters, pictures etc.

4.9 (RQ 5): The school's support and intervention programmes to manage the language transition.

Theme 5: Workshops and school visits

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This question addressed the issue of support and intervention programmes provided by the schools to manage the language transition. Most of the participants felt that there was no support provided by the Department of Education, specifically for language transition. Moagi went straight to the point and said that no support was given on language transition. He stated that the department only offer teacher development workshops on curriculum in general, at least once per quarter.

Mandla agreed with Moagi when he responded without any hesitation and said: "Not that I know of. Nothing about the transition at all". Christelle admitted that the DoE provides schools with the DBE (Department of basic Education) books, even though they are not addressing the language transition of the learners.

Bongani acknowledged the fact that the district subject support staff visits their school, even though they are not addressing the issue of language transition when he said that although the Department subject advisors visit schools for support, they only concentrate on curriculum in general, not Grade 3s transition into Grade 4.

Vusi, like Bongani, on the other hand admitted that the department organises workshops for teachers for every term, however these workshops do not cater for language transition. They address what is expected to be covered in as far as the curriculum is concerned.

Ntombi in different words agreed with her colleagues that there are cluster meetings to discuss the challenges teachers are facing, but they are not addressing the issue of language transition from Grade 3 into Grade 4.

In conclusion, the department of education is visible in schools and follow up is done on curriculum issues. Teachers are trained through workshops and cluster meetings; however, the issue of language transition is not properly managed, neither by the schools nor the department. Most teachers expressed their views that there was no support at all regarding the management of this transition. They are only acknowledging the fact that the districts support group is visible at schools at least once per term.

4.10 Class observation

4.10.1 Teachers' English proficiency

.Most teachers are African, English is not their home language, therefore as I was observing, I realised that the teachers also make some errors when facilitating the lesson in English, for example, the teacher would address the children as "childrens". Studies have proven that qualified practicing English second language teachers (ESL) are not necessarily proficient in English and that this may influence the ESL learner's ability to acquire English proficiency (Nel & Swanepoel, 2010).

4.10.2 Learners' attitude towards English as the LoLT

As mentioned before, the learners in a township school that I visited are African language speakers, whereas the language of learning and teaching in the Foundation Phase is three African languages i.e. Sesotho, isiZulu and isiXhosa. When they move to Grade 4, the LoLT changes to English. In an urban school, the LoLT is English in both foundation and Intermediate Phases. The Constitution of 1996 stipulates that learners have the right to receive education in the language of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable. This is not practicable in the schools I visited.

There were various factors that played a role in the attitudes that learners held regarding English as the LoLT.

4.10.2.1 Positive attitude to English

Several teachers interviewed agreed that learners hold a positive view of English, and are eager to learn and practice the language:

According to teacher "Bongani", the teachers play a significant role in facilitating the transition to English as the LoLT. He stated that the attitude of learners towards English as with anything else in their lives, depends on how we as adults/teachers perceive it. A school must create a conducive, non-threatening environment for students in which they are encouraged to make mistakes while acquiring the language instead of being ridiculed by their classmates or worse, by their teachers. Learners at this age are always optimistic/eager to learn and they just need to be encouraged. "Learners like English and have a positive attitude towards it. For example, they write poems and letters to their teachers in English, trying to express themselves in English", said Vusi.

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Ntombi agreed with Bongani and Vusi by saying that learners enjoy learning new things. They enjoy English. The challenge is the little time allocated to English as a subject in Foundation phase. Anyienda, (2017) emphasised that there is limited classroom opportunity for learners to practice English.

4.10.2.2   Negative attitude to English

However, not all the learners show a positive attitude towards the language. Teachers Mandisa (township) and Moagi (urban) from different environments expressed the same feeling by saying some learners displayed a negative attitude towards English. This is particularly true of the learners who are struggling or experiencing learning difficulties. They went to the extent of creating their own English words, for an example, a learner would say: "rubbering" attempting to say erasing''.

4.10.3 Code-switching during teaching

In this section the lessons that were under observation were mostly dominated by the teachers' voice and the role of the learners was mostly to respond to the teachers' questions, which often relied on clues to lead to the answers. The lesson was in the fourth grade and about feelings or emotions (Life Skills). Code switching is a general practice in many South African classrooms despite the 'official' opposition to it in the past, possibly because of over-utilisation of the L1, resulting in no attempt to use the target language (Auerbach, 1993; Bot, 1993; McCabe, 1996).

Before the lesson commenced, the teacher greeted the learners in isiXhosa, and then introduced the lesson in English. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the teacher would translate what she said in English into isiXhosa (code switch), for learners to understand what she was saying. Code switching is used as a form of scaffolding (Salami, 2008). During the nineties, the approach to code-switch changed to what was referred to as translanguaging, which was perceived more positively (McCabe, 2013). Krashen (1985b) stated that code switching lowers the affective filter, he said that learners need less stressful environments to learn successfully.

4.10.4 Limited verbal participation from learners

In this section the subject lessons that were observed were mostly conquered by the teacher's voice and the role of the learners was regularly to answer to the teachers'

questions, which often relied on clues to lead to the answers. This also shows that limited verbal interaction is one consequence of the learners' transition into English as the LoLT.

4.10.5 Overcrowded classrooms

During the interviews half of the interviewees mentioned that the biggest challenge they were facing was big or overcrowded classes (Van Staden & Howey, 2010). They also said that teachers could seem incompetent, but due to big classroom numbers it is not easy for them to even reach out to learners with learning challenges. Discipline in classes is a challenge, because teachers are unable to walk around the classroom during class activities due to limited space, hence some learners are using this to their advantage by being undisciplined, knowing very well the teacher cannot reach out to them.

Mandisa added. "English is not our home language as teachers too. Learners here are African as well, they speak three different African languages during break times and even at home. They only switch to English when they are in class for that time. That is why it is not easy for them speak and write fluent English. Communicating and learning in English for them is foreign". Krashen (1981, p. 99) suggests that L2 for foreign language learning needs to be more like the child's acquisition of its native language (Brown, 2000, p. 1). Krashen differentiates between acquiring and learning a language. Second language learning is a long and complex undertaking. The learner's whole person is affected as he/she struggles to reach beyond the confines of a first language and into a new language (Brown, 2000, p. 1).

4.11 Teachers' attitude towards English as the LoLT

It became clear to me during the interviews (in both urban and township schools) that teachers do not take the process of transition into consideration. Rather they only look into methods and strategies of teaching in general. The teachers are multi-lingual and most of them seemed to communicate in Sepedi/Setswana/Sesotho (urban school) and isiXhosa and isiZulu (township school). There were many instances where they did not interact in English when communicating amongst themselves and when discussing some of the school matters. During the interviews English was rarely used as I also allowed them to respond in the languages that they felt comfortable in.

Teacher Vusi, who is a Grade 4 teacher in a township school, mentioned that their school is African multicultural, he added that even the teachers are not proficient enough in English, he personally communicates well with his kids in English, but stated that learners are struggling to express themselves in English. Therefore, he code switches to isiZulu to make them understand what the lesson is about. He also mentioned that he has a positive attitude towards English, emphasised that it feels good to teach learners new things, something that they are interested to learn.

Another participant, teacher Bongani at an urban school, held a more nuanced view of English as the LoLT when he said that he is of the opinion that it would be ideal for each learner must be taught in their mother tongue as this would ensure maximum acquisition of content and skills especially in complex fields such as mathematics, sciences etc. He continued by saying that having said that, though, he has accepted the reality that with globalisation, internet and urbanisation the world has become one village and students must be multilingual to be able to be competitive and remain relevant especially in a global economy that is dictated by the West, in which English is the dominant language.

4.12 Assessment and language transition

I requested to view three Grade 4 class activity books (from high, average and low performing learners) during the observation. Learners express themselves differently in English according to their levels of understanding. I also examined the text books for English and Life Skills, to find out if the levels of English used in them could easily be understood by the learners. The class activity books of the learners were used to assess any difficulties they have in understanding English as the LoLT.

Table 4.3 lists some examples of errors some of the learners committed when writing sentences and words in English:

Table 4-3: Learners' errors

No.	Correction version		Error
1	Sleep and never dream that dream again		Sleep n don't dream with this dream"
2	I am sorry, it's a mistake, I didn't know your window is broken		I em sony its mistak I didn know your widow is break
3	Corrections		Conectins
4	Them		Tham
5	Getting		Giting
6	Fire		Faya
7	Substance		Sabstans
8	Fuel		Suel
9	Rabbit		Bunny
10	Produce		Prodice

The Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshega, said as reported in one of the local newspapers (when she visited one of the primary schools around Johannesburg that: "Primary years are the prime time of a child's life. This is the time when we must encourage them to read to ensure they are eager to learn." (Joburg East Express, 2018). (She further explained that the chaos and challenges experienced in high school are the reflection of the foundation phase: "A matric learner's handwriting tells you something about the learner's foundation years and at high school, it is already too late to address problems".)

4.13 Language proficiency and classroom participation

Related to the problem of overcrowding and especially disruptions from learners, most learners were unsettled and fidgeting. Learners need less stressful environments to learn successfully (Krashen, 1985a).

Teacher "Mandisa" instructed the learners: "Name types of feelings you know"

One of the learners raised up his hand and when chosen, he reported in isiXhosa:

"Ma'm, 'uThabo' uyandiphazamisa": meaning Ma'm 'Thabo is disturbing me*.*

It became clear during the observations that those learners who have language difficulties become too playful and noisy during the lesson. The learners who understood, were the ones who were concentrating and participating during the lesson. They are keen to learn new things and they communicate fairly with the teacher. Communication in Grade 4 class was in isiXhosa. I could hear learners communicating while the teacher was presenting the lesson in English. To make them understand she code switched to isiXhosa, for an example during the lesson introduction, the teacher reminded them about yesterday's topic in English and translated it again in isiXhosa, she then said: "*Angithi?*" meaning *"Are we together?"*, then the learners understood her, and all responded, "*yes Ma'am"*.

4.14 Environmental: resources and literacy at home

Some teachers highlighted that learners do not communicate in English when they are at home, which creates worry that they are not exposed to English for the learners around the township, a factor that makes it hard to motivate them to use language and learn English, as one participant teacher Moagi explained, learners coming from low socio-economic circumstances and most parents in these families have little literacy levels. Children from such families are rarely exposed to books or consistent literacy practices in their homes. Home fictional reading in Pre-School years may be completely unavailable. "Some children have very little experience of making meaning from the printed word before they start school", said Moagi.

This concern is reiterated by Wolfaard (2001, pp. 87-88, p. 107) when she states that: ''according to the theories of successful second language acquisition, there must be an exposure to the target language'', which is challenging considering a lack of resources and exposure at home for some learners.

Teacher Vusi added that the environmental surrounding of their learners, for an example their township, is a multicultural African language area. People there speak isiZulu, isiXhosa, Sepedi, Sesotho, Tsonga and so on. Due to that circumstance, learners are communicating in all those languages, when they come to class, the language changes to English. It is then that the confusion arises.

4.15 (RQ 4) Strategies and resources teachers and schools use to facilitate the transition into English as the LoLT

It was significant for me to understand that most teachers were mentioning the teaching resources and methodologies they were using during their teaching times, instead of resources to manage transition of learners' language into English from Grade 3 into Grade 4. They are basically not implementing strategies to manage language transition. This observation is reiterated by Le Roux (1993) when stipulating that ''teachers do not have the knowledge and skills to support English language learning and to teach literacy skills across the curriculum'' Le Roux (1993, p. 150). It was also discovered by Phatudi (2007, p. 128) that schools initially never thought of implementing strategies to facilitate transition.

The following are some of the responses I received when I asked them what strategies and resources their schools and they used to facilitate the transition into English as the language of learning and teaching:

> I use readers, phonic charts, pictures and alphabetic charts. I also encourage my learners to join reading clubs around the area. Firstly, a teacher must be qualified and well trained. I use story telling with pictures and encourage learners to interact in English outside classroom. I use pictures, posters, flashcards, objects and simple games. I first teach the learners the sounds and letters of the English Language. I label the objects in the class e.g. I write table on a card and put the card on the table etc. (Christelle.)

Bongani felt that the transition from Foundation to Intermediate phase always posed a challenge for most of our learners. As a school it is imperative that the Language

Policy addresses this challenge and nip it in the bud as early as grade 4. Failure to do so may perpetuate learning difficulties as students' progress to the higher grades. "When it comes to strategies we believe in maximum exposure to the language by encouraging 'English only' during school hours", said Bongani.

Maogi commented:

> It has been proven that one of the quickest and easiest way to acquire a language is through exposure by hearing it all the time. We also run a stringent reading programme in which every child in the first thirty minutes of the day reads quietly under strict supervision of a teacher. All children get a reading book from the library to read at school and at home as well. Reading opportunities are also infused in most of the day's lessons, not only in the English lesson (Moagi).

He continued by saying that CAPS is prescriptive. Various activities are integrated around a central theme to enrich the learners' conceptual language base and understanding of vocabulary. (This is over a period of two weeks). Their Grade R-3 are taught in English (which is not their mother-tongue), however the use of a story with pictures help learners to listen attentively and to retell the story. The difference is that the implementation of the story and the use of pictures enhance the learners' receptive and expressive language skills. Lesson planning is important. He continued:

> Also using a central theme helps. Having word walls relating to the story/central theme, role-plays and stories all related to the functional approach to language assist learning and increase linguistic awareness. Songs and play songs that support and expand vocabulary pertaining to the original theme/story as well as songs and rhymes, supported by movements and role role-play, allow for repetition of vocabulary. Such strategies provide a script for learning language. Encourage reading and writing within the general theme. Starting with what they know in their mother tongue to translate it in English in which is around the subject I am teaching (codeswitch) (Moagi).

4.16 Focus group discussion

The focus group discussion took place in the urban school. The group was composed of two Grade 3 teachers and two Grade four teachers. I started with one Grade 3 and one Grade 4 teacher, then after thirty minutes of our discussion, I called in the other two. They did not feel comfortable with the issue of being recorded, hence I went on without recording. Amongst the concerns they raised was the sociocultural surrounding of the learners. Mandla, a Grade 4 teacher, said that their school was African. Even when one tries to code switch, it does not help because their learners are speaking different home languages. Code switching refers to the use of two different languages in a sentence and the substitution of words (Duran, 1994; Oyeomoni, 2006).

Due to many immigrants, languages such as Swahili, French, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sesotho, Sepedi, English and Afrikaans do occur in the school environments.

This is seen as challenge because when these learners go home, they switch to their different home languages. English is a challenge to parents as well because some of them cannot speak nor read in English at all. According to Mandla: "When we call them to address their children's progress, the kids are the ones who translate for them because they can hardly hear a word in English." He shook his head to express his frustration and continued by saying that even for them as teachers there, English is not their home language. With such learners they encountered big challenges after school when learners left school, because they attended extra classes to learn their own home languages.

Mandla further stated that the following day when you asked about the homework that was not done, the learners tell you: "I went to madrasa". When you ask what 'madrasa' is, they tell you 'madrasa' is the extra class that they attend to learn their own home language after school. He admitted that personally he cannot speak Swahili and he has learners in class who cannot understand English at all. To address this challenge, Mandla said that he has paired those learners with the ones who can speak Swahili to translate everything he says in English. In the process they get frustrated, as it becomes time consuming, according to Mandla.

All the teachers confirmed that there was no cooperation between the Grade 3 and Grade 4 teachers per se to facilitate language transition. A Grade 3 teacher Moagi

said that in town, the home language is English, even though they are experiencing massive challenges about the language, the LoLT is English from Grade R. Their biggest challenge is during term 1 and 2 when they admit new learners from countries such as the Congo. The child comes here with no clue of one English word. He can also not help because he has no clue of Swahili or the French language. Then he finds another learner who can speak Swahili to be the translator. But that is so frustrating for the learner because they feel the stress of not understanding the language, according to Moagi.

It caught my attention when the teachers from both groups were asked if CAPS was addressing the issue of language transition, some of them responded with a "No". When referring to their portfolio in Table 1, they were part of the CAPS training when it was rolled out, or some of the teachers who represented the schools during the training did not roll it out to the teachers who remained behind. However, from the interview responses I received, some of the teachers agreed that CAPS addressed the issue of language transition and supported their statements with various examples.

These are some of the responses I got that confirmed that measures that are in place don't work:

- Mandla answered without any hesitation and said: "No, because it only focuses on the learners' progressions, forgetting about the language challenges the learners experience in Grade 4. Also, assessments are just too many for their age group, especially for English and Afrikaans".
- Vusi added by disagreeing too when he said: "No, generally the document itself does not address any transition from Grade 3 to Grade 4. It is more of assessment focused than language transition."

4.17 Conclusion

In this chapter I presented the participants' points of views on what they presented as the challenges they faced when teaching in English as the LoLT. Given their experiences, they highlighted the challenges and expressed their personal views to address the strategies they apply when teaching in English as the LoLT. All the teachers raised a concern about the issue of overcrowding in classes and that it was restricting them to achieve the objectives of their lessons. The teachers in the township

school supported the issue of code-switching, that it was the best solution to assist learners to understand the language.

5   CHAPTER 5: DATA INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

5.1   Introduction

This research explored the management of learners' language transition from Grade 3 into Grade 4 by the teachers in selected township and urban schools around Gauteng Province. It also looked at how teachers worked together to facilitate this transition as well as the challenges that the teachers faced when facilitating this transition. The LoLT in the schools is neither the home language of the teachers nor the learners. The teachers who participated in this study are all English second language speakers, with one whose home language is Afrikaans (she is also an ESL speaker).

When the MOI is not the language spoken at home by either the teachers or the learners, complex language encounters are bound to take place (Evans & Cleghorn, 2010). The study used a narrative method to present the data. The data was analysed through themes that emerged during interviews and class observations. The consequences of overcrowded classrooms will be investigated and discussed as well. The consequences of the language challenges confronted by both learners and the teachers as well as the sociocultural environment of the learners will be discussed. The English proficiency of the teachers and the learners will also be discussed.

5.2   Overview of the study

Chapter 1 outlined the background of the study. The focus of this chapter was mainly on the problem statement, the research problem, the rationale/purpose of the study, the research questions and the research methodology. Chapter 2 presented the review of literature supporting the main topic of the study. The chapter also presented the conceptual framework underpinning the study regarding language transition issues, the role of CAPS as well as the allocation of teaching and learning time per week in Grade 3 (foundation phase) and Grade 4 (intermediate phase).

Chapter 3 presented the research methodology and design, the procedures that were followed when the research was conducted, the research sites and population. The sampling procedures were also presented in this chapter. Chapter 4 focused on the data presentation and the participants' portfolios. Chapter 5 presents the data interpretation and the discussions thereof. It also provides the findings based on

identified themes of the study. Chapter 6 identifies the significance of the study and makes recommendations for further study.

5.3 Findings of the challenges faced by both teachers and learners

5.3.1 Overcrowding

Classroom overcrowding is an impediment to learners reading progress. Teachers are unable to engage learners individually during reading lessons. Overcrowded classrooms are not conducive to an environment that develops learners' reading skills in the schools. When the classrooms are overcrowded, learner progress in developing reading skills is seriously slowed down (Molapo, 2016).

Due to overcrowding in classes that I visited, the participants also raised a concern about overcrowding as teaching and learning do not take place in a conducive manner. One of the factors affecting the large numbers in classes is that the township school is a no fee school, while the urban school's annual school fees is R4000, which makes it R400 per month for ten months. Hence many parents prefer free education or a smaller fee-paying school for their children. Low school fees increase access to a higher number of learners, particularly those from underprivileged families.

The literature proved that learners with low yearly school fees also obtain their education in classes with a higher number of learners associated to those in the provinces with high yearly school fees according to Phurutse (2005). He further emphasises that high/expensive school fees remain a thorny matter as they limit the admission of learners from underprivileged societies to schools where resources are available which often charge excessive fees. It was found in the study by Dhunpath and Joseph (2004) that some schools in the Pretoria area charge about R11 000 per annum, which make these schools inaccessible to learners from underprivileged families. The National Department of Education through the 'National Norms and Standards for School Funding' (South African Schools Act of 1996), promoted equity and introduced a new funding formula for schools. An adjusted version of the 'Norms and Standards' was released for public statement in September 2004 (DoE, 2004).

One of the participants ("Christelle"), indicated during the interviews that her school had an attendance of plus minus two hundred learners when she started working there in the early seventies, but presently the school has plus minus eight hundred learners. Global studies on effective education demonstrate that class size influences the

teaching and learning atmosphere, with bigger classes performing poorly in comparison to classes with less learners (Fullan, 1993). My understanding is that the Department of Education determines the teacher-learner ratio and sends it to schools.

The recommended teacher-learner ratio is beyond 1:40, which makes it more challenging to meet each learner's individual needs at her or his required level, particularly when preparing learners and facilitating the transition to a second language as a medium of instruction (Steyn, 2017, p. 105). The numbers are managed within the school. However, it should be noted that there is no total agreement about the ideal class size, and the literature specifies that varying backgrounds call for a variety of approaches. There is agreement that classes with fifty learners or more are disadvantageous to appropriate teaching and learning, but class size should be treated carefully because it has no magical, unmediated outcome on learner achievement (Phurutse, 2005).

The teacher could hardly walk around the classroom to monitor the learners' work. The physical condition of the Grade 4 class made it difficult for the teacher to conduct her lesson in a proper manner. The walls of the class did not send the message that it was a classroom. The reason provided was due to subject teaching in the intermediate phase, it was not easy for the subject teacher to display his or her teaching resources such as charts, as they must go around to other classes. The fact that the Grade 4 learners remain in their classes and teachers are rotating between the classes, results in the teachers not taking "ownership" of that class, hence the poor condition of the class.

At some stage, three learners were sharing one table and they were pressed and squeezed against each other, reporting continuously to the teacher that so and so was causing a disturbance. When given a class assignment to write, they manage the space by folding their books so that three of them can have space to write. One learner moved to sit on the floor next to the chalkboard due to poor print on the chalkboard. Add to this a dilapidated floor with cracks, old furniture and desks and steel doors that are heavy and noisy. Because the school has been vandalized by continuous break-ins, the School Governing Body (SGB) resorted to steel doors. The condition is very distressing. The teachers' table was full of papers and books and no proper cupboard was installed in the classroom.

The Grade 3 class, despite the large number of learners, was spacious and the teacher utilized the resources such as charts and displayed them over the walls. The print is rich, and the teacher confirmed that because she spent most of her time in the classroom with the same learners, it was easy for her to make her classroom environment conducive to learning. However, she mentioned the challenge that the learners were too many to make her teaching easy.

The principals are not assisting in the management of overcrowding as they are the ones who are managing the admission of learners into a school. Teachers are just provided with the class list of learners with a big number to manage. This contributes to poor management of language transition as the teachers mentioned that they were unable to reach out to all the learners because of this challenge of overcrowding.

5.3.2 Language challenges

Language posed a challenge in both urban and township schools. As highlighted in Chapter 3, the township school in the foundation phase is divided into three African languages, isiXhosa, isiZulu, and Sesotho classes, with English as English Second Language. When moving to Grade 4 the LoLT becomes English. In the urban school, the LoLT is English as a home language, with Afrikaans (FAL).

The data collected shows that all the teachers in both schools were bilingual. In the township there is very little exposure to English. The teachers communicate in various African languages amongst themselves; in the staffroom, they communicate according to the first language chosen. During the interviews, they responded in the languages that they felt comfortable in and I translated into English when taking notes. The surrounding community around the township uses all the South African languages, so such learners are exposed to a very limited exposure of English.

This took me back to the Grade 4 lesson that I observed in a township school where teachers were either code switching or translating for learners to understand what has been said. Kasule and Mapolelo (2005, p. 603), indicated that code switching and translating are strategies that teachers use as transitioning strategies regarding the medium of instruction in teaching Mathematics in the primary schools. This strategy was introduced in Burundi and it was found to be so successful that it was proposed that it should be used for both the spoken and the written word (Nthulana, 2016, p. 79).

All the teachers from both schools agreed that learners had less exposure to English. Learners in the township school are only exposed to English in class. Amongst themselves, they communicate in different South African languages; when they go home there is no English exposure at all. Learners in an urban school, even though English is a home language in their school, also communicate in different African languages. English is only spoken in class during teaching and learning. Teachers are also expressing themselves in their different home languages. The class activity I requested (Chapter 4, Table 3) proves that some learners are interpreting and spelling English words the way they sound them, '*fire-faya*'.

5.3.3 Sociocultural environment of the learners

The sociocultural environment of the learners is playing a role in the learners' academic performance. My study did not involve the parents and the community, but the few answers that I got from some of the teachers about the parents, showed me that there was no or little parental involvement concerning language transition. There were quite concerning sociocultural statements that were raised by the teachers during the interviews and focus group discussions, for example, when Vusi mentioned the environmental surroundings of their learners where people in the area speak isiZulu, isiXhosa, Sepedi, Sesotho, Tsonga etc.

Bronfenbrenner observed human growth as a "product of interaction between the growing human organism and its environment" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 16). His ecological systems theory is grounded on the idea that a person's growth occurs within a complex system of relationships which are also affected by different levels of their social and cultural setting.

The problem of the environment was also highlighted in the group discussion by Mandla such as:

> Our school is Africa, even when one tries to code switch, it does not help because our learners are speaking different home languages. Due to many immigrants in our area, we have languages such as Swahili, French, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sesotho, Sepedi, few English and Afrikaans. It is a challenge because when these kids go home, they switch to their different home languages. English is a challenge to parents too because some of them cannot speak nor read in English at all. When we call them

to address their children progress, the kids are the ones who translate for them because they can hardly hear a word in English (Mandla).

During the interviews in the township the school teacher "Vusi" said:

> The environmental surrounding of our learners, for an example our townships is a multicultural African languages area. People around this area speak isiZulu, isiXhosa, Tsonga, Sesotho and so on. As such learners are socially communicating in all these languages, when they come to class, the LoLT is English, and however they are also not communicating in English amongst themselves during learning (Vusi).

This confirms that most learners, both in townships and urban schools, are only exposed to English in the classroom during teaching and learning. Parental involvement is very little. Both schools only involve parents once per term to view their children's books and discuss their children's progress individually. The challenge of learners' language transition from Grade 3 into Grade 4 is not discussed with the parents. Despite parents' little involvement in the transition of the learners, when there is sufficient contact and communication between the teachers and the parents, there is also less difference in the learners' competencies (Griebel & Niesel, 2002).

5.4   Theme: Limited learner participation (engagement)

From the classroom observations that I made, the teachers were involving the learners, although in Grade 4 there was more voice of the teacher than of the learners. The teacher involved the learners but as she was asking them questions about the previous lesson, only a few hands were up, and she chose one learner, who instead of giving the relevant answer to the question, raised a concern that another learner was disturbing him. Half of the teaching time was wasted as learners were playful. The teacher kept calling them to order while she was trying to teach. According to one of Mudzielwana's (2012) findings, the teachers spent more time in asking questions than in teaching reading comprehension. Teachers should provide ample time for teaching reading comprehension with all the various facets, since comprehension cannot just happen, it should be taught (Ehri, & Sweet, 1991; NRP, 2000; Oczkus, 2004). There is no opportunity to learn and use the language to which they are transitioning.

From my point of view, it was not a disturbance per se, the learners were three to one table and were very uncomfortable as they kept on moving and fidgeting to show the

frustrations of being uncomfortable. The learning space was the issue. The class was packed with many tables and chairs to accommodate a huge number of the learners. The challenge regarding transition from Grade 3 to Grade 4 is not English per se, but rather a deficient home language foundation and the standard of teaching offered (Steyn, 2017).

5.5 Parental involvement

There is proof of parental involvement in both schools that I visited, however the parents are only involved when invited to come quarterly to view their children's books, as well as attending annual general meetings to discuss the school's progress and budget analysis. The study on transition is not only limited to the children's knowledge, but includes parents' opinions on transition as they act as a support, or what Vygotsky refers to as "scaffolding," to children as they move from one phase of learning to the other (Phatudi, 2007). The transition is not a once off event, it starts long before the child starts schooling. The schools should look into orientation programmes to orientate learners from Grade 3 into Grade 4, what it is that they will experience, such as making them aware that the workload in foundation phase is not the same as in intermediate phase.

Such programmes should start as early as when the child starts preschool to promote the eventual entrance of a child into a primary school. Glaizer (2001) noted that transition programmes should operate over a longer time, i.e. they may operate over a term, or even throughout the first year for them to be effective.

5.6 Recommendations

5.6.1 Overcrowding

Given the challenges of overcrowding that were identified during the study, I would like to recommend that the Department of Education re-look into the issues of no fee and fee-paying schools. There should be one system for all schools in terms of fee paying. Parents are choosing schools with less fees or schools that are not paying school fees. This affected the number of learners registering in a school. The teacher-learner ratio should be monitored. If the ratio is 1:40, principals should be advised to implement it as it is because it is affecting the performance of both teachers and learners.

Teachers are unable to monitor learners' work as they are unable to move around the class to monitor class activities and manage discipline in the class. The teachers are tied to one corner of the classroom while a learner is not concentrating on the other side of the classroom. She can hardly walk towards the learners to monitor them, instead, she will keep on telling the learners "*shhhhh, stop it, you are disrupting*", but the learners are not changing the behaviour as they are aware she is unable to walk around due to a packed classroom. The principals need to monitor the numbers of the learners they admit in a school, should the numbers exceed the suggested ratio, excess learners should be referred to other neighbouring schools. The Department of Education should assist by monitoring head count. This could reduce the workload of the teachers and may lead to the production of good performance and results. The root cause is that principals are contributing to this challenge because the department provides each and every school with the relevant document with a specific ratio for that particular school every year, but they ignore it.

5.6.2 Teaching resources

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS), provides guidance on what resources teachers can use when they teach. It states that each learner must have his/her own textbook and teachers should guarantee that a system is in place for retrieving textbooks at the end of each year. Due to the responses that I received from some of the teachers, it seemed to me they had no knowledge as to what CAPS was all about. I recommend that the Department of Education should arrange CAPS training for newly appointed teachers. The SMT of the school should ensure that each teacher has a copy of a CAPS document of the subject they teach and encourage them to use and read it regularly. The LTSM allocation of funds that is provided by the department should be used fruitfully according to the needs of learners. Necessary resources should be procured and utilized by every subject teacher, especially in the intermediate phase.

Subject teachers should encourage reading during their periods as it will help in the language development of the learners, especially in Grade 4. It should not be left to the English teachers. They should encourage the spirit of teaching English across the curriculum that was rolled out by the Department of Education. McLaughlin and Allen (2002) and Learning First Alliance (1998) emphasise that teachers must not only teach

learners to understand text on a literal level, but also on an interpretive and evaluative level.

It is also stated in the CAPS document (DBE, 2011, p.12) that the ability to read well is central to successful learning across the curriculum. It further states that learners are expected to read and write different types of texts (including instructions, reports and explanations) during lessons. Mudzielwana, (2012) also discovered that reading comprehension was taught haphazardly and with little time allocated for this activity.

In the intermediate phase in some schools, the learners sit in one class for the whole day while the teachers walk to them. As such, the utilisation of teaching resources such as charts are compromised. Teachers claim it is not easy to display the teaching resources as they visit different classes. Schools believe it is time consuming when learners move from one class to another. I recommend that the School Management Teams (SMTs) meet and discuss how they could fit the rotation time into their daily subject time tables. By so doing so they will enable subject teachers to design the subject class according to the needs of that subject. For an example, a Mathematics class will be displayed with mathematics charts and resources, learners learn easier when they see rather than only listen.

5.7   Consclusion

There is a very serious need for quality management of learners' language transition in the intermediate phase, specifically Grade 4. This language transition cannot be treated alone without serious consideration of learners reading and writing skills. This should be given more priority in the Foundation Phase. However, the Intermediate Phase teachers, irrespective of subject teaching, should involve reading in their lesson planning. This study aimed at investigating how teachers managed learners' language transition into Grade 4. I understand that it is a case study and as such it is difficult to draw generalised conclusions, however, I discovered during the interviews that teachers do not consider the word 'transition' in their teaching and according to them there is no communication between the Grade 3 and Grade 4 teachers, which hinders the transition process. It seemed as if it is done haphazardly on individual levels, communicating only about the learners who are progressed and need support in the next class or phase.

From the responses that I received from interviews and group discussions, I realised that some teachers were not aware of the contents of the CAPS document. When they were asked if it addressed the issue of language transition into Grade 4, most of them responded with a "No". It is stated in DBE (2011) that: "in South Africa many children start using their additional language, English, as the language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in Grade 4. This means that they must reach a high level of competence in English by the end of Grade 3, and they need to be able to read and write well in English" (DBE, 2011, p. 8). This statement on its own addresses the issue of language transition from Grade 3 into Grade 4, even though the word transition is not mentioned.

As one of the limitations of my study, it was mentioned by one of the interviewees that he was available for the interview but not the class observation as they were leaving for a SADTU salary negations meeting. It drew my attention that those meetings were scheduled during the week during teaching hours. This disrupts teaching and the rights of learners to be taught. Could it not be done after school hours or on Saturdays when learners were home?

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6   CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1   Significance and recommendations for further studies

This study investigated how South African teachers manage language transition from Grade 3 into Grade 4 in selected township and urban schools in Gauteng Province. The educational issue was the teachers' lack of management skills applied to learners' language transition into English as the Language of Learning and Teaching. This transition is not taken into consideration. Teachers are generalising the fact that the learners are struggling to read, write and are being progressed to the next Grade with the same problem. In a nutshell, transition is not properly managed. Teachers attend workshops that do not specifically train them on how to manage the transition of language from Grade 3 into Grade 4; workshops only cover how to teach a specific topic for the specific term. They also play a role in the lack of language proficiency of the learners because they themselves are not proficient enough in English. The progression of learners into Grade 4 without proper orientation contributes towards the challenges both teachers and learners are experiencing.

Learners' lack of exposure to English does not occur only at home, but also at school. This is a problem because the GDE has no systems in place to monitor the teachers' and the schools' strategies to facilitate the management of language transition, hence the teachers and the schools are obliged to find their own way to minimise the challenges. Currently there is no communication between the Grade 3 and 4 teachers on how to attend to the language problem the learners are facing.

Based on the limitations of the study the findings and the significance of the study may not be generalised. I would like to recommend the following for further studies:

a) More research on the impact of poor language transition management by the teachers.

b) Continuous development of teachers regarding South African language policy.

c) How to empower foundation and intermediate phase teachers to work together to facilitate language transition.

d) How to involve the parents to take part in the management of language transition.

e) How to make parents aware of the challenges the schools are facing with the transition of learners into Grade 4.

f) Strategies on how parents can be involved in the management of learners' language transition into Grade 4.

g) Raising parental awareness on what transition is and the impact it has on the academic performance of their children.

6.2   The interview questions:

1. What strategies and resources do you use to facilitate the transition into English as the LoLT?

2. How do you ensure that learners understand the topic/lesson presented in English as the LoLT?

3. How do Grade 3 teachers and Grade 4 teachers work together to facilitate this language transition?

4. What are the main factors influencing the language problems/challenges faced by learners?

5. Describe the attitude of learners towards English as the LoLT?

6. What techniques do you use to keep learners interested in English?

7. How do these techniques contribute towards learners' language transition?

8. What is your attitude towards English as the LoLT in Grade 4?

9. Is there any communication between the Grade 3 and Grade 4 teachers concerning language transition? Please elaborate?

10. What challenges do teachers face during learners' transition into English as the language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT)?

11. What support or intervention programmes do your school have to manage the language transition in Grade 4 and beyond?

12. How do you assess your learners' English proficiency?

13. What support do you get from the Department of Education to ensure smooth management of language transition of learners from Grade 3 into Grade 4?

14. Do you think the Curriculum Assessment Policy Standards (CAPS) address the issue of language transition into Grade 4? Why?

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8   ANNEXURES

Annexure A: Letter to the District Manager of request for permission to conduct research

Annexure B: Letter to the Principals of request for permission to conduct research

Annexure C: Letter to the Teachers of request for permission to conduct research

Annexure D: Letter to the Parents of request for permission to conduct research

Annexure E: Principal's Consent form

Annexure F: Teacher's Consent form

Annexure G: Learner's Consent form

Annexure H: Interview protocol

Annexure I: Observation protocol

ANNEXURE A: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT REAECH IN SCHOOLS

69 Galteemore East Street

Malvern

Johannesburg

2094

The District Manager

Department of Education

Private Bag X9910

Sandton

2146

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN YOUR SCHOOLS AT THE JOHANNESBURG EAST DISTRICT

I humbly request a permission to conduct research for my MEd (Masters) degree in the above-mentioned district.

I am a register student of the University of Pretoria. I will be very grateful should you allow me to use your schools as my research site for the research report that I am expected by the University to write.

The topic of my research study is Learners' language transition from Grade 3 into Grade 4.

Should you grant me the permission to conduct my research at your two schools, one in the township area, and one in the urban area, I will also ask the school principals for permission to go into schools and conduct this research. Furthermore teachers that I will be working with, will be interviewed.

I will conduct classroom observation in Grade 4 for about four days per class shall be conducted. After each lesson observation, some discussions will be held with the teacher's concerned. The interviews and discussions shall be tape recorded for transcription thereafter. I will ensure the anonymity of the school and the teachers concerned.

I hope that this request will be granted. Should there be any further concerns and queries about the request, please contact me on 082 3415972.

Thanking you in anticipation

Yours faithfully

Catherine Mmamotidi Maodi

ANNEXURE B: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS

69 Galteemore East Street

Malvern

Johannesburg

2094

Dear school Principals

I am registered for a MEd with the University of Pretoria.

To qualify for my Master Degree in Education, I am required to write a research report that specifically looks at the teachers' management of learners' language transition from Grade 3 into Grade 4.

In this study, I am required to answer the following main research question: How do SA teachers manage learners' language transition from Grade 3 into Grade 4?

During the study the following method will be used:

1. Classroom observation will be conducted for about one week
2. One on one interviews will be conducted for about 30 minutes to 1 hour
3. Focus group interview with the teachers for 30 minutes to 1 hour
4. I will humbly request for their voice recording for transcribing
5. Their identity and that of your school will be highly anonymous for your/their/schools' safety

I request that you allow me to conduct one on one interviews, classroom observations and focus group discussion in your school with the selected Grade 3 ad Grade 4 teachers.

Your permission will be highly appreciated.

 Thanking you in anticipation

Yours faithfully

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ANNEXURE C: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

69 Galteemore East Street

Malvern

Johannesburg

2094

Dear Grade 4 teachers

I am registered for a MEd with the University of Pretoria.

To qualify for my Master Degree in Education, I am required to write a research report that specifically looks at the teachers' management of learners' language transition from Grade 3 into Grade 4.

In this study, I am required to answer the following main research question: How do SA teachers manage learners' language transition from Grade 3 into Grade 4?

During the study the following method will be used:

1. Classroom observation will be conducted for about one week
2. One on one interviews will be conducted for about 30 minutes to 1 hour
3. Focus group interview with the teachers for 30 minutes to 1 hour
4. I will humbly request for voice recording for transcribing
5. Your identity will be highly anonymous for your safety

I request that you allow me to conduct one on one interviews, classroom observations and focus group discussion.

Your participation will be highly appreciated.
Thanking you in anticipation

Yours faithfully

…………………………………

Catherine Mmamotidi Maodi
Tel: 082 3415972

ANNEXURE D: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

69 Galteemore East Street

Malvern

Johannesburg

2094

Dear parent/guardian/caregiver

I am registered for a MEd with the University of Pretoria.

To qualify for my Master Degree in Education, I am required to write a research report that specifically looks at the teachers' management of learners' language transition from Grade 3 into Grade 4.

In this study, I am required to answer the following main research question:

How do SA teachers manage learners' language transition from Grade 3 into Grade 4?

During the study the following method will be used:

1. Classroom observation will be conducted for about one week
2. One on one interviews will be conducted for about 30 minutes to 1 hour
3. Focus group interview with the teachers for 30 minutes to 1 hour
4. I will humbly request for voice recording for transcribing
5. Your child's identity will be highly anonymous for their safety

   I request that you allow your child to be part of the class that will be observed during teaching time at their school.

   Your permission will be highly appreciated.
   Thanking you in anticipation

   Yours faithfully

   …………………………………

   Catherine Mmamotidi Maodi
   Tel: 082 3415972

ANNEXURE E: PRINCIPAL CONSENT

Dear Principal,

I am a student studying through the University of Pretoria. I am currently enrolled for M.Ed (Masters) in the Faculty of Education. I have to complete a research module and one of the requirements is that I conduct research and write a research report about my work. I would like to ask you whether you will be willing to allow me to conduct a part of this research in your school.

The topic of my research is: **Management of learners' language transition from Grade 3 into Grade 4.** The Grade 3s experience language problems when they transition into Grade 4. In foundation phase in township schools, the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) is African languages. When they move to Grade 4 the LoLT changes to English. In urban schools, bi- or multi-lingual learners attend school in the language that is not their home language. There is limited English proficiency for Black South African learners in urban schools.

The purpose of this study is to find out how the South African teachers manage learners' language transition from Grade 3 into Grade 4 in selected schools around Gauteng Province in Johannesburg district. While much literature exist on learners' language transition, not much literature cover how teachers manage this transition. I hope to find out how the South African teachers manage learners' language transition from Grade 3 into Grade 4. The research will include an analysis of Grade 4 teachers' management of this transition by means of interviews and class observation. Grade 3 teachers too will be interviewed to find out if they contribute towards the management of this transition.

If you agree to allow me to conduct research in your school, I will interview three Grade 3 and three Grade 4 teachers. I attached a copy of the interview schedule for your information. Interviews will be conducted at your school after teaching hours for 30 minutes to 1 hour. It will be audio taped and transcribed by me for analytic purposes. Only my supervisor and I will have access to this information. I will also like to have a focus group discussion with both Grade 3 and Grade 4 teachers for one to two hours in your school. The discussion will only focus on the research topic and nothing else. This will take part after the interview process and will not affect teachng time. The discussion will be audio taped. .

ANNEXURE F: TEACHER CONSENT

Dear teacher,

I am a student studying through the University of Pretoria. I am currently enrolled for M.Ed (Masters) in the Faculty of Education. I have to complete a research module and one of the requirements is that I conduct research and write a research report about my work. I would like to ask you whether you will be willing to participate in this research.

The topic of my research is: **Management of learners' language transition from Grade 3 into Grade 4.** The Grade 3s experience language problems when they transition into Grade 4. In foundation phase in township schools, the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) is African languages. When they move to Grade 4 the LoLT changes to English. In urban schools, bi- or multi-lingual learners attend school in the language that is not their home language. There is limited English proficiency for Black South African learners in urban schools.

The purpose of this study is to find out how the South African teachers manage learners' language transition from Grade 3 into Grade 4 in selected schools around Gauteng Province in Johannesburg district. While much literature exist on learners' language transition, not much literature cover how teachers manage this transition. I hope to find out how the South African teachers manage learners' language transition from Grade 3 into Grade 4. The research will include an analysis of Grade 4 teachers' management of this transition by means of interviews and class observation. Grade 3 teachers too will be interviewed to find out if they contribute towards the management of this transition.

If you agree to participate, you will be interviewed about this topic. The interview will take place at your school after teaching hours, there will also be classroom observation that will be conducted to observe how you interact with your learners in English as the LoLT. The interview will take 30 minutes to one hour. The observation will be during teaching hours as

ANNEXURE G: LEARNER CONSENT

69 Galteemore East Street

Malvern

Johannesburg

2094

Dear learner

My name is Mrs MC Maodi, I am registered for a MEd with the University of Pretoria. I would like you to be part of the class that I will observe during my research project at your school. You are not expected to answer any questions about the project.

If you agree, please fill in the information below:

Name of learner --

Date of birth   --

Name of school --

Grade   --

Home language ---

Boy/Girl   --

OR

I do not agree to take part in the project

Name -- Date ----------------------------

Thank you for reading my letter

Yours faithfully

Catherine Mmamotidi Maodi

The teacher interview protocol

Management of learners' language transition from Grade 3 into Grade 4

Time of interview: 14:30   Duration: 30 minutes to 1 hour
Date: _____
Place: Selected township/urban school
Interviewer: Catherine Mmamotidi Maodi
Interviewee: _____ Pseudonym: Teacher Dipuo/Boitshepo
Male / Female: _____

The Grade 3s experience language problems when they transition into Grade 4. In foundation phase in township schools, the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) is African languages. When they move to Grade 4 the LoLT changes to English. In urban schools, bi- or multi-lingual learners attend school in the language that is not their home language. There is limited English proficiency for Black South African learners in urban schools. Teachers' lack of English exposure is also a challenge. The purpose of this study is to find out how the South African teachers manage learners' language transition from Grade 3 into Grade 4 in selected schools around Gauteng Province in Johannesburg district.

<u>Questions:</u>

1. What strategies and resources do you use to fascilitate the transition into English as the LoLT)
2. How do you ensure that learners understand the topic/lesson presented in English as the LoLT?
3. How do Grade 3 teachers and Grade 4 teachers work together to fascilitate this language transition?
4. What are the main factors influencing the language problems/challenges faced by learners?
5. Describe the attitude of learners towards English as the LoLT?
6. What techniques do you use to keep learners interested towards English?
7. How do these techniques contribute towards learners language transition?
8. What is your attitude towards English as the LoLT in Grade 4?
9. Is there any communication between the Grade 3 and Grade 4 teachers concerning language transition? Please elaborate?
10. What challenges do teachers face during learners' transition into English as the language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT)?
11. What support or intervention programmes does your school have to manage the language transition in Grade 4 and beyond?
12. How do you assess your learners' English proficiency?
13. What support do you get from the Department of Education to ensure smooth management of language transition of learners from Grade 3 into Grade 4?
14. Do you think the Curriculum Assement Policy Standards (CAPS) addresses the issue of language transition into Grade 4? Why?

Observational protocol
Topic of study: Management of learners' language transition from Grade 3 into Grade 4
Classroom number: _____ Pseudonym: Teacher Dipuo/Boitshepo
Name of observer: Mmamotidi Catherine Maodi
Role of observer: _____
Time of observation: _____
Length of observation: _____
The Grade 3s experience language challenges when they transition into Grade 4. The purpose of this study is to find out how the South African teachers manage learners' language transition from Grade 3 into Grade 4. Pseudonyms will be utilized in the observations, data analysis and the findings. The data collected in this study will serve in research purposes only and treated as confidential. Access to the data will be granted to the researcher and the supervisor only. Please sign the consent form at the back of this document. Thank you for your participation.

Descriptive fieldnotes	Reflexive fieldnotes
Classroom checklist: ☐ Lesson introduction and presentation in English ☐ Teacher and learners interaction in English as LoLT	
Participants	
Class lesson	
Strategies Learners' language assessment: Misconceptions:	
Activities	