

**THE INFLUENCE OF TEACHER PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES ON  
LEARNER TRANSITIONS IN ENGLISH MEDIUM CLASSROOMS  
FROM GRADES 3-4**

**by**

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UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE  
BLOEMFONTEIN**

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**2019**

## **DECLARATION**

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## DEDICATION

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*This work is dedicated firstly to my husband, Doctor Patrick Tendayi, who has been my pillar of strength. Words cannot amply express how I feel about the kind of support that you gave me. Thank you for encouraging me not to quit even though I was about to. Thank you for your remarkable love and confidence in my abilities. I will forever be grateful to you for being my motivating force, being so understanding and patient, without which I would not have managed completing this thesis.*

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

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<b>ACE</b>	<b>Advanced Certificate in Education</b>
<b>BEd</b>	<b>Bachelor of Education</b>
<b>CAPS</b>	<b>National Curriculum Policy Statement</b>
<b>C2005</b>	<b>Curriculum 2005</b>
<b>DBE</b>	<b>Department of Basic Education</b>
<b>DET</b>	<b>Department of Education and Training</b>
<b>DoE</b>	<b>Department of Education</b>
<b>ESL</b>	<b>English as a Second Language</b>
<b>FAL</b>	<b>First Additional Language</b>
<b>FP</b>	<b>Foundation Phase</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>Framing</b>
<b>HDE</b>	<b>Higher Education Diploma</b>
<b>HL</b>	<b>Home language</b>
<b>HOD</b>	<b>Head of Department</b>
<b>MKO</b>	<b>More Knowledgeable Other</b>
<b>MTI</b>	<b>Mother-tongue Instruction</b>
<b>NEEDU</b>	<b>The National Education Evaluation and Development Unit</b>
<b>NSES</b>	<b>The National School Effectiveness Study</b>
<b>LOLT</b>	<b>Language of Learning and Teaching</b>
<b>L1</b>	<b>First Language</b>
<b>L2</b>	<b>Second Language</b>
<b>LAD</b>	<b>Language Acquisition Device</b>
<b>OBE</b>	<b>Outcomes-based Education</b>
<b>ORF</b>	<b>Official Recontextualising Field</b>
<b>PRF</b>	<b>Pedagogic Recontextualising Field</b>
<b>RD</b>	<b>Regulative Discourse</b>
<b>RNCS</b>	<b>Revised National Curriculum Statements</b>
<b>SACMEQ</b>	<b>Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality</b>
<b>TIMSS</b>	<b>Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study</b>
<b>SASA</b>	<b>South African Schools Act</b>
<b>SGB</b>	<b>School Governing Body</b>
<b>SLA</b>	<b>Second Language Learning</b>
<b>SCT</b>	<b>Sociocultural Theory</b>
<b>ZPD</b>	<b>Zone of Proximal Development</b>

## SELECTED DEFINITIONS AND TERMS

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**ANA:** The Annual National Assessments, which were implemented in 2011, and they assess learners' knowledge in Mathematics and Literacy.

**African language:** In the context of this report, the term refers to South Africa's nine official languages: isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, SiSwati, Tshivenda and Xitsonga.

**Bilingualism:** Refers to the ability to communicate effectively in two languages, with more or less the same degree of proficiency in both languages.

**Bio-ecological theory:** Rationalisation interprets knowledge acquired by individuals as a derivative of their environments (Bronfenbrenner 1979:22).

**CAPS:** Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements. It is a revision of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and serves as an in-depth guide for teachers to plan their time and structure lessons including providing details of what content they are expected to cover each term. The CAPS programme also prescribes which textbooks, workbooks and other sources should be used. It explains what every subject per grade should teach and assess (DBE 2011:3-11).

**Classification:** This refers to the nature of the differentiation between contents. Where classification is strong, contents are well insulated from each other by strong boundaries. Where classification is weak, there is reduced insulation between contents, for the boundaries between contents are weak or blurred (Bernstein 1975:176).

**Dual medium of instruction:** Refers to the use of two media (languages) of instruction by a teacher in a lesson, switching from one medium (language) to the other, on a 50:50 basis (DBE 2010:3).

**Single medium of instruction:** Refers to the use of one media (language) of instruction by a teacher in a lesson (DBE 2010:3).

**First Additional Language (FAL):** Refers to a compulsory language subject (in addition to the Home Language) that learners must study at that level (DBE 2010:3).



**Framing:** Framing is related to the transmission of knowledge through pedagogic practices refers to the degree of control educator and learners possess over the selection, organisation, pacing and timing of the knowledge transmitted, as well as relations between educator and learner (Bernstein 1990:100).

**Grade 4-slump:** This is a phenomenon where there is a general drop in academic performance, which occurs when learners move from Grade 3 to Grade 4 because of the psychosocial factors related to academic, curricular and structural differences between the foundation and intermediate phases (Matavire 2016:20).

**Hierarchy:** Hierarchical rules may be explicit or implicit (Bernstein 2003:202). The rules of hierarchy define the interactional relationship between a teacher and a student leading to order and good manners of the students, which were established by the teacher.

**Home language:** Refers to the language that is spoken most frequently at home by a learner (DBE 2010:3).

**Invisible pedagogy** is (at least initially) invisible to the acquirer, essentially because the acquirer appears to fill the pedagogic space rather than the transmitter. Invisible pedagogy implies that the discursive rules (the rules of order of instruction) are known only to the transmitter, that the control of the teacher over the learner is implicit rather explicit (Bernstein 1975:116).

**Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT):** Refers to the language medium in which learning and teaching, including assessment, take place (DBE 2010:16).

**Language** is commonly described as how a person learns to organise experiences and thoughts. It stands at the center of the many inter-dependent cognitive, affective, and social factors that shape learning (Thomas & Collier 2001:112).

**Language learning areas:** Refers to any of the 11 official languages, other languages approved by the Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB), Braille and South African Sign Language, approved by UMALUSI (DBE 2010:3).

**Language level:** Refers to the level of proficiency at which language learning areas are offered at school such as home language, first additional language, and second additional language (DBE 2010:3).

**Language proficiency:** Refers to the level of competence at which an individual can use a language for both basic communication tasks and academic purposes.

**Learner:** refers to a learner who attends school.

**Mother-tongue:** Refers to the language used constantly from birth to interact and communicate with a learner by their care-givers, family, friends, and community; hence it becomes his/her natural instrument of thought and communication (DBE 2010:3).

**Multilingualism:** Refers to the ability to speak more than two languages or to be proficient in many languages (DBE 2010:3).

**Pacing** refers to the expected rate of acquisition; that is, the rate at which learning is expected to occur (Bernstein 1990:66).

**Pedagogy** is a sustained process whereby a person acquires new forms or develops existing forms of conduct, knowledge, practice and criteria, from somebody or something deemed to be an appropriate provider and evaluator (Bernstein 2005:66).

**Pedagogic discourse** is produced through three main fields, which are hierarchically related. The fields of production, recontextualisation and reproduction. Pedagogic discourse is a standard for appropriating other discourses and bringing them into a special relation with each other for the determination of their selective transmission and acquisition (Bernstein 1990:183-4).

**Parallel medium instruction:** Refers to the use of multi languages as the LOLT that takes place in separate classes in the same grade (DBE 2010:3).

**Parallel medium school:** Refers to a school that practises parallel medium instruction in all Grades (DBE 2010:3).

**A pedagogic practice:** A pedagogic practice intermediates between the field of potential pedagogic meanings and what emerges as pedagogic communication. The pedagogic device structures pedagogic communication (Bernstein 1990:183-4).

**Preferred language of instruction:** Refers to the (preferred) language of instruction indicated by a learner at the time of registration (DBE 2010:3).

**Single medium of instruction:** Refers to the use of one medium (language) or one LOLT by a teacher in a class (DBE 2010:3).

**Single medium school:** Refers to a school that uses one medium of instruction (language) for all learners in all grades (DBE 2010:3).

**Transition** is referred to as a key process that occurs during a specific period; it can be regarded as a change in status (Vogler, Criello & Woodhead 2008:4).

**Second additional language:** A non-compulsory language subject that may be studied (by choice) by learners at that level (DBE 2010:3).

**The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)** is an international comparative study of young learners' reading literacy. The pre-PIRLS test is considerably easier than the PIRLS test, with roughly 400 words per text rather than the PIRLS 800 words per text (Spaull 2016:2-6).

**Visible pedagogies** are transmissions that are regulated by explicit hierarchy and explicit criteria. Visible pedagogies place the emphasis on the performance of the learner, the text the learner is creating, and the extent to which that text is meeting the set criteria (Bernstein 1975:116).

## ABSTRACT

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Decades of research investigations have linked a drop in the levels of academic performance to the transition from Foundation Phase to Intermediate Phase (Grades 3-4). The aim of this study is to investigate what precisely affects learners during the period of transition, and to establish whether the move from Grade 3-4 creates learning challenges. Understanding that these challenges do not only stem from a lack of basic coping skills, the current study examines South African schools focusing on the teachers' pedagogical practices concerning English as LOLT from Foundation Phase to Intermediate Phase (Grades 3-4). This has led to the discovery of a certain type of comparative pedagogy between Grade 3 and 4 teachers.

This study explored the influence of teacher pedagogical practices between Grade 3 and 4 learners regarding the relationship between transition and linguistic challenges at the commencement of Grade 4. The study is foregrounded in theoretical frameworks and methods that are derived from the British sociolinguist, Basil Bernstein (1924-2000) complemented by Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory. Both theories contain a sociological message. From Bernstein's models of pedagogic discourse, the theories of classification and framing are highlighted as encompassing the genres of visible and invisible pedagogies.

This study used qualitative data collection methods drawn from the interpretivist paradigm. Firstly, the researcher distributed questionnaires to gather teachers' biographical data. Secondly, the study observed lessons of ten Grade 3 teachers and ten Grade 4 teachers. Lesson-observation assisted in comparing and evaluating Grade 3 learners and Grade 4 learners concerning English LOLT pedagogical approaches in different subjects. Thirdly, interviews with ten Grade 3 teachers and ten Grade 4 teachers were carried out. In addition, data was triangulated to see whether observed evidence and questionnaire data corroborated.

The findings of the study indicated a different pedagogical approach between Grade 3 and Grade 4 whereby Grade 3 teachers' positional relationship was more personal, thus weakly framed. In addition, the teachers were very interactive and gave co-extension in lessons. Grade 4 teachers had a more distant relationship in their lessons using a one-size-fits-all pedagogic approach. The Grade 4 teachers did not satisfactorily respond to the diversity of children's learning characteristics; instead, they expected the learners to fit

automatically into their Grade 4 contexts. In many ways, it is not the transition itself that can cause social discomfort and stress, but the factors in the environment. The study concludes that transitioning (which is a process, not an event) challenges, result from distributional injustice in learning since learning is a language-based semiotic activity that is influenced by structure through power and control. This study indicates that it's not only learners who are engaged in the transitioning process in Grade 4, but the teachers also as they are faced with challenges in adapting their approach to suit the environment to be able to create cohesion between their strategies and learner-needs.

**Keywords: Transition, pedagogy, pedagogic discourse, visible pedagogy, invisible pedagogy, pacing, framing, classification**

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

---

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

In South African Primary schools, many learners encounter problems once they reach Grade 4. It seems that when learners start Grade R as part of the Foundation Phase, they tend to perform better up to Grade 3. As they transition to Grade 4 (Intermediate Phase), learners are confronted with academic challenges. These academic challenges become persistent and the situation of poor performance becomes worse as time passes. This can be attributed to the fact that learners use English as the Language of Teaching and Learning (LOLT), yet only a small percentage of learners and teachers speak English as their home language (HL).

One may ask why such a situation has arisen in Grade 4. In South Africa, research by Matavire (2016:33), Sibanda (2015:14), Pretorius (2014:55) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study [PIRLS] (2016:23) assert that Grade 4 problems are more prominent in that the Grade 3 and Grade 4 physical and literacy contexts are largely different. Furthermore, it is reported that there are notable difficulties concerning what content and what knowledge is valued. The differences between the two Grades also occur in the way the activities are undertaken, the relationship between the learners and the teachers, the sudden introduction of subject teachers who come in as traditional figures of authority versus Grade 3 teachers whose authority was informal and implicit. Thus, all these variables result in learners' loss of autonomy. Research from the international arena, clearly highlights statistically and theoretically that transitioning challenges are more prominent in Grade 4 since it is the first time the learners change from learning to read, to reading to learn. Although every grade-transitioning may have challenges, but Grade 4 proves to be the most challenging Phase (Bellmore 2011:382; Brewin & Statham, 2011:365; Sanacore & Palumbo 2009:66).

Before discussing the Grade 4 challenges, it is essential to discuss the education system of South Africa to set the foundation concerning these challenges. Many studies, both nationally and internationally on South Africa's quality of education indicate that the system is riddled with problems; hence, the education system is regarded as dysfunctional Nkosi (in BBC news 29 January 2016:1); Masondo in (City Press: 31 May 2016:1); Spaul

2013:15). The education system ranks lowest on the international scene and national findings and learner-performance have demonstrated challenges regarding learning and teaching gaps which have resulted in low achievement levels.

Statistical findings from national and international assessments, like the Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring and Evaluating Quality (SACMEQ, 2013:45), Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS, 2016, Progress in International Reading and Literacy Study (PIRLS, 2017), Annual National assessment (ANA 2011-2014) and the National Development Evaluation Unit (NEEDU 2013:33), all indicate poor education quality and serious educational challenges for the learners.

This chapter presents the background to how teachers' pedagogical practices influence learner transitions in South Africa's Primary Schools. This study considers teachers' pedagogical practices as being at the heart of learner transition, where English is used as the Language of Learning and Teaching. The researcher was interested in the kind of pedagogical practices that teachers used to advance the academic and social achievement of learners in Grade 3 and Grade 4 classes. To begin with, the study gives an overview of studies that have been conducted on learner transition and teacher's pedagogical practices both globally and within the South African context. The outline provided not only offers the background but also highlights and motivates the rationale as well as the objectives, research questions, theoretical framework, the problem statement and the methodology that guide this study.

To make sense of the data, the theoretical framework of Bernstein (2000:133) on classification and framing and supporting framework of Bronfenbrenner's (1979:6) ecological perspective are discussed. Having been intrinsically driven by years of teaching experience as a Grades 3-4 teacher, the researcher therefore wrote this study from a personal standpoint. The chapter concludes by an overview of the thesis, where the link per chapter and between chapters is established.

## **1.2 THE BACKGROUND LITERATURE**

The South African Primary education system is structured in Phases (DBE, 2012:19); namely, the Foundation Phase (Grades R-3), the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4-6), and the Senior Phase (Grade 7). The Grade 3 learners in South Africa must either be in the age groups of 8 or 9 but with 10 being the oldest, maybe because the learner may have

repeated a Grade; whilst the Grade 4 learners are in the age group 9-10 with 11 being the oldest (Jones 2013:16). Grade 3 falls within the Foundation Phase, and previously was the third year of schooling in the Primary school. Grade 4 is the commencement of the Intermediate Phase within the South African schooling system. Transition in this study was used to refer to the period after Grade 3, which in this case is entering Grade 4.

In the Foundation Phase, the learners are taught by a single teacher who sees to their academic, social, and emotional needs at school. This is referred to as class-teaching whereas, Grade 4 learners are taught by subject specialists, meaning that at Grade 4 level the subjects taught are departmentalised. The Foundation Phase lays the groundwork for all formal schooling before learners move to the Grade 4 context.

Research referred to (Brewn & Statham 2011:265; Sanacore & Palumbo 2009:66; Chall, Vicki & Jacobs 1983:14-15) has indicated that when the learners transition from Grades 3-4 there usually is a drop in academic performance that is evidenced by a change in academic performance and a sharp decrease in test scores. Transitioning from Grades 3-4 has led researchers to concluding that this is the time learners 'fall off the track' or experience a drop in academic performance. As indicated earlier on, the learners transition from learning to read, to reading to learn. The learners also transition from concrete to abstract thinking, and sometimes there is a change as they transition from using a native (Home Language- HL) as Language of learning and teaching (LOLT) to using English as LOLT (Sanacore & Palumbo 2009:66).

Therefore, research cited in this study so far, state that the period from Grades 3-4 is a critical stage since the transition is thus synonymous with a learning gap that culminates in a drop in academic achievement, experiencing learning challenges, going through a feeling of school disengagement, failure to maintain academic success for those who were already performing well, including lacking specific skills needed to cope with the new environment. The study foregrounds teacher pedagogies in Grades 3 and 4, where the LOLT is English, which is neither the learners' first language nor the majority of the teachers' first language. Therefore, this study investigates whether there are differential pedagogic approaches between Grade 3 and 4 teachers in the teaching of content subjects through English as a language of learning and teaching (LOLT). This study provided an important opportunity to advance the understanding of how teachers' pedagogies in LOLT influences the teaching of content subjects during transitioning from Foundation Phase to Intermediate Phase.



According to this study, it seems as soon as the Grade 3s transition into the next phase, which is Grade 4, challenges arise. Hence, the issue of learner-transition challenges dates as far back as 50 years and has thus been equated with the theory of the "4th grade slump" which was researched by (Chall, Vicki & Jacobs 1983:14-15).

They carried out a longitudinal study whereby they tested the reading abilities of second graders through to Grade 4 and their findings concluded that whenever third graders move to the fourth grade, they are faced with many academic difficulties and this results in learners facing the "fourth grade slump". This "fourth Grade slump concept" implies that as students move from 3rd Grade to 4th Grade, they encounter fluency difficulties which in turn leads to comprehension deficits, which therefore results in lower test scores all round. Similarly, Grade 4 learners' literacy deficits as indicated by Wright (2012:353) is that these learners who lack in vocabulary knowledge are likely to struggle in reading comprehension. The problem of Grades 3-4 learner-transitioning is a global phenomenon, even American students struggle in the 4th Grade. A detailed explanation on how Grade 4s struggle internationally will be highlighted in the next chapter.

In schooling terms, transition envelops a process of moving from one educational setting to another. As stated by Jindal-Snape (2015:2) in education, transition is defined as movement between learning Phases in which the teachers, learners and their peers must renegotiate and reorganise their learning background and set of social relationships. The study alludes to the transition in the primary schooling context in South Africa, which is more prominent between Grade R (pre-school) to Foundation Phase. Grades 3-4 (which is the Foundation to Intermediate Phase) is the most challenging transition.

From literature reviewed, it seems the academic setback experienced between Grades 3-4 is largely influenced by the context which may either make or break a learner during early years. To set the context, the study provided the history of the curriculum paradigm shift from pre-democracy to post democracy to provide a summary on how each curriculum shift informed teacher practices in Grades 3 and 4. Drawing from the ecological theory, transition is highlighted in terms of learner experiences and developmental differences as experienced within a school context. By drawing on the concept of learner-transition research shows that learners who fail to adapt in Grade 4 end up being part of the "Grade 4-slump" (Chall *et al.*, 1990:23; Sanacore & Palumbo 2009:67; Gordon, Gdula, Peterson & Klingbel 2011:67).

It is within the context of this movement from Foundation Phase to Intermediate Phase that a learning gap is experienced thereby resulting in the “4th-Grade slump”. Unfortunately, the education system which South Africa’s Grade 4s fall under has been condemned and regarded as dysfunctional; hence, researchers assert that there is an education crisis in South Africa (Nkosi in BBC News 29 January 2016:1; Masondo 2016:1; Spaul 2017:15; Modisaotsile 2012:2; Chisholm 2005:50). The crisis seems more distinct concerning the transitioning from Grades 3-4. Figure 1.1 below depicts transitioning as it is experienced by Grade 4 learners after passing Grade 3. It is indeed challenging to move from the Grade 3 confined environment where there is a close relationship with teachers and learners, to the wider context where one can easily be part of a crowd.



**Figure 1.1: Challenges in transitioning - the cognitive leap from Grades 3-4 demonstrating how steep the cognitive leap is**

Similarly, referring to South African Grade 4s, Pretorius (2014:55) confirms that transitional challenges do exist at Grade 4 level by pointing out that “our Grade 4s are not well prepared for literacy challenges in the Intermediate Phase”. Secondly, there is a challenge in the form of transitioning in the LOLT, whereby the learners learn in their home language from Grade 1-3; then on commencement of Grade 4 the LOLT changes to English. “In schools in South Africa where learners are taught in an African language in the Foundation Phase, Grade 4 is particularly challenging because this is when English becomes the LOLT” (Pretorius 2014:53).

Moreover, Grade 4s usually fail to manage with literacy and thus experience reading challenges as evidenced by PIRLS (2006, 2011, 2016) results. Pretorius (2014:56) further asserts that the learners’ greatest barrier is the movement from learning to read to reading to learn, and this makes reading even more difficult and most learners get stuck here. Referring to the same situation, Sibanda (2015:12) cited a lack of relevant vocabulary skills, which compounds the ability to comprehend content knowledge; hence, learners

struggle to adapt to learning from more concrete thinking to abstract thinking.

Still within South Africa, Mkhwanazi (NEWS 24, 2014:1) cited challenges like longer school days whereas from Grade 1-3 the learners finish school an hour earlier than Grade 4s. The researcher believes having a longer school day becomes too monotonous and difficult to the learners who are struggling to adjust academically and socially. Mkhwanazi (NEWS 24 2014:1) further cited relationship problems that result in social problems, due to the introduction of new teachers and numerous teachers at once in Grade 4. The learners are used to having one teacher who is usually very close and accommodating; then suddenly there are many teachers who seem not to worry about the welfare of the learner but are interested in the learners' competence.

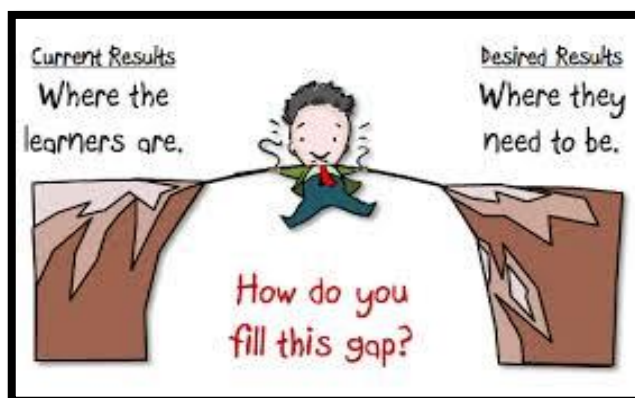
Research by Matavire (2016:7) noted challenges in literacy in the form of poor reading skills and an unbalanced academic cognition development, which is required for dealing with Grade 4 higher-order concepts. All these factors are cited as contributing to the Grade 4-slump in South Africa. However, it is not only learners who are facing transitional challenges, but also Grade 4 teachers who have to adapt each time they meet a new class of Grade 4 learners. It is also observed that these challenges experienced in South Africa are like those in other countries; hence, this is an international phenomenon transitional. However, Sanacore and Palumbo (2009:67-69) claim that not all Grade 4 learners face challenges during transitions.

As stated previously, most Grade 3 learners, as they transition to Grade 4 experience changing routines and learning approaches which can result in a drop-in achievement (Pretorius 2014:52; Gordon *et al.*, 2011:10; Sanacore & Palumbo 2009:13). In the researcher's opinion, the Grade 3-4 transition is very difficult since in Grade 4 there are pronounced changes and Pretorius (2014:57) posits that Grade 3 teachers are expected to have laid the linguistic and literacy foundations of learning in English LOLT and learners should have mastered the use of English as LOLT for a range of purposes.

Therefore, the inability to read for gaining knowledge creates a learning barrier that ultimately leads to a decline in achievement. Hence, this is substantiated by literature from South Africa (Matavire 2016:33; Sibanda 2015:14; Pretorius 2014:55). In a study, which set out, to determine whether transition is synonymous with achievement decline, Gordon *et al.* (2011:2) concluded that every educational transitional point result in academic decline regardless of Grade or stage. To do this, Gordon *et al.* (2011:2-3) conducted a

review of literature, based on 23 empirically-based peer-reviewed articles. To determine the effects of transition on achievement, Gordon *et al.* (2011:2-6) evaluated studies that compared Grade level and standardised state achievement scores, and the results indicated that at every grade transitional Phase, students' marks drop.

To understand these multiple transitional issues, one cannot ignore the influence of the environmental context, which contains the educational context, since learning is affected by the shift in settings and roles. The context in which transitional challenges occur is critical to understanding how these scenarios unfold and how meanings are ascribed to them and then to foreground findings to see how and where this study fits. To foreground the transitional context, the researcher briefly gives some of the key issues emanating from the relevant education system. For example, research by Spaul (2013:3) asserts that "the clear majority of South African pupils are significantly below par in terms of the curriculum coverage, and more generally, have not reached a host of normal numeracy and literacy milestones". According to the article by Waldburger in the *Mail and Guardian* (2014:6), the teacher is the bridge between the learners and the curriculum, but currently there is no bridge or transition process to facilitate the move from Grade 3-4. Figure 1.2 below is a pictorial representation of how children struggle to move from one point to the other.



**Figure 1.2: Illustration of the learners struggling in Grade 4**

Accordingly, an article in the *TIMES LIVE* (2017:1), cited Professor Jansen, who condemned the state of our education system as being dysfunctional. As stated earlier on, many researchers concede that the South African education system is in crisis. This assertion corroborates current statistics on both the national and international scene where South Africa is said to perform poorly in both literacy and numeracy competence. This is demonstrated by statistical findings in *PIRLS* (2016), *TIMSS* (2015), and *ANA* (2014). More

recent statistics (*PIRLS*, 2017; *TIMSS*, 2015) indicates that South Africa performs worse than most economically impoverished countries.

Spaull (2017:13) cites the *PIRLS* Report of (2017) which posits that South Africa's educational quality ranks at the bottom of the international scale - to be specific it is 75<sup>th</sup> out of 76 countries in numeracy. Spaull also (2017:12) provides important insights into the state of literacy levels concerning Grade 4s in South Africa, by analysing the *PIRLS* Report of 2017 which stated that 12 810 South African Grade 4 learners from 293 schools were tested for reading. Findings demonstrated that 8 out of 10 learners could not read, and an overall of 78% of the tested Grade 4s could only pronounce certain given words. The *PIRLS* Report and the *Times Live* of 8 December (2017:1) broadcasted that South Africa is ranked 50<sup>th</sup>, which places it last in the literacy skills section. Later, audits in research at national and international levels highlighted the extent of the problem to be starting from as early as the Foundation Phase. If we look at the *PIRLS* results, researchers (Howie, Van Staden, Tshele, Dowse & Zimmerman, 2012; Jansen, 2017) indicated that, dating as far back as (2006) followed by 2011 then 2016, literature reviewed suggest that the reading scores of Grade 4s have been stagnant.

Having reviewed literature, it seems most researchers in South Africa like Matavire (2016:5), Sibanda (2015:10) and Pretorius (2014:57) have focused on challenges concerning fluency and literacy skills in the transitional language phase at Grade 4 level (commonly referred to as the 4th Grade slump). It is therefore likely that such connections exist between learners' poor language skills and academic under-performance. If the teacher and learner cannot transfer and grasp content knowledge in a common language (English), then the message does not coherently reach to the recipient. In the same vein, Qorro (2009:33) noted that "just as a water-pipe is an important medium in carrying water, and a copper wire an important medium for transmitting electricity, the language of instruction is an indispensable medium for carrying or transmitting education from teachers to learners and among learners".

As a result, there is a possibility that learners experiencing challenges in the LOLT will become underachievers because language influences thought formation and that thought formation is the foundation of learning.

How then can these Grades 4s handle complex expository texts because after Grade 3, learners are expected to use their literacy foundational base in the language of learning

and teaching to meet new curriculum demands in Grade 4? The challenge is exacerbated by the lack of literacy ability, which I view as an academic transactional obstacle in content learning. It is normal, that in any subject, learners must exhibit confirmation of their thinking through LOLT (Chall *et al.*, 1990:15).

The hurdle in Grade 4, is being able to cope with complex language and thought processes. Having considered all these language-related factors, the researcher therefore, decided to explore the pedagogy of these teachers in relation to learner-transitioning. What is not yet clear in studies done especially in South Africa is how teacher pedagogy in English LOLT can reduce the literacy gap during transitioning. It is against this backdrop that the study argues that Grade 4 challenges are determined by teachers' instructional practices during transitioning. Consequently, this brings teacher pedagogy as the dominant theme of this study.

In the researcher's view, it's not only learners who are engaged in the transitioning process in Grade 4, but the teachers also transition and are faced with challenges in adapting their approach to suit the environment to be able to create a connection between their strategies and learner needs. Therefore, pedagogy is acknowledged as a key component during educational transitioning in Grade 4. However, it is worth noting that, Ballam, Perry and Garpelin (2017:278) warn that pedagogy is diverse and can be influenced by the cultural, political and social values of the teacher. This corroborates my assertion that teachers are also faced with transitional challenges, as with each Grade 4 class they must adapt to the needs of the learners. In all academic challenges, teachers are acknowledged as critical role players; for example, in this study they are supposedly key players in facilitating learner- transitions from Grade 3-4.

To demonstrate teachers' importance, Mourshed, Chikjioke and Barber (2011:470) point out that teachers' practices are correlated to the education system of a country; consequently, whatever results which are generated in learning assessments, are connected to teacher- performance within the dictates of an education system. I understand that a gap exists between teacher pedagogy that is between Grade 3 and 4 approaches, so South Africa's teachers must be ready to receive diverse learners from multilingual societies. School-readiness in terms of preparation of teachers and learners leads to successful transitioning from Grade 3-4.

Results show that our teachers are not adequately prepared to assist learners during transition or to permanently solve these challenges because everyone stereotypes the problem; thus, prejudicing the essence of the matter. It must be borne in mind that for every subject the approach differs, and the teacher differs in his/her approach according to the individual needs of learners, as well as the needs of the curriculum. Teachers' pedagogical practices therefore are embedded in practices that have been formed over time depending on their previous experiences. Feldman (2017:68) warns that it is difficult to shift teacher pedagogies considering "the conscious and unconscious beliefs and values that have been imbibed over time and which has structured the way they enact classroom pedagogy". Therein is another rising challenge - that of teachers' instructional practices suiting them, not the learners.

From the above, one can deduce that the path to off-set Grade 4 transition challenges is not a once-off event, but there must be sustained efforts in developing learners to reach Grade 4 in a smooth transitioning manner. Another challenge in the South African education system, is mentioned by Gumede in (*Business day* 27 February 2017:3) that less than 10% of the population in South Africa speak English as a home language (HL) which is the LOLT in the majority of schools. Regarding the LOLT, most teachers especially in this Phase of schooling may not be among the 10% of English native speakers since Afrikaans and other ethnic languages are still entrenched by the Constitution of South Africa (1996). Since the Grade 4 learners have been rated as one of the lowest in literacy in the English language as the LOLT, the question arises whether the learners will be able to learn in this language and through this language.

### **1.3 MOTIVATION AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

The motivation to explore this area study comes from a personal perspective. The researcher has had the opportunity to teach in two different countries, Zimbabwe and South Africa, and experience in both contexts is within early LOLT immersion schools: schools that teach in English as LOLT from Grade one onwards. At a personal level, as a teacher, the researcher noticed that learners when they enter Intermediate Phase coming from the Foundation Phase, seemed to experience problems in academic achievement and adjustment. Even though the learners were in schools that offered English LOLT. It is from Grade one that the researcher observed former high-achieving learners' performances in English-medium schools plummeting, especially at the beginning of Grade 4. Thus, two themes became related; that is, pedagogy and LOLT.

The researcher has carried out this research to find out why previously high-achieving learners start to fail. Therefore, the need to find out whether the transition is a factor at Grade 4 or it is how the LOLT is taught. Even in South Africa, previous research on transition by Pretorius (2014:52) showed that the learners who were rated as good academic achievers in Grade 3 start to fail or underachieve in Grade 4.

The interest in teacher practices and transition were stimulated by the work of Gee and Lou (2008:13), Sanacore and Palumbo (2009:73) who apparently concluded that the transition is synonymous with a decline in academic achievement. In their study. They caution that usually there is risk of teaching students as a homogenous group and this leads to a one size fits all approach, which is not suitable since the learners' needs are heterogenous.

The academic transitional challenges that Grade 4 learners experience is not a South African phenomenon only because other international researchers have cited problems and trends within their contexts too. Several studies by Robertson (2015:16), Pretorius (2014:52), Sanacore and Palumbo (2009:69) have commented on the issue of the 4th-Grade slump. Suggestions included a need to further explore pedagogical practices and English LOLT as pressure points to learner-transitions.

To explore pedagogical practices, this study uses Bernstein's notion of visible and invisible pedagogy as it relates to teacher practices and distribution of power in the classroom context. Bernstein (1975:116) defines visible pedagogy as performance-based, because it places emphasis on the performance of the learner upon the discourse the learner is creating and the extent to which the text is meeting the criteria. On the other hand, invisible pedagogy implies that the learner bears more power over what he selects, over how he structures, over the time-scale including his activities. Questions, which emanated over the years included: *what are the pedagogical needs of learners during the year of transitioning into Grade 4?*

The topic of pedagogy is prominent where learning and teaching is concerned because South Africa is a linguistically diverse country where eleven languages are deemed official. In as much as LOLT pedagogy affects teaching and learning, there are other factors which do affect learner-achievement. In this study, the researcher was interested in LOLT and transitioning, since moving grades in school may result in disengagement since transitions are generally assumed to be times of complexities. For example, in the South African



context (Pretorius 2014:52) and internationally (Sanacore & Palumbo 2009:69) assert that when learners move Grades or change learning contexts, they are beset with challenges. These challenges manifest as statistically-related achievement-loss, indiscipline, maladjustment, school disengagement, physiological, psychological, social and emotional problems (Lesnick, George, Smithgall & Gwynne 2010:33; Sanacore & Palumbo 2009:69).

Although the study has cited research from other countries in relation to the 4th-Grade slump, the researcher cannot exactly equate international Grade 4s and South Africa's Grade 4s because of contextual variations in policy, practice and even early-childhood education approach, since we experience transition in different times and locations. However, the noted similarity is that, despite all these contextual differences, when the learners' transition from Grades 3-4 (Foundation Phase to Intermediate Phase), no matter the country, it seems there are academic challenges which lead to the "4th-Grade slump". Although the phases are named differently in different educational contexts around the world, the significance of Grade 3-4 transition is internationally recognised (Lesnick *et al.*, 2010:23; Sibanda 2015:1).

#### **1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Findings in literature suggest that South African learners have poor literacy skills. The PIRLS (2006) study concluded that the grade fours and fives were rated lowest in mean performance and fell below the fixed international mean of 500 points. "At Grade 4 level, 36% of English learners fell below the international benchmark" (Howie, Venter, Van Staden, Zimmerman, Du Toit, Scherman & Archer 2008:17). Also, in 2011, South Africa grade 4 learners were selected as "benchmarking participants" of PIRLS concerning the language of learning and teaching. Related to this, Pretorius (2014: 55) concludes that pre-PIRLS (2011:22-23) results indicate that South African grade fours fall below the required literacy level commensurate with their grade. Grade 4 has been identified as a problem area, hence some learners in South Africa are struggling academically when they exit Grade 3 moving on to Grade 4 (Matavire 2016:33; Sibanda 2015:14; Pretorius 2014:55 & PIRLS 2016:23).

#### **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Emanating out of the problem statement, is the main research question:

*How do teachers' pedagogical practices influence learner-transitions from Grades 3-4, in classrooms where English is used as the language of learning and teaching?*

To inform the exploration of the main research question, several sub-questions were developed to address the different elements of the main research question:

- What are the contemporary understandings of the influence of teachers' pedagogical practices on learner-transitions both internationally and in South Africa's contexts?
- What is the link between the language of learning and teaching, and teachers' pedagogical practices and learner-transitions in primary schools?
- What kinds of LOLT pedagogical practices do Grades 3 and 4 teachers use?
- How do these pedagogical practices influence the transitions of Grades 3 and 4 learners?
- How contemporary understandings of teachers' pedagogical practices influence learner-transitions from Grades 3-4?

The main question and sub-questions facilitated the formulation of the research aim and objectives.

## **1.6 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

The aim of this study is to investigate how teachers' pedagogical practices influence learner-transitions from Grades 3-4, in classrooms where English is used as the language of learning and teaching.

The main objective of this study is to make sense of the ways in which teachers' pedagogical practices influence learner-transitions from Grades 3-4, in classrooms where English is used as the LOLT. To achieve this, several subsidiary objectives were considered:

- To understand the pedagogical practices Grade 3 and 4 teachers use in English LOLT;
- To explore pedagogical practices in English LOLT that influence the academic achievement of Grade 3 and 4 learners;
- To investigate how the new understandings of teacher's pedagogical practices in LOLT influence learner-transition from Grades 3-4; and

- To arrive at new ways of thinking about the influence of teachers' pedagogical practices on learner-transitions in classrooms where English is used as a LOLT.

### **1.7 BERNSTEIN'S AND BRONFENBRENNER'S THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study is situated within a Bernstein (1977:116-156) approach which is key in evaluating teacher pedagogy to understand how teachers' pedagogical practices influence the learner transition from Grades 3-4 in South African primary schools. Bronfenbrenner's theory was used as a supporting theory, which highlighted transitional challenges in relation to the pedagogical learning contexts and how the learner relates to the microsystem, macrosystem and exosystem. To establish how teachers' pedagogical practices, influence learner-transition from Grades 3-4, the researcher made use of Bernstein's (1990:100) key concepts of classification and framing where visible and invisible pedagogy were pronounced through teacher practices.

The theory of classification and framing weaves through the whole study relating to pedagogical power-relations. Classification is concerned with what is considered as knowledge of the curriculum and what it is that counts as knowledge in learning. According to Bernstein (1990:100) framing is the locus of control that learners have over the rules of communication where framing has the potential to regulate the form of its legitimate message. In short, framing refers to the nature of the pedagogical relationship between the "teacher and the taught" (Bernstein 1975:88). Although classification is discussed alongside framing, data was analysed through combinations of framing relations that inform the teacher's pedagogic practice as visible and invisible pedagogy.

Bernstein's (1975:116) genres of pedagogy - visible and invisible - are used to unpack teachers' practices in relation to the learners during transition. A visible pedagogy is performance-based, whereas an invisible pedagogy is learner-centred. Visible pedagogy emphasises learner-performance; that is, the discourse the learner is creating and the extent to which the text is meeting the criteria. The researcher preferred analysing the lessons that were observed using the genres of pedagogy (visible and invisible) to illuminate explicitness and implicitness within the distributive rules of communication.

Teacher practice tells us how knowledge is selected, distributed, and under what context. Bernstein's concepts also gave importance to issues of classification and framing as key boundaries in learning; hence, it is emphasised as a theoretical framework. Classification

and framing therefore creates learning relationships in different learning contexts. Since the teacher is part of the microsystem, his/her pedagogical approach has the most immediate effect on the learner. In the learning context, all interacting factors like the context and the environment, may either "make or break the learner". Referring to Bronfenbrenner, to bring out the effect of the context. Bronfenbrenner's (1979:1V) theory becomes more relevant in the study because the learner as an individual is not a passive recipient but is also sending and receiving messages within the teaching-learning environment. The learners bring individual attributes; for example, ability in LOLT, their reading skills and their emotional dispositions.

In addition, Bronfenbrenner's (1994:20) theory of ecology was used in the study as a contextualist perspective. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory propounds that there are five interacting layers in an environment; namely, the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and the chronosystem. These layers are embedded, hence creating different relational influences on an individual. In relation to the learner, the theory emphasises that each relationship that surrounds the learner affects all aspects of a learner's development. Therefore, the learner's progress is viewed within the influence of the nested layers.

Bronfenbrenner's (1994:21) ecological theory compliments Bernstein's (1977:112) theory on the relevance of the context of knowledge-transmission because the structure of social relationships regulates the ideologies of communication. The ecological philosophy enabled the researcher to place teachers' practices within the quality and context of the learner's environment and to view the teacher and the learner as part of the ecosystem and how the 'bi-directional concept' influences in the learning context to regulate their relationships. Both theories assert that the learner is an active agent in the context where there are shared responsibilities in the relationships, which are bi-directional in nature.

## **1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Saunders (2007:14) defines methodology as the theory that informs how research can be undertaken, what theoretical and philosophical assumptions the research should be grounded in, and the implications for the chosen methods. It can be understood as a way to systemically resolve an investigation in research. Through the research, we study the various steps adopted in the research, and these lead to the components, which constitute the research design.

### **1.8.1 Research design**

Research design is a sub-category of research methodology in which the latter is referred to as the superset. Creswell (2009:3) and Sekarani (2003:33) define a research design as the ultimate strategy selected to integrate different components of a study coherently and logically. The design details comprehensive methods of data collection and data analysis. It therefore informs the philosophical assumption selected in addition to distinct methods selected on how to collect further data, analyse and interpret the data. Creswell (2009:3) states that there are three types of designs: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. This study selected the qualitative approach as a means of exploring teacher pedagogy and understanding how these influence learners' performance during transition. Qualitative approaches were also adopted in order to cohere with the ideal paradigm and its philosophical commitments. In this case, the qualitative approach assisted in understanding and comparing teacher pedagogy across two learning Phases.

### **1.8.2 Research paradigm**

The study made use of an interpretive paradigm (Kuhn 1962:13) including its related methodological procedures and approaches. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007:23) assert that an interpretivist paradigm assumes that reality is created intersubjectively; hence, it is concerned with individual subjective experiences. An interpretivist paradigm will enable reflection of the complexity of research based in classrooms. In addition, it has the potential to incorporate, explicate the inconsistencies, and then elucidate the subjective nature of the teaching and learning context. The interpretive research (Creswell 2009:21) uses qualitative methodological approaches (Mertens 2010:356); therefore, qualitative research was chosen as a methodology suited to the interpretive paradigm, in addition to the multiple case study research strategy.

### **1.8.3 The research approaches**

There are three research approaches that one can select: qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods. Firstly, the qualitative approach assists researchers in interpreting meanings about how participants relate to or interact with a social phenomenon. Qualitative research relies on emerging methods; hence, it is inductive in nature. Whereas the quantitative approach construes meanings in terms of numbers and quantity. Thus, the quantitative approach is deductive in nature because it uses predetermined methods.

The mixed methods research approach interprets data by using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The qualitative approach was selected since it is compatible to the chosen paradigm.

#### **1.8.4 Research Strategy**

The study adopted the multiple case study research strategy. Yin (2011:17) views a case as “a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life contemporary bonded system (a case) or multiple bonded systems”. The justification for selecting the case study strategy is that it permits comprehensive understanding of the problem and relies on extensive data collection processes where multiple sources of data are merged or triangulated (Creswell 2013:100).

#### **1.8.5 Research Methods**

An important component of research design is the utilisation of specific research methods. Research methods form part of data collection, data analysis and data interpretation for the study. Research methods can either be qualitative or quantitative or one can use both as a mixed-methods approach. Qualitative research answers questions such as who, what, when and how; it tries to unpack, understand and underline the nature of a phenomenon (or phenomena) whereas quantitative research answers questions about how much or how many. This study was not interested in quantity but in the human behaviour, attitude, experiences and practices; hence, the strategies and techniques selected were linked to the qualitative approach (Creswell 2014:32). As such, the study selected methods that use the constructivist philosophical assumptions which incorporated open-ended questions, emerging approaches, interview data, observations, data analysis and methods generating data from thematic strands. These methods collected information from participants, out of which meaning was derived. This study employed the standardised face-to-face open-ended interview technique (Creswell 2009:130) and the closed-ended questionnaires (Mertens 2010:352) to generate biographic data for analysis.

### **1.9 DATA COLLECTION**

This study used four types of instruments for data collection this includes the non-participant observation, questionnaires, face-to-face interviews and data analysis. Although

the study is largely qualitative in nature, the quantitative data collection method (which is the questionnaire to elicit statistics) was to lend credibility to the qualitative data. The questionnaire (Appendix D) was used to collect biographical information and other questions that can only be better explained quantitatively (Mertens 2010:352).

Yardley (2009:243) states that the following methods are adopted from the qualitative perspective: the semi-structured interviews, the non-participatory observation methods, and the data analysis process. The semi-structured face-to-face interviews were used as a follow up to questionnaires and lessons observed. In research, an interview is a conversation between the researcher and participant where questions are posed in order to elicit information (Yin 2011:129; Mertens 2010:352) The researcher interviewed the same teachers who were observed for lesson-presentation in order to widen the conversation for a better and specific understanding of the phenomenon (Christensen & Burke 2008:44).

This study followed a process where teachers were firstly given questionnaires to respond to, as this also assisted in preparing the researcher in knowing the biographic background of participants, which therefore led the researcher into seeing phenomena through their eyes. Afterwards, the same teachers who responded to the questionnaires were interviewed. Each process was staggered to allow for time to process data. The research triangulated the methods of data collection (the non-participant observation, questionnaires, face-to-face interviews and data analysis) that were engaged. The main advantage for using the interview technique was to eliminate the non-response rate, in addition to the fact that the interviews gave the researcher the opportunity to have direct contact with the participant (Creswell 2009:177).

When observing the presentation of lessons in classes, the researcher divided the time equally among all classes although teachers at times finished too early or too late. Hence, the study was conducted at least for two weeks per school in both grade 3 and 4 classes. This involved analysing the teachers' strategies and how they teach all subjects in English as LOLT.

### **1.10 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS**

The study was done with specific reference to the Free State Province, in the Motheo District

where five schools from former Model C schools were selected on the basis of LOLT. The research limited the inclusion of contexts where dissimilar features prevailed in order to promote the emergence of a non-biased research study. The reason for selecting five schools with similarities was to enable comparability. The selection of participants was done based on the LOLT of the particular schools so as to inform readers whether transition can also be affected by the medium of communication between the teacher and the learner.

The sample (Yin 2011:88) for this research consisted of 10 Grade 3 and 10 Grade 4 teachers from five urban schools which are in quintile 5 - and all these schools are former Model C schools, meaning they were the previously advantaged schools. The schools are all situated in the middle-class suburbs at the periphery of the Central Business District (CBD), and their learners are largely from working-class communities. The location of schools was influenced by the desire to investigate schools that share similar attributes in terms of LOLT, student population and teacher population.

### **1.11 DATA ANALYSIS**

Creswell (2009:218) and Yardley (2009:243-250) suggest that data should be reduced when using the interpretive approach where themes and patterns are identified from collected data. In this research study, data was generated through questionnaires, face-to-face interviews, and lesson observations. Lesson-observation recordings were transcribed, after which themes and patterns were identified. Interview recordings were also transcribed and coded (Miles, Huberman & Saldana 2014:89) and thereafter thematic patterns were identified and explored. This means that data is analysed through description of the case as well as through generation and description of themes.

The study used the inductive approach because the researcher first visited schools to observe lessons. The researcher firstly went to observe the lessons and later adapted the contextual meanings generated from the lessons observed. Later, the researcher created thematic patterns having relied on post hoc understandings of observed properties. Data was reduced using the interpretive approach where themes and patterns were being drawn (Creswell 2009:218; Yin 2011:45). Lesson observations were transcribed, and themes drawn. Interviews were transcribed and coded (Miles, Huberman & Saldana 2014:89). Thematic patterns were drawn and explored. This means that data was analysed through the description of the cases and through the generation and description of themes.



### **1.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The study adhered to ethical standards by seeking clearance from relevant authorities. Firstly, an Ethical Clearance Letter was sought from the University of the Free State Ethics Department (cf. Appendix A), the Free State Department of Education (cf. Appendix C) and all relevant participants were informed (cf. Appendix D). Based on generated research questions, and preferred research methods, the researcher created a course of study outline. The study outline is followed by an outline of chapters and relevant research methods.

### **1.13 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The study is significant in that it redirects focus on a new theme in transition since the issue of LOLT transition seems persistent, particularly where the teacher practices are in English LOLT. It is envisaged that the outcome of this research will have a positive effect on the transition of future learners from Grades 3-4 by advancing the theoretical understanding of contemporary learner-transition. Clearly, the findings could possibly benefit the learners and the teachers.

### **1.14 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

There were a few limitations encountered during the study. Firstly, there was not sufficient time for data collection. The teachers hurried through their lessons and from their body language one could sense that they were uncomfortable. Secondly, data collection was limited concerning lesson observations. There was the need to observe one teacher more than twice, but the teachers had other professional obligations to afford us access to additional lesson observations (Cohen & Manion 2007:21).

### **1.15 MEASURES OF TRUSTWORTHINESS**

Research findings need to be critically evaluated to assess levels of credibility and objectivity. Credibility involves establishing believability of results. In order to assess trustworthiness, there are certain measures used in qualitative research, which are expressed in terms of credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability. These four criteria gauge the quality and authenticity of the research findings (Creswell 2009:9).

### **1.15.1 Credibility**

In qualitative research, credibility is established by engaging different data collection methods in order to evaluate the consistency of findings. Hence, the researcher utilised multiple data sources to strengthen the credibility of the study. The interview transcripts, recorded data from questionnaires, lesson evaluations, and data analysis processes, provide the credibility (Cohen & Manion 2007:32; Creswell 2009:10),

### **1.15.2 Transferability**

Transferability refers to the degree in which the same research can be replicated in different settings. Results must be similar in order to deem the results as credible. Comparable results increase the aspect of credibility. The researcher provided well-documented dense accounts from the study, as well as the background data to establish the context of study. The participants' biographic data was included to corroborate findings when making comparisons. The instruments utilised in data collection and analysis are detailed; and the instructions of how they can be used are so clear such that anybody can replicate the study in a different setting (Cohen & Manion 2007:32).

### **1.15.3 Dependability**

The aspect of dependability is measured by the standard and manner in which the research is detailed and carried out. In order to make the study dependable, the researcher gave an in-depth account of the process of the research from the research design to the findings. To ensure dependability, the researcher used multiple sources of data and created thick descriptions of the context and procedures (Cohen & Manion 2007:32; Creswell 2009:10).

### **1.15.4 Confirmability**

Confirmability implies the degree to which the findings are free from the researcher's values, but exactly depict the focus of inquiry; that is, the degree of neutrality in the findings presented. The researcher provided appendices and tables of raw data and also included the examples of research instruments. In addition, the researcher made comprehensive descriptions of the design and procedures carried out, thus enhancing the aspect of confirmability (Yin 2004:36).

## 1.16 RESEARCH STUDY OUTLINE

Below is the research study outline to indicate how the aims connect to the questions.

**Table 1.1: Research study outline**

<b>Main question:</b>		<b>Research Aim:</b>	
<i>How do teachers' pedagogical practices influence learner transitions from Grade 3-4, in classrooms where English is used as the language of learning and teaching?</i>		<i>To explore contemporary understandings of the influence of teachers' pedagogical practices on learner transitions both internationally and in South Africa's contexts.</i>	
<b>SUBSIDIARY QUESTIONS</b>	<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>RESEARCH METHODS</b>	<b>CHAPTERS</b>
What is the link between the language of learning and teaching, teachers' pedagogical practices and learner transitions in primary schools?	To identify the link between teachers' pedagogical practices, the language of learning and teaching and learner transitions.	Literature and observation	Two and three
What kinds of pedagogical practices do Grades 3 & 4 teachers use?	To explore the pedagogical practices of Grade 3 & Grade 4 teachers in classrooms where English is used as the LOLT.	Interviews and observations	Four, five and six
How do these pedagogical practices influence the transitions of Grades 3 & 4 learners?	To arrive at new understandings of how teachers' pedagogical practices influence learner transitions from Grades 3-4 learners	Literature Review	Seven

## 1.17 OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS

The following provides an outline of the thesis where the focus and interconnection between the different chapters are summarised:

**Chapter 1:** This forms the introduction of the study, which is an overview of the research. A brief background of transitional challenges locally and internationally is given. The researcher's perspective and motivation to undertake the study is also discussed. A brief literature review and the research design guiding this study are also given.

**Chapter 2:** This outlines the literature study, discusses the background of the curriculum progression in relation to teacher pedagogy to give the grounding for my study. The movement from one curriculum to the other is highlighted as the period from Bantu

education to OBE, then to RNCS and finally to CAPS. The chapter also addresses models of transition and highlighted transitional theories. Lastly, the chapter reviews previous studies.

**Chapter 3:** A Bernstein Perspective and the Ecological Approach, unpacked Bernstein Theory of classification and framing where concepts such as visible and invisible pedagogies (Bernstein 1971:205) were highlighted and situated within the study. The chapter discusses Bernstein's concepts from a pedagogic discourse, the pedagogic device and detail regulative and instructional discourse.

**Chapter 4:** Here the research design and methodology are focused upon. It explains and discusses the research design, the theoretical framework, including the sampling context involved in the study, and the population. Additionally, the issues of credibility and believability are included and expressed in the study. Also discussed in the chapter were the instruments used, data sources, types of data collected, the operational theoretical framework and the rationale for the selected research design.

**Chapter 5:** Using Bernstein to present findings, included the analysis of collected data in the form of interviews, lesson observations and biographic data received from respondents. The researcher generated frequencies and modes from questionnaire data on participants' profiles. Results were expressed as percentages in tables and graphs. The data are tabulated to give more meaning.

**Chapter 6:** The chapter is devoted to presenting an analysis of the data and findings of the study, which includes how the findings relate to the research questions.

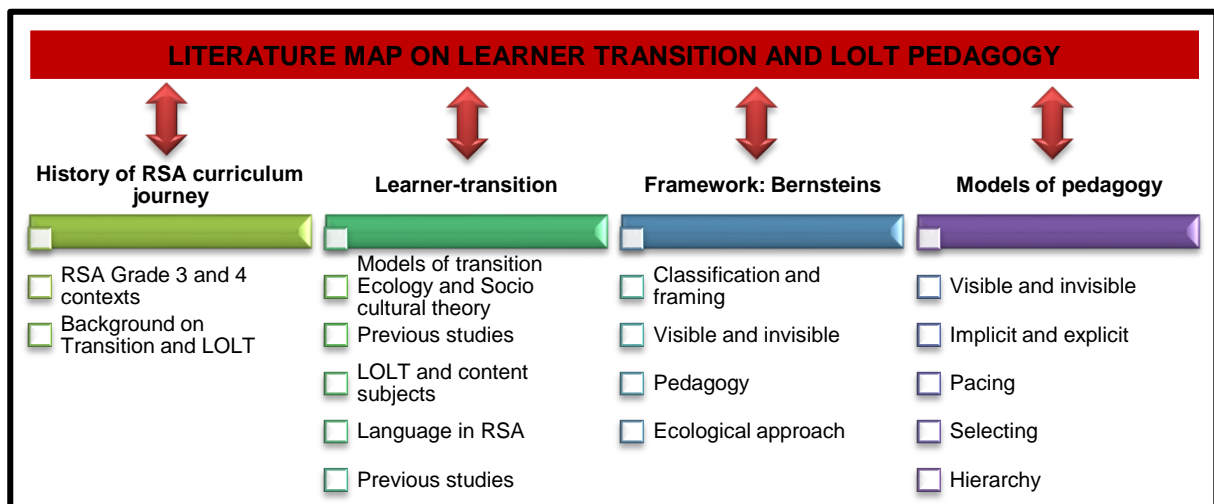
**Chapter 7:** This chapter includes the summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations. It recapitulates the study and reflects on the limitations and conclusions drawn from literature.

## **1.18 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter presented an overview of the study and the background transitional challenges experienced by learners from Grades 3-4 in the Free State. The theoretical framework adopted for the study was outlined and the purpose of the study justified. In

addition, the research problem and aims were described and the objectives and questions highlighted. This chapter gave a brief description of the research design and methodology considered in carrying out the study. Key concepts were defined.

In the next chapter, relevant literature on LOLT, transition, and curriculum progression are discussed. Figure 1.3 below summarises a literature map that is represented in separate sections to show a summary of literature reviewed from Chapter 1-6. Literature reviewed is discussed in-depth starting from Chapter 1.



**Figure 1.3: Literature map**

## CHAPTER 2

### CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK

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#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores contemporary understandings of the influence of teachers' pedagogical practices on learner-transitions, and at the same time it provides an exciting opportunity to advance our knowledge of teacher-pedagogy and learner-transition pertaining to Grade 4. The study also discusses South Africa's curriculum journey with special reference to teacher-practices and traditional transitional challenges. Highlighting the history of the curriculum raises awareness of how we have arrived to where we are; in addition to identifying what underpins the vision of South Africa's current curriculum. It is within the context and vision of the curriculum that teachers can understand why and how they teach their subjects.

It is hoped that teacher-pedagogy may be understood in relation to Grade 4 transitions within the dictates of the current curriculum, considering that South Africa has undergone a curricular overhaul to alter pedagogical assumptions and archaic instructional approaches. Further, the chapter outlines South Africa's curriculum journey from pre-democracy to post-democracy. A study of literature on the topic, nationally and internationally, focusing on learner-transition, is also presented wherein pedagogical practices of Grade 3 and Grade 4 teachers are discussed in relation to their learning contexts where English is the LOLT. Although the researcher's focus was on transition and English LOLT pedagogy, the study commenced by highlighting the context of the study and exploring at length issues like South Africa's curriculum reform journey.

This is essential in that, for one "to understand why a system is working, one must understand the history of the system, the overall country culture and understand how each of the components of the reform work in tandem" (Hargreaves 2012:37).

The study outlines some significant perceptions of teacher-pedagogies in the language of learning and learner-transitions. Learners' academic transitioning from Grade 3-4 is an under-researched area; therefore, this study contributes to new knowledge in that transitioning was explored comparatively between two critical grades (3-4) in relation to South Africa's history. The study presented South Africa's curriculum paradigm shift

chronologically to establish the impact of pedagogy throughout the curriculum transformation. The reason for presenting this is twofold; firstly, to start my research within the broader context of South Africa's educational reforms pre- and post-democracy; and secondly, to have some contemporary understandings of the influence of teachers' pedagogical practices throughout the curriculum transformation period to find out what shapes teachers to make them as they are today.

We need to keep in mind that curriculum reform fundamentally targets improvement of teacher-practices; this is in addition to researchers' attempts to solve South Africa's transition issues. Consequently, there is a need to go back to the root causes to pick up the foundational inconsistencies. The study, therefore, began by highlighting curriculum transitioning in South Africa, as far back as the recommendations of National Education Policy Initiative (NEPI) in 1992.

This study refers to the curriculum journey with special reference to the primary schools, highlighting the impact of all reforms and policies in teacher pedagogy between Grade 3 and Grade 4. The reviewed literature was explored to elicit information on how teacher pedagogy is affected in terms of context, curriculum, LOLT and transition.

There was need to evaluate the foundations of the education system that the participating teachers fall under. This linked teacher-practices to their pedagogical orientations, taking into consideration that teachers as individuals possess deeply ingrained habits and skills due their differing life experiences (Bourdieu, 1992:72). In the researcher's view, the curriculum journey and transformations experienced by the teachers in South Africa have therefore contributed to some of their ingrained habits in teaching because every curriculum transformation entailed familiarising teachers with new or innovative teaching methods. If one looks at the ingrained Christian National Education System, one sees that it immensely contributed to teachers' pedagogy in that we still have teachers who believe they should be custodians of knowledge thereby depriving the learner of the ability to learn productively using critical-thinking skills.

This corroborates Van der Nest's view (2012:5) that a change in curriculum necessitates a change in the functioning of the teacher. For this reason, the study draws from an ecological perspective, because teachers are not just producers of actions, but products of environmental conditions which they encounter during their lifetime. This study also

investigates whether this could be why we experience transitional challenges in Grade 4.

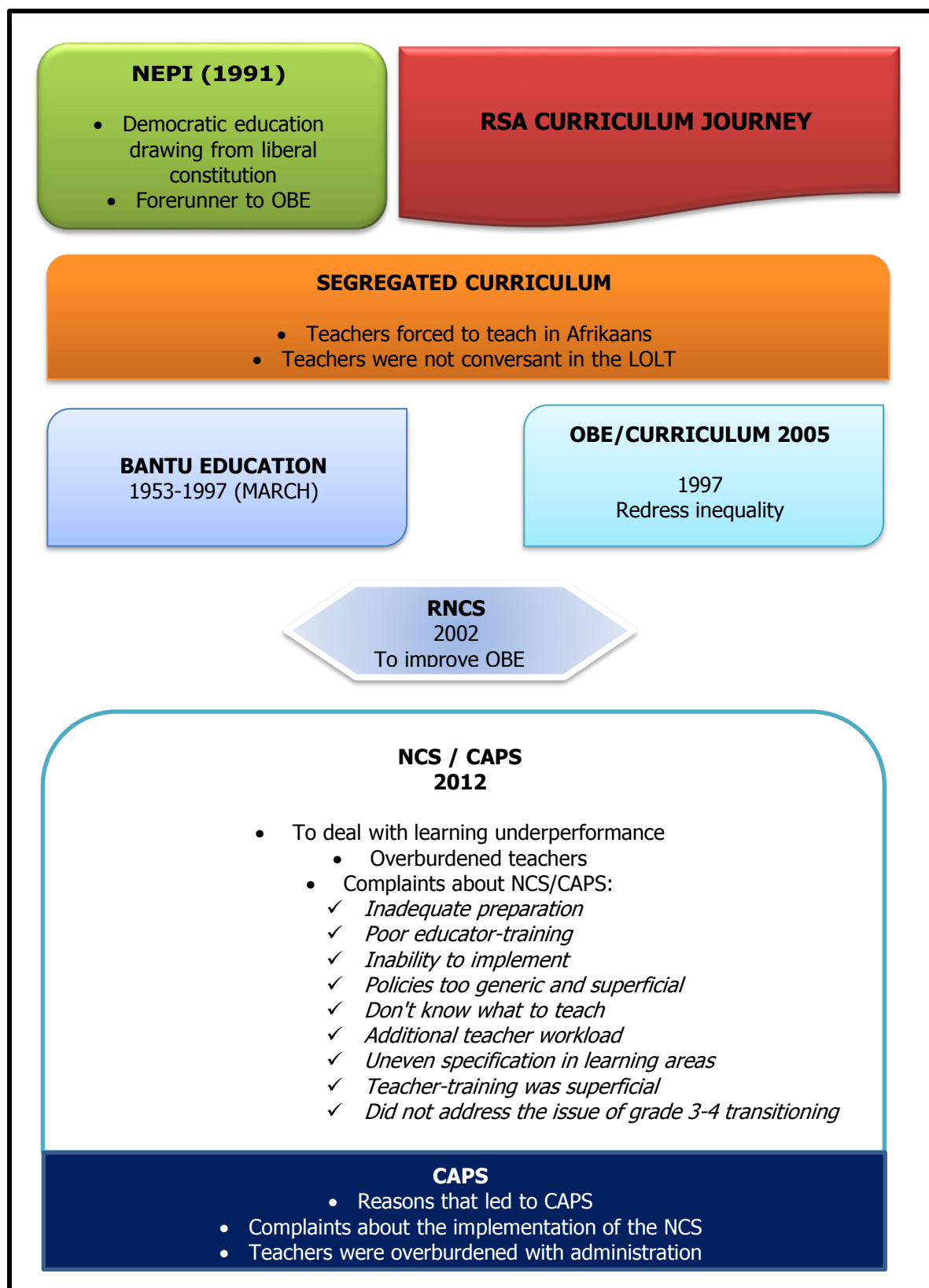
In the researcher's view, the curriculum discussion is significantly relevant to this study because of the continuous curriculum changing which has implications for all role-players in education. In this case, the teachers must shape and interpret the curriculum to suit the context of the learner. As a result, it becomes compulsory to explore teacher-practices through curriculum lenses since they (teachers) must interpret the pedagogical aspect of the curriculum. As mentioned earlier, it is beneficial to start with curriculum reform to contextualise teachers' instructional practices. In doing so, one may be able to establish the contextual factors that bring about transitional challenges.

## **2.2 CURRICULUM PROGRESSION**

At this juncture, the definition of *curriculum* is imperative before continuing with any discussion. Setiadi (2016:8) defines *curriculum* as "a description of what, why, how and when students should learn. The curriculum is not, of course, an end. Rather, it seeks both to achieve worthwhile and useful learning outcomes for students and to realise an array of societal demands and government policies".

The researcher has provided a self-created organogram (cf. Figure 2.1). Although the organogram provided dates as far back as 1953, the study chronicles briefly the curriculum shifts only from 1992 (NEPI 1992:66) to the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements in 2012 (CAPS, 2012).





**Figure 2.1: South Africa's curriculum transformation from the old curriculum to CAPS**  
(Du Plessis 2013:1; Adu & Ngibe 2012:987; Van der Nest's view 2012:5; DBE 2005:2; Dada, Dipholo, Hoadley, Khembo, Muller & Volmink. 2009:12; NEPI 1992)

### 2.3 NEPI REPORT (1991)

A reflection in detail about South Africa's curriculum-change process leads us to start from where the first breakdown was identified. Accordingly, soon after the 1994 elections, education in South Africa experienced a new era, where there was a need for a curriculum paradigm shift, as proposed by NEPI (1992:68). Curriculum 2005, based on OBE philosophy, signalled the breakaway from an oppressive unequal education system. This is evidenced in the Chisholm Report (2000:15). This study has included an outline of the curriculum reform journey highlighting the fact that knowledge organisation is influenced by curriculum policies; and teacher pedagogy, influenced by political history. For example, in South Africa the year 1990 was significant educationally in that it involved curriculum debates and the struggle between the apartheid government and the democratic forces. This period coincided with the release of political prisoners, and consequently led to a negotiated settlement whereby the curriculum shift was part of the "change-package". This resulted in the weakening of liberation socialist opinions (Pinar 2013:470; Jansen & Christie 1999:4).

Pinar (2013:476) further asserts that the negotiated settlement led to the Government of National Unity (GNU). This transition of events affected educational ideologies. Therefore, South Africa moved away from the Christian National Education ideology, thereby adopting a liberal Constitution regarding the curriculum. To do this, a committee was created - the National Education Policy initiative (NEPI 1992:67) which comprised of educational researchers, policy-analysts, students, teachers, community leaders and trade unionists. The National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) was founded between December 1990 and August 1992; it was the brainchild of the National Education Coordinating Committee. The National Education Policy Initiative aimed to evaluate education and training policies based on aligning them with the values of a democratic South Africa (Jansen & Christie 1999:4). One of the distinguishing features of NEPI, as identified by Cross *et al.* (2013:175) was the "provision of a broad values-framework for thinking about a democratic education policy after apartheid; this framework emphasised non-racism, non-sexism, democracy, equality and redress".

Chisholm (2005:80) corroborates this view by asserting that NEPI's (1992:69) vision was the conceptualising of an inclusive education system that thrives on principles of democracy. However, a prerequisite for the vision of NEPI to materialise was the adoption of a new Constitution after South Africa's independence in 1994. This acted as a basis for

curriculum change, thereby leading to a new curriculum, C2005 in 1998, which was an outcomes-based curriculum. Hence, in the context of this study, the curriculum journey started in 1991 in line with the NEPI report emanating from a post-Independent South Africa. Thus, NEPI became the forerunner to OBE as it included principles as manifested in C2005 (NEPI, 1992).

## **2.4 C2005 (1998)**

The history of South African education has been fraught with challenges with teachers being affected the most by the all-round confusion and uncertainty. Consequently, Earl (2003:1) stated that educational reforms in the past decade have felt like a “roller-coaster ride” for most teachers and school-communities. This is reflected in the curriculum as it progressed from Bantu Education, C2005, RNCS, NCS, and then to CAPS. This shows an unstable education system, which has been transforming curriculum time and again. Yet in all this, the most important entity - the learner - does not play any role. More surprising, the teacher who is supposed to relay knowledge and skills to learners, is a silent actor who is excluded in discussions involving curriculum changes.

### **2.4.1 C2005**

This study maintains that these transformations show that each curriculum policy was founded on the educational limitations experienced in the previous curriculum policy. Starting with Curriculum 2005 (C2005), Chisholm (2000:9-10) reported that C2005 was Outcomes-Based (OBE). The OBE Curriculum came into existence in 1997 in order to replace the injustices of apartheid education, and at the same time promote a new Constitution, which will include policies to rebuild an already divided education system. Furthermore, the implementation of C2005 was a move away from the Christian National Education and was regarded as a “pedagogical route out of apartheid education” (Chisholm 2000:3).

Emanating from this is the OBE philosophy that highlights that a person should acquire rights as an individual from the outset. The purpose of OBE, as cited by Adu and Ngibe (2012:986), was to increase the knowledge, skills, and values of the learners and teachers. Further, Adu and Ngibe (2012:986) confirmed that the main aim of C2005 was to move

away from content-based teaching to an outcomes-based curriculum. This was based on the philosophy of preparing learners for life, thereby leading teachers and learners towards a skills-based curriculum. According to Hoadley (2018:34), OBE was aimed at developing a thinking and problem-solving citizen

#### **2.4.2 C2005 and Teacher-practice**

As indicated, C2005 was aimed to reflect the process of implementing an Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) approach (Nongxa 2010:56). The objective of C2005 was to empower teachers (Adu & Ngibe 2014:984). The teachers' OBE pedagogies empowered them to be innovative and creative in designing and shaping their own programmes and even select content (Hoadley & Jansen 2002:173). Hence, it was assumed C2005 accorded both learners and teachers personal emancipation through the development of subject knowledge, skills and values.

Teachers' lesson-planning was structured around the needs of their learners; however, there was the absence of a specified method of instruction. The aim of C2005 was that by the end of the educational experience, each student should have achieved set goals or specified outcomes. There was no single specific style of teaching or assessment in C2005. It focused on what was regarded essential for all learners to execute successfully at the end of the learning task (Hoadley & Jansen 2002:173).

This approach was deemed flexible, as opposed to working according to set periods because the emphasis was on *what* the learner will be able to do.

#### **2.4.3 Impact of C2005 curriculum on teacher practices**

Nongxa (2010:56) argues that although C2005 as curriculum reform was introduced as a move away from the oppressive Bantu Education, there were shortcomings as cited in the Chisholm Report (2005:58). Although initially stakeholders had embraced C2005, there was dissatisfaction due to rising flaws and gaps, which led to complications in teacher-practices. Several challenges were highlighted, and Chisholm (2005:58) cited the following: the quality of teacher-orientation to the curriculum was inadequate since there was no effective training - instead training played an advocacy role resulting in inadequate preparation to deliver OBE.

According to the DBE (2009:15), the Dada Committee noted that C2005 did not give enough guidance to teachers as teachers didn't know exactly what to do. This was aggravated by a shift away from explicit teaching and learning which was thus replaced by facilitation and group work. Furthermore, it came to light that in other cases, teachers could not interpret the curriculum. Apparently, teacher-practices had been grossly affected because teachers were not trained to interpret the finer points of the OBE curriculum. The dearth of training for teachers concerning OBE facilitation already spelled doom (Chisholm 2005:59). The learners' standard of reading and writing did not correspond with their Grade and cognitive level. In addition, C2005 was criticised for curriculum-overload particularly in the intermediate phase where learners had to grapple with eight learning areas resulting in them lacking in general knowledge.

In a study on teachers' perceptions and experiences with OBE, Jansen (1999:208) quoted teachers who unanimously asserted that the preparations of C2005 were inadequate and incomplete. The purpose of curriculum reform was to improve pedagogical practices and knowledge acquisition, but for Mouton, Louw, and Strydom (2012:212) the OBE curriculum was branded as inadequate because it had moved away from the crucial basics like reading and writing, resulting in having university students who could barely read and write. Another pressing issue was said to come from the African Foundation Phase teachers who neither comprehended the policy nor the assessment requirements. From this, one can conclude that the teachers were not sure of what to do. Considering all these challenges, teachers were more likely to underperform for they can only take the learners as far as they (teachers) can see. To substantiate this view, Mourshed *et al.* (2011:471) put it simply that "the quality of an education system determines the quality of its teachers because the best school systems are those that have the best teachers". This is corroborated by the fact that teachers are responsible for re-contextualising the curriculum, so the implementation of any curriculum relies on teachers' competence.

Malaba (2010:30) elaborates that OBE misled and misinformed teachers who have been limited in their contribution to this important policy. This was exacerbated by OBE not giving precedence to curriculum content. Further criticism of C2005 was centred on the teachers' inability to interpret and deliver the curriculum content in the classroom. Thus, contemporary learning challenges and pedagogical problems we have in South Africa are the "seeds" sown by OBE. These consequences of an inadequate curriculum are seen in South Africa's performance when we compare the country's position against international

benchmark trends in both Language literacy and Mathematical Numeracy. These curriculum flaws impact on learner-transition.

#### **2.4.4 C2005 Challenges and Learner-transition**

The first problem connected to transition is explored by Jansen and Hoadley (2009:187) whose study revealed that “the Curriculum 2005 review report makes it quite clear that this curriculum’s overriding emphasis on integration – across disciplines, and between school knowledge and the learners’ experience of everyday life was introduced at the expense of giving attention to progression within specific disciplines and to systematic conceptual coherence within subjects”.

In the researcher’s opinion, the lack of coherence and lack of attention in student progression consequently became a challenge as learners transitioned grades. In analysing the OBE curriculum, the issue of academic transition came up as a pressure point, as it was revealed that there were challenges experienced by students between Grades and Phases. All these challenges were regarded as being triggered by subject “overload” and the inability to learn using the LOLT as was reported by Chisholm (2000:50). The Report cited “overcrowding” and the inclusion of eight learning areas in the GET band. In Grade 4, there were eight learning areas; namely, Languages, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Technology, Social Sciences, Arts and Life Orientation, Economic and Management Sciences.

The researcher also holds the view that there was too much teacher autonomy therefore teachers’ practices resulted in the uneven specification across learning areas, phases, grades and schools. This resulted in transitional challenges and these cascade into teaching-learning challenges.

Several studies by Taylor (2011:2), NEEDU (2012:13), Prinsloo and Heugh (2013:12), and Howie *et al.* (2017:67) have highlighted the existence of numeracy and literacy challenges. Literacy and numeracy problems persist because learners who were products of an inadequate and flawed curriculum are now teachers. What does this mean for quality? What pedagogic practice do they draw from? If the previous system was flawed, and if the teachers underperformed, it raises the alarm as to how they are performing as teachers in schools.

Moreover, it was not prudent to let teachers interpret and design their own understandings of the curriculum. For teachers to interpret a curriculum fraught with inconsistencies and complex terminology, compounded by the fact that most teachers do not speak English as a home language, it thus became a fruitless endeavour to design lessons that would lead to meaningful learning. Jansen (1998:1) criticised the language and concepts, which were regarded as confusing, complex and contradictory. Therefore, this study, argues that giving inadequately trained teachers too much responsibility beyond their capability could have led to academic and quality problems in the educational system in South Africa, which we experience even today. Hence, Malaba (2010:33) claims that learners who are products of OBE suffered from an inadequate curriculum. The fact that learners could not read, write or count at grade-appropriate levels was a sure sign of a futile education system. This resulted in the need to review and diagnose challenges in the curriculum; hence, the establishment of the Chisholm Report, which carried out the first curriculum review.

## **2.5 FIRST CURRICULUM REVIEW: CHISHOLM REPORTS**

As a way of conceding defeat by the DoE on the introduction of OBE as cited earlier on, a review committee was appointed to investigate and report on the OBE conundrum; thus, emanated the Chisholm Report of 2000. The previous paragraph has indicated the flaws cited by the Chisholm Report of (2000). The Chisholm Report (2005) recommended that C2005 had to be simplified, at the same time shifting the curriculum. The DBE (2002:3) had the significant role of becoming involved with teacher pedagogy in order to re-structure the education system in South Africa. Teachers were regarded as key contributors to the education revolution. This is because teachers had to undertake many roles which included as being mediators of learning, leaders, administrators, managers, pastors, learning areas and phase specialists (DoE 2002:3).

In response to flaws in C2005, the review committee recommended the following: firstly, seeing that the curriculum structure and design were complex, it had to be simplified – hence, a new revised curriculum structure had to be adopted to refocus on teacher-orientation and training. Secondly, the complex curricular terminology had to be simplified since it had elicited a plethora of interpretations. Thirdly, “curriculum-overload” was cited as a teaching-learning barrier; hence, there was a need to reduce the workload for both

teachers and learners. Eventually, the committee recommended the decrease of learning areas from eight to six. The committee also suggested the introduction of learning materials to use in learning and teaching. Lastly, the committee recommended the adoption of a revised and streamlined curriculum statement for ECD, FET and ABET, leading to the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS). Although recommendations were made, transitional issues still popped up regularly as the curriculum-overload in OBE still had its “hangover” effects.

The major challenges that had to be attended to as priorities were teacher-orientation and effective teacher-training. According to Van der Nest (2012:5), a change in curriculum entails a pedagogical transition on the part of the teachers. It was unwise for other stakeholders to be the ones evaluating the curriculum transformation and exclude the teachers who were supposed to be the main players who were trained to evaluate at the school level, and to see whether it (curriculum change) was a move in the right direction since they deal with learners on a daily basis; as such, we should not overlook the teachers’ significance and centrality in the education system. To complicate matters further, the curriculum overview and implementation period took too long, and as a result new problem cropped up in trying to solve old problems.

## **2.6 REVISED NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT (RNCS 2002)**

The fact that there was a task team appointed to review C2005 was the first sign; the second sign was the subsequent curricular overhaul. This shows that teachers were drawing their guidelines from an “untrustworthy” curriculum, thereby resulting in widespread learner underperformance.

After C2005, the Ministerial Committee acknowledged curricular problems by announcing radical changes in the curriculum (Mouton *et al.*, 2012:1215). These review outcomes resulted in the iteration of the OBE philosophy in the form of RNCS, which was established in 2004 and thus came before the NCS in 2007. The DBE (2004:2) confirmed that the RNCS was not a new curriculum but a restructuring of C2005 to improve teacher pedagogy and quality of learning. The RNCS included Grades R-9 and was implemented by means of learning programmes. These are systemic programmes that focused on promotion of learning outcomes and assessment standards. The RNCS simplified and clarified C2005. Furthermore, it tried to shift from the skills-based to context-dependent content.



### **2.6.1 Impact of RNCS on teacher pedagogy and learner transitioning**

The enactment of RNCS was also plagued by many problems. For example, there were pedagogical problems within the offering of C2005. Firstly, there was a mismatch between curricular demands and teacher-capacity. Secondly, the teacher practices were hindered in that educators, during teacher-training sessions observed that subject-specific training was largely ignored thus making training superficial and leaving teachers clueless. In addition, there was also a lack of subject specialists, and this too contributed to more criticism and confusion about content. This inevitably hindered teacher' performance especially the intermediate phase (Dada *et al.*, 2009:38). Subject-overload (as stated earlier on) in Grade 4, was still prevalent with 8-9 learning areas. This affected the teacher in planning and teaching efficiently, and the learner in remembering all the content. This issue of subject overload still persists in present times.

On reviewing the Revised National Curriculum Statement, key factors emerged that impacted on learner-transitioning which still act as hindrances to date. (Dada *et al.*, 2009:47) contend that Grades 3-4 learner-transitioning was cited as a key challenge emanating from the lack of curriculum coherence between the Foundation Phase and the Intermediate Phase. The other challenge related to Grade 3-4 transitioning specific to content overload in the intermediate phase. All the Intermediate Phase learning areas were too numerous, and this was exacerbated by the absence of subject specialists. Dada *et al.* (2009:14) cited eight Intermediate Phase learning areas listed under RNCS: Languages, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Arts and Culture, Life orientation, Economic and Management Sciences, and technology.

Coming back to our theme regarding learner-transitioning and teacher-practices, there were too many reforms being implemented at the same time without training the teachers on how to adapt the curriculum. This could have affected the Grade 4 teachers since they failed to understand and interpret the curriculum and to recontextualise the discourse. Furthermore, they could not align the curriculum content to the academic needs of the Grade 4 learners. Findings in the RNCS review highlighted the mismatch between the demands of the RNCS curriculum and the teachers' capacity.

Even after adopting a non-segregated schooling system, teachers faced challenges. These challenges implied that the teachers could not attend to work with thoroughness due to subject and work overload. "In other words, insufficient time and effort are allocated to the development of knowledge and skills in the 'gateway' subjects" (Chisholm 2000:38). A

recommendation was made to reduce the number of subject learning areas to six. Another recommendation was to introduce English as a First Additional Language (DBE 2009:6).

This problem was aggravated by new vocabulary, verbosity and the LOLT, in addition to these differing per subject in Grade 4. Findings from the Review Committee further acknowledged that the challenge at Intermediate Phase was also caused by Grade 3's low proficiency in English LOLT, because by the end of Grade 3, learners' English language proficiency level was not enough to take them through to Grade 4. The quality of both mother-tongue and English instruction has been questioned, especially in the early grades of schooling (DBE 2009:14).

Furthermore, teachers' pedagogical practices failed in that the that teachers found it difficult to sift through content, especially at the Intermediate and Senior Phase levels since content was found in different forms, in different documents, and at different levels of specificity (DBE 2009:6).

It is imperative to note that academic transition is not a recent problem, but has been carried over from C2005 to date, because every curriculum implementation was followed by an evaluation. In all curriculum progressions discussed, learner challenges and teacher pedagogical practices were prominent issues when literacy and numeracy were assessed.

### **2.6.2 The National Curriculum Statement NCS (2007)**

Regarding the recommendations for the restructuring of the NQF, formal schooling was divided into two bands that were under different directorates but within the DoE. Therefore, 'Grade R-9 culminated in the General Education and Training Certificate (Band 4), and Grade 10-12 was to form part of the Further Education and Training band, and in the formal schooling sector it culminated in the National Senior Certificate examination (Dada *et al.*, 2008:38).

### **2.6.3 Impact of NCS on teacher practices and learner transitioning**

The NCS outlined the teachers' role as a key contributor in education transformation in South Africa (Du Plessis 2013:5). Therefore, the NCS accorded the teacher considerable autonomy in interpreting content and how to teach the content. The issue of transition between grades and phases was also a source of concern – especially from Grade 3 to Grade 4. To corroborate this, Du Plessis (2013:7) revealed that teachers complained that

the many learning areas were confusing; furthermore, there was a pedagogic gap between Foundation Phase to Intermediate Phase. The knowledge base of pupils coming out of the NCS curriculum was not enough (Grussendorf 2014:16). Hence, there was a public outcry concerning the standard and quality of the NCS curriculum. Teachers' methodology was more of iteration of the OBE curriculum, whose practices were previously criticised. Despite all these criticisms, there were positive experiences: the teachers had more autonomy such that they could teach and pace work according to learner needs and ability (Du Plessis & Marais 2015:33).

## **2.7 REVIEW OF THE DADA COMMITTEE**

The flaws in the NCS led the Minister of Basic Education to appoint a task team to consider its challenges and concerns. (DBE 2009:44). The Curriculum Implementation Review Committee (CIRC) headed by Dada (2008) was appointed to ensure that the "NCS is repackaged so that it is more accessible to teachers" (DBE 2010:69). The final report of the CIRC recommended a five-year plan for improving curriculum implementation and enhancing teaching and learning (DBE 2009:23).

Findings indicated that teachers were overburdened with administrative work that did not concern learning. Du Plessis and Marais (2015:7) commented that the NCS was too broad and therefore not specific to what teachers had to teach as there was no clear structure of the curriculum. Also, different teachers and different role-players interpreted the curriculum differently, as a result there was a great deal of confusion leading to learner underperformance on a great scale. Further the curriculum was not aligned in structure and design; hence, there was a need for cohesion between Foundation and Intermediate phases (Burroughs 2014:6).

In summary, the curriculum was flawed because of repetition of content from term-to-term, and from one grade to another. Understandably, the teachers were also "change weary". All these criticisms of the NCS curriculum led to endorsing the implementation of the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). The new curriculum, therefore, tried to alleviate the shortcomings of the NCS. Dada *et al.* (2009:6) acquiesced that transition was a problem, which had no short-term solution.

## **2.8 AIMS: CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT POLICY STATEMENT (CAPS, 2012)**

According to the DBE (2009:13), CAPS is not a new curriculum but a transformation of the NCS; hence, it follows similar procedures and principles. The objective of the CAPS

curriculum was to lessen teachers' administrative work and provide clear guidance and consistency for teachers when teaching (O' Donoghue 2013:3). Furthermore, the CAPS curriculum introduced a concise policy document for each grade per subject, which provided details on the content teachers needed to teach and how teachers were to teach. For Du Plessis (2013:1), "CAPS curriculum is an adjustment to what we teach, (curriculum) and not how we teach (teaching methods)". This study is sceptical of teacher achievements within the CAPS - if the teachers did not understand C2005 and RNCS, how then can they cope with CAPS since most of the same teachers fall within the period of curriculum transformation.

### **2.8.1 Curriculum assessment policy statement and teacher-pedagogy**

The CAPS curriculum does not mention the specific role of the teacher because there is little room for teachers to interpret what and how to teach, since content is prescribed. "The CAPS document provides guidelines on how much time should be spent on each topic and what content must be covered" (Du Plessis 2013:2). Pinnock (2011:23) contends that CAPS was supposed to make curriculum more accessible to teachers, but confusion still exists, and underperformance abounds.

### **2.8.2 Impact of the CAPS curriculum on teacher-pedagogy**

Teachers felt too restricted to put their own ideas and adjust curriculum to suit their contexts, but then the same teachers had previously failed to adapt curriculum, hence they were given a structured curriculum.

This research holds that if teachers are given a structured curriculum, which is not adaptable, it puts learning at risk because children are individuals and every context demands different approaches. The CAPS curriculum takes away the power of creativity, hence teachers do not reflect upon their practice, but they just follow instructions according to policy. The other challenge comes from teachers' status, because newly qualified teachers and older teachers do not interpret the curriculum in a similar way. Every teacher is most likely influenced by background, beliefs, and ability to teach content; and this result in contextual variances.

Another challenge cited by Ramatlapana and Makonye (2012:58) is that CAPS demands

uniformity regardless of where you are. Uniformity is two-fold - whilst it is good in maintaining equality in education, contextual factors may not be conducive for certain CAPS prescriptions, thereby leaving teachers and students compromised. To corroborate this view, Fataar (2012:33) argues that the narrow "scripting of the school curriculum fails to leverage a rich curriculum and pedagogical platform that accord schools and teachers the necessary conceptual space to engage students in productive learning". As such, CAPS is too ambitious in terms of content that is supposed to be covered. The other problem is that the content is tightly framed, hence requiring fast pacing when teaching, thereby disadvantaging some learners especially the slow learners.

This study argues that uniformity cannot work as far as teaching is concerned. Many interacting factors either may act as catalysts or may derail the problem. Teachers may be advantaged or affected by the microsystem, macro system, and ecosystem because whatever is presented in the environment can be either a catalyst or a hindrance. In addition, the researcher would like to strengthen the argument by citing Feldman (2017:57), whose standpoint is that "students enter schooling from different structural positions due to early-life immersion in the family and communities that embody distinctive qualities of dispositions". This becomes a challenge if a curriculum is narrowly scripted because children from working-class communities are encouraged to become original thinkers, yet their background did not expose them to everything in the school environment (Waldburger 2014:1).

Although there are challenges with the CAPS curriculum, there are some positives. There is now an emphasis on active learner-participation and content knowledge. Also, the pacing and sequencing of the curriculum is much more organised (O' Donoghue 2013:3). It succeeded in reducing the number of projects per learner, doing away with portfolios, suspending the CTAs for Grade 9 and reducing the number of subjects in the Intermediate Phase from eight to six (DBE 2010:7).

However, the fact that CAPS has gone back to the "old curriculum" indicates negativity because the idea was to do away with apartheid education. The old curriculum was strongly framed and strongly classified in content, and it is the same in the current structured curriculum. Consequently, teachers' pedagogical tasks are made difficult by trying to cover syllabus while adhering to curricular guidelines in an overloaded and tightly-framed curriculum. The main drawback of CAPS is that the workload at Intermediate Phase level, is enormous.

The concern regarding CAPS is that it is strongly classified and strongly paced, and this disregards learners who are not as fast in comprehending learning-content. It appears more suitable to the middle-class children who usually are advantaged; this is in line with what Waldburger (2014:1) asserts - students possess cultural capital, hence they are able to navigate the progressive world.

Table 2.1 summarises the pedagogical aspects of each curriculum (Take note, the old curriculum refers to the post-independence Christian-based curriculum).

**Table 2.1: A comparison of pedagogical approaches in South Africa's different curricula**

CURRICULUM	OLD CURRICULUM	C2005/OBE	RNCS	NCS/CAPS
Pedagogy	Authoritarian Pedagogical philosophy	Interactive goal- oriented	Participatory learner- centred and activity based	No clear pedagogic roles
Method	Performance- based	Integrated / Competence-based	Hybrid mixed model performance like in relation to knowledge then competence as learner centred pedagogy	Interactive goal-orientated
Approach in learning	Rote learning	Skills and outcomes based	Discovery- based learning	Rote learning
Curriculum offering	Rigid Curriculum centred on drill and practice	Adaptable	Adaptable teacher to design accordingly	Rigid
Content	Content and sequence prescribed	Content not prescribed Teachers were to design their own learning programme and select appropriate content	content partially prescribed	Content and sequence prescribed
Role of learner	Passive	Active	Active	Active and critical thinking encouraged
Role of teacher	Authoritarian	Facilitator	Facilitator	Not clear pedagogic roles
Objectives	Content-driven	Skills driven	Learning outcomes	Concepts content and skills
Principles	Christian ideology/segregated education	Outcomes based	Outcomes based	Social and environmental justice
Teacher work quantity	overloaded	Overloaded	Overloaded	Overloaded
Assessment	Content assessment/exam driven	Continuous assessment	Outcomes and assessment standards	Content continuous assessment

(Adapted from Pinar (2013:47); Van der Nest (2012:5); Ramatlapana & Makonye (2012:57); Nongxa (2010:56); DBE (2009:9); De Klerk (2000:40); Chisholm (2000:50); Jansen & Christie (1990:13))

## **2.9 CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT POLICY STATEMENT**

According to the Catholic Institute of Justice (2010:4) analysis of the CAPS curriculum indicated that CAPS is good in that it is prescriptive and informative; hence, it helps teachers in knowing what must be covered. Although the content given is good, the problem seems to be content-overload in all subjects because there is a mix of a bit of everything. Here again, the review of the Grade 4 CAPS curriculum in the Intermediate Phase exposes overloading, implying that the problem was never successfully dealt with. Furthermore, O' Donoghue (2013:3) maintains that generic home language in Grade 4 is too prescriptive, and together with the content overload, thoroughness of teaching and learning is severely compromised.

The issue of Intermediate Phase transitional challenges has not been dealt with effectively in South Africa and this affects our schooling system. To support the assertion that South Africa has not succeeded in dealing with transitioning challenges, the researcher included the results of *PIRLS* (2006, 2011 & 2016) where literacy results are ranked; South Africa's Grade 4 literacy level ranks amongst the lowest, compared to about 50 competing nations worldwide. Even National and international findings from reports extracted from NEEDU (2013), DoE (2012:23), ANA (2014), SACMEQ & *PIRLS* (2011, 2016) give an indication of learning challenges that may be emanating from teacher pedagogy; hence, there is a need for further research on topics like teacher pedagogical practices and teachers' subject knowledge as it is evident that the reduction of number of learning areas has not yielded the desired results, especially between Grades 3 and 4.

## **2.10 SOUTH AFRICA - GRADES 3 AND 4: CONTEMPORARY LEARNING CONTEXTS**

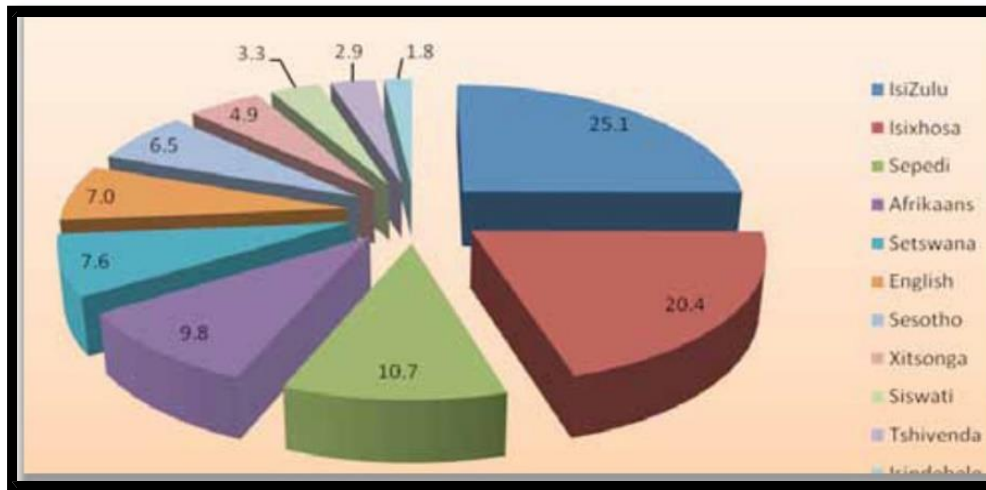
In the South African primary school context, Grade 3 learners were housed in the Foundation Phase block; but in Grade 4 they move to the Intermediate Phase, which situates them in a whole new environment, which sometimes seems that they are on an island – such is the confusion of the transition. To complicate matters further, in Grade 4 the learners are taught by teachers who specialise in single subjects. There is no one who is assigned to take care of the emotional well-being of learners; subject specialist teachers are so burdened (by overload) with delivering content that they seldom find time to assist learners in this regard.



Even more traumatic to the learner is the LOLT change (English) at the Grade 4 stage – learners were accustomed to being taught in their mother-tongue/home language from Grades 1-3. According to policy guidelines, additive multilingualism is very important and African languages must be imparted in schools (DBE 2011:13). South Africa schools use two pedagogical theories of language; some schools use the immersion approach, and some use the bilingual approach. The proponents of the early immersion approach argue that it is advantageous for a learner to acquire a new language when they are still very young; for example, learning in English from Grade one (Imhoff 1990:57). The immersion approach in English is used mostly in Former Model C schools and some private schools. Another approach adopted by some schools is termed as a bilingual transitional model. The bilingual transitional model is used mostly in public schools where the learners only start learning in English from Grade 4. Taylor and Coetzee (2013:6) have identified the immersion approach as “The Straight-For-English” LOLT approach. This study was based upon schools that use the early immersion model - the former Model C schools. The reason for my using these schools as research sites was to remove too many conflicting circumstantial factors around the transitioning period.

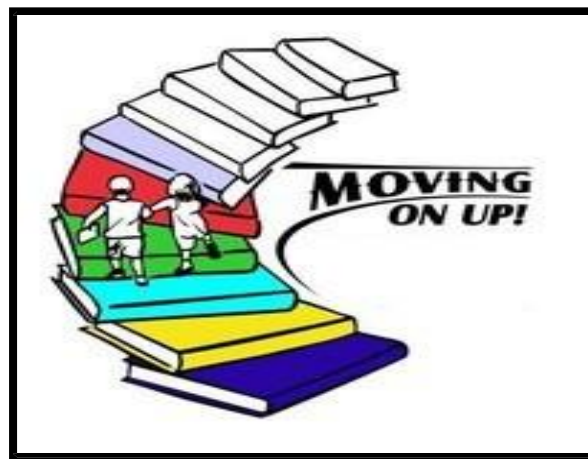
As we move deeper into globalisation, English is of vital importance for economic transformation and international communication; as such, our education system should gear learners for this journey. Herein lies the dilemma as Grade 4 learners are unprepared for the shift (Pretorius 2014:55). However, “this failure to cross the bridge between Foundation Phase and Intermediate Phase is by no means a unique South African phenomenon”.

Another example of the “4th Grade slump” comes from studies in America as cited by Gee and Lou (2008:4) who state that “The United States is facing an educational crisis. USA students are doing poorly in Literacy, Mathematics and Science compared with their peers in other industrialized countries”. They further cite that elementary education in the USA is facing serious problems in the foundation level or elementary school - problems leading to “the 4th Grade slump”.

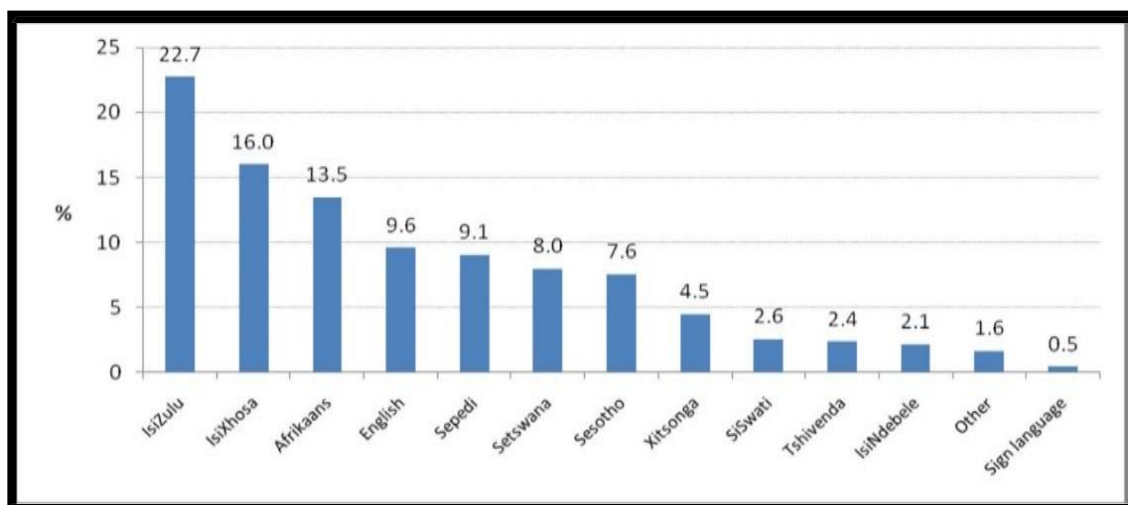


**Figure 2.2: Percentage of learners by Home language (DBE 2010:12)**

Figure 2.3 illustrates that as the Grade fours transition from Grade 3 to 4 the work becomes harder.



**Figure 2.3: Illustration of transitioning phase between Foundation Phase and Intermediate Phase**



**Figure 2.4: Percentage of the country's population according to the First Language spoken (Adapted from Census Brief 2012; Census 2011:24)**

### **2.10.1.1 *South-African statistics and position on LOLT***

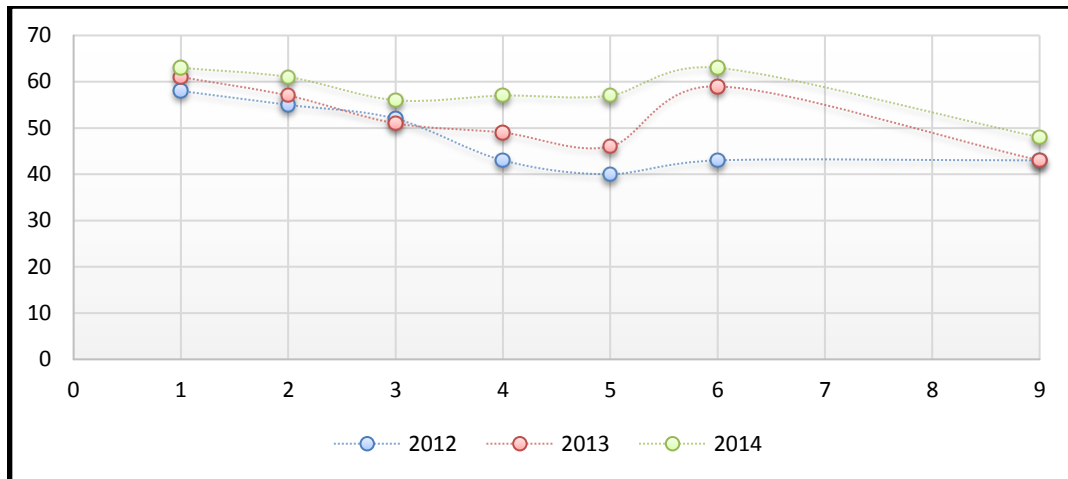
Literature studies have revealed that South Africa participates in both national and international assessments (NEEDU, 2013; ANA, 2012 - 2014; SACMEQ, 2000 - 2007; PIRLS, 2006-2016). This is done in a bid to improve the quality of literacy and numeracy, which ultimately impacts on the quality of education findings. Findings from these assessment studies consistently demonstrate the poor quality of education in South Africa, which can be mainly blamed on linguistic factors.

A report by NEEDU (2012:6) indicates that it is widely known that South African schools perform below expectations and little is supposedly known about why this is so. The more the DoE tries to fix it, the worse it becomes. However, information gathered assists in identifying poor language trends as one causal factor. Taylor and Coetzee (2013:4) warn against blaming the LOLT because they hold the view that the relationship between these findings and language factors are not clear, given the historical language disadvantages. This assertion is debatable because it seems the relations are clearly delineated because inability to read well can eventually stunt learners' use of language even if they have the ability to learn content in school.

A study sampled 133 schools in 15 districts of nine provinces (NEEDU 2012:4-8). They top three readers in each of the sampled grades per school were selected for assessment. Results indicated that 72% of the supposedly best learners possessed reading skills below the average benchmark. This tells us the extent of the state of language challenges.

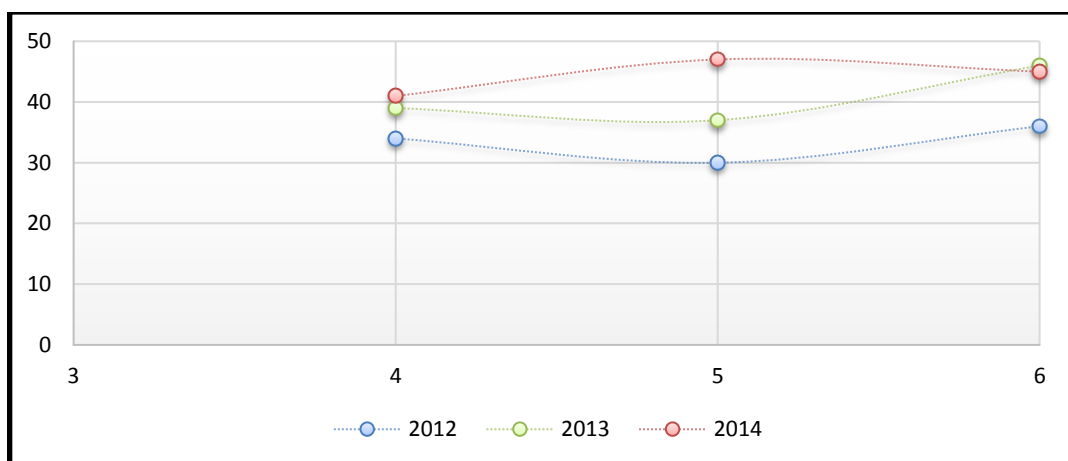
These findings are just one of many indicators of poor literacy levels in LOLT in South Africa. Also, the results of The National Schools Effectiveness Study (NSES), concerning Grade 3s and 4s in numeracy and literacy (2007-2009) showed that only 19% of Grade 3s read at grade level, and 27% of Grade 4s read at their grade level. These results may be indicative of inefficient and ineffective teacher-practices in South Africa because if literacy and academic results are below international norms then it means teacher practices are questionable.

Having presented various findings from both international and national assessments, it is easier to link poor literacy achievement to LOLT because the sampled schools' participants presented a lack of thinking and reasoning abilities in interpreting the information.



**Figure 2.5: Annual national assessment results: Summary of achievement in Home Language in 2012, 2013, 2014**

The above results analysis serves to provide performance trends and standards as presented in the Annual National Assessment reports on the evaluation of 2012-2014 national results.



**Figure 2.6: Achievement percentage (First Additional Language (FAL))**

The ANA results of (2012) corroborate the views of Prinsloo and Heugh (2013:12) who highlight that "South African Research Evidence during large-scale assessment shows that after the first three school years, which is from Grade 4 onwards, only a minority of learners adequately mastered content subjects across the curriculum". Therefore, when we look at the overall educational achievement, there is a need to consider whether the LOLT acts as a barrier to learning.

The ANA results of 2011-2014 indicate that the average performance of Grades 3, 4, 5, 6 and 9 learners in Mathematics and Languages is below 50%. Hence, Hirsch (2013:4) argues that "if these tests are true representations of what learners are expected to learn,

then this would suggest that at the end of every academic year typical learners in these grades only understand less than 50% of what they are expected to know in Mathematics and Languages”.

The ANA results indicate that learners struggle academically when they transition to Grade 4; as illustrated when we compare over the years the Grade 3-mark analysis to the Grade 4-mark analysis. Learners cannot all of a sudden have plummeted in numeracy and language skills and fail in large numbers; there could be something negatively affecting numeracy and literacy performance.

Although the authorities (DBE 2012:23-24) have claimed that there is an improvement in the ANAs, Murasi (2014:5) warns against such claims, because the exams authenticity and validity are questionable, since the results are managed by schools and the tests change annually “thereby undermining the possibility and reliability to make direct comparisons between schools”. In both national and international findings on performance assessments, it is evident that our learners struggle with literacy skills from the Foundation Phase as claimed by Murasi (2014: 2-3) who identified early literacy problems among the Grade 1-3 learners in South Africa.

## **2.11 TRANSITION AND PEDAGOGIC PRACTICES**

The issue of pedagogical practices is vital and needs exploration because research generally indicates that there are serious academic challenges during the transition to Grade 4 because the instructional practices of Intermediate Phase teachers do not meet the development needs of the learners (Eccles & Midgley 1989:34). According to Manditereza (2015:41), the fact that there is an apparent mismatch between teacher-practice and learners' needs, means that it is imperative to analyse teacher pedagogical practices as instrumental to challenges faced by learners.

Table 2.2 is presented to explain possible reasons for learners' low achievement levels as viewed by researchers (Hoadley 2012:197). This paints a picture as to what is happening in classrooms in South Africa using the pedagogical lens. The studies were carried out in the years representing each curricular paradigm shift, from OBE teachers to CAPS teacher-practices.

**Table 2.2: Small-scale findings derived from primary schools, which were studied**

FINDINGS	KEY STUDIES
Low levels of cognitive demand	Adler <i>et al.</i> (2002)
Dominance of concrete over abstract meaning	Schollar (2008); Ensor (2009)
Lack of opportunities for reading and writing	
Slow pacing	Reeves <i>et al.</i> (2008); Pretorius & Machet (2004)
Collectivised as opposed to Individualised learning	Hoadley (2003); Ensor <i>et al.</i> (2002)
The erosion of instructional time	Hoadley (2008)
Multiple complexities related to Language, especially second language teaching and learning	Chisholm (2005) Probyn (2009); Setati & Adler (2000); Desai (2001)
Lack of explicit feedback to learners	Brock-Unte & Holmarscottir (2004)
Lack of coherence	Reeves (2005); Hoadley (2008) Venkat & Naidoo (2012)

(Hoadley 2012:97)

Regarding transition, the findings are indicative of learners' failure to adapt to the systematic type of teaching-learning adopted by the teacher. The learners may be transitioning from one teaching style to the other; each style may be either a catalyst or a hindrance. The learners often experience challenges in adjusting to changes in the educational environment, and transitions represent a major shift in daily contexts in which learners interact. Elementary school learners are attached to one teacher who facilitates all the core subjects, in addition to meeting learners' emotional needs; whereas in Grade 4 the teaching approach used is departmentalisation (one teacher per subject).

## **2.12 RATIONALE FOR EXPLORING LOLT, PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES AND TRANSITION**

In a bid to come up with a new angle of research and highlight issues of transition, pedagogy and LOLT practices are presented as influential in academic achievement during the move from Grades 3-4. Whilst other researchers Delsing (2010:12), Pretorius (2014:56) and Sibanda (2014:23) have looked at LOLT as an entity and some have looked at transition and behavioural issues as an entity, my study differs in that it explored the link between Grades 3-4 transitions and LOLT. Also, it considered the impact of teacher pedagogical practices simultaneously gauging the impact of English LOLT. English as LOLT, is a horizontal discourse; meaning that learning will be dependent upon previous knowledge - in this case Grade 3 knowledge will inform Grade 4. The researcher preferred to explore how the LOLT and pedagogical practices influence continuities concerning learners' transition from Grades 3-4.

It is hoped that this study can bring about new ways in which teachers can adapt and modify their teaching practices to suit students' diverse social-cultural groups in the process of recontextualising knowledge (Feldman 2017:67) to bridge the gap between student learning and the school's functional and pedagogical orientations.

As suggested at the beginning of this chapter, there are reasons that show that language plays a major role in learners' content comprehension. If a learner does not understand the LOLT then he/she cannot follow instructions, and thus cannot decode textbook language, thereby becoming alienated from the classmates, and then usually engages in inappropriate behaviour (Hoadley 2012:193). South Africa's poor quality of education is attributed to language challenges, Jordaan (2011:3) corroborates this by emphasising that learners are exposed to inadequate and inappropriate teaching styles that result in language difficulties across all curriculum areas. Simasiku, Kasanda and Smit (2015:6), view language as being the channel between thinking and learning as the extent to which we grasp language determines how effectively we comprehend subject content. Thus, knowledge of LOLT supersedes the knowledge content of other disciplines. Van der Berg and Taylor (2011:17), asserts that there is a strong relationship between Language socio-economic status and school functionality in South Africa. Although this may be the case, this study did not intend magnifying that relationship even though language and its socio-economic status may be mentioned sometimes.

To obviate controversial and contextual factors, the study used ex-Model C schools that followed the early immersion approach. The reason this research explored LOLT as the problem was because teachers using English as LOLT may not be aware of their limitations when teaching content (Setiadi 2013:70). Hence, there was a need to investigate contemporary teacher practices in relation to the LOLT.

### **2.12.1 LOLT Pedagogy in other subjects**

To accentuate the link between teacher practices and LOLT, Hammond (2013:3) states that LOLT weaves across transition as a theme, because "language is a cross-cutting issue that exists as both a barrier and as an opportunity for teachers and students". Therefore, the language of instruction can be leveraged for increased access or used for further marginalisation. This assertion is supported by findings from Manditereza (2015:40), whose findings concluded that the "issue of medium of instruction and learning is a serious concern often associated with low academic standards".

It is essential to look back and ask ourselves where lower academic standards originate in as much as how the medium of instruction affects learning; but the researcher would like to focus on the role of teachers' practices and how it influences learner transitions from Grades 3-4. The teacher-practices affect the learners' capacity to acquire knowledge and skills because language is a socialising tool. That means teachers as agents of socialisation adopt beliefs based on their experiences as students of English LOLT and as teachers of LOLT. These experiences influence how they adapt messages from the curriculum and then adapt them to transfer knowledge and skills in the classroom. Hence, the study investigated to what extent, English as the LOLT marginalises learners at commencement of Grade 4 (Manyike & Lemmer 2014:252).

Most people hold the misconception that since Mathematics uses symbols, there is no need for language learning in a Mathematics class; but learners must solicit confirmation of their thinking through LOLT (Viliami 2005:483). In a study of language factors that affect Mathematics teaching and learning, the learners struggled to grasp the vocabulary of the subject, thus limiting their discussion of ideas and concepts. Mathematics teachers' pedagogical practices put pressure on second language learners - even the teachers had limited mathematical vocabulary to explain mathematical concepts clearly to learners, as they were also products of a system that did not emphasise English as a LOLT (Viliami 2005:483). Thus, the cycle continues.

### **2.12.2 Transition issues and language**

Ponder (2008:278) cites that elementary teachers in the United States of America are expected to be masters of many subjects because there is a practice of class teaching. Currently in the USA, each state has its own set standards, curricular assessments most of them measure textbook knowledge. It is therefore true that language affects academic achievement, therefore the researcher firmly maintains that language is the supporting foundation (or hindrance) in learner-performance during transition.

## **2.13 LITERATURE REVIEW ON PREVIOUS STUDIES CONCERNING TRANSITIONS**

Murasi (2014:3) states that the issue of transitions in education cannot be underestimated. When learners transition from one level of education to another, they experience changes within themselves as well as in their learning environment. Difficult



educational transitions can lead to learners' disengagement, negative attitudes towards school, reduced self-confidence, and reduced levels of motivation in education. Therefore, for learners to achieve, there is a need for a smooth transition from one school level to another. Of note, is the assertion made by Kvaslund (2000:27) that transition is also determined by students' transitions from previous experience. For example, the English as LOLT is a horizontal discourse meaning learning will be dependent upon previous knowledge. The students, for example, must know the letters of the alphabet before they can read.

This study questions whether learners are able to understand academic concepts through the language they are still learning because people can only be empowered when they can use and adapt a language for their own purpose? The challenge faced in schools by students is that "too often the school discourse displaces the discourse of students (Murasi 2014:5). Understandably, discourses must be congruent since both teacher and learners require language to acquire knowledge. If learners are not nurtured effectively during this phase, they are bound to fall behind because foundation skills are developed during the first three years of schooling.

After the foundational years, learners begin to experience problems (Pretorius 2014:52). Hence, during the movement from Grades 3–4, the achievement gap is pronounced. To date, there has been a lot of research focused on learner education transitions and its impact on behaviour and academic attainment, hence researchers are trying to pinpoint the exact factors that influence learner transition. The reason transition draws a lot of interest is because of the drop in academic performance. Though researchers have come up with many variables concerning transitioning challenges from Grade 3-4, there seems to be no real, definite and authentic answers in sight.

Gee and Lou (2008:4) blame the lack of equilibrium in the relationship between the academic language LOLT and content as causing failure in Grade 4 because "content in school is more couched in academic language and the student's lack of contingency on their control of LOLT results in inability to comprehend content". As learners move to Grade 4, learning content becomes more complex and specialised since different academic areas and disciplines use different varieties of vocabulary.

Researchers (Delsing 2010:34; Rockoff & Lockwood 2010:10; Cook *et al.*, 2008:23) have come up with many variables to explain the drop in academic performance in Grade 4.

Most researchers lay the blame within learner issues, yet it could be the educators' lack of English language skills (among other factors) which have led to learners not being empowered with knowledge and skills to progress through certain grades. It should also be noted that the problem may emanate from the environment which may be stifling academically in terms of knowledge-stimulation and communication skills. Therefore, the "4th Grade slump" phenomenon needs to be explored in different contexts. Researchers have battled to come up with a contingency solution.

Loban (1976:33) who carried out a 12-year longitudinal study of students from Grade 1-12, cited a drop-in reading performance, which became more pronounced during Grade 4; yet in Grade 3, this was less conspicuous. However, Loban (1976) did not sufficiently explain reasons for the drop in the transition from Grade 3-4; neither did he pinpoint factors that have contributed to the drop. This explains that students who were successful in the third Grade later dropped in performance once they entered Grade 4.

## **2.14 INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

Several international studies (Bellmore 2011:282; Lockwood 2010:8; Pretorius 2014:52; Rockoff & Lockwood 2010:13) have investigated various theories related to the "Grade 4-slump". Another study, which corroborates findings on the issue of the "Grade 4-slump" by Holas and Houston (2011:333), was a longitudinal study of 1500 Michigan student who were assessed in performance progression from elementary school to junior high school in the 7th year. These studies found that there was a decline in achievement, engagement, and reading competence.

This implies that the pace of reading development slackens down around the time the learner reaches Grade 4 (Chall, Vicki & Jacobs 1983:5). This is because after Grade 3, knowledge is mainly acquired if one can read competently. A successful transition will determine learners' ability to comprehend subject matter (Kitson 2011:10).

Holas and Huston (2012:343) maintain that transitioning implies adjusting to new contexts and this is greatly influenced by the congruence of the past and present contexts, and the dynamic relationships between the learner, the teacher and the school environment where transitioning is taking place. Their recommendation was that researchers who explore the theme of transition must also explore the school culture, the student-teacher relationship, the teaching practices, the school size and the demographic differences.

Hence, investigating teacher practices becomes imperative because they are catalysts for developing the language ability of the learners.

## **2.15 NATIONAL STUDIES**

As stated earlier, there is a dearth of research studies on learner-transitioning in South Africa. However, a few studies on learner-transition have been conducted. One of these studies comes from Pretorius (2014:55) who did confirm that transitional challenges do exist in South Africa stating that "our Grade 4s are not well prepared for the literacy challenges in the Intermediate Phase". Pretorius further cited the following as being challenges that are experienced by Grade 4s in South Africa: Increased workload beyond learners' competence, the challenge of learning in a new language different from Grade 1-3 LOLT, and failure to cope with literacy and reading challenges as evidenced by PIRLS (2006, 2011, 2016).

Another South African study by Sibanda (2015:12) focused on literacy challenges such as the lack of relevant vocabulary, complex content in the curriculum, movement from concrete to abstract thinking, among other transitional challenges. An article by Mkhwananzi (2014:1), indicated issues like longer school days, having new teachers, and relationship problems in Grade 4. A study by Matavire (2016:7) cited poor reading skills and an academic cognitive leap from Grade 3-4.

## **2.16 RESEARCH GAPS IN TRANSITION**

As stated earlier on, in South Africa, there is a gap in research on learner-transition especially between Grades 3-4. This should be the first gap that needs to be addressed. Internationally, too, most studies seem no longer relevant to current situations. This study also aims to fill research gaps in relation to grade-transition and language. Gordon *et al.* (2011:2-3) cited in Eccles *et al.* (1991, 1993) indicated that elementary school learners perform better than middle and junior school learners of the same age in GPA standardized tests. Several researchers have suggested that it's not necessarily learner-transition, which causes deceleration in academic achievement, but it may be other factors such as school organisational culture and teaching practices (Gordon *et al.*, 2011:3). The LOLT and pedagogical practices were also cited as factors that led to "the Grade 4-slump". Additionally, Holas and Huston (2012:333) identified classroom size and classroom quality as contributory factors that need to be explored.

Cartmell (2011:27) encourages researching transitioning in earlier school years since current information on transition seems stagnant and no longer applicable. None of the previous findings seems to have found a stable solution to transitional issues because it is not clear how the LOLT and pedagogical practices affects learning at Grade 4 level.

Teachers all around the world are facing new challenges as governments introduce policies to teach English at much younger ages. Despite this move, there is little research that documents what happens in practice when students move from learning English at the first level to the next, and how they can be supported to make this change. This exposes another gap in that there is little research as to what happens in practice when learners move from learning English in Grade 3 and then moving up to Grade 4. For this reason, the study spread across two levels; that is, between Grades 3 and 4. This inevitably helped in finding out how the process of the LOLT in the Foundation Phase (Grade 3) prepares the learners' movement to Grade 4 (Intermediate Phase).

## **2.17 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

Focusing on the South African curriculum journey as an extension of the study, contributed to gaining an understanding and knowledge of teachers' pedagogic practices. Furthermore, the history of the curriculum evolution has been provided in the hope that mistakes of the past will not be repeated and that quick solutions will be found towards the transitioning problems. The shifting from one curriculum to the other makes teachers demotivated – no sooner have they adapted to one curriculum, then the other one is introduced. Now suddenly, they are required to acquire new ideas and methods to suit the dictates of the new DoE curriculum policy. Adu and Ngibe (2012:984), corroborate this by stating that "continuous change in the curriculum affects the lives, relationships, and working patterns of teachers and the educational experiences of learners".

Ironically, curricular reforms are supposedly meant to improve practice and learning; unfortunately, it seems to make practice even more difficult (Adu & Ngibe 2012:984-986). Hence, Hoadley and Jansen (2002:12) affirm that changing a curriculum is problematic in that it takes time for stakeholders to adjust and comprehend new ways of thinking. In addition, it also depends on whether the teachers involved have the capacity to continually adjust to further curriculum reform.

Transitional issues regarding the curriculum from OBE to CAPS were discussed. The reason

was to establish whether there was a pedagogical connection among the challenges emanating from curriculum transformation. In this way contemporary understandings of teachers' pedagogical practices and how they influence learner- transitions from Grade 3-4, may be elicited.

The curriculum paradigm shift has resulted in teacher challenges because, even today, we still have teachers who were trained pre-94 and are most likely to lack in certain areas of curriculum delivery due to the legacy of apartheid where teachers (as students) received inferior education. In 2012, the RNCS was re-evaluated, but Themane and Mamabolo (2011:8) disapproved of this as it failed to equip teachers with the ability to select socially valued knowledge and skills.

Some researchers like Delsing (2010:12), Pretorius (2014:56) and Sibanda (2014:23) have attributed Grade 4 transitioning challenges as a reading gap. On the other hand, Hirsch (2005:3) argues that the "4th Grade slump" cannot only be attributed to reading problems since the learning challenges start long before the learners become good readers. The gap (especially in English LOLT) begins to widen in the fourth grade and then progressively widens as learners move up grades.

Although the transition is synonymous with a drop in academic achievement, Sanacore and Palumbo (2009:67) state that "though some learners transition smoothly to fourth Grade, other students struggle with content area material'. Parker and Neuharth-Pritchett (2009:22) argue that the cause is not the content material, but that it is the conflict between the instructional academic environment and the developmental needs of learners, which lead to transition challenges.

There is strong evidence that "the Grade 4 slump" is not restricted to South Africa or to the United States of America as a study by Bozzo (2005:48), showed that international reading literacy assessment results are declining in certain countries. For example, Sweden, which is said to have been rated first in the PIRLS reading literacy study of 10-year olds, dropped to rank nine on the assessment of 15-year olds on PISA, a programme for international student assessment. Other countries which experienced a dip included England, Italy, Germany, Greece and Russia.

The inclusion of international studies on the topic of transition from Grade 3-4 allows for a broader exploration of literacy challenges and linguistic issues. In addition, it also allows

us to see how South Africa's education system, compares to other nations. Focusing on Grade 4 is an acknowledgement that it is a pivotal year in the primary school. Regardless of differences in learner-contexts, policies, and teacher-training, Grade 4 transition has proved to be a problematic area.

Most researchers have cited the persistent physical, social, and psychological effects on learner-transition. They all seem to concur that transition between Grade 3 and 4 ultimately results in a decrease in academic achievement. As for LOLT, whether it is English, Afrikaans, or another Language, the language used in an academic environment to construct knowledge, beliefs, and worldviews has proved to be challenging for learners.

This study provides a new perspective to learner grade-transitioning and its challenges in that the methodology uses interviews, observations, questionnaires, and documents to explore phenomena between Grade 3-4. In addition, the lessons observed (Chapter 5) helped to analyse exactly how the modalities of classification and framing create different pedagogic practices. In doing so, it is hoped that some gaps in knowledge will be filled by this research study.

## CHAPTER 3

### USING BERNSTEIN TO UNPACK TEACHER-PEDAGOGY AND LEARNER-TRANSITION AS CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

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#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter uses the theory of Bernstein as an epistemological guide to evaluate knowledge presented in the study, and to investigate Grades 3 and 4 teacher-pedagogy in teaching different subjects using English as LOLT. This chapter uses Bernstein's (2000:90) concepts to evaluate Grades 3 and 4 teachers' abilities in re-contextualising knowledge from the curriculum until it reaches the learners. Re-contextualising, put simply, is the movement of knowledge from one state to another; in this case the movement of knowledge is done using English as a LOLT in all subjects. For example, knowledge can be set as literacy research, which is then translated into policy and finally converted to practice. To be more specific, this can emanate from the curriculum, to the syllabus and then to the textbook. Thereafter, teachers select, pace, and evaluate what they consider relevant.

This assertion is supported by Bernstein (1990:78) who maintains that within the pedagogic relationship, the teacher wields the power to control the process of acquisition and transmission. Therefore, the teacher sets out clearly defined roles for the learners. It is against this backdrop that this framework has been selected to evaluate teacher and student interactions to understand who wields power in the teaching-learning process, in addition to evaluating the strength of a specific discipline. This chapter provides a context for the study by providing a theoretical framework based on the guiding question: *to what extent do teacher practices in English LOLT influence learner transition from Grades 3–4?* In this chapter, I use Bernstein and Bronfenbrenner's theories as the theoretical framework to understand and explain how teachers' pedagogical practices influence learner-transitions from Grade 3-4, in English medium classrooms.

Firstly, I begin this chapter with an outline of Bernstein's theoretical framework by focusing on his curriculum re-contextualization within the interactions of the pedagogic discourse. This is done within two opposing models, which are classification and framing. Therefore, observations, interviews, and questionnaires were used to demonstrate how these two models of classification and framing translate into visible and invisible

pedagogies, which are key themes for the study. I have referred to curriculum re-contextualising to unpack how Grades 3-4 teachers select, sequence and pace knowledge from the curriculum to the learners. When teachers engage in pedagogical practices, they adopt a recontextualising principle. Wheelahan (2010:6) defines re-contextualising as “the principle that governs the way in which knowledge is selected from the field in which it was produced and translated for transmission and acquisition”. This study asserts that the principle is instrumental in that it explores how Grades 3 and 4 teachers’ pedagogical practices were framed and classified, thereby leading us to identifying the type of pedagogy in the observed classes.

Secondly, the study relates to the works of Bernstein concerning the making and unmaking of the curriculum and this is connected to what Keane (2014:49) observed - the challenge in the primary school is to create relevance when re-contextualising knowledge within the curriculum. Hence, the teaching learning process must create meaning and relevance. I drew on Bernstein’s theories of classification, framing, visible and invisible pedagogy to explain the influence of teachers’ pedagogical practices on learner transitions from Grades 3-4. For Bernstein (1990:63) differences in teacher pedagogies impact on both the selection and organisation of knowledge.

Thirdly, the study discusses the pedagogic device, which is at the centre of Bernstein’s (1990:63) concepts adopted in this study. This study would not carry much weight without explaining the pedagogic device because it is the “condition” for the construction of pedagogic discourses. Wheelahan (2010:30) emphasised that “the pedagogic device is responsible for mediating the way knowledge is distributed, re-contextualised and evaluated in the curriculum”. The ensemble of distributive, re-contextualised and evaluative rules is what is referred to as the pedagogic device.

Fourthly, the study explored the applicability of two complementing theories. My study revealed how Bronfenbrenner’s (1979:111) theory of ecology gives credence to Bernstein’s concepts. For example, both the teacher and learner are affected by the conditions and the environment, which are within the parameters of the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and the chronosystem. This highlights how Bronfenbrenner’s theory supports Bernstein’s concepts.

Lastly, the chapter discusses factors that work against Bernstein’s concepts. A summary of the theoretical framework is also given.



### **3.2 BERNSTEIN AND THE MAKING OF THE CURRICULUM**

As far as curriculum re-contextualisation is concerned in South Africa, Metcalfe (2008:93-94) observed that "curriculum changes have de-skilled teachers with serious consequences for quality". This seems to indicate that the teachers are incapacitated or compromised as far as knowledge-distribution and re-contextualisation are concerned. Even after seeking and implementing a socially just and human rights-based curriculum, the policymakers and major stakeholders are still faced with challenges - in this case Grades 3-4 learner transitioning. The framework adopted in this study will therefore assist in highlighting the issues of power and control as expressed in concepts of classification and framing in relation to the new curriculum. In the making of the curriculum, we look at classification and framing in relation to how teacher- practice influences knowledge-distribution through the process of recontextualisation.

To first make sense of classification and framing of knowledge, one needs to first understand the concept of the re-contextualisation principle. It is imperative to note that before knowledge framing and classification, one must discuss the position of the pedagogic discourse, which is referred to as the re-contextualising principle (Bernstein 1996:47). The content of the syllabus and curriculum is "delocated" from its original site by the teacher who, now, through classification and framing, adopts a pedagogical practice that moves knowledge into sites of teaching and learning.

Considering South Africa's paradigm shift in curriculum and policy overhaul, teachers have been exposed to new pedagogic demands. This constant shift in the learning and teaching environment may affect the teacher-learner relationship. This is because those who regulate and control the curriculum define what becomes the content of the school subject. Teachers in most cases are left marginalised but are expected to become active agents when re-contextualising acceptable content. These teachers struggle to adapt because they are either positively or negatively influenced by the macrosystem, microsystem, exosystem and chronosystem. It is within these systems that a complex system of mediation within social class dispositions, learning culture and context of the environment is experienced. According to Bernstein (2015:1) one of the greatest trials facing the South African education system is the inability to produce adequate, capable, and knowledgeable teachers who can impact positively in the teaching-learning environments.

Concerning LOLT and pedagogy, Fieldman (2017:67) and Kitson (2011:12) reveal that there are incongruent relationships in learning and teaching, emanating from the failure to recontextualise aspects of the curriculum. (Jordan 2011:3) adds that language factors do influence learning factors. Regarding teacher practices, pedagogic problems have roots in the legacy of apartheid; hence teacher practice affects the ability to move knowledge effectively within sites (Spaull 2013:27). For example, some teachers fail to recontextualise the content to meet the demands of the learners (Spaull 2013:27). To highlight the teacher challenges. Bernstein (1990:181) postulated that learners varying, and different achievement levels might be the result of changes in teacher pedagogical approaches; hence, this may alter or influence learners' academic outcomes.

This chapter presents the rationale for the preference in using Bernstein's theories to unlock teacher-pedagogy during and after transition. In this section, I bring the making of the curriculum and discuss how knowledge is taken from the original site to the intended site through the re-contextualising principle. Based on the theory of Bernstein's curriculum re-contextualising principle, when teachers teach, they are engaging in intermediate roles where they are receivers and carriers of knowledge, which they thereafter distribute to the learners. Therefore, their practice is interpreted in their ability to move knowledge that is within the intended curriculum to the implemented curriculum, then lastly to the enacted curriculum. For example, in a South African scenario the DoE sets the intended curriculum as policy, then the curriculum designers in universities re-contextualise the policy, and finally the teachers receive the curriculum as a syllabus, hence they act as intermediates. Teachers act as agencies of reproduction as they interact with the learners.

Further, Bernstein (2000:33) emphasizes that a pedagogic discourse is a recontextualising principle that "selectively appropriates, relocates, refocuses and relates other discourses to constitute its own order". In addition, (Bernstein 2000:32) asserts that discourses move from one location to another and when discourses are usurped, they are therefore, brought into special relationship with each other thereby articulating power relations. The pedagogical discourse is presented as a carrier and relay for ideological messages for external power relations, which in turn are interpreted as degrees of classification and framing in knowledge production.

Hoadley (2006:55) comments that the differential distribution of knowledge to our learners produces different pedagogic identities and different orientations to meaning, both abstract and contextual. This study focused on the end-level whereby teacher practices were

observed and analysed as they reproduced and recontextualised the curriculum in the form of subject content regardless of the LOLT proficiency. This resulted in the prominence of three key issues. Firstly, under the spotlight was the teachers' ability in re-contextualising content relevant to the needs of the learners. Secondly, the teachers who are mostly non-native speakers of English LOLT had to re-contextualise content in English LOLT. Lastly, they had to transfer knowledge to learners who are also non-native speakers of English and who are at a transitional point in schooling terms. Therefore, it is through knowledge-production and movement that Bernstein's key concepts of classification and framing become distinct.

Bernstein's mission to understand the processes of schooling led him to develop different theoretical concepts. To begin with, the pedagogic discourse Bernstein (1996:47) offers is a basis for conceptual analysis of the power control relations through which subjectivity is constructed and reconstructed via discourse. The pedagogic discourse, as stated earlier on, is a re-contextualising principle. Consequently, learner-transition experiences challenges emanating from the designing of the curriculum. In other words, it is through the re-contextualising of content knowledge within the curriculum that transitioning from Grades 3-4 becomes a challenge. Moreover, the Chisholm Review Committee (2000:35) cited curriculum overload in Grade 4 as a learning barrier, hence there was needed to reduce the teaching loads of teachers. Thus, it is evident that the designing of a curriculum can affect teaching-learning situations, thereby causing tension within teacher-practice.

The Dada Committee (2009:34), as stated earlier on in chapter two, highlighted transitional challenges concerning content progression from Grades 3-4, including subject-overload and LOLT. As such, this study indicated that movement of knowledge becomes a pedagogical pressure point. Considering the current CAPS curriculum, teachers struggle to re-contextualise knowledge because the CAPS curriculum takes away the power of creativity; hence, the teachers fail to re-contextualise content according to learner needs (Faatar 2012:34). Additionally, the teacher does not have much autonomy and time to re-contextualise content, especially in the contemporary curriculum.

The discourse which uses classification and framing principles reproduces or transforms power relations in education by mediating the way knowledge is distributed. Bernstein's theoretical framework assisted in investigating paths of language, while constructing paths to subject content and teaching pedagogies. These are later translated or viewed as teacher practices that this study explores concerning how lessons were structured in terms

of power and control between the teacher and learner, and how this influenced the acquisition of knowledge using the given LOLT. The lessons observed were taught using the English LOLT, hence framing and classification were utilised as smaller lenses in examining the degree of specificity, which later translated to types of pedagogy.

### **3.3 CLASSIFICATION AND FRAMING**

Literature reviewed also revealed other researchers who used classification and framing principles for analyzing pedagogy (Naidoo 2012:39; Cause 2010:6; Lockett 2010:13).

Further, Morais (2004:559) employed Bernstein's concept of pedagogic discourse to define learning in social contexts and the interactions that occur in them that may be used to create contexts where learners are active learners. The study analysed the interplay of the characteristics of pedagogic practice and the importance of a mixed pedagogic practice where we have a weak and a strong framing.

For Bernstein, structure was instrumental in the distribution of pedagogical knowledge. To highlight structure and content, Bernstein asserted that there were two genres of pedagogy (1977:116). The study used the genres of pedagogy where Bernstein talks of class, and pedagogies, visible and invisible. In this study, Bernstein stated that there are two types of knowledge-transmission emanating from the processes of classification and framing which are at the heart of pedagogic discourse and practice. For Bernstein (1975:88), classification is "the degree of boundary maintenance between contents" and framing as "the strength of the boundary between what may be transmitted and what may not be transmitted in the pedagogical relationship". In a classroom scenario where framing is strong, the degree of teacher control is high, and the learners have restricted preferences. Where it is weak, the periphery of academic rapport is less marked, and students are left with more options and thus they control what is taught and learned.

Therefore, in this study classification and framing concepts (Bernstein 2000:6) were instrumental in describing the structuring of discourses and the extent of control that teachers have over selection, sequencing, criteria rules and evaluation to express the "how" of pedagogy. Bernstein's two genres of pedagogy (visible and invisible/closed and open codes), according to Naidoo (2012:41) reveal the visibility of pedagogy. In this study, teacher practices were either visible or invisible.

The constructs of classification and framing provide avenues to examine how power and control are transmitted because of the way they are distributed within a discourse (Bernstein 1996:3). The study used classification and framing as two dimensions of pedagogical variability. Whilst classification was used to identify the structuring of discourses, spaces, and agents (the “what” and “who” of pedagogy), framing described the relative control teachers and learners have over selection, sequencing, pacing, evaluation, and hierarchical rules (the “how” of pedagogy).

The classification and framing of knowledge are mediated through distributive rules which define access to different areas of knowledge. First, re-contextualising rules determine that knowledge and skills are to be selected from the field in which it was produced, and then translated into pedagogic practice.

### **3.3.1 Classification**

The classification of knowledge refers to the way in which knowledge is defined in different fields and how these fields are distinguished and insulated from each other. This means the way knowledge is classified determines what is important for learning and how it is presented. Classification describes how powers are transformed into specialised discourses.

Classification can either be characterised as being strong or weak. This is explained by Cause (2010:6) who observes that strong classification implies strong boundaries, such as when the timetable consists of clearly separate subjects; for example, English, Mathematics, and Life skills. Robertson (2008:47) gives a clear, straightforward example by commenting that in strong classification “the teacher systematically points out what is correct/incorrect in a clear detailed way”. Furthermore, strong classification can be realised in a class, for example, where a teacher evaluates different mathematical skills one theme as distinct units. That means the degree of classification may differ within the context of that one lesson. In addition, there could be strong classification pertaining to the pedagogical content to be delivered, yet weak classification pertaining to the teacher who delivers that content (Cause 2010:6).

Consequently, to circumvent the above challenge in a Grade 4 class in South Africa, teachers may rotate when subject teaching. Mathematics is clearly distinct from other subject areas (e.g. Natural Sciences) and thus there is a strong degree of boundary between each subject thereby resulting in a strong classification. In weak classification,

the teacher will accept content produced by the learners and only asks questions for clarification concerning learners' production.

### 3.3.2 Framing

Bernstein (1971:150) refers to framing as the degree of control teacher and pupil pose over the selection, organisation, and timing of knowledge transmitted and received in pedagogical relations. Framing, according to Wheelahan (2010:28) entails how the teachers must teach. This means teachers must be able to identify what counts as knowledge and how we can make it relevant. This is to say framing denotes the relation between discursive rules. In the process, it reveals the extent, to which the teacher controls, selects and paces content, by making either explicit or implicit rules. Furthermore, framing regulates how legitimate meaning maybe put together and made public, using evaluative criteria.

Bernstein (1975:153) elaborates that framing is concerned with the "how" of knowledge and brings into sight the discursive rules, which comprise of elements used in the locus of control over the selection, pacing, sequencing, and evaluation of knowledge. These can also be identified as strong or weak depending on the extent of power in selecting, sequencing, pacing and use of rules for performance evaluation.

Cause (2010:7) commented that through the strength of framing, students learn "when" to ask, "what" to ask and "how" to ask. Overall, one can argue that framing helps illuminate the power of certain agencies over *what*, *when* and *how* knowledge can be learnt in referring in terms of the curriculum relating to what content is taught, and what must come first. Since framing can be either strong or weak, in the classroom context, strong framing implies the teacher controls the class without much interaction with the learners. The teacher regulates how knowledge will be distributed in relation to selection of content, communication mode, site, pacing, sequencing and evaluation criteria. The nature of this relationship is guided by explicit rules (Robertson 2008:48).

In framing, Morais *et al.* (2004:7), maintain that stronger values represent instructional theories that are more centred on the transmitter. On the other hand, weaker instructional theories characterise values more centred on the receiver/acquirer. Strongly framed knowledge is where students have little or no control over the selection of knowledge of the curriculum and its sequencing, pacing, and evaluation. Conversely, weakly framed knowledge implies students have much greater control over their own

learning process; for example, when learners are left to work on their own to discuss, explore and problem-solve.

An example of strong framing viewed from the perspective of Naidoo (2012:53), Cause (2010:6) and Morais *et al.* (2004:7) refers to a teacher who plans a lesson that restricts students' freedom and control in their lessons or the content they are learning. Communication is strictly from the teacher to the children. Strong framing in a classroom situation can be, for instance, when learners are asked to write about their favourite pet and they may want to ask the teacher if they can also draw the pet as part of the classroom activity. The teacher may just say "do as I say, no questions no suggestions". Under strong framing, students are only allowed to speak at certain times.

Concerning weak framing, research indicates that it is characterised by learner control without consultation with the teacher. In this case, a learner can be free to select how learning transpires (Robertson 2008:49). Weak framing occurs when the teacher can select work based on pupil interest. Bernstein (2000:12) explains that weak framing occurs especially during the pacing of the subject content. Therefore, in weak framing the learners may be given a choice to write about their favourite pet; afterwards they may sketch the pet, and later even want to paint the picture of the pet.

Bernstein's work mainly addresses educational transmission thus the selection of this theory opens a discourse for understanding the practices that occur within the pedagogical classroom context. Bernstein advocated analysing the structure in the discourse of learning thus sometimes he is referred to as a structuralist who recommends that interrogating education discourse structure will help us not to reduce education to a system that is external and that only centres on power relations. Hence, Bernstein (2000:27) affirms that "the structure of the pedagogic discourse and the nature of pedagogic practice carries the message of power as much as the pedagogic discourse".

### **3.4 THE CURRICULUM, CLASSIFICATION AND FRAMING**

According to this study, if we look back at curriculum transformation since 1994, the curriculum designers considered how principles of content and knowledge in each curricular dispensation were to be released within a classroom situation. Starting with the National Christian Education during pre-democracy, the content, knowledge and sequence were prescribed, and the curriculum was regarded as strongly framed and teacher-centred. The

curriculum content was developed by other people and imposed on learners. The teachers and learners had very little say in curriculum content and learning. Classification and framing of knowledge, therefore, reflected the dominant values of the ruling party, pre- and post-apartheid. In addition, stakeholders who control the way information is disseminated, prescribed what was to be done. There was a shift in focus from the content-based syllabus to an outcomes-based one (DoE 1997b).

Bernstein's concept of classification and framing in the curriculum gives us a framework for understanding re-contextualisation of knowledge. Concerning C2005, it was a weakly framed curriculum because it integrated learning areas in pursuit of cross-curricular themes (Pausigere & Graven 2013:31). As stated earlier on, when C2005 was reviewed, it was criticised more specifically on the aspect of teacher pedagogy because the teachers lacked guidance and thus, they did not know what to do. Next, came the NCS curriculum which regarded teachers as key contributors and thus the teachers had considerable autonomy because the curriculum allowed teachers to interpret content and methodology of teaching. The curriculum principles were weakly framed just like in OBE.

Moreover, C2005 evaluated learners on outcomes and readiness as was presented in their portfolios. The problem here was that the teachers were not firmly in control with the subject content and at the end of the day they complained that they did not know what to do. The RNCS was also weakly framed in that its integrated subjects. It was outcomes-based, child-centred, and content and sequence were not prescribed. The teachers had to use their own mechanisms in applying a participatory approach based on the needs of the learners. The NCS was also a weakly framed curriculum in that teachers had a certain degree of authority.

Jansen and Hoadley (2009:23) view the National Curriculum Statement as 'a hybrid or mixed model'. It is more strongly classified and less integrated than Curriculum 2005 but at the same time, it contains various 'aspects of a competence model of curriculum, such as a learner-centred pedagogy'. The NCS is weaker at the GET Level because there is a weaker classification between subjects; hence, subjects are not distinctly defined. Lastly, designers of the CAPS curriculum have prescribed every detail, including a sequence of contextualising knowledge and content thus leaving teachers as robots since they do not have the power to adapt the requirements of the set curriculum. It is through re-contextualisation that relationships are either weak or strong, and teacher practices are either visible or invisible. Teacher practices, therefore, depend on the teachers' ability



to understand the designed curriculum including the relevance of the principles of that curriculum within contexts.

### 3.5 CLASSIFICATION AND FRAMING IN THE CLASSROOM

Bernstein (2000:12-14) adds that framing occurs where there is an explicit control over the selection of communication, the sequencing, what comes first/second, its pacing and the rate of acquisition. This includes the criteria for strong framing consists of the above processes and occurs where there is explicit control. In weak framing, the learner has more control over the rules. It is imperative to note that the level of framing can vary since there can be strong framing on pacing, yet weak framing around the social base of pedagogic communication. If a system is subjective-based, it means the teachers possess enormous power in terms of what content is taught and how they organise sequencing leading to strong classification and weak framing. Lastly, the CAPS curriculum proved to be strongly framed because it is prescriptive in nature confining teachers within certain boundaries as it was very specific on what had to be learned and in what order.

### 3.6 FRAMING OF EVALUATION

**Table 3.1: Framing of evaluation**

FRAMING VALUE	DESCRIPTOR
Strong Framing F++	The teacher specifies what is correct or incorrect in a clear detailed way
Moderately strong Framing F+	The teacher points out in General what is missing
Moderately weak Framing F--	The teacher points out what is missing but does not correct
Weak Framing F-	The teacher accepts the learners' production and questions are for clarification

(Bernstein 1975:116)

**Table 3.2: Comparing classification and framing**

CLASSIFICATION	FRAMING
Deals with power in discourse	Deals with control in discourse
Determines the <i>what</i> of knowledge	Determines the <i>how</i> of knowledge
Relations of power in the class	Relations of control in the classroom
Represents the voice of power	Represents the message of power
Determines what can be expressed	Determines how it is expressed
Determines what counts as knowledge	Regulates how knowledge is taught
Determines what can be expressed	

(Adapted from Bernstein 1971:150; 1990:100)

### **3.7 BERNSTEIN'S PEDAGOGIC DISCOURSE**

Since pedagogic discourse results in social construction through interaction, Bernstein's concept of pedagogic discourse helped to examine and illuminate the structure of discourses and the power relations concerning Grade 3 and 4 classes involving teachers, learners, and the context. In line with Bronfenbrenner's ecological view, social construction is a key variable in learning, since learners' knowledge is derived from their contextual environment as they socialise. The learner therefore is an active learner and the teachers' duty is to create a conducive learning environment that enhances learning. Hence, adopting Bernstein's conceptual tools, this study's research process included observations of whether teachers controlled or facilitated lessons, how they arranged lessons, and how meaning was elicited. Overall, the theory helped in unpacking the communication relationship between pedagogy and learning, and how knowledge is structured and communicated. This was done through examining the teacher-learner relationship and visibility of pedagogy in these pedagogic contexts. For this study to unpack pedagogical practices of Grades 3 and 4, teachers in South African schools were examined on the strength of visibility in issues of power and control, and the visibility of instructional and regulative criteria to be learnt.

Bernstein's work reflects on boundaries; for example, those among social groups, subject areas, and schools. In this study, questions arose concerning the differences in the teaching of mathematics language and the English language as LOLT. Other questions included: what boundaries are created, and whether teachers are controllers or facilitators, and how much freedom do learners have? Bernstein's boundaries can thus be regarded as horizontal and vertical discourses when equated to Bronfenbrenner's (1979:111) ecological stance.

This study involved the collection of observational data in the classrooms as an aid in exploring the boundaries that exist between LOLT and content-subjects, and the boundaries of subjects' pedagogy including relationship boundaries. The observational data revealed the degree of insulation between curriculum contents and between the transmitter and acquirer. Therefore, on the issue of boundaries "that degree of insulation between curriculum contents and between teacher and pupils is what distinguished the individual who is at the centre of teaching and how he/she distributes knowledge" Wheelahan (2010:10). Furthermore, the strength of boundaries also determined whether criteria were met in specific contexts including teacher-practices concerning LOLT.

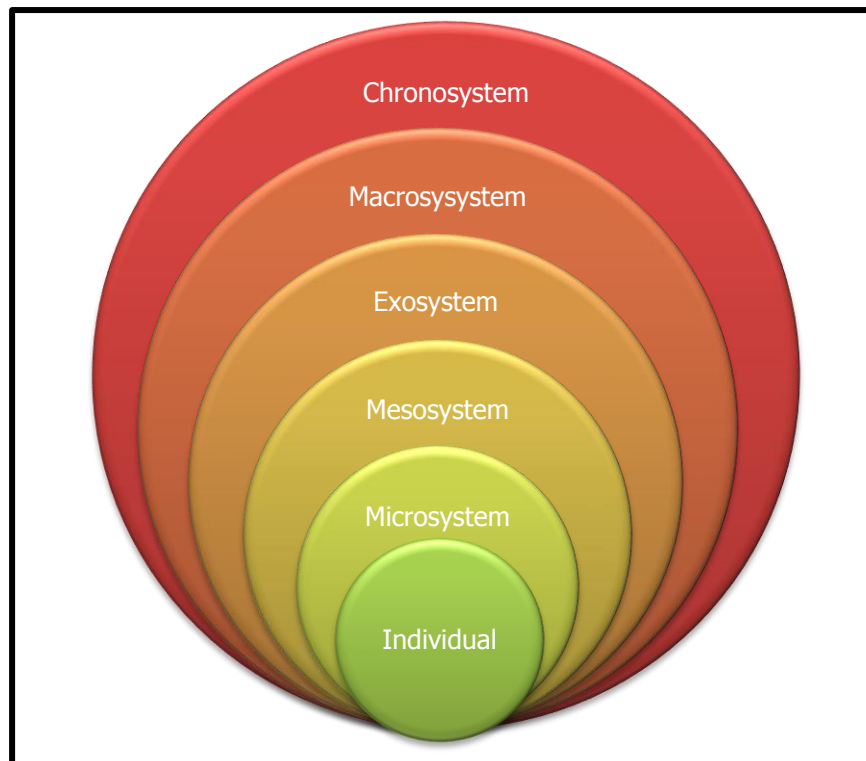
Wheelahan (2010:8) suggests that learners need to be provided with the ability to navigate boundaries, as well as the capacity to recognise and evaluate. In this study, the assumption was that LOLT must be able to empower the learners with the requisite skills to navigate through subjects and discourses.

Considering the literature review and the structured research questions, this study drew on the conceptual framework of the theory of Bernstein (1986; 1990; 2000; 2006) which was significant in analysing how teachers used the theory of the pedagogic discourse and its rules in transforming the curriculum into relevant knowledge. This was used to illuminate what it is that teachers select as content knowledge, how they transform content into knowledge, how they sequence the content, how the content knowledge is classified and framed, and exploring knowledge acquisition of learners. Hence, Hoadley (2006:18) observes that Bernstein provides a language for the description of pedagogic discourse through the concepts of classification and framing where a "crucial relation between classification and framing refers to the social division of labour".

### **3.8 BRONFENBRENNER'S THEORY**

Alongside Bernstein (1996:118), a complementary theory, Bronfenbrenner's (1979:111) theory of ecology, was used as it was seen to be synchronous to Bernstein's concepts.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979:15) theory outlines that development is a result of the interacting relationships that occur between people and their environment. This means we cannot evaluate a child's development within the immediate environment only, but we must relate the interactions among the larger environments in which a child develops. The children as learners may acquire many things from their surroundings for their development and whatever they turn out to be is dependent on how good or bad that environment is. Therefore, Bronfenbrenner postulated that there are many different levels that may affect how a child grows and develops. These levels were listed as the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystemic; the macrosystem and the chronosystem (cf. Figure 3.1).



**Figure 3.1: A model of Bronfenbrenner's ecological map  
(Adapted from Bronfenbrenner 1990:34)**

The microsystem is the interactions that the learner has with his immediate family and those close to him and this includes the peers, and the neighbourhood play area. Therefore, interactions within the microsystem are essential for the development of the whole child.

The immediate feedback or immediate family's views and perceptions may affect the child. The mesosystem denotes the relationship between the different parts of the microsystem; for example, how the family and teachers relate to each other, how the family relates to peers, teachers and the religious groups. Bronfenbrenner further defines the exosystem as having less interaction but has indirect impact on the development of the learner and this maybe the parents' location of the work place, extended family and the neighbourhood. Another, level is the macro system, which embodies the cultural, subcultural, and social context.

Bronfenbrenner's theory of ecology has been considered for this study, since according to Perry, Dockett and Petriwskyj (2014:23) an ecological perspective emphasises that transition is better comprehended when it has been analysed in relation to learners' contexts such as home, school, and neighbourhood, and showing how these contexts interact.

In this study, learning is defined by the insulation of learning boundaries; consequently, the ecological theory of Bronfenbrenner (1979:112) comes into play as this theory states that the learner is at the centre of five environmental systems and that the learner's development may thus be affected by experiences emanating from how the learner relates to the systems. Using Bronfenbrenner in this study allows us to view learners' relationships at different levels. This means that an ecological approach does more than describe associations.

Hence, the ecological theory presents the context as being instrumental in that the "learners are part of their environment and therefore are influenced by their environment, thus the learner and their environment influence each other (Perry *et al.*, 2014:VI). For communication to take place in the environment, the learners need a language that can be understood by participants using role models of the language; hence, this research assumes that such learners need a contextual language. In line with this, the ecological theory presents the context as being instrumental since there is a "bi-directional influence".

According to the ecological theory, the teacher therefore, is an important mediator in role-modelling language because the teacher is part of the ecological systems approach. How the teacher mediates language is a result of how the teacher articulates the learning space. In the ecosystem, the teacher mediates within the child's social space, the child, and the ecosystem. The teacher, having cultural capital, operates within a certain parameter in the regulative discourse, which thus results in different pedagogical dispositions. Their pedagogies are a result of how they relate differently to the agencies within the ecosystem resulting in different teachers articulating their environment differently.

Accordingly, teachers need to be part of the learning environment. Thus, Bronfenbrenner's (1994:8) theory maintains that environmental forces influence students' behaviour. The teachers' pedagogy can be a force in the environment because he/she must understand the contextual needs of individual learners. If we consider the environment during Grade 4, Bronfenbrenner's (1979:111) ecological approach becomes more relevant in influencing the process of transition because transition (like the ecological approach) has a broader connotation. It starts from the learners, the learners' language, their environment, and then their social relationships.

This environment may also be in the form of teacher pedagogical practices and curriculum change with its concomitant implications. Therefore, ecological theory demonstrates that

language curriculum, is especially sociological in nature as it shows the relevance of the context of language learning. To support this view, the study included the works of Haugen (2009:325) who states that “the ecology of language is determined primarily by the people who learn it, use, and transmit it to others”. As such, and in keeping with the key theme of this study, which is based on LOLT and transition, this means that the learner must acquire knowledge of LOLT in school subjects through negotiating and adjusting to a new context of learning socially, physically and cognitively. In other words, the learner should adapt to a new context of expectations and adjust to ecological rules and boundaries set and created by the teacher. Consequently, the learner functions within set boundaries (Sadovnik 2001:690).

Bronfenbrenner’s theory in this study assumes that the worldview of the learner is influenced by the ecological system. This coincides with Bernstein’s view (1975:199) that the school is an agent of socialisation, which socialises the learners through the three message systems of curriculum pedagogy and assessment.

To sum up, Morais, *et al.* (2004:4) posit that the nature of social interaction in classrooms is a consequence of power and control relations between agents, subjects and discourses, and spaces. Bronfenbrenner’s theory is also relevant in studying teacher-practices because teacher pedagogy is influenced by the teaching context.

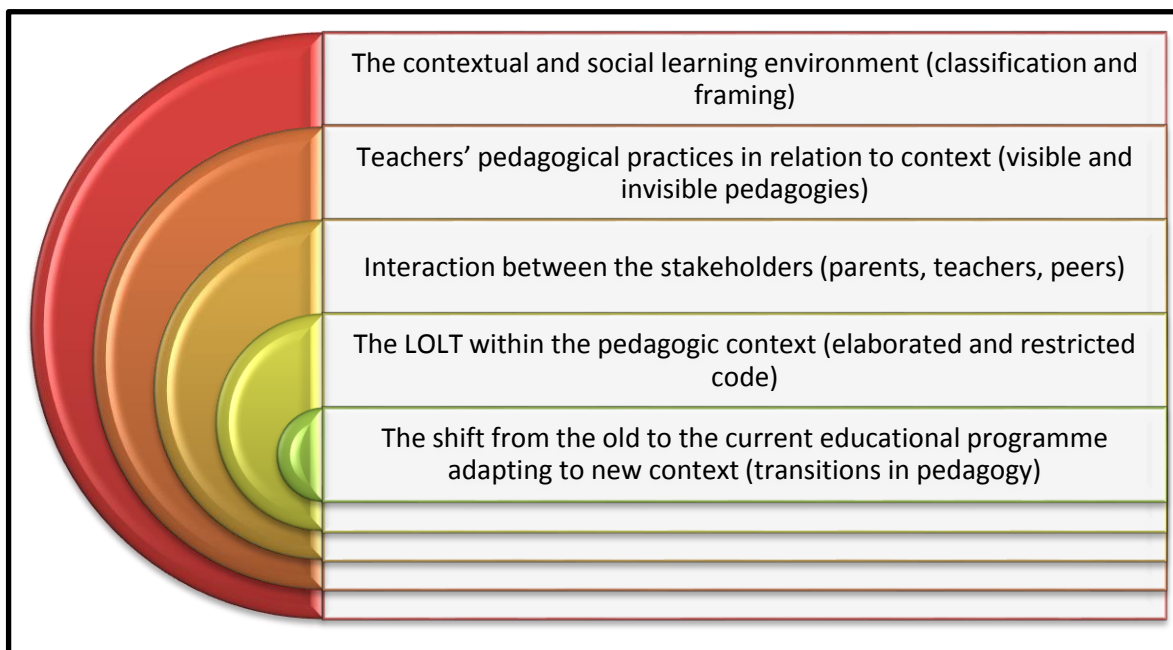
Concerning evaluative rules, the acquirers or learners show that they can produce the required text, adhere to the assessment process, and thus demonstrate how to produce the right outcome called for by the implementation of the pedagogic code.

### **3.8.1 How Bronfenbrenner’s theory complements Bernstein’s theory**

Bernstein’s and Bronfenbrenner’s theories complement each other through the role of the teachers as they re-contextualise pedagogic spaces in Grade 4 classrooms. Therefore, it is important to note that when we talk of pedagogic space we include three interrelated approaches, which include the physical space, the space within the pedagogic relations, the place between learning and the participants, and the cultural aspect of classrooms (Di, Lebo & Jacobs, 2004, cited in Robertson 2009:869).

Therefore, it is noteworthy that these learning spaces or “contexts” are not just physical environments, but they include the valuing of knowledge, the typical distribution of power

within relationships that interact around that knowledge, and the sorts of interactions that are expected to occur within participants using that knowledge. As such, contexts can be considered “systems of knowledge enacted in social practices” (Cole & Chan 1990). Below I present a self-created illustration to demonstrate learning spaces created by transition from Grade 3-4.



**Figure 3.2: Elements of pedagogic space**

Regarding the pedagogic space and Bronfenbrenner's ecological approach, the teachers' practices rise within the inner influences and outer influences. This means that at the macro level the inner influence of teachers' practices come from teachers personal and practical theories, which come from established and implicit values and beliefs. On the other hand, "the outer sphere of official influences is informed by Bernstein's official recontextualising field" which includes national policy, and the curriculum Hence, teachers' pedagogic practices within the official re-contextualising field are consistent with the "legitimised pool of pedagogic possibilities". Teachers' practices are therefore shaped by the pedagogic spaces created within their social and physical context. Considering the ecological approach, teachers' practices operate within their contextual backgrounds (Robertson 2009:862).

This study suggests that the classroom is a context and the home is another context, which both expose the learner to knowledge of LOLT. The teacher's background knowledge also influences the environment and the relationships within the contextual systems of the child as they both struggle for control within the teaching-learning context. The learner therefore will learn from the teacher, what to say, when to say it and how to say it. In

other words, the teacher's experience may change the learner's worldview. The learner can only acquire knowledge through interacting with others and through gaining feedback from the environmental relationships. Mutekwe (2016:122) cited Bernstein's (2010) work where it is specified that the pedagogic discourse and the ideologies that regulate the pedagogic spaces are both the micro and macro relationships, which exist within the ecological systems. A change in these relationships alters the status quo in the educational aims and objectives.

How knowledge is distributed and what knowledge is distributed depends on the context and boundaries of distributive and instructional rules created by the insulation in the boundaries. This supports the ideology that teaching is context-tied and context-dependent (Bernstein 1971:5). In this study, the ecology of language will also reflect on the pedagogical systems and the context in which LOLT is situated because learning is realised through the nature of the social interaction; in this case, pedagogical interaction among people with different skills and knowledge. In addition, Bernstein (1990:66) asserts that the capacity to recognise the nature of knowledge is dependent on learners' experiences beyond the education realm.

Therefore, this experience beyond education can only be acquired from the social context. Based on the premise that learning is socially-constructed and instructional in nature, when it comes to English as LOLT for example, learners come to school with a bank of knowledge of names and properties of objects found in their environment. The knowledge is acquired when the learner asks questions from those in his environment. Part of this contextual knowledge once gained is therefore later elaborated on in school by the transmitter. Thus, Bronfenbrenner's ecological approach becomes more relevant in factors affecting transition because transition, like the ecological approach, has a broader connotation if we consider the environment during Grade 4. It starts from the learner, the learner's language, the environment, and then the social relationships. This environment may also be in the form of teacher pedagogical practices.

Accordingly, Bernstein's and Bronfenbrenner's theories concur in that learning occurs according to the influence of people, events and the contexts. These theories complement each other in that in the field of sociolinguistics teaching is regarded as being dependent on and tied to the context in mediating knowledge and interactions between learners and the curriculum. These interactions are dependent upon the strength of the boundaries as created by teacher-learner relationships, curriculum re-contextualisation and



the bi-directional influences existing within the ecological systems approach. Therefore, the nature of the socialising agents affects learning in a salient way.

Further, the study refers to Bronfenbrenner's (1979:112) ecological theory to demonstrate that language curriculum, is especially sociological in nature. With reference to the relevance of the context of language learning using the ecological theory coupled with Bernstein's pedagogic discourse, the researcher acknowledges that there could still be theoretical gaps. It is further acknowledged that learner-transition can be influenced negatively by many issues, and academic drop may emanate from within-learner factors, the environment, the curriculum, the school, the teachers and many other variables. These factors are more significant when we look at Bernstein's view on language where he stated that working class children's language arise from a restricted code; meaning they are disadvantaged in terms of school language capacity, whereas the middle-class learners possess the relevant code, which advantages them in school.

### **3.9 BERNSTEIN ON LANGUAGE**

Bernstein's work highlights the link between relationships and forms of knowledge and the connection between subject identities. Bernstein (1971:131) claims that power resides within a certain structure of knowledge and within the structure of re-contextualisation, thereby resulting in knowledge being mediated through distributive rules. Resultantly, these distributive rules define and distribute access to different knowledge. Bernstein (1971:131) was interested in the language ability of the working class and middle-class learners, because he viewed language as a knowledge-transactional tool. This subject of working- class and middle-class children is therefore context-tied thereby bringing the relevance of the ecological systems approach into play.

On the other hand, Bernstein was concerned about the underachievement of working-class learners hence he directed an investigation on the relationship between social-classes in language and education capabilities. In his conclusions, he established that the middle-class learners tend to use what he termed the "elaborated code" whilst on the other hand the working-class learners were largely confined to the "restricted code" (Bernstein 1971:5-6). Therefore, Bernstein makes the point that the language of working-class learners is disadvantaged because it is context-specific since it is only relevant to certain social situations. The working-class learners' language is identified as a restricted code, since it is more localised and dependent on. Hence, Mutekwe (2016:120) cites Bernstein

(2010) when he refers to 'the correlation between societal class and language codes to show reasons for the poor performance in language-based subjects by the working-class students mentioned earlier'.

In other words, Bernstein argues that the working-class learners have limited language competencies because of their socio-economic background, and this language deprivation can negatively influence academic achievement for learning is a language-based semiotic activity (1971:7). The elaborated code is what Bernstein associated with the middle-class learners because the type of language is abstract and universalistic, explicit and context-independent. In this study, the researcher was more interested in the reasons for underachievement in Grade 4 learners after they leave the foundation phase (Grade 3 or third Grade).

The study was not overly concerned about the social background of the learners, although later this was used to support current theories. The study assumed that LOLT deprivation is a result of distributional injustice in learning since learning is a language-based semiotic activity that is influenced by the structure through power and control. Before addressing classification and framing principles, the pedagogic discourse was discussed using Bernstein's (2002:202) approach so as to see the connection and structure of the selected framework.

Bernstein (2002:202) further elaborates that the pedagogic device is the condition for the construction of discourses. Firstly, Bernstein refers to the pedagogic device as the systemic and institutionalised way in which knowledge is re-contextualised from the field of knowledge-production into the school system, which includes its distribution and evaluation within the schooling system. To put it simply, the process of curriculum re-contextualisation entails that those in charge of designing the curriculum are responsible for choosing the content to be learnt, the pedagogy for the content, and how learning must be assessed. The teachers are now charged with the duty of making sense of that much-intended curriculum or course and therefore must now adopt the pedagogic practices that relate to their interpretation and understanding of the intended curriculum. It is through these processes that Bernstein's concepts of classification and framing are transformed into teacher-ideologies. This means knowledge is being adapted and passed on in education through various stages until it reaches the learner.

In summary, this theoretical approach provides the means to analyse and understand

exactly whose power and control is being relayed in each pedagogic context. Also, the pedagogic device highlights the paths for language construction (Cause 2010:4; Hugo & Bertram 2009:6; Singh 2002:576). Here it is established whether the teacher or the learner has more control in the lesson, which leads one to the modalities of pedagogic practice.

### **3.10 MODALITIES OF PEDAGOGIC PRACTICE**

As discussed earlier, to distinguish the two types of pedagogy, Naidoo (2012:39) dissects each as being characterised by either explicit hierarchy, explicit sequencing, or explicit evaluation. Those characterised by explicit discourses are termed visible pedagogy, since it shows who wields power in the classroom. On the other hand, invisible pedagogies are highly characterised by implicit factors resulting in disguising the power relations making it difficult to distinguish the transmitter. Regarding visibility of pedagogy, Bernstein (2003:201) stressed that the essence of any pedagogic practice is measured against the performance of mediated criteria on whether learners have achieved the goals. Therefore, any pedagogic practice is measured by explicit or implicit regulative and instructional criteria leading us to unpack pedagogy as being visible or invisible.

### **3.11 THE PHILOSOPHY OF VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE PEDAGOGY**

The philosophy of visible and invisible pedagogy tells us whether the relationship in the academic space was open or closed.

#### **3.11.1 Visible (explicit) pedagogy**

Bernstein (1975:87) postulated that there are two curriculum types that emanate as a result of variations in degrees of classification and framing; hence, he termed the curriculum as either open or closed (collection type). This type of curriculum is therefore characterised by strong classification. For example, the learner is asked to collect a group of coloured contents to meet some criteria. The subjects are taught in isolation of each other in addition to being demarcated by strong boundaries.

On the other hand, we have an open curriculum, which Bernstein termed the "integrated code" characterised by weak classification, but here subjects are not isolated, and boundaries are broken. This study preferred using the terms *visible* (closed curriculum)

and *invisible* (open curriculum) to distinguish the two types of curriculum. Pedagogic practice that displays explicit hierarchical, explicit sequencing, and explicit evaluation criteria results in visible pedagogy which shows clear power relations in the classroom (Bernstein 2003:201).

As mentioned by Bernstein (1975:116), a visible pedagogy is performance-based, because it places emphasis on the performance of the learner upon the discourse the learner is creating and the extent to which the text is meeting the criteria. In a visible pedagogy, the emphasis is on the learner's external production where the rules are explicit. As mentioned before, Bernstein (1975:116) states that "the more inherent the manner of transmission, the more diffuse the criteria and the more visible the pedagogy" indicating that visible criteria is in line with strong classification and strong framing.

An example of visible pedagogy comes from a Grade 4 lesson, which the researcher observed:

TeacherE: The lesson's pacing was too fast and there was no feedback. The pacing was not determined by the learner-input needs as it was wholly determined by the teacher.

*Teacher: Write corrections in your spelling books. Open your spelling books. You must have them for spelling.*  
*Teacher: Stop saying I do not know what to do, you are not foundation phase anymore; you cannot forget your book, you must have your books.*  
*Learner: What must I do?*  
*Teacher: Write one word three times. (Selection of work and evaluation was teacher-centered).*  
*Teacher: Open your spelling books. You must have them for spelling.*  
*[The learners had to discover for themselves where they went wrong and correct their work]*

Unfortunately, the approach seemed inappropriate because the teacher did not find out why the learners could not get the spelling correct in the first place. The lesson resulted in codes (F++).

This pedagogy is visible as the teacher is more of a controller, in that there is one-way communication, where the teacher instructs learners on what they should do. The relations of control and communication were clear (Bertram 2012:53). This also denotes strong framing because the teacher merely gave work to be completed in a predetermined order.

### **3.11.2 Characteristics of visible pedagogy**

In visible pedagogy, the teacher plans a lesson in such a way that it can restrict students' freedom. The lesson lies within closed boundaries because there is strong teacher-framing and strong teacher-classification; because even the context is controlled. The teacher controls the structure in which students communicate, as there is a one-way transfer of information, which mostly comes directly from the teacher to the student, exacerbated by minimum or no learner discussion. Under the distributive rules, there are explicit hierarchy, explicit sequencing, explicit and specific criteria. These rules are apparent since there is the definite interactional relationship between teacher and student, and the power relations are distinct (Bernstein, 1975:118-119). This is also characterised by strong boundaries between, space, time and communication.

### **3.12 INVISIBLE (IMPLICIT) PEDAGOGY**

Naidoo (2012:52), Cause (2010:9) and Fong (2006:28) commented that the invisible pedagogic discourse is hidden. This means it is initially invisible to the acquirer. The acquirer appears to fill the pedagogic space rather than the transmitter. In invisible pedagogies, there is less interest in production of explicit stratifying differences or matching the acquirer's text against the peripheral common standard.

The following example illustrates invisible pedagogy:

In the scene with the teacher, I will use the same theme of flowers, but I will ask learners to get in groups where they can selectively talk about flowers, draw the flowers, and look for pictures of flowers. The learners work spontaneously in self-chosen groups, interacting through discussions. Although the teacher has arranged the learner's context of learning, the learner has more power over what he selects; they either draw, cut pictures or talk about flowers.

By choosing a specific group, the learner is regulating his/her own movements and social relationships. Even when they draw, it means each child will draw a flower of his/her choice as there is no fixed criteria. There is reduced emphasis upon the transmission and acquisition of certain skills. There is evidence of more student action. This denotes weak framing because the teacher has selected content per learner interest.

### 3.12.1 Characteristics of invisible (implicit) pedagogy

To highlight the types of pedagogy, I tabulated and made a comparison to explain clearer how control and power is characterised.

**Table 3.3: Types of pedagogy**

TYPE OF PEDAGOGY	VISIBLE (STRONG FRAMING/ STRONG CLASSIFICATION)	INVISIBLE (WEAK FRAMING AND STRONG CLASSIFICATION)
Hierarchical rule	Explicit	Implicit
Pacing	Explicit	Implicit
Selection	Explicit	Implicit
Criteria	Explicit	Implicit
Evaluation	Performance-based and explicit	Competence-based and implicit

(Adapted from Naidoo, 2012:41)

Bernstein (1975:119) explains that when pedagogy is invisible, the teacher arranges the context in which the learner is expected to rearrange. So, within this context, the learner has more power over what he selects, over how he structures, over the time scale including his activities. In this regard, the learner controls his own movements and social relationships. The learners seek their own knowledge of sources to deepen and enrich their learning capabilities. There are more student activities; for example, the teacher can give an instruction to do research on flowers - that means the learners are encouraged to seek their own knowledge sources to deepen and enrich their living experiences. This can be a typical example in some kindergarten classrooms where the teacher structures the classroom but afterwards stands back to focus on learner-initiated activities.

Here the power distribution is hidden, and the implicit perspective is demonstrated significantly, resulting in implicit hierarchy, implicit pacing, and implicit criteria, where the teacher acts as a facilitator. The teacher does not direct, neither does he force, because the teacher's expectations are multiple and varied. When the transmitter (teacher) takes a step back, that teacher is weakening boundaries thereby making the principles of learning invisible. To highlight the types of pedagogy I tabulated and made a comparison to explain clearer how control and power is characterised. In lessons observed by me, there were approaches where discourse was hidden, and lesson-discourse was visible (cf. Appendix H).

### **3.13 EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT RULES**

When one looks at methods of instruction, one asks whether the learners acquire more with either explicit or implicit instruction. Explicit instruction is whereby the transmitter (teacher) clearly outlines what is to be done, and how learning is to be achieved. Instructions are clear and unambiguous, and the learners follow given instructions. Brewin and Statham (2007:363) maintain that "explicit teaching involves directing students' attention towards a specific learning objective in a highly-structured environment". Firstly, the teacher gives instruction through modelling; therefore, he/she explains to students what to do. Secondly, the teacher models the activity and guides the students.

However, in implicit teaching, the teacher does not explain how things are to be done, but merely presents the problem to the learners and allows them to make their own investigations and conceptual structures. The objective is not plainly expressed. Implicit teaching can be equated to behaviourism. Students can create their own schemas for understanding rules instead of memorising. Bernstein (2004:33) demonstrates the nature of the pedagogical relation by presenting two alternative responses a teacher might give to learners when they complete the drawing of a person (as previously mentioned in the class activity above). Some body parts were missing in the drawing. Therefore, Bernstein characterises an explicit or visible pedagogic relation by the teacher praising, but pointing out that humans have two arms, two legs and so on. On the other hand, the implicit or invisible relation is represented by the teacher by merely using praise to motivate creativity. These different relations will establish different forms of power and control so in the first scenario the teacher highlights missing criteria but in the second scene, the teacher just presses on. In scene one, the learner then knows exactly what he/she was supposed to do.

#### **3.13.1 Hierarchical rules**

The hierarchical rules propounded by Bernstein (2003:202) establish the conditions of manner, character, and order. In a pedagogic relation, the teacher is the transmitter, and the learner is the acquirer. In this regard, Bernstein asserts that in a pedagogic relation, the learner must learn to receive, and the teacher must take the sender of the message. The hierarchical rules spell out the conditions for order, manner, and character. The hierarchical rules can be either explicit or implicit.

The more implicit the hierarchy, the more difficult it is to distinguish the transmitter. An implicit hierarchy denotes power masked by devices of communication. This results in the teacher acting directly in the context of acquisition, but indirectly on the acquirer. Hierarchical rules are crucial in the teacher-learner relationship since they regulate the form of communication between subjects with distinct hierarchical positions. For example, English LOLT teachers have been socialised within specific hierarchical structures.

### **3.13.2 Sequencing rules**

Sequencing Bernstein's (2003:204) rules can be endorsed in syllabuses in curricular and behavioural rules. Sequencing implies that when there is a transmission of content or knowledge, it cannot be done at once. Something must come before, and something must come after. In the education system or in curriculum practice, the pedagogic practice must have sequencing rules and the sequencing rules will influence the pacing rules. The sequencing rules may be implicitly or explicitly controlled by the teacher. The teacher, therefore, teaches according to the departmental curriculum, thereby making the curriculum the pacesetter. Hence, the teacher must know what aspect/unit to teach first in week 1 until the end. The way the content is sequenced may affect the pace at which the teacher should deliver content.

Where the sequencing rules are explicit, the sequencing rules are visible and where sequencing rules are implicit it means the genre of pedagogy is invisible. Naidoo (2012:41) refers to sequencing in learning, when he states that early reading is crucial to visible pedagogy since it is an early requirement in sequencing rules. The age at which the learner should be able to read is a function of sequencing rules of the pedagogic practice.

From this sequencing rules perspective, the learner must first be able to read; but during this period, the learner is dependent on the teacher. Once a learner can read in the language of LOLT, he/she then becomes less dependent. However, if the learner fails to meet the sequencing rules stage (for example, sequence of content from Grade 3-4), they get caught up in the strategies of the repair system. In this study, sequencing was instrumental because in transition, there is sequence of content from Grade 3-4. Sequencing involved learning strategies, hence I explored various teacher pedagogies and learner responses as a measure of teacher capabilities and effectiveness. One guiding perspective is how learners are adapting to sequencing rules in learning in LOLT. Sequencing entails pacing rules, for pacing is the time allowed for accomplishing sequencing rules.



Sequencing rules can be explicit and learners of five years of age are expected to develop certain competencies such as to behave in a certain way. At six years, they are expected to have certain other competencies. Sequencing rules of a visible pedagogy are explicit, and the direction of knowledge is availed in clearly demarcated steps. This study assumed that if a learner cannot meet sequencing criteria or critical requirements of sequencing rules, then transitioning academically becomes a challenge (Bernstein 2003:204).

### **3.13.3 Pacing rules**

Pacing refers to the probable rate of acquisition - the rate at which learning is expected. Pacing is somehow interrelated to sequencing rules; even though pacing regulates the rules of time and rhythm of transmission, this rhythm varies in speed. In Grade 3, there is a pace of acquiring language and by the end of Grade 3 the learners are expected to have mastered learning to read so that in Grade 4 they adopt the strategy of reading to learn (Bernstein 2003:205).

Unfortunately, some learners learn at a slower pace, thereby transitioning to Grade 4 becomes more difficult because teaching is usually done at a faster and uncomfortable pace thereby making it difficult to adapt to the new context. Therefore, if the rate of pacing is adopted at a slower pace, at that point rules of sequencing may pose challenges to the learner. So, if a learner goes to Grade 4 without the ability to read, how then can the transmitter move at a faster pace? This is when we have schools introducing "catch-up" programmes at Grade 4 level.

### **3.13.4 Criteria rules**

Criteria rules which Naidoo (2012:41) refers to, is the practice of evaluating students' text, be it oral or written in terms of what counts as authentic knowledge involving social relations in the teaching context. In any teaching context, the principal issue is to assess and appraise the competence of the acquirer. What the teacher assesses is whether the standards that have been availed to the acquirer have been accomplished. The principles may be regulative in conduct, character, and manner. This can be instructional and discursive criteria. The acquirer is expected to be able to apply accomplished criteria to his/her own practices. The acquirer who is a learner in this case, must be able to understand what counts as legitimate and illegitimate knowledge or a social relation. This means evaluative rules are clear as learners know exactly what is supposed to be done.

Criteria can be specific or hidden. The pedagogy works by making available to the learner what is missing. The criteria can be specific if the learner is aware of the criteria. The criteria can be clearly articulated; for example, in specific criteria the teacher can say “that is a beautiful car but where are the wheels”? In implicit criteria, the learner is not aware except in very general ways of the criteria he/she must meet (Naidoo 2012:39). After drawing, the teacher can ask the learner to describe the picture of a car. This pedagogical approach facilitates a space in which the learner can create text under conditions of minimal external constraints and control.

**Table 3.4: Pedagogy and degree of specificity**

<b>RULES OF PEDAGOGY</b>	<b>VISIBLE/EXPLICIT PEDAGOGY</b>	<b>INVISIBLE/IMPLICIT PEDAGOGY</b>
Hierarchical	Establish relations of clear authority	Mask power
Pacing	Clear time set at rate of acquisition	Time is hidden/not clear set time boundary
Sequencing	Create a clear time limit	Make it difficult for learners to get the logic of time
Criteria	Makes clear what counts as acceptable communication, behaviour, and knowledge	Learners have freedom to create individualised criteria

### **3.14 RATIONALE FOR ADOPTING BERNSTEIN**

Despite the critiques laid against the work of Bernstein, this study still preferred his theories because of the relevance concerning the framework for my study. Firstly, the reason for adopting Bernstein’s approach is that it explicitly stands as a relevant tool to use in analysing what (and how) knowledge is relayed through the curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment. The reason for involving all these concepts is that we cannot talk about pedagogy without considering assessment and evaluation. In addition, assessment, pedagogy and curriculum can be used to explore and illuminate discourses in schools that act as primary social control agencies or classifiers. Classification and framing assisted in identifying the problems involved in “delocating” a discourse, because Bertram and Hugo (2009:7) indicate that in the process of “delocating” a discourse from its original site of effectiveness and moving it to a pedagogic site, a gap or rather a space is created.

First, if Grade 3 teachers have introduced and taught English as an LOLT, then was it done in such a way that it will be easy to build on previous knowledge when entering Grade 4, or is there a curriculum disjuncture? The degree of insulation highlighted who is at the centre of teaching? This Bernstein’s (1975:115) notion of visibility included the sequencing, and pacing of lessons, and what is to be considered as legitimate knowledge.

Secondly, the study chose Bernstein's theory as a framework because of how the theories intensively investigated the relationship between language and education, and this also revealed structures of inequality. The features of communication which denote power and communication in pedagogic interactions were so relevant because of the way these powers are structured and distributed and this may affect different learners as they move up grades, hence the study sought to establish the cause for the dip in achievement when learners moved to Grade 4. This is because Bernstein's ontology implied that classification and framing influence the degree of visibility in pedagogic discourse, and whether learners access knowledge equally. Therefore, Bernstein links educational failure to general language acquisition failure.

This, however, led to the assumption that LOLT could be playing a role in learner underperformance at Grade 4 level. Using Bernstein's theories thus enabled me to explore whether the distribution of knowledge plays out differently with different teachers in different grades since each person is bound to interpret, acquire and communicate the message differently. Hence, this view corroborates Bernstein's (2002:31) perception, which explains that different agencies appropriate knowledge differently since "knowledge that is reproduced in curriculum undergoes another process of re-contextualization as it is appropriated by teachers". This means teachers teach according to how they understand the discipline.

Thirdly, Bernstein (1971:21) maintains that when learners transition, according to invisible and visible pedagogies, "there is a crucial change in what counts as having knowledge, in what counts as a legitimate realisation of what knowledge is and in which social context'. What Bernstein writes is that when learners transition there may be a change in the genre of pedagogy, hence a shift in pedagogy will imply a shift in learning code to the learner (from open to closed). What Bernstein implies is that what learners bring to the learning context may hinder or facilitate the process of transitions; learners may fail to acquire knowledge through an unfamiliar genre.

In addition to observing whether the ability and rate of classification and framing is congruent between Grades 3 and 4, the study discussed how the pedagogic discourse influences learning through the teachers' ability to contextualise knowledge.

Lastly, the rationale relates to Bernstein's view (2002:31) that "knowledge that is reproduced in curriculum undergoes another process of re-contextualisation". This

perspective assisted in reflecting on three questions. Are the teachers able to relocate the syllabus to schemes of work for classroom teaching? Do teachers know how English LOLT content is to be structured, relayed, learnt, and used in other content subjects? Is the knowledge curriculum-based or subject-based?

This theory of classification and framing (Bernstein 1990:65) which I adopted was essential to establish how power and control translate into principles of communication, while examining relations between categories such as agents, discourses, practices, and subject discipline. Bernstein made a distinction between what is relayed (the message) and the underlying pedagogic device that structures and organises the content and distribution (of what is relayed) using the key process of re-contextualisation. This is where knowledge produced at one site (mainly, but not exclusively, the university), is selectively transferred to sites of reproduction (mainly, but not exclusively, the school). This process is not straightforward and cannot be taken for granted. When re-contextualising of knowledge, relocation, and "delocation" occurs, it results in various misinterpretations or dilemmas because different people have different ideological perspectives (Bernstein 1971:205).

How do teachers re-contextualise knowledge and convert it to classroom knowledge? This study revealed the extent to which teachers and learners control the curriculum and how the content is placed in the context of LOLT, thereby revealing how the teachers sequence the content, in Grade 3 and Grade 4. This results in discovering whether classification and framing allow for continuity in the curriculum or whether it causes a disjuncture. However, framing will reveal how the selection of knowledge is taught.

### **3.15 RELEVANCE OF BERNSTEIN TO LEARNER-TRANSITION**

During learner transition, Bernstein (1975:26) explains that there is an increase in the strength of classification and framing and this is due to the increase in the range of teachers. It is also a time when children learn that the principle of authority surpasses that of the individual who holds it. Hence, in Grade 4, the learners fail to adapt to the new contextual demands, due to the nature and degree of framing and classification. Using Bernstein's notion of visibility through framing and classification assisted in analysing observed and collected data on student-teacher interactions as observed during lessons and measured against orientations of pedagogic practice to gauge how subjects were framed and classified. Data was analysed using the three rules of pedagogic practice, which were based on orientations of pedagogic discourse.

### **3.16 BACKGROUND, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CRITICISM OF BERNSTEIN**

Singh (1991:571) and Sadovnik (2001:6-7) described Bernstein as a social theorist who developed the sociological theory of pedagogy over a period of more than three decades. Bernstein mostly analysed the nature of knowledge and the relationship between knowledge and power. Maton and Muller (2007:118) comment that Bernstein's theoretical thinking developed from pedagogic code, pedagogic discourse, and then knowledge. During the latter part of his life, Bernstein focused on how education could be understood on its own terms and not merely as a relay for social class and other inequalities (Davies & Hughes 2009:596). Bernstein's ideology blames education as being responsible for producing inequality since society consists of privileged and disadvantaged people who access knowledge differently. Thus, understandably, Bernstein propounded on issues of distribution inequality in education citing the advantages of the middle class over the working-class learners.

Cause (2010:4) explained that Bernstein's work drew from Durkheim's (1893-1947) analysis of complex and simple forms of social organisation when describing how schools are organised and how this structure affects the learner's individuality and identity. Moore (2004:120) concurs with the views of Jenkins (1990) by describing Bernstein's work as fundamentally Durkheimian because of how he similarly analysed the nature of knowledge and the role that different forms of knowledge play in mediating social relationships and structuring society. Philbert (2005:66) claims that Bernstein's conceptualisation of language owes a great deal to structuralism in linguistics because this approach focuses on the organisational features of education rather than on the system of meaning that is constructed by languages.

Bernstein (1990; 1996) was more interested in the consequences of different pedagogic practices for different social classes. Later, he returned to the very theme of education and inequality - the original basis of his project for over 40 years (Sadovnik 2001:597). Bernstein's interest was embedded in the role of schools and how they acted as agents in distributing society's values and power. This is because Bernstein's work was grounded in the origins in studies of families, and languages, and moved from there to schools, and schools to society (Sadovnik 2001:203). Bernstein was more concerned with the consequences of knowledge- production rather than the description of that production. One cannot deliberate about the consequence without finding out the cause; hence, this study explored both the process and the consequence. An area of interest was about how

learners struggle during transitioning to Grade 4 and therefore this led me to investigate the consequences. This is because research has revealed that in-depth studies on academic achievement, direct our attention to classroom instructional processes.

### **3.16.1 Bernstein's accomplishments**

Bernstein accomplished a lot important milestone, firstly by providing a theory of school knowledge and transmission. Secondly, he demonstrated how the "what" of education is transmitted. Thirdly, he linked the sociologists of his early work to the analysis of the codes and schooling. Lastly, he called for an analysis of the consequences of those differences in curriculum and pedagogy (Morais *et al.*, 2012:559).

Hoadley and Jansen (2009:1) state that Bernstein's work greatly focuses on the curriculum; secondly, it provides a well-developed set of conceptual criteria for understanding the curriculum and for doing research. Bernstein's major focus was to develop a theory that analysed the structure of social relationships, and to shape people's consciousness and identity through the curriculum. Bernstein's work in the sociology of education was centred upon the pedagogies of knowledge by providing descriptions of the key features of communication in the form of power and control in a pedagogic interaction. Wheelahan (2010:18) states that Bernstein's contribution extends beyond establishing the centrality of knowledge to the curriculum but explains how knowledge is adapted and moulded to suit the average learner. Bernstein's analysis led us to distributional injustices and divergent knowledge identities.

### **3.16.2 Criticism of Bernstein's work**

Despite all noted accomplishments, there have been criticisms levelled against Bernstein's work. The following issues were noted: issues of deficit and difference, dense writing style (Walford, 1995:193) and a lack of empirical testing. King (1976:81) and Sadovnik (2002:5-8) sum up by saying whatever the criticism of Bernstein's work, "it is undeniably one of the most sustained and powerful attempts to investigate significant issues in the sociology of education, thereby marking a profound influence in sociological research".

In addition, Sadovnik (2001:551) identified different studies, which however criticise Bernstein's work. Despite the criticism, Sadovnik maintains that Bernstein's work remains very substantial in that it remains one of the most sustained and authoritative attempts to

examine noteworthy issues in the sociology of education. Bernstein wanted to expose the different ways in which people understand, interpret, and manage teaching. However, regardless of cited criticism, the study still preferred using Bernstein's concepts and models of pedagogic discourse, as given in the rationale for selecting the framework.

### **3.17 SUMMARY**

As a point of departure, the research questions in the study are referred to in this summary. The study discussed how teachers possess different pedagogical content-knowledge, resulting in them interpreting learning content differently, thus leading to divergence in pedagogical discourses. Therefore, Bernstein (1996:2004) maintains that this varied approach to pedagogic practice leads to having two types of pedagogy. These types of pedagogy are characterised by the strength of the contextual boundaries (Naidoo, 2012:38). Hence, the pedagogical discourse is indicated by either explicit or implicit regulative and instructional criteria.

I mainly adopted concepts from the works of Bernstein (1971, 1975, 1977, 1996, 2000 & 2002), hence this study elaborated on converting knowledge to pedagogic communication. Considering the literature reviewed and the study's research questions in this study, Bernstein's works were significant in investigating how teachers used the re-contextualising rules in transforming curriculum into knowledge. For instance, in actual teaching, there is a procedure that must be followed as the curriculum content is structured in such a way that something must come first; that is, there is a hierarchy of presenting these lessons. The pedagogic discourse and its tools illuminated what it is that teachers selected as content knowledge, how they transformed content into knowledge, how they sequenced the content, and how they framed the content knowledge. In addition to exploring the knowledge-acquisition of learners, this framework enabled me to firstly explore how teachers explored and determined content and knowledge relevant in learning, what was being learnt, how content was learnt, as well as structuring and selection of content. Moreover, it assisted me in establishing the relationship between transition, language, and education.

Lastly, Cause (2010:8) clarifies why it is important to use Bernstein's theory; essentially, using Bernstein's theory allows power relationships to be brought into analysis so that the concepts that illuminate significant influences in the shaping of knowledge can be examined. This process results in distinguishing, rather than dichotomising different

transmission structures. Hence, in my study, I adopted Bernstein's approach to dissect power relationships using visible and invisible pedagogy to illuminate whose power is dominant in knowledge-distribution, and whose power leads to knowledge-acquisition.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **MAPPING AND JUSTIFYING THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

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#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter examined the various frames of reference present in Bernstein's theoretical framework and Bronfenbrenner's, contextualist approach and how they inter-relate throughout the study. My study based on Bernstein's (1990) theory of pedagogic discourse refers to theoretical power and control relations in knowledge distribution.

In this regard, the framework revealed how knowledge is distributed within different contexts and what knowledge is distributed within the different disciplines. I preferred analysing the lessons I observed using the genres of pedagogy (visible and invisible) to illuminate explicitness and implicitness within the distribution rules of communication. Using ideas of classification and framing, the visibility of pedagogy was verified using explicit and implicit rules of the pedagogic discourse. This helped me in my study to evaluate how access to knowledge is distributed after re-contextualising.

The theoretical framework selected is drawn from the naturalist perspective; hence, it links with the desired research design, which is also materialistic in nature. In this chapter, the study considers the issues relating to research design, the methodology, data collection, and data analysis. Data was collected from different sources, which were later triangulated. This chapter discusses the research methodology adopted to study the teachers and learners within their natural settings. To do this, several data sources were adopted to explore and reveal transitional challenges experienced during movement from Grades 3-4. Furthermore, the study sought to explore teacher practices in LOLT in different content subjects, hence the subjects observed had to be taught in English LOLT.

The study searched for an approach that corresponded with the theoretical framework. It was assumed that the research design must be qualitative in nature and must be aligned with naturalistic inquiry. Additionally, at the same time the design must be explored for subjective meanings that emanate from contexts and the participants, since it draws greatly from a contextualist perspective. Hence, in the case of teacher practice and learner transition, the transitional issues are understood within the context of practice. Bernstein's and Bronfenbrenner's perspectives thus complement the methodology in that they

emphasise the impact of childhood experiences in the classrooms in the broader contexts and the people who are within these contexts. The works of Merriam (1988:19) point out that qualitative research is primarily concerned with process rather than product. This was included strengthening the argument within the study that teacher pedagogy in LOLT influences learner transition thereby showing how people make meaning in their context, experiences, and interactions. Having given the background of the preferred framework, this chapter presents a detailed approach of the research design guiding this study based on the following questions:

Main Question: *How do teachers' pedagogical practices influence learner transitions from Grade 3 to Grade 4 where English is used as the LOLT?*

The following subsidiary research questions were developed to address the various elements of the main research question:

- *What are contemporary understandings of the influence of teachers' pedagogical practices in English LOLT on learner transitions?*
- *What kinds of pedagogical practices do Grades 3 and 4 teachers use in English LOLT?*
- *How do these pedagogical practices in English LOLT influence the academic achievement of Grades 3 and 4 children?*
- *How do these new understandings of teachers' pedagogical practices in LOLT influence learner transitions from Grade 3-4?*

This study looked for the research design most suited to the philosophy of language and teaching. Referring to Slavkovsky and Kuta (2013:6), the role of language includes being a tool for thought construction but at the same time creating realities. This is because language affects interpersonal relations and gives one an understanding of self-identity. This resulted in the adoption of the constructivist epistemological orientation, guided by an interpretive theoretical perspective, which therefore uses an inductive approach. The research methodology, which bears similar principles to the chosen paradigm, is the phenomenological approach. My epistemological position is inductive in that knowledge was built from the bottom-up observation of the world. The methodology was mostly qualitative although to a lesser extent quantitative, when used to collect teacher biographies.

## 4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The study observed the philosophical assumptions of three major paradigms: scientific, interpretive and critical (Scotland, 2012:9). Johnson and Christensen (2008:596) observed the same paradigms as interpretive/constructivist (interpretive) and emancipatory (critical). In later years (Creswell 2009:6) identified the worldviews or paradigms, which are listed as follows: post-positivism, constructivism/interpretivist, and advocacy or participatory. Amongst these competing paradigms, I chose interpretivist, which is discussed and rationalised hereunder. The adopted research design is illustrated in Figure 4.1 where all the research processes are presented.



**Figure 4.1: Adopted research design**

### 4.3 THE SELECTED PARADIGM: INTERPRETIVISM

The study engaged the interpretive paradigm which (Mertens 2010:8) mentioned as interpretive/constructivist which included its related methodological procedures and approaches.

The following assertions reflect pillars of interpretivist:

- i. ontological position of interpretivism is relativism;
- ii. discovery of how humans derive meanings from interactions;
- iii. human experiences result in varying social realities;
- iv. human behaviour is context-bound; and
- v. gaining of realities through common sense.

(Creswell 2014:38; Mertens 2010:8)

The ontological position of interpretivism is relativism. This implies that the notion of reality is subjective and differs per individual (Leedy & Omrod 2010:143). This view is supported by Scotland (2012:11) who asserts that our reality is mediated by our senses, and through our consciousness we interpret the world.

The interpretive paradigm reflects the process of unpacking learning using teacher pedagogy in LOLT in an interactive manner. Hence, I chose the interpretive paradigm of Mertens (2010:8) and Johnson and Christensen (2008:596) because of its epistemological stance that meanings and reality are extracted from social extractions. In this research, the aim is to obtain a comprehensive picture about transition practices in Bloemfontein, in South Africa. Mertens (2010:8) furthermore, explores the experiences and viewpoints of practising teachers within Grades 3-4 levels. Teachers in this regard were studied in their contexts.

Interpretivism, was a reaction from the critique of using the natural science approach in social science, thereby using subjective knowledge where an inductive approach is underpinned by a subjective ontology (Mertens 2010:7-8). The interpretive paradigm holds that reality consists of peoples' subjective experiences of the external world. The ontology of interpretivism holds that reality is socially created. The interpretive paradigm is fortified by observation and interpretation. This supports Creswell's (2009:20) assertion that interpretivism calls for the imaginative understanding of the studied phenomenon thereby assuming emergent and multiple realities. Creswell (2014:26) maintains that the

ontological position of interpretivism is relativism. Relativism is the view that reality is subjective and differs from person to person. In my view, the differences are based on the individual context, the teacher, the child and the school; and this gives rise to subjective actions and reciprocal interactions within the context.

Furthermore, the ontology of interpretivism holds that there are varied realities that are constructed by human interactions and meaningful actions. Additionally, ontology further highlights the discovery of how people make sense of their social world in their natural environment through engagement in daily routines, conversations and writings. To sum up the interpretivist ontological stance, Crotty (1998:43) had this to say: "Our realities are mediated by our senses, hence without consciousness the world is meaningless. Reality emerges when consciousness engages with objects which are already pregnant with meaning".

In accordance with this research study, the LOLT shapes the learners' realism in all content subjects and gives access to learning. This study proposes that the LOLT becomes the transactional currency to make meaning and this view corroborates with Vygotsky's (1978:192) who explained that languages actively shape and create reality. Thus, reality is constructed through the interaction between language and aspects of the environment. As stated earlier on interpretive epistemology is subjectivism, which is thus based on real-world phenomenon. The inquirer and the participant are therefore bound by interactive processes of talking, writing, listening, and reading. The human Interactive process constructs knowledge and reality contextually between humans and their world. Therefore, the social world is only comprehended subjectively Scotland (2012:13).

In my study, the teachers and their actions are deemed as important parts of the child's context in that the child has direct contact with the teacher. Therefore, the theoretical framework of Bronfenbrenner (2006:123) thus adopted the microsystem category, as it constitutes contexts such as home, the school, and the community where there are bi-directional influences. The study also adopted the mesosystem, which establishes the relations between two or more microsystems. Examples of interpretive methodology include case studies, phenomenology, hermeneutics and ethnography. Creswell (2009:8) points out that interpretive methods prompt insight and understandings of behaviour and explain action from the participant's viewpoint. In this study insights were generated through meanings emanating from class observations, teacher and pupil interaction and the resultant learning outcome.

My epistemological perspective on the study represented the way Grade 3 and Grade 4 teachers teach and how the learners received or learn in LOLT because teacher practices are presumed to be impacting on learner transition. The impact comes through the pedagogy of content subjects through LOLT in the learning context, which is the classroom.

#### **4.3.1 Rationale for adopting the interpretive paradigm**

The interpretive paradigm was chosen because of certain advantages. Firstly, it is relevant because of its ability to produce multiple realities that are contextually linked or that are socially constructed. In this case, both the researcher and participant create their own reality based on their experiences (Mertens 2010:13). Most significant, the study holds Bernstein's assertion that the environment is a device for mediating between the subject and the pedagogic discourse. Hence, Diaz (n.d. 93) claims that "when reading Bernstein, sometimes we assume an overlap between the production of discourse and the production of subjectivism" Furthermore, Diaz (n.d 94) explains that "at different levels power is inseparable from physical and symbolic boundaries of experiences, meanings and the contexts of interactions in which realization of meaning take place".

Mertens (2010:10) points out that "the ontological position of interpretivism is relativism" and from this assertion one deduces that relativism is subjective; hence different people experience same events differently. In this regard, Creswell (2014:20) conceptualised individual realities as being mediated by our senses. In this study, the framework situates the focus on the relatedness of classroom features in a way, which considers both the contextual organisation of knowledge and its transmission. Within an interpretivist perspective the relatedness of classroom features and the participants make up a case. In seeking to strengthen my view that interpretivism is relevant to the selected framework, I am in agreement that a Bernstein discourse situates learning and interaction in a social context thereby rendering the learners as active participants.

Therefore, Creswell (2014:34) and Mertens (2010:11) agree that the world does not exist independently of our knowledge. In the research design, a case study strategy was adopted since research is socially constructed and it emerges from people's social practices. This practice emanated from studied cases. The case study strategy therefore complemented interpretivism since they both draw meanings from subjective experiences This enabled me to contextualise the research to understand how teacher practices in LOLT influence learning during transitioning, including how and why learners seem to experience

problems during transitioning to Grade 4. When equated to concepts of power and boundaries we cannot understand or isolate a subject from its environment; and on the part of the teacher, the environment is assumed to shape his/her pedagogic discourse.

Lastly, interpretivism is therefore “directed at understanding phenomena from an individual’s perspective, investigating interactions among individuals, and considering historical and cultural contexts which people inhabit” Creswell (2009:8). If we consider the curriculum changes in South Africa, there is evidence of shifting values and beliefs because with each new curriculum dispensation the teachers had to shift their beliefs and values. The phenomena that the study needed to understand was teacher pedagogical discourse, impact of learner transition, and how discourse is a crucial field of struggle.

Interpretivism gives the researcher greater scope to explore and address issues of influence and impact in order to answer the *how* and *why* questions in this study. Hence, interpretivism helped in exploring the natural environment, which in this case was the teachers’ approaches in their classroom’s contexts. To understand how pedagogy works, the relay of pedagogy in divergent contexts help in defining social relationships between the teacher and the student. This also assisted in analysing the extent and effect of LOLT on transition in addition to other reasons why learners struggled during transition.

The rationale for using interpretivist principles lies in its epistemological stance, which hold that meanings and reality are extracted from contextual interaction. This view corroborates Scotland’s (2012:12) who postulated that “reality is individually constructed, and there are as many realities as individuals”. In this case language does not passively label objects but actively shapes and moulds reality

#### **4.4 RESEARCH APPROACH**

Qualitative approaches were engaged to link with the preferred paradigm and philosophical commitments. Qualitative researchers use the philosophical assumptions such as constructivism because it provides the opportunity to investigate intricate phenomena within their settings.

##### **4.4.1 Case study research strategy**

Strategies of qualitative enquiry include phenomenology, ethnography, narrative studies

and case study (Creswell, 2009:17). The case study has been preferred for this study. A case study strategy links with the selected paradigm which views knowledge as being socially acquired (Metler 2016:14). The rationale for choosing case study was partially because it is among the approaches of qualitative enquiry and its suitability to explore teacher practices and teachers in action in their unique spaces, which I consider as the contemporary phenomenon that can only be understood by engaging with realities. Furthermore, Mertens (2010:233-234) and Yazin (2015:134) assert that knowledge from case study research is socially constructed and it emerges from people's social practices. Personally, I concur with interpretive stance that reality is constructed because in my lesson observations I observed that LOLT functioned appropriately in giving meaning to subjects, since language exists in connecting its users to one another within their ecosystem; this became evident in my research since the teachers were studied within their contexts.

The case study strategy is sometimes regarded as being controversial when it comes to identifying the number of cases and how to select the cases. The methodologists seem unclear as to their recommendation about which cases can be regarded as being sufficient in a study (Mertens 2010:233-234; Yazin 2015:134). In this study, Grade 3 and 4 learners, as well as their teachers from the five-selected former Model-C schools, were purposefully selected. The cases were based in Bloemfontein in the Free State Province of South Africa. The schools selected were selected on the basis that they all adopted English as the LOLT. Also, the English LOLT is regarded as a home language in the schools, which are situated in middle-class suburbs. The learner population is from both middle-class and working-class, with the larger population being that of the working-class learners.

The study only selected former Model C schools to try to delimit aspects of differentiation to be able to generalise the study. Bertram (2012:78) warns that South African schools are differentiated so widely regarding socio-economic status, geographic location and resourcing [to name but a few]", that to come up with a credible research based on similar factors would be expansive; I therefore based my study on similar schools (only former model-C schools).

Case studies can be used to investigate cases where existing knowledge is limited (Rose & Conhoto 2015:5). This can be "a life contemporary bonded system (a case) or multiple bonded systems" (Creswell 2013:97; Johnson & Christenson 2008:212). Case studies may be single cases or multiple cases; the cases may involve a single unit, an individual, or a



small number of related cases. The investigation in this study consists of ten Grade 3 and ten Grade 4 teachers regarding their ability to transfer knowledge. This was investigated during lesson observation. The investigation was followed by interviews and document analysis.

The study was a descriptive and multiple case study that utilised the qualitative methodological approach. Yin (1994:13) explains a case study as an empirical inquiry whose investigation is based on life context especially when the boundaries are blurred. A case study as viewed by Metler (2016:14) is a detailed study of specifically identified programmes, activities, people or groups. In addition, Rose and Conhoto (2015:3) explain that a case study is more of an exploration used to answer specific questions, which seeks divergent contextual evidence.

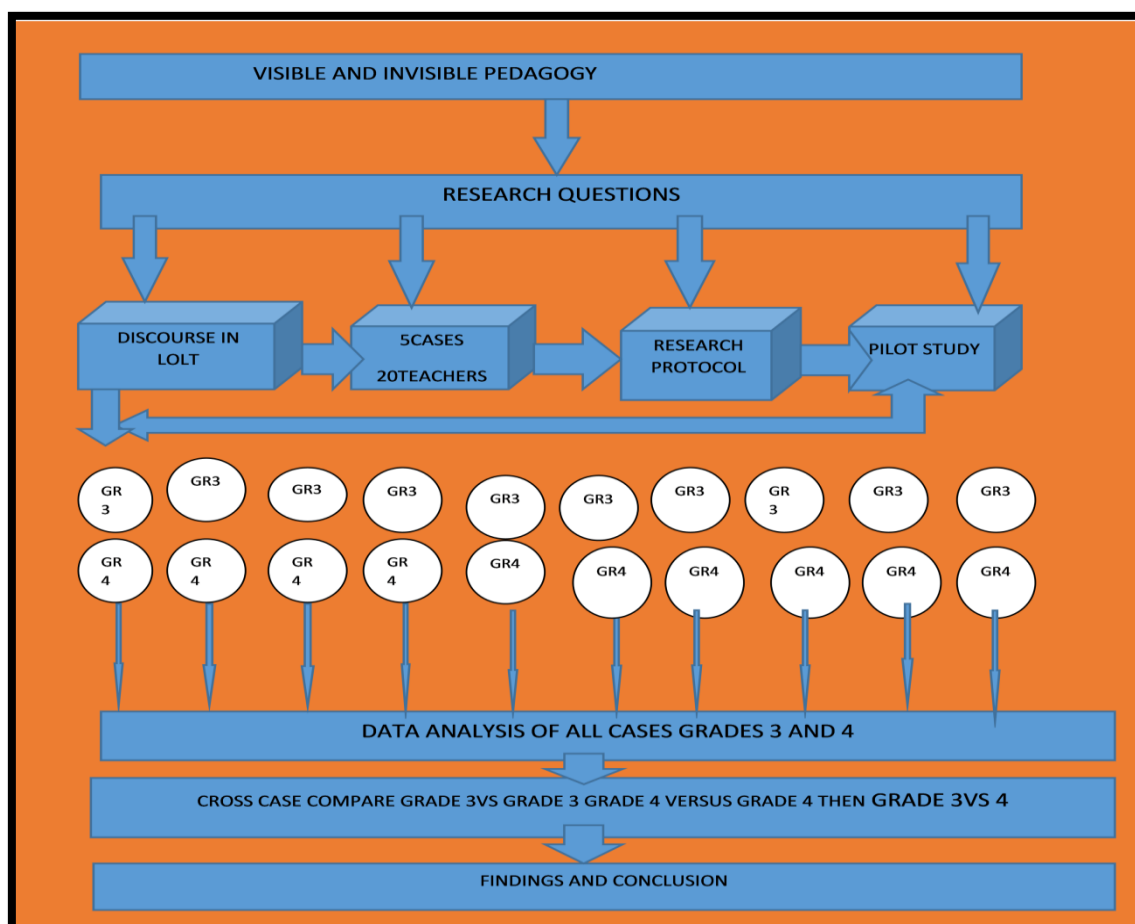
There are three types of case studies that have been propounded by (Yin 2014:10). The exploratory type is used as a pilot to other studies or research questions. Then the descriptive (providing narrative accounts). Lastly, the explanatory type, which tests theories (Cohen *et al.*, 2011:181). Cohen *et al.* (2011) explains that the case study is advantageous in that "it provides a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply presenting them with abstract theories or principles". In this regard, a multiple case study was explored using ex Model-C schools in the South African context that use English as LOLT.

The rationale behind selecting the case study option was to explore this phenomenon as opposed to the dynamics of LOLT as being a catalyst or barrier in learner transition. The fact that the study wanted to comparatively explore teacher pedagogic approaches and transfer of knowledge in more than one school, led to the adoption of the multiple case study. The study lens relied heavily on the instructional analysis between the producers and acquirers of knowledge in all these schools. This study argues that teachers' pedagogical practices make or break LOLT as the bridge to accessing content through language. The argument whether one case is sufficient raised doubts because a single case may be manipulated.

Based on this perception I therefore felt compelled to adopt the multiple case design and increase the number of participants to achieve comparability. This might increase the chances of a trustworthy study. Cohen *et al.* (2011:25) asserted that of the three broad approaches affiliated to educational research, the interpretive paradigm is most naturally

suitable to case study research. The rationale for choosing the case study is that it enables a comprehensive understanding of the problem and requires extensive data collection where multiple sources of data are incorporated or triangulated. Creswell (2013:100) and Yin (2014:10) point out that the case study is a very popular method in social science

Therefore, seven former Model-C schools were selected for the case. The seven schools were initially selected but unfortunately, the other two schools could not be part of this study. The fieldwork was carried out in 20 classes. Each perspective explored the relay of discourse between teachers and students. This included the action by teachers and student reflection. Multiple data collection sources were used which included face-to-face interviews and lesson observations. Below is Figure 4.2 showing adopted data collection methods. The selected cases were meant to investigate the relay of school knowledge in more than one context.



**Figure 4.2: Adopted cases (Adapted from Rose & Conhoto 2015:15)**

#### **4.4.2 The rationale for selecting the case study strategy**

Mertens (2010:352) rationalises the use of case studies as a qualitative approach by explaining that qualitative researchers seek to understand the context of the participants by visiting, exploring phenomenon, and gathering information on a one-on-one basis. Therefore, this suits the purpose and process of case study. I decided on the multiple case study because I am interested in the multiple case, which therefore allows for identification of common patterns in diverse situations. The case study process probes deeply while at the same time analysing connected interactions between the factors in explaining the present status.

For example, when studying a person, the case will not just be the person, but it further probes what kind of person one is. In my study, I gave a detailed description as suggested by Metler (2016:95) that the basic aim of a case is the development of a highly detailed description about the case under study. I was more interested in studying cases or situations in their context. Since the study was also based on the use of language, in the selected cases I could view how learners interact with teachers, peers, learning materials and the environment towards knowledge-acquisition. The case study appeared more relevant in the study because it enabled the use of multiple data collection techniques; it allowed me to explore teacher-learner relations in the discourse of a learning context.

#### **4.4.2 Determining the Sampling strategy**

“Sample designs can be either probability or non-probability. With probability samples each element has a known probability of being included in the sample, but the non-probability samples do not allow the researchers to determine this probability” (Pandey and Pandey 2015:14). Therefore, in my study I selected the purposive sampling approach which allowed me to choose participants using a non-probability approach. Purposive sampling enabled me to conveniently select the schools that offer English as a medium of communication because my study was restricted to only Grade 3 and 4 classes and their teachers. Hence teacher participants had to be conveniently sampled.

#### **4.5 PILOT STUDY**

The study utilised data collection instruments that were intended to determine whether the study bears enough exploratory interest (Leedy & Ormrod 2010:45). The pilot study

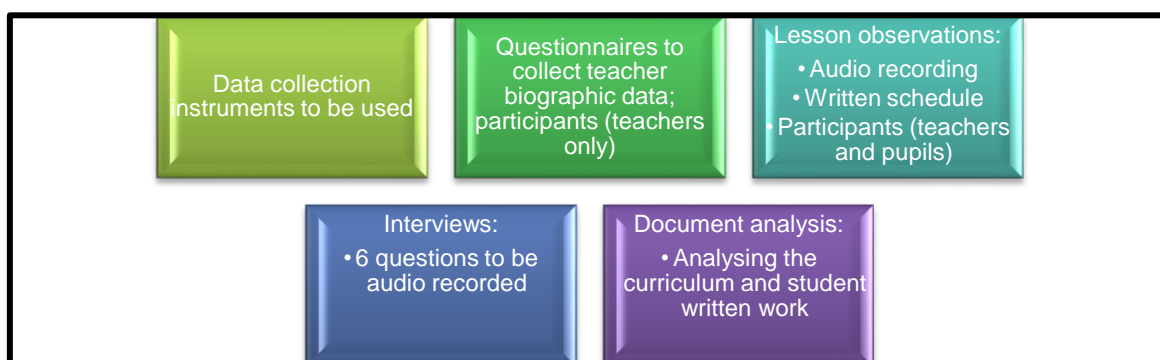
interviews helped the researchers to gauge time related factors and adjust questions accordingly.

During 2016, I conducted a pilot study at one selected former Model C school. This was an informal exercise where I chose three Grade 3 teachers and three Grade 4 teachers to be part of my investigation. Since my research is largely qualitative, the pilot study selected a few cases. Some ambiguous questions that were asked in the pilot study were later rephrased and shortened. This was to enable the participants to comprehend and respond accordingly, as well as allowing the researcher to probe further. Examples of the rephrased questions are as follows (cf. Appendices E-G).

The modified questions functioned better, and the participants provided the researcher with the relevant answers. The same procedures of data collection used in the pilot study were also adopted in the main research. Initially in the pilot study, I had included quantitative questionnaires and interview questions, but the teachers ignored most questions. When I asked, they said they either did not understand the question(s) or it was too long; hence my questionnaires were restricted to collecting biographic data.

#### 4.6 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS, PROCEDURES AND RATIONALE

The following figure represents the data collection procedure in a cyclical manner.



**Figure 4.3: Data gathering instruments**

##### 4.6.1 Data collection tools, procedures and rationale

The following methods were adopted as part of data collection: semi-structured interviews, observations, questionnaires, and document analysis, to answer the above questions. It shows how the conceptual framework and the paradigm relate. It also shows the link

between the study and the paradigm and how the paradigm interconnected with selected research approaches. The combination of these instruments could collect interpretive data in a qualitative way whereby the participants were not mere numbers but were given the opportunity to actively participate and bring meaning to the investigation. The research analysed events as they unfolded for the reader to make his/her own judgement, thereby giving an interpretation of the macrosystem, mesosystem and exosystem in relation to teacher-learner and context bi-directional influences.

Yin (1994:12) holds that case study methods draw from six data collection methods which can be referred to as instruments of data collection. Sources are interviews, direct observations, participant observations, and physical artefacts. Qualitative data collection methods were selected since they complement interpretivism and case studies where the approach is more subjective. Hence the selection of the semi-structured interviews, lesson observation, and questionnaires.

In case study research, data may be collected using a wide variety of methods. Hence, Best and Kahn (2016:249) explain that the methods include observations by either the researcher or his informants, interviews with participants, questionnaires, opinionnaires, psychological tests, and inventories. In case studies, the participant is the key player who sends a message. Although case studies can be described as qualitative, Gay *et al.* (2009:246) advises that we do not only explore cases qualitatively; the quantitative approach is also relevant.

## **4.7 DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

The data collection methods selected are indicated below.

### **4.7.1 Non-participant observation**

The study employed the non-participant observation technique (Liu & Maitlis 2010:611) where the researcher observed participants surreptitiously. The researcher's role is to be a "complete observer" and as a non-participant observer, this method was used to observe lessons that were conducted in English (LOLT). The researcher stayed separated from the activities so as to be able to understand generated phenomenon from an impartial perspective (Mertens 2010:352; Creswell 2009:179) [see Appendix G for the observation schedule]. The objective was to evaluate whether the control of the teacher over the

learner is implicit or explicit. The observations also highlighted the degree of authority between teachers and pupils, between selection, pacing, and hierarchy in the transmission and acquisition of specific skills subjects. The researcher also discovered the type of pedagogy that was prevalent per grade level. The observation, data collection method for this study was grounded in the following:

- Teachers' pedagogical approach (visible/invisible);
- Teacher-learner pedagogical relationship; and
- Pedagogical device based on the rules of hierarchy, pacing, selection, criteria and evaluation.

The observation method became very relevant because it was woven into qualitative methodology. Observation helped in supplying first-hand experience of the participants. In a case study involving teacher pedagogical practice, usually people would want to portray themselves as being good. It was found that the best method befitting this study was the observation method since it highlighted the phenomenon in the context of the participants who were also interviewed.

The study created an observation protocol, which was used to evaluate all lessons observed. The observation protocol was used to record the reconstruction of dialogue and description of the participatory context. Just to make my case study stronger, I intended to collect samples of learners' work after every lesson to help in evaluating teachers' approaches in terms of classification, framing and visibility-depth. Unfortunately, not all teachers cooperated since they felt collecting learners' work was meddling. The participants seemed very uncomfortable and unwilling to give me the learners' workbooks; hence, the researcher decided not to collect learners' work and to even request teachers' planning files.

As far as the non-participant observation is concerned, there are advantages and disadvantages. Liu and Maitlis (2010:611) stated that the problem with non-participant observation is the "observer effect". Participants are sometimes affected by the presence of an observer. Participants may view a researcher as an intruder; however, the participants in this study were encouraged to behave normally. Another disadvantage is the selectivity aspect on the part of the researcher who may select only certain aspects to observe, but this was counteracted by observing about 20 lessons. Hence, increasing the observation of different aspects of lesson presentation.

### 4.7.2 Interviews

Cohen *et al.* (2007:352), Johnson and Christenson (2008:203-208) and Metler (2016:203-205) warn that interviewing is more than just questions because interviews are purposeful interactions that researchers use to elicit information from the perspective of another. In this case, the researcher learns what the other person knows or why they act in a certain way. When we interview, we are trying to find out how the next person perceives a phenomenon or their view of preconceived categories that organise their world Patton (1990:248). This supports the assertion by Guba and Lincoln (1994:112) who suggest that realities are captive and therefore they rely on mind interpretations. When we want to look at the world through someone's eyes, the researcher elicits their worldview through interaction, thereby, making conspicuous the interpretivist epistemology, which is subjective, transactional, and interactive.

The interview method encompasses various types of interviews that can be used depending on what information is required and how it is to be acquired. In this case, the study interviewed teachers to give the participants the floor to unconsciously write their story. Therefore, interviews are of great significance because they give the researcher the power to understand participants on their own terms (Saldana & Omasta 2018:90) identified various types of interviews as informal, conversational, guided, standardised, open-ended, closed fixed response and closed response. All these types of interviews share common features; the interviews may be done face-to-face or telephonically.

Pandey and Pandey (2015:61) claim that qualitative interviews are structured, semi-structured or unstructured. The researchers must not impose their preconceived notions because if they do, the result will be biased. This helps in controlling issues of bias. Researchers sometimes give away too much such that participants begin sharing their preconceived notions. On that note, Best and Kahn (2016:255) warn that interview data can easily be biased and misleading; hence, it is imperative for researchers to guard against providing too much information that makes the participant "fake" their response. The interview questions for this study investigated the following in both Grades:

- Learner readiness for either Grade 3 or 4;
- Achievement drops in current Grade;
- Prevalence of LOLT challenges;
- Differences between Grade 3 and 4 works; and

- Influence of LOLT on Learning.

This research adopted the standardised face-to-face open-ended interview. Saldana and Omasta (2018:90) assert that this means having a set of questions that are predetermined and are asked of interviewees in a fixed order during the interview. The interviewer selected questions that enabled the researcher to be able to ask some basic questions (cf. Appendix F), hence increasing the comparability of responses. Therefore, according to Patton (1990:288), the standardised interview reduces interviewee preconceived notions especially if there are many participants. In this study, I created my own interview protocol. This assisted in reducing interview bias. However, Patton warns that this type of interview is less flexible in relating to specific individuals and circumstances since it may limit spontaneity and relevance. Steps were taken to safeguard this. Although the interviews were theme-relevant, this did not stop the researcher from further probing.

#### **4.7.3 Document analysis**

The Grade 3 and 4 textbooks were used to evaluate the differences in vocabulary depth since vocabulary and LOLT are interlinked in literacy studies. The study analysed the period of week one in all subjects and compared the results with Grade 3 end of term work to check on vocabulary progression. Furthermore, the CAPS curriculum was used as a yardstick to measure the impact of curriculum progression regarding Grade 3 and 4 transitioning.

Although the research design was largely qualitative, questionnaires were used to support and substantiate qualitative data. The researcher designed a questionnaire (cf. Appendix F) which was first piloted using five non-participating teachers. The questionnaires' purpose was to collect participants' biographical data. The biographical data led to an understanding of why and how certain approaches were used when teaching (in LOLT), and to understand the influence of teachers' backgrounds. This study then developed a more structured, closed and numerical questionnaire. The questionnaires assisted in drawing comparisons across participants and across themes. After using questionnaires, the second stage was observation (the research then moved to classes to observe how the teachers were teaching).

The questionnaires in the study sought to establish:



- Teacher profile (gender, age, qualifications, experience);
- Home language;
- LOLT at varsity level; and
- Ability in English LOLT.

## 4.8 PRESENTATION OF TEACHERS' PEDAGOGIC PRACTICES

### 4.8.1 Managing data from questionnaires

Initially, the research gathered data from questionnaires that was intended to establish the frequency and agreement of responses among participants. This was done to establish whether there is a pattern between participants' views on LOLT and transition. Classroom observations were used to establish the current relationship between LOLT and transition. Drawing from the genres of pedagogy, the lessons were used to observe how teachers facilitate and mediate knowledge through LOLT using English as a transitional tool.

### 4.8.2 Grade 3 teacher-profile form

The teacher profile has been included to investigate current teacher characteristics. Most researchers as indicated by Sayed and McDonald (2017: 21) have explored what makes a school system significant by citing that teachers' common characteristics influence learner performance.

#### 4.8.2.1 *Grade 3 teacher's home language or first language*

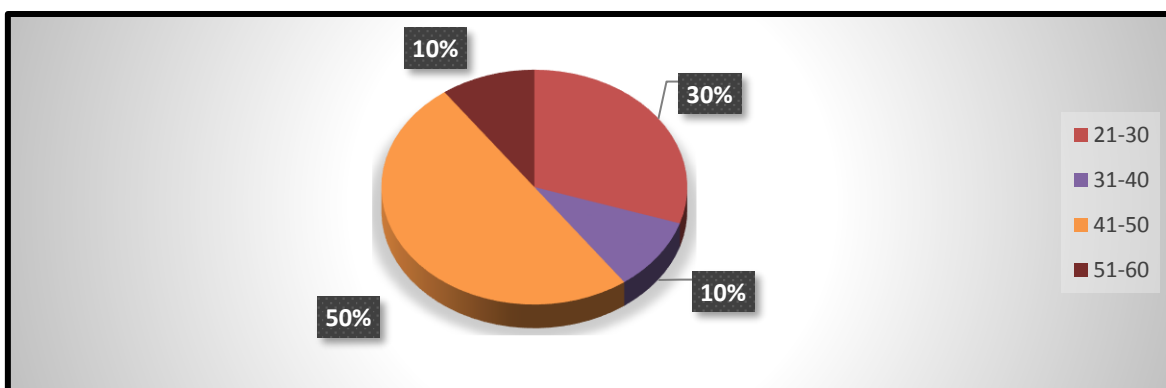
The Grade 3 teachers' home language was distributed as follows: Afrikaans 40%, English 40%, 10% for Sesotho and IsiXhosa (cf. Table 4.1).

**Table 4.1: Grade 3 teacher profiles (n=10)**

GENDER	HIGHEST QUALIFICATION	AGE RANGE	GRADES TAUGHT	HOME LANGUAGE	LOLT AT UNIVERSITY
F	B. EDU	41-50	3	Sesotho	English
F	H.E. D	41-50	3	Afrikaans	Afrikaans
F	B. Edu (FP)	21-30	3	Afrikaans	Afrikaans & English
F	PTD	41-50	3	Xhosa	Afrikaans & English
F	B. EDU	21-30	3	English	English
F	H.E. D	51-60	3	Afrikaans	Afrikaans
F	B. EDU	31-40	3	Afrikaans	English
F	H.E. D	41-50	3	English	English
F	SPIII E and ACE	41-50	3	English	English
F	B. EDU	21-30	3	English	English

#### 4.8.2.2 *Grade 3 teacher age-distribution*

The Grade 3 teachers' age distribution contrasted with that of the Grade 4 teachers. Grade 3 classes were dominated by mostly elderly female teachers. Information from the questionnaires and teacher biography the results showed that participant teachers in Grade 3 ranged from 21 to 60 years of age (cf. Figure 4.4).



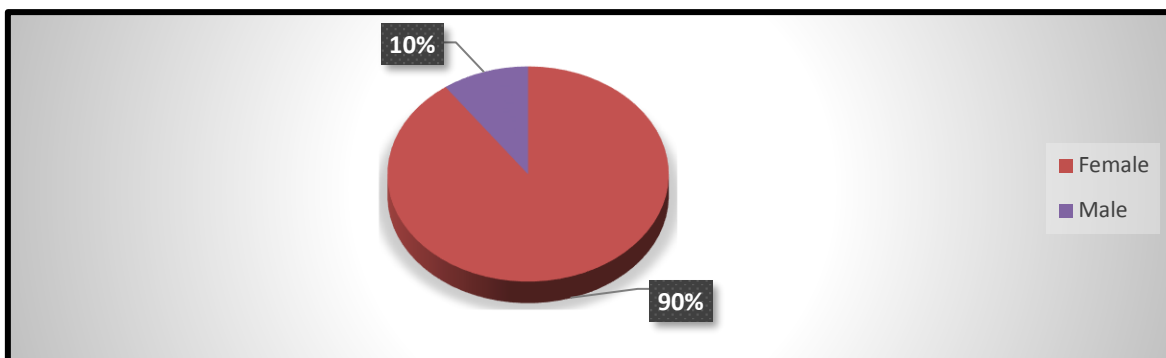
**Figure 4.4: Grade 3 Teacher age range**

From the results, we see 50% of Grade 3 teachers were in the 41-50 age range. That was the highest range. This implies that Grade 3 teachers are mostly from the "old school" and that they were trained in the old curriculum. The 21-30 age range constituted 30%. The youngest age range represented was 31-40 which thus represented 10% (cf. Figure 4.4).

It is good to note that the age of the educator has some implications for his or her maturity to understand the education system and the purposes of educational curricula. However, some educators who may be just about to retire may not be eager to contribute to curriculum changes, saying that it might not assist him or her about economic survival anymore (Makgato 2003:222).

#### 4.8.2.3 *Grade 3 and gender of teachers*

Teacher gender has an effect, South Africa education in the foundation phase is dominated by female teachers but when we move to Grade 4 male teachers are present but in limited numbers (cf. Figure 4.5).

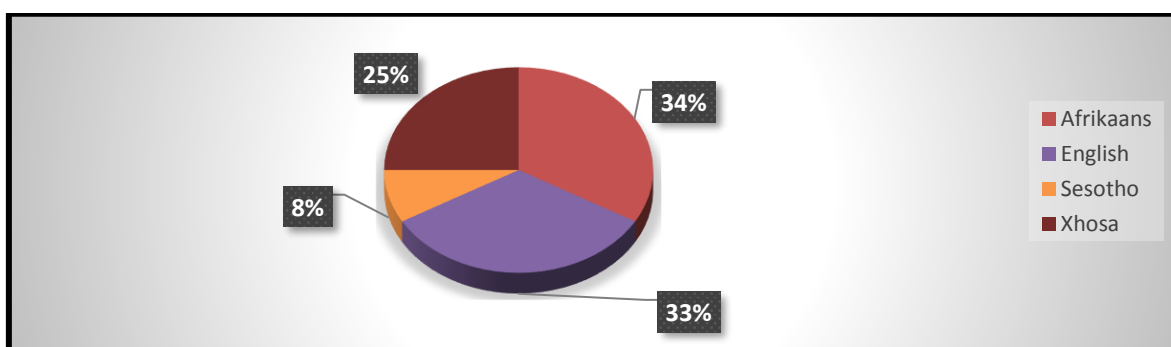


**Figure 4.5: Teachers' gender**

Findings in Grade 3 indicate that 90% of participant teachers were females. Even in the Intermediate Phase there was limited male representation. From this distribution one can concur with Sayed and Macdonald (2017:17) when they maintain that FP teaching is equated to childcare and parenthood because the lower phases in schools have the majority of female teachers as is the case in other countries such as Tanzania.

#### **4.8.2.4 Grade 3 teachers' home language**

The Grade 3 teachers' home language was distributed as follows: Afrikaans constituted 40%, English 40%, followed by 10% for Sesotho and IsiXhosa. Forty per cent (40%) of the teacher-participants are Afrikaans-speaking, 40% are English speakers and only 10% Sesotho and IsiXhosa speaking. Teaching in English LOLT may not be effective as teachers speak the language but struggle with fluency (accuracy of language usage and pronunciation) as shown in Figure 4.6.

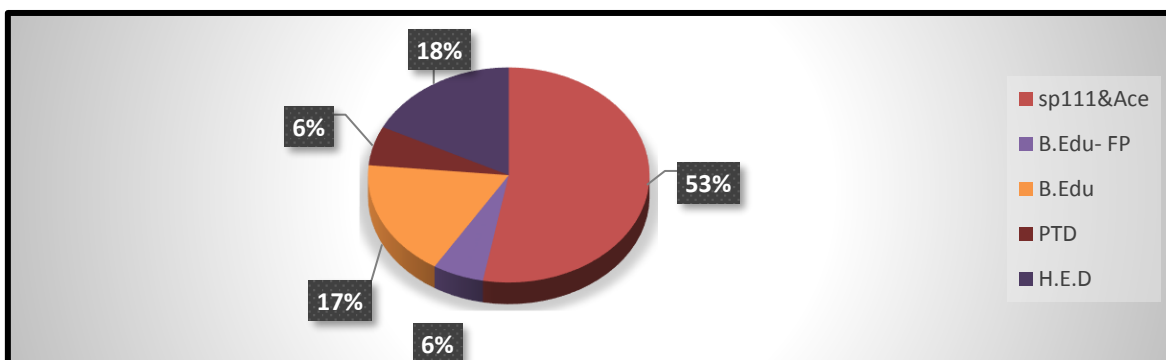


**Figure 4.6: Teachers' home language**

#### **4.8.2.5 Grade 3 teachers' qualifications**

The Grade 3 teachers' qualifications were as follows: BA 50%, Higher Education Diploma 30%, PTD 10%, SPIII AND ACE 10%. The teacher profile became imperative in providing

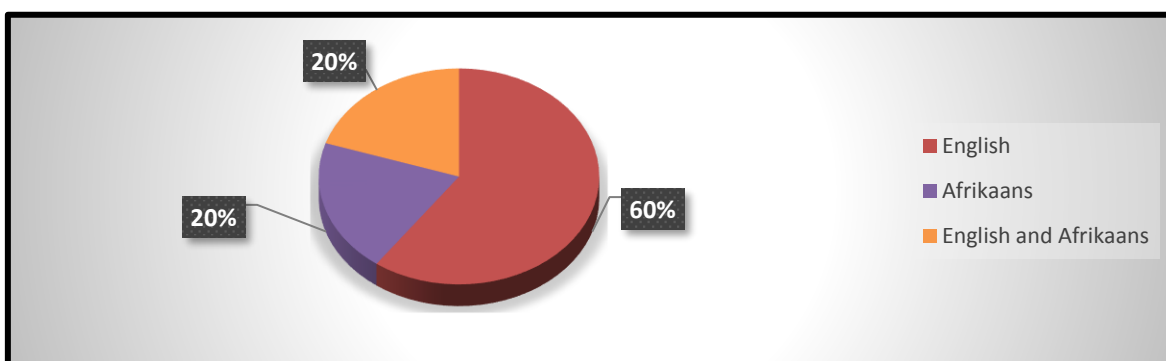
a background study of educators' qualifications. This was deemed necessary in that, qualifications influence the way a teacher discharges duty and selects pedagogical approaches. Furthermore, the qualifications may affect teacher-perception, ability, and choices. In this study, the researcher presented South Africa's paradigm shift, so knowing the teachers' qualifications may redirect one into understanding the type of curriculum one draws upon. Figure 4.7 indicates teacher-qualifications.



**Figure 4.7: Teacher qualifications**

#### 4.8.2.6 *Teacher LOLT at University*

The teachers' language of learning during their university years of teacher-training was as follows: 60% were educated in English, whereas 20% were educated in Afrikaans, and 20% received bilingual education in Afrikaans and English (Figure 5.8).



**Figure 4.8: Teachers' LOLT in University**

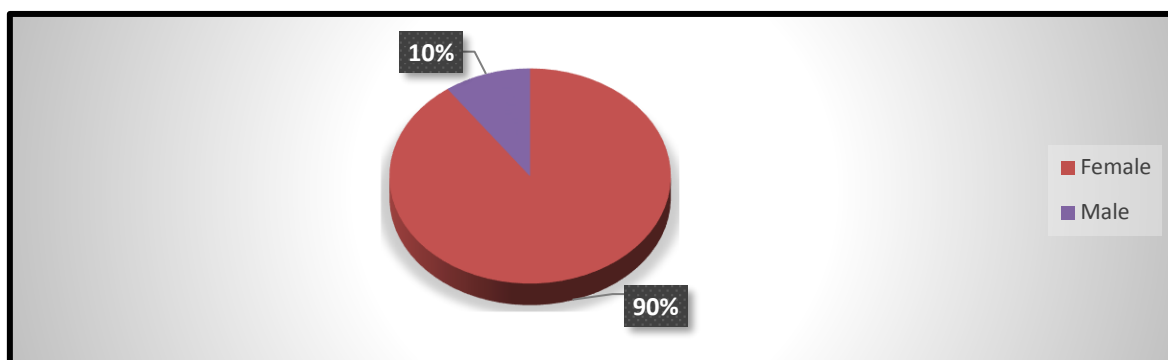
The Grade 4 teachers' profile was included to compare the LOLT between Grade 3 and Grade 4, and to highlight how teachers' characteristics affect how they perform their duties (cf. Table 4.2).

**Table 4.2: Grade 4 teacher-profiles**

GENDER	AGE RANGE	HIGHEST QUALIFICATION	GRADES TAUGHT	HOME LANGUAGE	MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN UNIVERSITY
F	61 and above	T.E.D (SPR) Advanced Certificate	4	Afrikaans	Afrikaans
F	21-30	B. Ed (FP)	4	Afrikaans	English
F	41-50	HED	4	English	English
F	31-40	4TH YEAR	4	Afrikaans	Afrikaans and English
F	41-50	B. EDU	4	Afrikaans	Afrikaans and English
F	41-50	B. A	4	Afrikaans	English
F	21-30	NIL	4	Afrikaans	English
M	51-60	PGCE	4	Afrikaans	Afrikaans
F	21-30	B. Ed	4	English	English
F	31-40	ACE	4	Sesotho	English

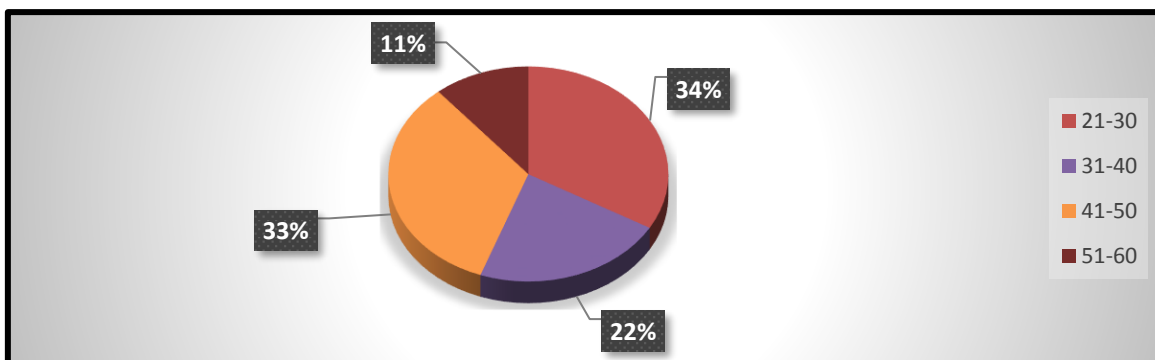
#### 4.8.2.7 Gender distribution

Teacher gender distribution in Grade 4 is also dominated by females (Bhana & Moosa 2015:1). The male participants revealed that they felt it more appropriate for them to work in senior phases, but this raises issues of "masculinity teaching" in South Africa (Figure 4.9).

**Figure 4.9: Gender distribution**

#### 4.8.2.8 Grade 4 teachers' age distribution

Teachers' age ranges are there to determine the pattern in relation to the curriculum dispensation of that era. The Grade 4 teachers' age distribution was in contrast to that of the Grade 3 teachers. Grade 3 classes were dominated by young female teachers with only one male teacher. The age range 21-30 constituted 30%, the 31-40 constituted 20%, the 41-50 constituted 30%, the 51-60 10%, and lastly the 61+ also constituted 10% (cf. Figure 4.10).

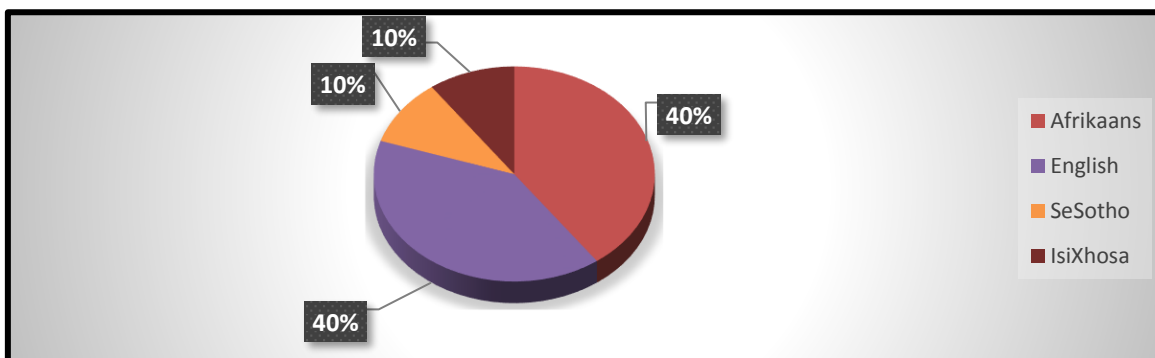


**Figure 4.10: Grade 4 teachers' age distribution**

The above figure represents the Grade 4 age distribution.

#### **4.8.2.9 Grade 4 teachers' home language or first language**

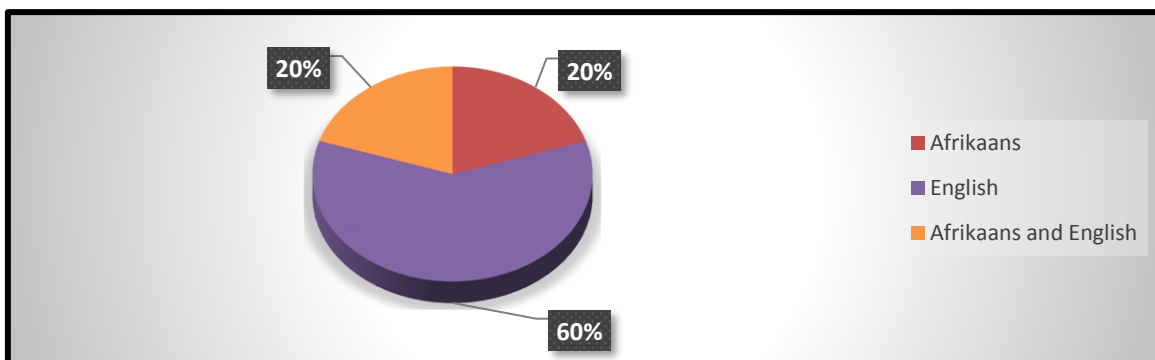
The teachers' home language was as follows: 40% of the teachers are Afrikaans-speaking, 40% are English speakers, and only 10% Sesotho and 10% IsiXhosa. Since only 10% are English LOLT speaking teachers, it is highly unlikely that the teachers will speak the language with a hundred percent fluency (cf. Figure 4.11).



**Figure 4.11: Grade 4 teachers' home language or first language**

#### **4.8.2.10 Grade 4 teachers' LOLT at University**

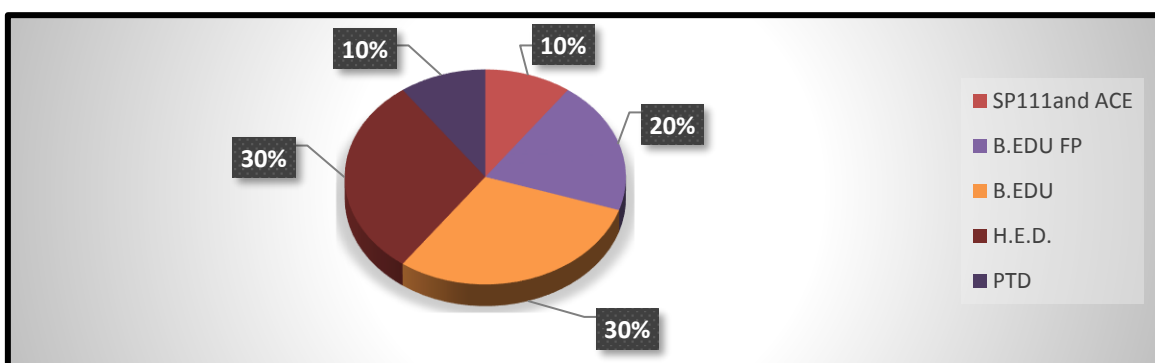
When we look at teacher LOLT at University, 60% received their education in English, 30% received bilingual education, and the remaining 10% received education in Afrikaans. In as much as they may be teaching effectively, second language speakers may sometimes not be eloquent when using structures of the English LOLT (cf. Figure 4.12).



**Figure 4.12: Grade 4 Teacher LOLT at University**

#### 4.8.2.11 *Grade 4 teacher-qualifications*

As far as teacher-qualifications were concerned, 10% of Grade 4 teachers were unqualified, 60% of the participants were degree holders (10% being BA and 50% BEd), 10% were diploma holders, and lastly 20% obtained Academic Certificates in Education (ACE). This showed a very different quality of teaching and learning for people of different race groups and exposure to vastly different forms of pedagogy. Race under apartheid (and currently) correlated strongly with social class (Chisholm 2004:878). The professional training of the teachers had also taken place in different kinds of institutions, and some were racially segregated. This can also pronounce different teacher backgrounds (especially those trained under the apartheid-imposed "bantu education" system), which ultimately informs their comparative pedagogical approach (cf. Figure 4.13).



**Figure 4.13: Grade 4 teachers' qualifications**

## 4.9 SCHOOL CASE STUDIES

Although the researcher applied to the DoE to use seven schools as research sites, unfortunately one school could not grant entry, leaving the researcher with six. Also, one school's contextual factors were not conducive enough for this type of data collection,

therefore I had to exclude it as one of my research sites thus leaving me with 5 schools. The schools sampled were all former Model C schools, which seemed better equipped in terms of resources.

#### **4.10 CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS**

The researcher spent at least one full day in each school during the first block of data gathering. The researcher used a self-generated observation schedule (cf. Appendix G) However, there are issues that came to my attention. For example, observations could not ignore the situational factors, which influenced teaching and learning, especially the kind of resources that were used in evaluating the first lesson observed. To sustain what the researcher had observed, audio-recorded lessons were subsequently transcribed to be able to draw parallels with other lessons.

In the presentation of results, the researcher focused on the following aspects of pedagogic practices (hierarchical rule, selection, pacing, sequencing, and evaluation criteria). The intention was to reveal the extent to which different Grade 3-4 educators made explicit the cited discursive rules. Using Bernstein's theories of classification and framing teachers' strategies were analysed as per lesson, per teacher, using Bernstein's coding system (F++, F+/ F--'F-). Bernstein's concepts of framing and classification were used to distinguish the diverse "modalities' of pedagogic practice to denote the strength and weakness of sequencing, selection, pacing and hierarchy in knowledge selection. In this case a coding schema is presented below where the framing of lessons is presented in terms of strong teacher control/or learner control over knowledge selection. This would assist in establishing whether LOLT is affecting teacher pedagogic practice or whether teacher pedagogy affects learner transition.

Talbe 4.3 shows how coding was interpreted using Bernstein's concepts.



**Table 4.3: Coding**

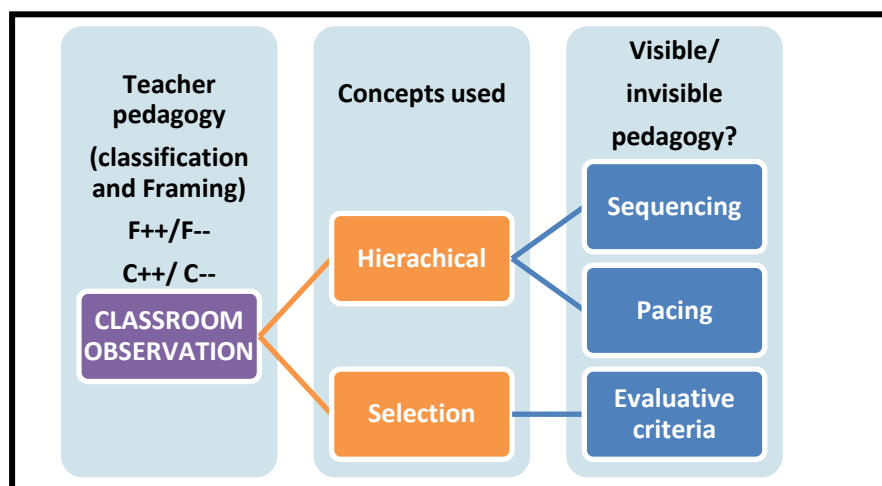
CODING Schema	F ++	F +	F - -	F -
Analyzing lessons using Bernstein concept	Very strong teacher control over knowledge Selection. And very weak learner control over knowledge selection	Moderate teacher influence on knowledge selection	Represent very weak teacher control over knowledge selection and strong learner control over knowledge selection	Indicate that the learner's power or authority was moderate

Here, the study used a self-created observation schedule to evaluate and analyse observed lessons. This approach was mainly guided by the works of Naidoo (2012:38-54) in an article entitled *"Analysing Pedagogy: Visibility and meaning"*. The analysis was based on the Bernstein concepts of hierarchy, sequencing, selection, pacing and evaluative criteria.

#### 4.11 BERNSTEIN'S CONCEPTS

Figure 4.14 shows Bernstein's concepts used to analyse teacher lessons in LOLT. The study audio-recorded lessons, which were later transcribed, then coded A - J and then filed. Section 4.3 shows how the researcher organised and managed the observation data. Bernstein (2000:12-14) explains that framing occurs where there is an explicit control over the selection of communication, the sequencing, what comes first, what comes second, its pacing, and the rate of acquisition.

Figure 4.14 represents concepts that were used in analysing the lessons that were observed.

**Figure 4.14: Observational concepts used**

### Sample lesson analysis

Below is a sample Grade 3 lesson before analysis:

<p><i>GRADE 3: TEACHER A: ENGLISH</i></p> <p><i>TOPIC: NOUNS</i></p> <p><i>Teacher: We want to learn again about nouns. Who can tell me what nouns are. There is many things that can be nouns. Either you tell me how we know a noun? Or you can tell me what a noun is. Who can explain to me what a noun is. You must teach me what a noun is.</i></p> <p><i>Learner 1: a noun is a thing</i></p> <p><i>Learner 2: a noun is a place</i></p> <p><i>Learner 3: a noun is a name</i></p> <p><i>Teacher: Now you must give me a noun</i></p> <p><i>Learner: Cape town B...</i></p> <p><i>Learner 2: Bellevue</i></p> <p><i>Teacher: okay good but now I want something else not name of place (It can be something you can feel something you can touch you can't tell me you can't see anything)</i></p> <p><i>Learner: teacher, teacher ----- a desk</i></p> <p><i>Now I do not want a place, I do not want a country, I do not want a river, and I want something else</i></p> <p><i>Learner: a chair and a pen,</i></p> <p><i>Teacher: we want to draw the nouns that we can touch or feel</i></p> <p><i>Then make a list of nouns that we cannot touch</i></p>
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### Presenting lesson observation data

In the following columns, classroom verbatim data is presented and coding (F++/F--) and (C++/C--) is used to represent the discourse relationships in the classes (Table 4.3). The table that follows (4.4) was used to evaluate the degree of teacher or pupil authority.

**Table 4.4: Hierarchical rule**

TEACHER	OBSERVATIONS
Lesson A: Vowels and consonants	(F--) Although the teacher was in charge, the learners were given a certain degree of authority to read at their own pace. The hierarchical rule was not distinctly defined because there were blurred boundaries in the hierarchy because the teacher allowed flexibility. They read the story at their own pace. The teacher asked the learners to read until they were finished reading, and she continued with her reading lesson until she was satisfied that all the learners had finished reading.
Lesson B: English Reading: The chest with the toys	(F-) The teacher used a mixed approach. Here the hierarchical rule is flexible in favour of the learners; the relationship was personal, and communication was both ways. Teacher says what must be done? For example: listen to me reading, then let's read altogether as a class. The learners are later given a chance when they are asked to read the passage individually; the learners read at their own pace until they are finished. The learners were given time to ask questions.
Lesson C: Breaking up sums	(F++) The hierarchical rule is visible and strongly framed. The teacher said: take out your Mathematics readers and writing books. Today we want to do break up activity, I expect everyone to respect our visitor by doing as I say.

	There is visibility of power relations between the teacher and learners because the teacher stands in front and gives instructions. Look at the board everybody; we want to work out $47+58$ , then break up this number. From this statement, it shows who holds the power because the teacher tells the students exactly what to do and how to do it.
Lesson D: Language Structures: Vowels and Consonants	(F+) This varied from strong to weak across the lesson. How to use <i>an</i> and <i>a</i> . Last week we were talking about vowel sentences. I said the alphabet has two families. What are they (F-)? In as much as the teacher is looking for text-book correctness, but there is communication and the learner is involved in his or her own learning. The teacher poses a question and is visibly in control.
Lesson E: Vocabulary Reading and Comprehension	(F-)Teacher: Well done, now open the book and go to page 20. Write this date January 2017. Teacher making sure learners are doing the correct thing The learners go to do the activity fire safety. Teacher: Do you know what to do? What picture must be number one, number two, Tell me picture number one. Write one sentence about each picture? Write what you see happening. (Both strong and weak framing). The teacher was evidently in control because, here the teachers' instructional rule was both explicit, and implicit at one-point teacher approached this lesson in 3 different ways. When they do spellings, when they read then study the pictures. The teacher demonstrated how to co-extend a language lesson to assist learners who do not have a second site of acquisition. The teacher probed and immediately corrected misconceptions. The issue of hierarchy is very explicit for example, when teacher states Teacher: right class we want to read the words on the board. You read when I point. Now we are going to clap, reading, and clapping to the sound. Our, family, brother, class started on phonic reading Clap and read the approach here is focus on the whole learner hence involving many senses.
Lesson F: Tens and Units	(F+) and (F-) Hierarchical rule: strongly framed was both explicit and implicit because when the teacher said: Teacher: I said page 10 and stop that. Now tell me how many circles do you see? [Learners: but teacher we already done it last week. Teacher: I said page 10 and stop that. Now tell me how many circles you see?] After persistence, the lesson showed who holds more power the learners or the teacher hence the hierarchical rule is explicit. At some point, the learners argued with the teacher as they were indicated having written the work already.
Lesson G: Life Skills	(F--) The lesson was weakly framed and more of child centred. Although teacher is in charge, she does cede a certain degree of power to the learners thereby creating weak framing and weak classification. Teacher: Now I want you to write about what you see in the picture. Then write about what you like to do. We are going to do a mind map who can tell me what a mind map is. The lesson is both explicit and implicit because the learners are even given the power to write what they like to do. The teacher engages both visible and invisible pedagogy.
Lesson H: English: Tenses	(F++) The hierarchical rules are very explicit if one looks at the percept below. Teacher: boys and girls we talked about 3 tenses. Even the instructional strategies are visible. Learners: we talked about 3 tenses which are they Learner 1: answer, simple present, Teacher: Yes, well done next answer Learner 2: future tense
Lesson I: English: Phonics	(F++) The hierarchical rules are very explicit; the teacher is clearly in charge of lessons even the order of activities is clearly monitored by teacher. The teacher gives an instruction of what must be done, when and how.
Lesson J: Mathematics: Telling Time	(F+) The teacher wields certain hierarchical power for example: Teacher: take out your Maths clocks, which I gave you yesterday during home time. Show me your clock; hold it up. Teacher: Mpho where is your clock? Learner: I cannot find it in my b...a...g. Teacher: OK come get another one, next time keep everything in your folder.

## Selection

Table 4.6 demonstrates how content was selected by different teachers.

**Table 4.6: Selection rule**

TEACHER	OBSERVATIONS
Lesson A: Vowels and consonants	(F-/ F+) Selection of material was both weakly and strongly framed since it was mixed sometimes visible and sometimes invisible. The teacher asked the learners to discuss about vowels and consonants (visible) then asked the learners to use a or an before vowels and consonants. Here the learners were expected to come up with answers. Student engagement was extensive. The work was not focused on text book correctness at least the lesson involved divergent questions.
Lesson B: Reading: The chest with the toys	(F++) selection of work is firstly teacher centred then the learners make sentences of their choice. There is evidence of weak framing though strong classification. The learners had to explain the meaning of new words in relation to the passage. The learners sometimes gave synonyms of the vocabulary provided.
Lesson C: Breaking up sums	(F+) The teacher controlled the extent to which content is selected. For example, the teacher said: Teacher: take out your Mathematics readers and writing books. Today we want to do break up activity, I expect everyone to respect our visitor by doing as I say. Teacher: Look at the board everybody we want to work out $47+58$ then break this number Teacher: break this number, break up means decompose.
Lesson D: Language Structures: Vowels and Consonants	(F+) Selection: this was a teacher centred approach. Teacher: Yes, correct ...Right now tell me when we use (a) tell me do we use it with a consonant or vowel. The instructional rules were balanced, as they were orientations of both visible and invisible by drawing from both a weak and strong framing. The lesson was very visible and co extended. Teacher talk was balanced the teacher even elaborated on the relayed message. Teacher: How to use <i>an</i> and <i>a</i> . Last week we were talking about vowels in sentences. I said the alphabet has two families. What are they? Learner A: a e i o u.
Lesson E: Vocabulary Reading and Comprehension	(F-) Selection is both visible and invisible because the learners are given work to read but later children are asked to make sentences based on what they see on the pictures that means they have certain degree of control.
Lesson F: Tens and Units	(F+) (Strong framing and visible) The learners cannot choose what to do but the teacher asserts what they must do. This is highlighted in the following percept of the lesson [Learners: but teacher we already done it last week. The learners are trying to be assertive. Teacher: I said page 10 and stop that. Now tell me how many circles you see?] The lesson was too teacher centred assuming the visible pedagogy and explicit hierarchy. Learner 3: me too madam. This resulted in learners showing lack of principles of their own discourse. The teachers' strategies were visible but the content to be learnt was not visible. Even the criteria were implicit. The teacher failed dismally in delivering the lesson.
Lesson G: Life Skills	(F+) The teacher partially guided by giving the Topic and mode of content. Teacher oversees selection of content. Teacher: What did you do over the weekend...? Now I want you to write about what you see in the picture. Then write about what you like to do. We are going to do a mind map who can tell me what a mind map is. Selection is implicit and weakly framed.
Lesson H: English: Tenses	(F+) The teacher has selected the content of the lesson, but the selection is both visible and invisible (weak framing and weak classification) because the learners are asked to identify tenses then later make sentences that denote the tenses children are asked to make sentences based on tenses whether they are simple, present, and past.

Lesson I: English: Phonics	(F+) Teacher is in control of selection that means selection of work is visible and strongly framed. Teacher: I expect everyone to respect our visitor by doing as I say. From these pictures, tell me which one has a name that begins with Lllll. Give me words with the Ll sound.
Lesson J: Telling Time	(F+) Teacher: yes .... Now class I want your clock to face you so make it face now. What happens if my short hand is on 3 and my long hand is on 6? When learners delayed responding the teacher. The teacher then sends by Bluetooth a picture of the clock on the large TV screen in their class. Teacher: Now, everybody looks at my big clock. Let us start from one o'clock to 12 o'clock. Class: 1 o'clock, 2 o'clock, 3 o'clock, 4 o'clock, 5 o'clock, 6 o'clock, 7 o'clock, 8 o'clock, 9 o'clock, 10 o'clock, 11 o'clock, 12 o'clock.

Table 4.7 highlights the pacing in the classroom, whether it was strongly or weakly framed; including the visibility of the content.

**Table 4.7: Pacing**

TEACHER	OBSERVATIONS
Lesson A: Vowels and consonants	(F--) Pacing: was weakly framed. The teacher did not set time limits but let learners move when they were ready to move. The learners had a double English lesson where they read a story and answered questions. Afterwards they also had a lesson on synonyms. The teacher wasn't strict on time. The teacher just wanted the learners to finish. The lesson was neither too fast nor too slow - the teacher was working according to learner readiness.
Lesson B: English Reading: The chest with the toys	(F-) At first pacing, was highly visible and was strongly framed. For example, when the teacher read the passage and the learners had to keep up with her pace. Later, the teacher waited for the learners to read and finish thus the learners were temporarily in charge of the rate of acquisition and level of pacing. The learners were given time to ask questions and provide full explanation. This therefore is evident of weakened framing of pacing. This therefore enables learners to acquire learnt matter.
Lesson C: Breaking up sums	(F-) This lesson was confusing as it moved in a haphazard manner, sometimes too fast and sometimes too slow. The children were only allowed to speak at certain times thereby rendering strong framing. When pacing is strongly framed, the children fail to acquire the realisation rules.
Lesson D: Language Structures: Vowels and Consonants	(F--) Pacing was weakly framed. The idea was for the children to master the lesson, but the teacher continued co-extending the lesson. The teacher allowed the learners to work, according to their ability she did not rush the children. She only mentioned that they must finish writing all the work that was written on the board.
Lesson E: Vocabulary Reading and Comprehension	(F+) The teacher's pacing is visible. Teacher: Right class, we want to read the words on the board. You read where I point. Now we are going to clap and read [clapping to the sound...Our, family, brother, class started on phonic reading Clap and read] In this lesson, the learners repeated the reading activity and practised oral spelling and hence making criteria more explicit.
Lesson F: Tens and Units	(F+) The pacing was strongly framed because the teacher asked the learners to write and finish. She continued teaching without entertaining questions.
Lesson G: Life Skills	(F-) The pacing is implicit because the learners can write until they finish. Selection: Teacher: Now I want you to write about what you see in the picture. Then write about what you like to do. We are going to do a mind map. Who can tell me what a mind map is? The learners are given time to express what they and were asked to work in groups to create a mind map

Lesson H: English: Tenses	(F+) The teacher's pacing is strongly framed and strongly classified. The teacher gives the learners time to write their work and guides them to finish according to their level of readiness.
Lesson I: English: Phonics	(F+) Pacing is highly visible and there are some variations because the teacher moves round to check on whether the learners understand what they should do.
Lesson: J Telling Time	(F++) Pacing was quite fast and the teacher determined what had to be done, and at what time. Teacher: Yes .... now class I want your clock to face you, so make it face now. What happens if my short hand is on 3 and my long hand is on 6? When learners delayed responding, the teacher, then sent via Bluetooth a picture of the clock on the large TV screen in their class. Teacher: Now, everybody look at my big clock. Let us start from 1 o'clock, 2 o'clock, 3 o'clock, 4 o'clock, 5 o'clock, 6 o'clock, 7 o'clock, 8 o'clock, 9 o'clock, 10 o'clock, 11 o'clock, and 12 o'clock.

Aspects of lesson sequencing are presented below in Tables 4.8 and 4.9.

**Table 4.8: Sequencing**

TEACHER	OBSERVATIONS
Lesson A: Vowels and consonants	(F+) The sequencing was visible, in that, first the learners read a story. After reading for comprehension there was vocabulary study, and the learners had to give synonyms for words in the passage.
Lesson B: English Reading: The chest with the toys	(F+) Sequencing: it was visibly controlled by the teacher at first because students (F-) started by learning new words then the teacher read for the learners and the learners read after the teacher. This showed vocabulary had to come first to relate it to the passage which was to be read. Here we can say there was weak framing because the learners had to discover for themselves how the new words relate to the given story. The teacher could sequence children's work in relation to their readiness for the next activity. All this was done at a moderate pace.
Lesson C: Breaking up sums	Sequencing: (F+) was visibly controlled by the teacher. The lesson was sequenced incoherently. The teacher was teaching break up where learners had to separate tens and units first, then add. The activity seemed a mammoth task because for learners to be able to break up they should have mastered place-value first. The lesson was too strongly framed so the sequencing was teacher-planned - not as per learner-readiness. Teacher: Look at the board everybody. We want to work out $47+58$ and then break up this number. From this statement, it shows who holds the power because the teacher tells the students exactly what to do and how to do it.
Lesson D: Language Structures: Vowels and Consonants	(F++) Teacher: Look up everybody. Let us look at the board and read <i>a</i> and <i>an</i> after me. Learners: a .... A Teacher: How to use <i>an</i> and <i>a</i> . Last week we were talking about "vowel" sentences. I said the alphabets had two families. What are they? Learner A: a e i o Teacher I want the names not what it is? Learner B: vowels and consonants. The sequencing was strongly framed by the teacher; the sequencing was strongly framed at first, then later weakly framed.
Lesson E: Vocabulary Reading and Comprehension	(F+) Teacher: Right class, we want to read the words on the board. You read when I point. Now we are going to clap and read and clapping to the sound...Our, family, brother, class started on phonic reading clap and read. In both exemplars of the lesson presented above, the educators determined what knowledge was selected, and how that knowledge was transmitted, and in what order. In the percept of the lesson presented above, the educators determined what knowledge was selected, and how that knowledge was transmitted, and in what order.

Lesson F: Tens and Units	(F+) Teacher: Turn to page 10. We want to calculate place-value. Learners: But teacher, we already had done it last week. Teacher: I said page 10 and stop that. Now tell me how many circles do you see? Learners: which one madam? Teacher: I mean how many circles of 10. Here what the teacher wanted to ask is that the students were supposed to figure out concepts of tens and units. In other words, making groups of tens from the circles. Which they must first count
Lesson G: Life Skills	(F-)Teacher: what did you do over the weekend...? learner 1: I played Learner 2: I slept. Learner 3: I studied. Learner 4: I was playing soccer with my friends. Teacher: Now I want you to write about what you see in the pictures that are in your books. From there I want you to write about what you like to do. (The learners did their given work but were free to write what excites them). Secondly, they had to do a mind map. Teacher: We are going to do a mind map. Who can tell me what a mind map is?
Lesson H: English Tenses	(F+) Sequencing: rules refer to the temporal ordering of knowledge and the learners know what comes first; and how, for example, Teacher: boys and girls we talked about 3 tenses. Even the instructional strategies are visible. Learners: we talked about 3 tenses which are they Learner 1: answer, simple present, Teacher: Yes, well done next answer Learner 2: future tense. The teacher firstly starts by asking the learners to identify the tenses; then to give the sentences that match the identified tenses. The teacher arranges what comes first and then sequentially presents the lesson.
Lesson I: English Phonics	(F-)Sequencing: The boundary lines are blurred because students start with the letters then pronounce them then match them on pictures and write. The lesson is based on sensory activities.
Lesson J: Mathematics: Telling Time	(F+) Sequencing: Teacher: Yes .... Now class I want your clock to face you so make it face now. What happens if my short hand is on 3 and my long hand is on 6? When learners delayed responding the teacher, the teacher then sends by Bluetooth a picture of the clock on the large TV screen in their class. Teacher: Now, everybody look at my big clock. Let us start from 1 o'clock to 12 o'clock. Class: 1 o'clock, 2 o'clock, 3 o'clock, 4 o'clock, 5 o'clock, 6 o'clock, 7 o'clock, 8 o'clock, 9 o'clock, 10 o'clock, 11 o'clock, and 12 o'clock. Here the teacher controls the sequence of the lesson from counting in 3s with a counter to counting abstractly. This creates variation in strength of classification and framing.

**Table 4.10: Evaluative criteria**

TEACHER	OBSERVATIONS
Lesson A: Vowels and consonants	(F-) Generally, in this lesson there was both weak classification and strong framing in the sense that the contents of the lesson were weakly insulated. Teacher: Good, but now I want something else, not the name of a place (It can be something you can feel, something you can touch - you can't tell me you can't see anything). In the lesson, the teacher selected work for learners to do. That means the lesson can be noted as being strongly framed because the teacher exercises a lot of power since he plans what must be done in a lesson. The teacher chose what knowledge will be transmitted and in what order transmission will take place. Learners were not given opportunities to alter the selection and the sequence of the knowledge.
Lesson B: English Reading: The chest with the toys	(F++) The criteria are strongly framed because the teacher explains his expectation: The teacher makes some points, either to the whole class or to individual learners, to clarify what is expected of them in the task (Hoadley, 2006). The lesson was a mixture of explicit and implicit principles.



Lesson C: Breaking up sums	(F++) The transmitter (teacher) makes the rules of legitimate expectations clear. For example, the transmitter gives the acquirer continuous comments on his or her performance so that the learner is aware of what criteria are missing in the production. First, the rules were implicit, for example, Teacher: Look at the board everybody. We want to work out 47+58 then break up this number. At first, the teacher had not clarified but later the rules became explicit. In your tests, you must show all steps to <i>get all the marks</i> . <i>The teacher implied that for one to get the total marks for each sum all steps leading to the answer must be indicated.</i> In our books, let us write 65+33. Break this down; put tens on their own and add units on their own; then add. Indicate all steps. The teacher here highlights her expectations so that the learners know what is expected of them but does not explain thoroughly to say when breaking up first we use the tens then put the units on the side, then add together. The teacher rather assumes the learners know what to do.
Lesson D: Language Structures Vowels and Consonants	(F+) The criteria varied sometimes from strong to weak. The teacher demonstrates how to co-extend a language lesson to assist learners who do not have a second site of acquisition. The learners first read vocabulary, makes sentences, and then reads the story. They also discuss the story and ask questions about the story. Hence, various teaching strategies that are interactive are utilised.
Lesson E: Vocabulary Reading and Comprehension	(F+/F-) The criteria are invisible when learners were asked to make sentences based on the pictures they see. Here the learners could make their own sentences. There is high visibility of evaluation. The teacher moves around helping learners to read and checking whether they are engaged in the given task and listen to their problems Criteria: criteria that the learner is expected to learn, and the teacher in this case expected the learners to read the words as she pointed them out. Criteria here seemed visible at times and invisible at times.
Lesson F: Tens and Units	(F-)The evaluative criteria were not visible because the content was implicit thereby resulting in weak classification and framing.
Lesson G: Life Skills	(F+) (Explicit) Teacher explains what must be done and moves around checking and giving individual comments and explaining what must be done. Teacher: Put some ideas down (teacher drew a mind map and gave two examples). There you go! I want you to complete the mind map. (as the class was writing the teacher was going around checking and asking why there were some blank spaces in mind-map)
Lesson H: English: Tenses	Criteria here seemed weakly classified and weakly framed as at times the learners were asked to make sentences based on the tenses they remember. In other words, the learners could make their own sentences. Strong framing of evaluative criteria was evident because the teacher asked the learners to list the forms of tenses. Then weak framing occurred when learners were asked to make their own sentences to relate to forms of tenses.
Lesson I: English: Phonics	(F++) Evaluative Criteria. Very explicit as the teacher made some points, either to the whole class or to individual learners, to clarify what is expected of them in the task (Hoadley, 2006).
Lesson J: Telling Time	(F-) Evaluative Criteria. The teacher makes some points, either to the whole class or to individual learners, to clarify what is expected of them in the task. The teacher explains to the learners how to represent time on the clock. The teacher moved round assisting some individual learners,

#### 4.12 SUMMARY: GRADE 3 OBSERVATIONS

Below is a summary of classroom observations that indicate the classification and framing in terms of selection, pacing, hierarchy selection and sequence to prove whether



pedagogical strategies were implicit or explicit (cf. Table 4.8).

**Table 4.11: Grade 3 observations**

TYPE OF PEDAGOGY	OBSERVATIONS										
	EXPLICIT - VISIBLE/ (STRONG FRAMING /F++/F+)										
	IMPLICIT - INVISIBLE (WEAK FRAMING F-. /F-)										
	Teacher										
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	
Hierarchical rule	explicit	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X
	implicit	X	X		X	X		X	X		X
Pacing	explicit			X			X		X	X	X
	implicit	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Selection	explicit	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Implicit				X	X		X		X	
Sequencing	explicit	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	implicit										
Evaluative Criteria	explicit	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X
	implicit			X			X				

#### 4.13 GRADE 4: LESSON OBSERVATION ANALYSIS

Below is an analysis of lessons where (F++) indicates strong framing and (c++) indicates weak framing in the hierarchical relationship (cf. Table 4.9).

**Table 4.12: Hierarchical rule**

TEACHER	OBSERVATIONS
Lesson A: English: Teaching Nouns	(F++) The teacher was clearly in charge of lessons even the order of activities was clearly monitored by the teacher. The content was not that visible although the lesson was on nouns as the teacher only uses closed questions and the interaction seemed limited.
Lesson B: Mathematics: Subtraction story sums and breaking up	(F++) Very visible and evidence of strong framing and classification (Teacher: [snaps] you are no longer in Grade 3; do not behave like Grade 3s; you must be able to read on your own. I want you to read on your own. I do not want to repeat myself. Teacher was visibly in control.
Lesson C: Mathematics: capacity	(F-) The learners can control the lesson because it is carried over to home Teacher: Go home and look for things which show capacity. Look for things in your mother's grocery cupboards that show capacity (things that hold liquids). What did we say are examples of things that hold capacity?
Lesson D: English Reading: The two frogs	(F+) The teacher was clearly in charge of lessons - even the order of activities was clearly monitored by the teacher. The teacher reads to the class. The teacher then explained to the learners what they must do to be ready for assessment. The learners were asked to read loudly after the teacher's reading. This lesson moved so fast that within 15 minutes the lesson was done.
Lesson E: English: Spelling	(F++) The teacher wasted a whole period and half by marking books in class. The children were lined up at the teacher's table. The teacher marks one-by-one while seated at the table in front, shouting orders. Teacher: Write corrections in your spelling books. Open your spelling books. You must have them for spelling. Stop saying you do not know what to do - you are

	not in foundation phase anymore; you cannot forget your book, you must have your book. Learner: What must I do? Teacher: Write one word 3 times. The teacher straight away asks students to write corrections of spellings written the previous day and asks the learners to use their textbook as reference for correct spelling. She marks the corrections as they queue. She does not point out where learners have gone wrong.
Lesson F: Social Science: Landmarks	(F-)The teacher wields all the power although she sometimes allowed children to work on some aspects on their own. Teacher: Let us go to page one. Write down one word that must do with "sea", one word that must do with "storm", "signals" and "rain". Teacher: Look at the sentences that best describe the weather and tell me which sentence did you choose and why? Teacher: No excuses anymore. You are not in Grade 3 anymore; you must oversee your things, why are you standing? Everyone must have his/her pencil? I said, Open your homework book please. (Even teachers language ability was not good) for example <b>word that must do with "sea"</b> ,
Lesson G: English Comprehension: The boy who cried wolf	(F-)This lesson was also a mixture of strong and weak framing in that the teacher created a zone of proximal development. Hierarchy was visible and learning strategies were visible and interactive. The hierarchical rules were both strong in classification and weak in framing. The teacher had control over the regulation of communication. Teacher: Stop that singing please, who is singing? We are going to read that story. You are going to read it aloud when I am done. You see the new words in our story people, I want to know from you what they mean? I will give you the words one-by-one:
Lesson H: English reading: The Birthday	(F+) The relationship is strongly framed; the teacher wields the power to a certain extent. The teacher first gives an instruction and asks the learners to read. Teacher: Good, that was nice! Ok, now let us read the story from beginning to end. If you have questions, ask me. Then we can talk about the story. [Teacher expands on students' responses by saying "give me a sentence using <i>extremely</i> ".
Lesson I: Mathematics: Place value	(F++) The teacher had all the power in the lesson. She discussed what was happening, when and how.
Lesson J: English reading: The Little Turtle	(F++) Hierarchy: The teacher is clearly in control because she instructs the learners on what to do. Teacher: Take out your "department" books and let us go to part 1.9. Let us read the poem. I am going to read while you listen. (Teacher reads the poem twice. Anyone with a question (learners were quiet)?

Table 4.13 tabulates how teachers selected and re-contextualised content from the curriculum and transferred it to the learners.

**Table 4.13: Selection**

TEACHER	OBSERVATIONS
Lesson A: English: Teaching Nouns	(F+) Teacher is in control because selection of work is curriculum-based. The teacher uses the DoE book and all concepts he is teaching comes from the Department book. The learners are supposed to comply with what is communicated. <b>Teacher:</b> Boys and girls, let's take our department books out and turn to page 23. Look at that insect; an insect has 3 body parts. Look at the words that sound the same. Ok, now let's turn to page 24. What is a noun? We said if it is a noun, then we see it, we touch it, we feel it. The teacher uses a rote method in teaching. He did not relate the contents of the lesson to anything. The teachers approach encourages cramming how then can they be able to master the LOLT.
Lesson B: Mathematics:	(F+) The selection was strongly framed because the teacher chose what the learners had to do. Teacher: Today we are doing subtraction story sums

Subtraction story sums, and breaking up	and breaking up, so our sum is 684-237. Okay, when we subtract we start from the end; then if the top number is small then we borrow from the number on the right. The teachers' explanation was vague teacher did not explain satisfactorily. What the teacher implied is that in 684-237 the 4 units cannot subtract the 7 units because 4 is the top number and is smaller than the bottom number. So instead the learners must borrow 1 ten from the ten sections and this gives 14 units. Our sum is 6 8 4 -2 3 7 (concept of borrowing). One learner kept saying "I do not understand".
Lesson C: Mathematics: capacity	(F-) Selection of work is partially controlled by the teacher because the children have some power to select and identify liquid containers. Teacher: Go home and look for things, which show capacity - look for things in your mother's grocery cupboards that show capacity. We want things that hold liquids. What did we say are examples of things that hold capacity?
Lesson D: English reading: The two frogs	(F+) The selection of work was strictly teacher-centred. To the learners, the selection is invisible. Teacher: We are going to open to our readers and we are going to read page 12, the story of <i>The Two Frogs</i> . Remember, it is for assessment so after reading the story you are going to tell me about the two frogs. For example, you will begin by saying "once upon a time there were two frogs...."
Lesson E: English: Spellings	(F++) Selection of work and evaluation were teacher-centred. The teacher wasted a whole period and half marking books in class. The children were lined up at the teacher's table while teacher marked one-by-one. She was seated in front of the class at the table shouting orders. This makes one wonder whether the learners were accessing knowledge. Teacher: Write corrections in your spelling books. Open your spelling books. You must have spelling books. Stop saying I don't know what to do - you are not in foundation phase anymore; you can't forget your book, you must have your books. Learner: what must I do? Teacher: Write one word 3 times. Selection of work and evaluation was teacher-centred. Teacher: Open you're spelling books. You must have them for spelling.
Lesson F: Social Science: Landmarks	(F-) Selection of work was mixed because the teacher's approach entailed both weak and strong framing. Teacher: Let us take out our social science books and open to page 1. I said open your homework books. Apparently, the learners were supposed to have written homework the previous day. The teacher is not very clear as to what she wants with the home books. At the same time the teacher asks the learners to open their text books. This was quite confusing for the learners. Please let us go to page one. Write down one word that relates to "sea", "storm", "signals" and "rain". Then turn to page 2 (teacher going around the class checking whether they have brought previous days homework and at the same time checking whether the learners have the correct materials and whether they are on the correct page). Teacher: Next, I want you to write down all the words that describe the "sea".
Lesson G: English Comprehension: The boy who cried wolf	(F+) Teacher visibly in control. Selection of work is strictly teacher-centred. The teacher directs the lesson. Teacher: Today we want to look at a folktale. Before we start, write in your book the date, tenth of February 2017. Teacher: Stop that singing please; who is singing? We are going to read that story then you are going to read it aloud when I am finished reading it. Folktales were stories that people told each other which were passed on from generations to generation.
Lesson H: English reading: The Birthday	(F++) Most of the time the teacher controls the sequence and selection of knowledge-transmission in the classroom. Teacher: Boys and girls, you remember tenses? We talked about 3 tenses. Learners: We talked about 3 tenses but what are they? Learner 1: Simple present,
Lesson I:	(F++) The teacher selected the work for the children according to set

Mathematics: Place-value	curriculum. Teacher: Today we want to practise subtraction. To subtract means to take away or the difference of a sum. Remember the small number does not take away the big number. Teacher writes on the board the sum.
Lesson J: English reading: The Little Turtle	(F++) Selection of work is teacher-centred which is strongly framed. Teacher: Take out your department books and let us go to page 19. Let us read the poem. I am going to read while you listen. [Teacher reads the poem twice]. Anyone with a question? [all learners were quiet].

Table 4.14 indicates how the teachers paced content during re-contextualisation of content from the curriculum and transferred it to the learners.

**Table 4.14: Pacing**

TEACHER	OBSERVATIONS
Lesson A: English: Teaching Nouns	(F++) Pacing was highly visible (strong framing and strong classification) but the pace is just too much as the teacher is more concerned about the time to move on to the next lesson. A few learners who were sitting beside the researcher showed they were not sure of what to write. Powers of communication seemed too strongly classified and framed as the teacher did not create a platform for elaborations. The teacher remained standing in front of the learners and did not move around to see what they are doing during this critical stage where learners are still adapting to everything.
Lesson B: Mathematics: Subtraction story sums and breaking up	(F++) Pacing – (strong framing and strong classification) Strictly teacher-centred because the teacher moved to the page and concept of the day. Although strategies and power are strictly visible but content to be learnt is invisible to the learners. Teacher: Our sum is 6 8 4 -2 3 7 Okay when we subtract we start from the end then if the top number is small we borrow from the number on the right 684-237(concept of borrowing). One learner kept saying "I do not understand". The teacher worked out the sum thrice. It seems the problem was with teacher's pedagogical approach and expressing herself in LOLT. The learner could not comprehend the story sums. From the lesson, LOLT contributed to a lack of understanding because the teacher kept saying "you know I cannot teach this in Sesotho, so you better listen".
Lesson C: Mathematics: capacity	(F-) Pacing the lesson was weakly framed because teacher asked learners to go and write at home - work was finished at home (the learners were asked to write at home and choose which containers contain liquids).
Lesson D: English reading: The two frogs	(F++) Pacing was highly visible and moved at a faster pace because it was just the teacher reading, then class reading, then individual learner's reading.
Lesson E: English: Spellings	(F++) The lesson's pacing was too fast and there was no feedback. The pacing was not determined by the learner-input needs; it was wholly determined by the teacher. Teacher: Write corrections in your spelling books. Open your spelling books - you must have them for spelling. Teacher: Stop saying I do not know what to do - you are not foundation phase learners anymore; you cannot forget your book, you must have your books. Learner: what must I do? Teacher: Write one word 3 times. [Selection of work and evaluation was teacher-centred]. Teacher: Open your spelling books, you must have them for spelling. The learners had to discover for themselves where they went wrong and correct their errors]. Unfortunately, the approach seemed inappropriate because the teacher did not even find out why the learners couldn't get the spellings correct in the first place.
Lesson F:	(F-)The pacing varies from strong to weak framing across the lesson. Let

Social Science: Landmarks	us take out our social science books and work on page 1. Teacher: Let us go to page one. Write down one word that must relate to the "sea", "storm", "signals" and "rain".
Lesson G: English Comprehension: The boy who cried wolf	(F++) The teacher mostly determined the pace at which the learners were working through tasks. The pacing was quite fast because in one lesson the learners had to read the story, answer comprehension questions, fill in a crossword puzzle and find meanings of unfamiliar words. The learners had to move to the next activity quickly because after this lesson they had to move to the next class for another subject.
Lesson H: English the Birthday reading	(F++) The teacher strictly controls the pace at which learners learn. Learners are unable to disrupt the pace set by the teacher. Strict adherence to time frames evident. For example, the teacher says: Thomas, why are you not reading (teacher bends down and tries to coerce the learner). Ok, now let us stop reading; the bell has gone, and it is time for Mathematics (strong pacing).
Lesson I: Mathematics: Place value	(F++) The pacing was too fast; the teacher controlled the pace of learning even when some learners seemed confused. The teacher just started with addition sums and did not even link this with place-value. Teacher: I want my work done fast; the bell is going to ring now.
Lesson J: English reading: The Little Turtle	(F++) Pacing is highly visible because clear rules are set. Teacher: Hey, stop that - the bell is going to ring now. Let's read quietly. When you are done answer the questions in your book and answer in full. Write neatly. Remember the bell will ring now so you better hurry up. [ALL learners read quietly. One wonders whether they all could read, or they were just staring at the page. Some already began by writing the answers to the questions and the teacher did not stop them].

Table 4.15 informs us about how the teachers sequenced content during re-contextualisation of content from the curriculum and transferred it to the learners. Also indicated, is how the teachers chose the mode of sequencing.

**Table 4.15: Sequencing**

TEACHER	OBSERVATIONS
Lesson: A English: Teaching Nouns	(F++). The teacher had substantial control over the sequencing and transmission of knowledge in the classroom (For example the teacher gives a list of instructions and directions as follows: How to use "an" and "a". Last week we were talking about vowel sentences and we said the alphabet has two families. What are they? Learner A: a e i o u. Teacher: I want the names of the 2 groups, not what it is. Learner B: Vowels and consonants. Teacher: Yes, correct ...Right, now tell me when we use "a" - tell me do we use it before a consonant or a vowel
Lesson B: Mathematics: Subtraction story sums and breaking up	(F++) The sequencing was not clearly visible, hence many learners tried to ask the teacher for clarity. In this lesson, the teacher had substantial control over the sequencing and transmission of knowledge in the classroom. Mathematics lessons observed had the strongest framing as the teachers exerted most control over all the pedagogic relations. There was no learner interaction and the learners kept asking what they must do. For instance: Although strategies and power are strictly visible but content to be learnt is invisible to the learners. Teacher: Our sum is 6 8 4 - 2 3 7. Okay, when we subtract we start from the end then if the top number is small, we borrow from the number on the right. 684-237 (concept of

	borrowing).
Lesson C: Mathematics: capacity	(F-) This lesson gives the learners the opportunity to vary and select the sequence of transmission, although the teacher has determined the transmission of knowledge she has also given power to the learners in the sequencing, hence it's (F-). Teacher: Go home and look for things, which show capacity. Look for things in your mother's grocery cupboards that show hold liquids. What did we say are examples of things that hold capacity?
Lesson D: English reading: The two frogs	(F++) The teacher had control over the sequencing of the lesson and she tried to make the content visible. An example from the lesson is given. Teacher: We are going to take our readers and we are going to read from page 12, the story of <i>The Two Frogs</i> . Remember it is for assessment so after reading the story you are going to tell me about the two frogs. For example, you will say "once upon a time there were two frogs..."
Lesson E: English: Spellings	(F++) Only the answer in the textbook was correct. Teacher: Write corrections in your spelling books, Open your spelling books. You must have spelling books. Teacher: Stop saying I do not know what to do; you are not foundation phase learners anymore. You cannot forget your books - you must have your books. Learner: What must I do? Teacher: Write one word 3 times. <b>(Here the teacher meant to repeatedly practice a spelling like sea, sea, sea)</b> Selection of work and evaluation was teacher-centred.
Lesson F: Social Science: Landmarks	(F-) The sequencing varies from strong to weak framing as the learners are given certain powers to also determine the transmission and sequence. Teacher: Let us go to page one. Write down one word that has to do with "sea", "storm", "signals" and "rain". Teacher: Look at the sentences that best describe the weather and tell me which sentence it is, and why?
Lesson G: English Comprehension: The boy who cried wolf	(F++) The sequencing is largely determined by the teacher. Teacher: Today we want to look at a folktale. Before we start, write in your book the date which is the tenth of February and the year is 2017. We are going to read that story. You are going to read it aloud after I am done reading. You will do the activity that follows. Folktales were stories that people told each other and were passed on long ago.
Lesson H: English the Birthday reading	(F++) The sequencing is visible and strongly framed because the teacher says: Before we read, we want to learn new words. [It just explains in one instance what the learners will do]. The selection is explicit because the teacher selects what the learners are going to do and how they are going to do it. Teacher: Good, that was nice. Ok, now let us read the story from beginning to end. If you have questions, ask me. Then we can talk about the story.
	(F++) The sequencing is largely determined by the teacher, for example, the teacher writes on the board the sum. Th H T U 1 8 9 5 - 3 8 9 Teacher: Keisha read the sum. Learner: One thousand eight hundred and ninety-five minus three hundred and eighty-nine. Teacher: OK, so look at the board everybody. I am going to subtract coming from the units. I say 5 minus 9. It cannot, because 5 is less than 9; then I borrow from 9 under the tens. I borrow one ten and 9 becomes 8 tens. (TR cancels 9 and put 8 under tens) Then my new units are 15 then I subtract 9 and the answer is ....
Lesson J: English reading: The Little Turtle	(F++) Sequencing is visible as the teacher sets clear time limits. Let us read quietly, when you are done you answer the questions in your book - and answer in full. Write neatly.

Table 4.16 presents the evaluative criteria used by Grades 3 and 4 teachers.

**Table 4.16: Evaluative criteria**

TEACHER	OBSERVATIONS
Lesson A: English: Teaching Nouns	(F++) Evaluative Criteria. Very explicit. The teacher made some points to the whole class to clarify what is expected of them in the task. (Hoadley, 2006). The teacher uses a one-size fits all approach. [Look at the following class observation]. Teacher: Boys and girls, let us take out our department books, page 23. Look at that insect; an insect has 3 body parts Look at the words that sound the same. An insect has 3 body parts: a head, thorax and an abdomen. Ok, now let us turn to page 24. What is a noun? We said if it is a noun, we see it, we touch it, we feel it.
Lesson B: Mathematics: Subtraction story sums and breaking up	(F-) Evaluative criteria was not very explicit to the learners who had to rely on the criteria in the textbook. The pedagogy was visible, but the content was not visible to the learners and there was no interaction or co-extension of meaning. There was too much teacher-talk and the teacher did not elaborate on the message as required. The teacher did not provide explicit feedback on how learner response matches up to expectation. It was a blanket approach to about 38 learners, most likely from different developmental levels. [The teacher's approach seems to imply that learners must fit into the Grade 4 contexts, instead of teachers' approaches being adapted to suit learners' needs and levels of understanding].
Lesson C: Mathematics: capacity	(F--) Evaluative Criteria were very implicit because the teacher asked the children to set their own criteria by identifying containers that can carry liquids. Here the criteria were implicit as the learners were going to use their own discretion to evaluate the criteria. The criteria were weakly framed because the teacher did not seek textbook correctness. Teacher: What is capacity? Learner: Volume. Teacher: At home, go and look for things, which show capacity; look for things in your mother's grocery cupboards that show capacity. I want things that hold liquid. What did we say are examples of things that hold capacity? Learner: Things like tins and bottles. Teacher: What are examples in your house that contain liquids? Learner: Cooking oil bottles, water-jugs, tomato sauce containers...
Lesson D: English reading: The two frogs	(F-)Evaluative Criteria were both implicit and explicit. The teacher made some points, either to the whole class or to individual learners, to clarify what is expected of them in the task.
Lesson E: English: Spellings	(F+) Only the answer in the textbook was correct. Teacher: Write corrections in your spelling books. Open your spelling books; you must have them for spelling. Teacher: Stop saying I do not know what to do! You are not foundation phase learners anymore. You cannot forget your books - you must have your books. [Lecturing approach]. Learner: What must I do? [Learners go to the teacher to tell her that they do not understand Platinum English home language spellings given but the teacher instead asks the learners to make corrections by repeatedly writing each spelling word 3 times.
Lesson F: Social Science: Landmarks	(F-) Evaluative Criteria drew on both weak framing and strong classification. The teacher made some points, either to the whole class or to individual learners, to clarify what is expected of them in the task. Now look at these 3 pictures. Explain what is happening in those pictures. These 3 photographs show how the city of Johannesburg changed from the past to the present. Learners started working in their books. This teacher moved from row to row making sure the learners were on working on the task.
Lesson G: English Comprehension:	(F-) Evaluative Criteria were sometimes implicit. Teacher: Okay now find the words following words in the crossword and circle them (grumble, frightened, grinned, scolded, amused). Look for the words in the word



The boy who cried wolf	block. Let me show you the example. [Teacher showed the children an example]. You must colour the words found. Use different colours.
Lesson H: English reading: The Birthday	(F-)The criteria were both explicit and implicit. Teacher: Good, that was nice! Ok, now let us read the story from beginning to end. If you have questions, ask me. Then we can talk about the story.
Lesson I: Mathematics: Place value	(F++) The evaluative criteria were explicit and strongly framed because the teacher highlighted exactly what must be done and what is considered as correct. Teacher: Today we want to practise subtraction. To subtract means to take away or the difference of a sum. Remember the small number does not take away the big number. Teacher writes on the board the sum. Th H T U 1 8 9 5 - 3 8 9 Teacher: Keisha, read the sum Learner: One thousand eight hundred and ninety-five minus three hundred and eighty-nine.
Lesson J: English reading: The Little Turtle	(F++) The evaluative criteria is highly visible. The teacher made clear what is acceptable communication, knowledge, and behaviour. Teacher even corrected learner pronunciations.

Table 4.17 outlines my observations in Grade 4 classes.

**Table 4.17: Summary: Grade 4 observations**

TYPE OF PEDAGOGY	OBSERVATIONS										
	EXPLICIT - VISIBLE / (STRONG FRAMING /STRONG CLASSIFICATION) F++/F+/ IMPLICIT - INVISIBLE (WEAK FRAMING AND WEAK CLASSIFICATION--/F-										
		Teacher									
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Hierarchical rule	explicit	X	X		X	X			X	X	X
	implicit			X			X	X			
Pacing	explicit	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
	implicit			X			X				
Selection	explicit	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	implicit			X			X				
Sequencing	explicit	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X
	implicit			X			X	X			
Evaluation criteria	explicit	X					X			X	X
	implicit		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Tables 4.18 and 4.19 gives an analysis of discourse relations within the teaching-learning environment.



**Table 4.18: Grade 3 Classification of discourse relations**

TYPE OF PEDAGOGY	ANALYSING CLASSIFICATION OF DISCOURSE RELATIONS INTER DISCURSIVE RELATIONS AND SPACE FOR TEACHING									
	Teacher									
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Discourse relation/link between school and everyday knowledge	C++	C+	C-	C++	C-	C--	C++	C++	C+	C++
Inter-discursive relations/between subject areas	C+	C+	C+	C--	C++	C++	C--	C++	C--	C++
Teaching space specialisation of space for teaching	C--	C--	C--	C--	C--	C--	C--	C--	C-	C-

**Table 4.19: Grade 4 classification of discourse relations**

TYPE OF PEDAGOGY	ANALYSING CLASSIFICATION OF DISCOURSE RELATIONS, INTER-DISCURSIVE RELATIONS AND TEACHING SPACE									
	Teacher									
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Discourse relation/link between school and everyday knowledge	C--	C--	C-	C--	C+	C++	C--	C--	C--	C++
Inter-discursive relations between subject areas	C++	C++	C+	C+	C--	C--	C+	C-	C++	C--
Teaching space specialisation space for teaching	C++	C++	C++	C++	C++	C++	C++	C++	C++	C+

#### 4.14 MANAGING INTERVIEW DATA

As stated in earlier chapters, the study conducted semi-structured interviews with teachers. A total of 20 teachers were interviewed and working with numerous responses proved challenging. To make data easy to interpret, the study used the concept of "rudimentary analysis" (Merriam 2009:178). This is whereby all data from interviews are transcribed, thereby taking note of consistencies and similarities. All observations were recorded; in this case the researcher noted teacher pedagogy in relation to hierarchy, pacing, selection sequencing and evaluative criteria.

This approach enabled me to observe similarities and differences among the raw data gathered. Data was manually generated even though it could have been done electronically

(cf. Table 4.15). The following is an example of how the researcher engaged with an interview set after it was transcribed. The following extract was taken from interview scripts which showed how the questions which the researcher explored led to establishing the rising themes (patterns) and consistent findings between Grade 3 and 4 teachers.

The teacher interview responses are indicated below. Similar questions were constructed for Grade 3 and 4 teachers for comparison sake (cf. Table 4.17).

**Table 4.20: Interviews**

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	CONSISTENT FINDINGS
1. Explain whether Grade 2s/3s struggle to adapt when they come to you.	Sometimes you meet learners who are not ready for Grade 3. School-readiness is important.	That is difficult to judge but generally they also need adjustment to the current grade. Generally, they seem very confused because everything is moving fast; even if they were ready, you cannot tell because changes in their status affect their ability.	Lack of readiness
2. Explain whether it is true that learners' achievement drops after transitioning into Grade 4.	We have struggling learners in Grade 3 who manage to pass either on age cohort or they were passed because they once repeated ...and they are part of the failing Grade 4s. <b>Secondly, mmmm I do not wanna say this... giggling.</b>	The marks go down; performance drops, for some learners the performance drops temporarily but only in first term but for the other learners that is the time the performance decreases permanently.	In Grade 4, marks decrease.
3. What challenges (if any) are exhibited in the Language of Learning and Teaching? If there are challenges, how do you deal with the challenges?	Our problems in the language of learning and teaching is spelling; we do not have that much of a problem in language. I think it's the confusion due to the three language rules or structure. Learners are confused when it comes to spelling.	Language can influence performance. Unfortunately, the learners have limited vocabulary in English LOLT.	LOLT influences comprehension of lessons.
4. What differences are there between Grade 3 work and Grade 4 work that you think may affect learners	Teacher-learner relationship in a confusing environment where the learner now must interact with more than 4 adults per day with different teaching approaches, discipline rules, and even attitude to their subject.	Work load increase for learners, and unnecessary teacher overload in administrative work is also a contributory factor.	Different pedagogical approaches. Dissimilar contexts  Less work in Grade 3 and flexible time in

once in Grade 4?			Grade 3 but Grade 4 has a fully packed curriculum.
5. Do you think teacher strategies are affecting learners when they transition?	I think yes. The language of learning can affect performance because the language of learning and teaching in Grade 4 is difficult to understand.	<p>Teacher strategies affect learners because learners have different learning styles. The way that a teacher presents lessons will affect learners' ability to comprehend.</p> <p>Some learners will understand a teacher's approach, whilst some learners will not; because some learners learn by doing things, some learn through use of images, some by doing and some by just listening. In the case of English LOLT during transitioning the learners are being disadvantaged by their affected by limited ability in English vocabulary because at home they don't speak this school language.</p> <p>We are using spelling books, phonics and visual aids. It's difficult to say what exactly is the problem in Grade 4</p>	There is a mismatch between Teachers' ability versus the learners' developmental level.

#### 4.15 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the researcher provided a detailed data presentation schema in terms of classification and framing of pedagogic discourse. The data was presented in a way that answers the research questions sequentially. Data from classroom observation was presented to evaluate classification and framing observed through interaction and delivery of lessons. As a starting point, data is presented beginning with questionnaire responses and "quantitative views" of participants. The research presented the units of analysis, which include literacy, numeracy and content lessons observed in the Grade 3 and 4 classes in different schools. The lesson exemplars were used and evaluated to see how they were classified and framed in context. Each educator's pedagogic practice as well as the strategies that educators used in the transmission-acquisition process, were depicted in detail. In Chapter 5, the analysis of the data obtained, will be linked with the research question and the title of this thesis.

## CHAPTER 5

### DATA ANALYSIS OF TEACHERS' PEDAGOGIC PRACTICES

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#### 5.1 OVERVIEW

This chapter presents findings of the study gleaned from the collection and analysis of data. It discusses the findings, deductions, triangulation, themes generated from the study, and whether the study objectives were achieved. Firstly, the chapter discussed the data collection procedure, in addition to presenting findings from questionnaires, observations, interviews, and document analysis. The focus of this chapter has been to present data which responded to the second research question relating to the determination of the extent to which Grade 3 learners are prepared for the language related challenges of reading to learn in Grade 4 during the acquisition and transmission process. This study observed content subjects taught in English LOLT from Grade 3 and 4 participants. A total of 20 lessons were observed and coded, involving 20 teachers. Six Mathematics lessons, 12 English subject lessons, one Social Science lesson, one Natural Science and Technology lesson, and one Life Skills lesson were observed in English LOLT. Therefore, for coding and analysis, I used some self-generated evaluation criteria to show classification and framing values using a Bernstein perspective of (F++/ F+ /F--/F-) present data, which responded to the following research questions:

- *What kinds of LOLT pedagogical practices do Grades 3 and 4 teachers use?*
- *How do these pedagogical practices influence the transitions of Grades 3 and 4 learners?*

To answer the above questions, the researcher evaluated lessons based on how teachers and learners occupied pedagogic spaces and how the lessons were framed in terms of hierarchy, pacing, selection, sequencing and evaluative criteria. This highlighted the social relations within the pedagogic spaces.

##### 5.1.1 Introduction

This section of the study shows how data extracted from questionnaires was analysed, firstly in a quantitative manner. Quantitative data was used to generate teachers' profiles and to list factors that affect learner-transition in English LOLT classes.

Analysing qualitative data was the second process because one must distinguish thematic features out of the raw data. Qualitative data analysis takes place throughout the data collection process. The qualitative data analysis approach was adopted as an interpretive lens where data must be organised in categories such that the researcher reflects constantly on impressions, relationships, and connections (Creswell 2013:49).

The responses from questionnaires were graphically tabulated, and percentages of responses were drawn. All narrative interview verbatim accounts were transcribed. The transcription of raw data resulted in the formation of categories and thematic strands or patterns, relating to the research topic. This portion of the study reveals how data was synthesised in a quadratic form to generate corroborative answers (four types of data sources were processed). The study describes each type of data collected. Evidence from the questionnaires, lesson observations and the interviews undertaken in schools suggest that workload, vocabulary, pedagogic style, disjuncture between LOLT, and access were factors, which influenced learner-transition. Moreover, these were exacerbated by abrupt transitions, different expectations from both teacher and child, and teachers' failure to address relevant issues. The data was triangulated to capture different dimensions of the same phenomenon. The data collection procedure follows below.

## 5.2 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The researcher personally visited each of the schools that have been selected for the research. Initially the researcher had sought permission to involve seven schools but ended up with five schools (Case schools Table 5.1). One school principal did not grant permission. The other school principal granted permission, but the teachers were not willing to be part of the study. Since it was based on participant consent, the researcher decided to work with willing participants from the five schools (5.1 Case Schools).

**Table 5.1: Case schools**

SCHOOLS	LOLT	PERIOD	TYPE	QUINTILE
A	English	GR 1-7	Urban	5
B	English	GR 1-7	Urban	5
C	English	GR 1-7	Urban	5
D	English	GR 1-7	Urban	5
E	English/Afrikaans	GR 1-7	Urban	5

### **5.3 FINDINGS FROM GRADE 3 TEACHERS**

Findings from Grade 3 teachers are discussed below.

#### **5.3.1 Questionnaires**

The questionnaires were distributed to ten Grade 3 and ten Grade 4 teachers and the following themes were generated.

#### **5.3.2 Female-dominated Grade**

The findings from questionnaires indicated that the Grade 3 teachers are female, with the majority being 41 years of age and above. Somehow, many of these Grade 3 teachers speak English as a First Language, alongside Afrikaans. In the questionnaires, it was discovered that there is a disjuncture between teachers L1 and learner LOLT, because most teachers are English LOLT second language speakers. The second theme showed that most old, experienced teachers, teach Grade 3 (41-50 years old) and the young teachers (21-30) constitute a higher number at Grade 4 level.

### **5.4 LESSON OBSERVATIONS**

Lesson observations also constituted an important source of the data collection tool for the present study, thereby exposing causative LOLT challenges during Grades 3 and 4 transitions. The study carried out lesson observations in-between all the English LOLT classes in each of the 20 participating classes. The research first went to schools to make appointments and observe informally; then the second week was meant for the actual observations.

The researcher assumed the role of an unobtrusive, non-participant observer. The study explored the usage of the rules of pedagogic discourse through teacher pedagogical strategies, which were tools to bring about comprehension when learners seemingly did not understand. An observation schedule (cf. Appendix E) was used when observing teachers' classroom practice. The lesson observations sought to discover comparative teacher pedagogy between Grade 3 and 4. This entailed learner-response and teacher-pupil pedagogical interaction and the visibility of pedagogical devices in classes. The researcher planned a self-created observation schedule guide that was based on the

study's theoretical framework of classification and framing, which translated to implicit and explicit rules.

Lessons were audio-recorded to assist in retention of information. Twenty audio-recorded lessons were observed, transcribed and categorised per grade showing emerging thematic strands. Comparisons were drawn from the Grade 3 and 4 lessons. Relevant data extracts were highlighted, and categories were drawn. Findings from the Grade 3 lessons brought about various themes.

In this study, the researcher discovered that the Grade 3 teachers in all classes seemed to have a pattern in their pedagogical approach. The teachers' approach of teaching was very distinct; the teachers explained exactly what the learners had to do and how they had to do it, and when they had to do it. Although the approaches were varied, there was this undeniable pattern. As the researcher looked at the approaches. It was understood what Bernstein implied by stating that pedagogic practices may either advantage or disadvantage learners because of distributional injustice. Invisible versus visible, means one of the two, advantages the middle-class learners. In the observed schools, most learners are from working-class backgrounds because in the interviews the teachers indicated that most learners are from the high-density suburbs and they are bussed to school daily; with a smaller portion making up middle-class learners.

The fact that language always mediates does not mean that it necessarily mediates what someone sets out to mediate. What is mediated depends a great deal on the mental disposition of the addressee (Bernstein 2000:41). Hence, classroom observations provided the actual pedagogical decisions and practices done in the classroom setting.

#### **5.4.1 Common teacher-pedagogy**

The Grade 3 teachers seem to adopt a common teaching approach as their pedagogies were mixed, alternating between visible and invisible pedagogies. Most Grade 3 classes showed open relations between learners and teachers because the teachers seem to alter the pacing by including other learning approaches. Even though the powers and boundaries of authority were significant, this did not stop the teachers from also involving learners and interacting with them. The Grade 3 teachers have an extended block of time so there is usually weak pacing, and this gives the learners more time to acquire knowledge. Although time is clearly demarcated and specialised in the Grade 3 classes, the

teachers seemed to tolerate disruptions and even accommodated learner pacing. In Grade 3, one subject uses the theories of another subject. Therefore, content subjects can be an extension of language. The Grade 3 teachers integrated playful elements into formal direct teaching. Another interesting aspect observed in relation to LOLT, is that the teachers gave co-extended meaning in their lessons. They were many illustrations and sensory activities; for example, reading aloud and clapping and reading at the same time. Bernstein (2005:89) maintains that "variations in pedagogy are advantageous". These changes allow time for exploration; for the introduction of horizontal discourse and more personally embedded meanings.

## **5.5 INTERVIEW FINDINGS**

This study also conducted interviews with both Grade 3 and 4 teachers. The purpose of the interviews was to follow up on observed lessons, to clarify why teachers adopt certain strategies, and to establish teachers' views on LOLT and learner-transition.

The interview questions were similar in each context; this led to getting many angles on the same issues. Obtained data was integrated to create coherency in support of the stated research questions. Additionally, teacher interviews were conducted to determine their views, conventions, and didactic choices.

Kuzborska and Kuta (2011:103) acknowledge that teachers' beliefs greatly influence their pedagogical practices. The teacher interview data provided the theoretical beliefs and perspectives on learners' transition, challenges, teacher pedagogical choices, and pedagogical practices related to English LOLT. Findings elicited from interviews, are presented below.

### **5.5.1 Lack of pre-preparation**

A small percentage of teachers indicated that sometimes learners are not grade-ready when they come to Grade 3; transition has its own challenges. Some teachers indicated that in Grade 3 during term one, for the child to be able to adapt, they go back to teach Grade 2 work because sometimes learners have forgotten the previous content due to lengthy the December holiday, or due to lack of understanding some basic concepts.



*Teacher B: Term 1 is mostly recap of Grade 3 work. What we are only properly teaching is cursive. so you will see term one their marks drop down and sometimes in term 2. Grade 3: the teachers also reiterated that marks go down during Term 1, but the transitional challenges are not so pronounced in Grade 3, because the learners are still doing the same subjects. It's only worse in Grade 4 where there are many interconnected factors that are minimal in Grade 3.*

### 5.5.2 Poor quality tests

Another issue worthy of recording is that (as one teacher indicated) that there are teachers setting poor quality tests and the moderator or HOD being guilty of not vetting those tests. This means learners are not given challenging tasks; thus, when in Grade 4 they are faced with a higher level of work, which they were never exposed to before. It was also observed that some participants were even too scared to talk about this issue, despite being promised confidentiality.

Refer to Grade 3, Teacher E interview:

*Teacher E (in a whisper): Yes, I have done so several times. I was told the learner passed. But remember when a learner fails in your your subject/class you are called by the principal as you have to account for what you have done; you should show evidence that you have helped this learner with the problems he/she encountered. You are accountable so now some people don't want to be in trouble with the principal, so they just pass learners somehow to avoid accountability.*

### 5.5.3 Policy-driven: DoE passing non-deserving learners

Findings from interviews indicated that the DoE policy leads to the passing of non-deserving learners in order to reduce the number of failures. But what will happen with the learners who are pushed to the next level? Sometimes they are passed on the age cohort or because the marks are close to the pass mark. One observation that this study recorded was the low pass mark in content subjects that is considered a pass. If a child passes with 40% in Grade 1, what mark will they pass with in Grade 4? The academic bar seems to be too low. Hence, one participant complained against the DoE's policy for pass marks by stating that:

*Teacher C: I think the Department must listen to class teachers because the teachers know the learners better. We are tired of the Department passing the learners on age; the learners are passed because the marks are close (e.g. 46% or 36% - perhaps the learner is struggling). The system is pushing learners to their eventual disadvantage. If a learner is pushed to Grade 4, at the end of Grade 4 he can't repeat as he is too old for the grade. He is promoted again on the basis of his age. In the intermediate phase he cannot repeat although he is failing because he has already repeated, so the learner is pushed. This will need to be investigated further as it creates a mind-set that failing is acceptable.*

#### **5.5.4 LOLT not a problem - spelling is**

Most teachers did not agree that LOLT is a learning challenge or transitional challenge but asserted that there is a serious problem in spelling and that the only learners struggling with LOLT are newcomers who in most cases started their Grade one in vernacular or any other subject other than English LOLT. The fact that teachers do not see LOLT as being a problem shows their lack of knowledge because spelling is part of the language of learning and teaching. However, the teachers agreed that teacher strategies could affect learner-achievement - this is an indirect admission that teacher pedagogy in LOLT affects learning.

### **5.6 FINDINGS FROM GRADE 4 TEACHERS: QUESTIONNAIRES**

#### **5.6.1 Female teachers**

Only 10% of Grade 4 participants were male. This is usually a female-dominated grade. There is a need of motherly nurturing and gentleness in teaching-learning, so it is usually the norm to have female teachers from Grade 1-4. In relation to communication, this usually creates a vacuum because male teachers are not as emotionally accommodating as female teachers; lessons are most likely to be strongly framed.

#### **5.6.2 Teachers speak English LOLT as a second language**

Most participant teachers in Grade 4 are Afrikaans-speaking. They also received pedagogical training in languages other than English. According to Atherton (2013), the teacher when teaching may fail to reach learners because of their non-proficiency in communicating in the English LOLT. This leads to confusion in the minds of learners who may underperform as a result of not understanding what the teacher is communicating; this eventually leads to fossilisation as the learners grows up thinking that the teacher's "erroneous" language usage was correct.

#### **5.6.3 Recently qualified teachers**

According to Atherton (2013:12) Grade 4 teachers were mostly in the (21-30) age range. This seems to indicate that they are just recently qualified. The study attributes their choice of teaching approach to their lack of experience, which may lead to learner-underperformance.

## 5.7 FINDINGS FROM GRADE 4 TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRES

Once a child is in Grade 4, he/she is expected to use the textbook in "managing the solitary privatised educational relationship" (Parker and Neuharth-Pritchett (2009:22). These Grade 4s seemed not ready to use the textbook to extract knowledge because the book epitomises strong classification and strong framing. The themes emerging from classroom observation include limited or absence of dialogue between teacher and learners. The Grade 4 teaching-learning observation session showed minimal learner-interaction. In some lessons, it was just the teacher only giving instructions. What was noticed in Grade 4 classes, was a general way of teaching where teachers seemed committed to rote textbook learning accompanied by tightly structured instruction (cf. Grade 4, Lesson A & Lesson B on capacity, Appendix N). Teacher interview responses are tabulated in table 5.2

**Table 5.2: Summary of Grades 3 & 4 interview responses**

	GRADE 3	GRADE 4
Q1	Sometimes not ready. Problem with new learners.	Not ready when they come to Grade 4. Too emotional. Behaves like Grade 3s.
Q2	Sometimes work and marks drop. New students' new problems.	Work performance falls. Too many disciplinary problems.
Q3	Spelling. New LOLT learners from vernacular LOLT. Teacher's ability.	Spelling problems. New LOLT learners transitioning from vernacular LOLT. Increase in terminology.
Q4	Teachers cheat by passing "failed" learners. Lack of parental commitment.	Failure to cope with Work overload. Too many new subjects. LOLT challenges.
Q5	Teacher approach has too much terminology.	Introduction of new subjects. Teachers' approach confusing. Work too fast and advanced.
Q6	Not exactly -but yes, in a way	Definitely
Q7	Teachers' approaches affected by teachers' backgrounds.	Teachers' pedagogy affects teaching-learning interactions.
Q8	Grade 3 teaches everything; They teach content and language	Did not teach LOLT in content-subjects. Lack of time. Only language teacher teaches LOLT.
Q9	Verify assessment and results. Check on Grade 2 & 3 syllabus - there is a huge gap	Huge gap from grades 3-4. Grade 3 teachers not doing their best. DoE must not force-pass learners. Verify assessment results.

### 5.7.1 Restricting environment

The teachers' lessons were too strongly framed because the lessons restricted learner-

freedom and controlled the context in which learning occurred (e.g. Lesson F: "Remember it is for assessment, so after reading the story you are going to tell me about the two frogs; for example, you will say 'once upon a time there were two frogs' ". There were explicit hierarchical teacher-student relations with a limited degree of options. Learners were constantly told what to do; for example, in Lesson A where the teacher said, "stop saying I do not know what to do, you are not in foundation phase anymore; you cannot forget your books, you must have your books".

### **5.7.2 Use of abstract material**

In all Grade 4 classes, that the researcher observed lessons where the teachers teach abstractly and there was little, or no concrete material used. The students appeared as if they were floundering. The major problem linked to LOLT was the lack of expansion of language or breaking down the abstract content to concrete terms. Unfortunately, the teachers seem not to understand how language acquisition works. In addition, they lacked mentoring experience. If we consider that the child spends an average of 35 hours at school per week, so whatever the mentor (teacher) does has an impact on the child, so the absence of learning materials, poor communication (LOLT), and a lack of mentoring experience, can affect learners' negatively.

### **5.7.3 Teacher-pedagogy**

The Grade 4 teachers mostly adopted the lecture method. The problem is that the teacher's methods or teaching style was not determined by the subject matter or even the nature of the learners. **From my observations** Grade 4 teachers are using a one-size-fits-all approach. The teacher did not make a great effort in making academic knowledge more familiar and accessible to the learners because the lessons were strongly classified. The time in Grade 4 was clearly marked out and rigidly set; that is, in terms of what is to be done, when and how. In the lessons observed, the teachers hurried throughout the processes because of time-constraints. Some were more concerned about the ringing of the bell rather than teaching-learning itself. Teacher-centred approaches where disruptions were not tolerated, lessons were mostly presented orally, and the researcher felt there was a mismatch between the content and the learner (Lesson F, I).

*English Lesson 1:*

*Teacher: We are going to take readers and we are going to read on page 12, the story of the two frogs. Remember it is for our assessment so after reading the story you are going to tell me about the two frogs. For example, you will say "once upon a time there were two frogs...". Now let us read once more. [Teacher asked about 10 different learners to read and they were all able to read].*

The teacher corrected pronunciations here and there. The Grade 4 lesson showed minimal learner-interaction. In some lessons, it was just the teacher just giving instructions. What the researcher noticed in Grade 4 classes was a general way of teaching.

#### **5.7.4 Teacher-centred talk**

Grade 4 teachers sometimes assume learners have already learned appropriate ways of adapting knowledge, and this results in using the wrong approach in teaching. The Grade 4 teachers are rooted in the content-based method. The lessons also revealed that that the teachers did most of the talking; rarely did they give the learners the chance to speak or opportunity to interact. This resulted in the strong pacing of the lessons (F++). The re-contextualisation process seemed so fast because the teacher must finish teaching his/her subject-content within the allocated time. This is evidenced by an excerpt from Teacher F:

*Teacher F, Grade 4, English Reading Lesson*

*Teacher: We are going to take readers and we are going to read on page 12, the story of the two frogs. Remember, it is our assessment so after reading the story you are going to tell me about the two frogs for example, you will say once upon a time there were two frogs.... Now let us read once more teacher asker about 10 different learners to read and they were all able to read.*

The teacher just gave instructions without much learner-input. There were no questions to test learners' understanding, hence there was limited student initiative.

*Grade 4 Spelling Lesson*

*Teacher: Take out your spelling assessment books*

*Learners: Which ones?*

*[The Teacher asked learners to take out assessment books]*

The learners seemed not sure of what to do. The teacher had to go to the learners herself and collect the books. The learners had to figure out the corrections without the teacher giving feedback.

*Teacher: Write corrections in your spelling books.  
Open your spelling books; you must have them for spelling.  
Teacher: Stop saying I do not know what to do; you are not foundation phase learners anymore; you cannot forget your book - you must have your books. [Lecturing approach].  
Teacher: what must I do? Learners going to the teacher to tell her that they do not understand*

### **5.7.5 The LOLT challenge: spelling errors**

Almost all teachers in Grade 3 cited spelling errors in learners' work as a great challenge especially when learners transition to Grade 3. It seems correct spelling in LOLT is a major challenge and the problem is exacerbated when this is carried over to Grade 4. However, teachers seem to magnify spelling challenges as the major barrier to learning to overlook their role in the teaching-learning situations.

## **5.8 FINDINGS FROM GRADE 4 INTERVIEWS**

The following section presents findings from the interviews carried out, and the generated themes are presented.

### **5.8.1 Learners' lack of preparedness during transition**

The interview findings revealed that learners are not grade-ready when they transition to a higher grade. For example, Grade 4 teachers admitted that when learners come to them from Grade 3-4, it is after a long holiday and the learners are not as ready, hence they struggle during term 1. They must first revise Grade 3 work. However, this does not mean that the learners will not be ready when they leave Grade 4.

*Interviewer: When learners come to you are they ready language wise to be in Grade 4  
Teacher C: I wouldn't say so because, In the first term we work a little but slower in term 1 and we tell them everything, pick up your things, skip a line, write the date because they want to be told what to do they are not yet ready to be independent. Write the date...we notice the shock of our Grade 4s during transitioning.  
Interviewer: Explain whether it's true that learner's achievement drops after transitioning into Grade 4  
Teacher D I think it's natural to struggle because it's a new environment. Sometimes we used to send our books to Grade 3 so that they see what is happening here with progression. There are challenges to be expected. It's just like you start a new job. Challenges experienced every progression there comes challenges that is a new learner. Starting a new group, it's almost like starting a new Grade you are always unsure. New, teachers its new learners in the classroom.  
Interviewer What challenges do you notice in this school?*

### **5.8.2 Semi-structured interviews: findings**

The researcher interviewed each teacher for about 25 minutes. The interview focused on learner adaptation, learner-coping strategies, teachers' use of LOLT, whether transition is a challenge in South Africa in Grade 4 classes, and whether LOLT is a learning barrier in Grade 4. This was to enable the researcher to explore whether Grade 3 lessons are foundational to Grade 4.

Grade 4s must build on the knowledge taught in Grade 3. It makes it difficult for the teacher in a higher grade/class to correct some misconceptions/errors in learners when they are in Grade 4, if the correct foundation was not laid. Each grade builds on the foundation laid in the previous grade. If Learners lack in comprehension skills, then they cannot read with understanding.

A teacher's approach can affect learner-performance if the teacher does not know how to communicate or does not understand how to teach in English. A teacher may be able to speak in a language, but this does not necessarily mean he/she will be able to teach in the language and include all the correct language structures. A teacher commented that transition is difficult; more subjects and learners are failing to cope with work. Behavioural problems arise when there are too many subjects, too much content to absorb, and there is the lack of familiarity with textbooks. The learners battle to distinguish between the different subjects, and they battle to read and interpret the instructions, especially in comprehension.

Grade 4 interviews reiterated some previously discovered themes. What was interesting was that these studies were carried mostly in Europe and now from a South African perspective, some themes do corroborate.

### **5.8.3 Transition is a challenge between Grade 3 and 4 in South Africa**

The participants unanimously agreed that transition is a challenge in South Africa, a challenge even in the schools under study. From their responses, there is an indication that this issue has gone on for too long.

#### 5.8.4 A drop in academic achievement

All participants corroborated that when learners transition into Grade 4 there is a slump in performance. They explained that learners' marks are higher in lower grades but from Grade 4 the marks drop, and their achievement goes down. All teachers see this as a learning challenge during Grade 4.

*Teacher B: The marks go down; performance drops for some it drops only first term but for some it stays like that. I guess there is a deceleration in performance.*

*Teacher C: I think it is natural to struggle because it is a new environment. There are challenges to be expected. It is just as if you start a new job. Challenges experienced every progression there comes challenges. A new classroom, new learners. Starting a new group, it's almost like starting a new Grade you are always unsure. New, teachers its new learners in the classroom.*

*Teacher D: Obviously, the performance changes negatively because of many issues. There are issues like having many teachers and some learners refuse to go to allocated teachers they are scared because of what the big learners tell them.*

#### 5.8.5 Too many teachers in Grade 4

*Teacher: learners do fail Grade 4 because the transition is this big like now they are still Grade 3s; they are used to one teacher teaching them. It is only this year we decided we are going to give them all the subjects. The transition is big because the Grade 4s still think now they are Grade 3s. There is a lot of adaptation that they must do...*

The major theme that was discovered in this study was the issue of too many subject teachers, thus creating confusion due to various teaching approaches, expectations, and approach to English LOLT since most teachers are not L1 English speakers. Looking at the interview response, sums it all.

*Teacher D: Obviously, the performance changes negatively because of many issues. There are issues like having many teachers and some learners refuse to go to allocated teachers; they are scared because of what the "big" learners tell them. They take too much time to finish their work.*

#### 5.8.6 Too many teacher ideologies and teaching strategies

This research has noted that learners are failing to cope with demands from too many teachers. Even the teachers agree that teaching strategies affect learning as there are now too many teachers from different L1 backgrounds. Also, different language approaches this may affect learner-performance. The researcher also believes that this is the reason all participants have cited spelling challenges.



### 5.8.7 High workload

The teachers cited that the workload is too much for Grade 4, hence they do not have time to teach per developmental level of learners, but to just deliver content-driven lessons to be able to meet the set requirements from the DoE. Literature cited also indicated that the issue of high workload was addressed in 2009. A look at the Grade 4 curriculum seems to suggest that CAPS is rigid and educational which is advantageous in that every school will know what must be covered. The content given is good, but there seems to be too much in all subjects. Teachers question whether the content must be covered in the prescribed order. A study by the Catholic Institution of Education (2010:9-13) also indicated that there is too much workload in Grade 4 and that there is a high volume of work to cover in home language with too limited time. In addition, the level of content seems of a very high standard; it seems the CAPS syllabus suits the high-flyers only. Obviously, in classes there are all levels of learners; "slow" learners fail to cover all given work, and this increases their frustration levels. This is what one teacher had to say:

*Teacher F: I know students fail when they go to Grade 4. I have always wondered why mm they fail. Remember in Grade 4 the learners' workloads increase. The load is a lot for them. Remember they move from 4 simple subjects.... now suddenly the learner does 6 subjects.*

The learners are used to the Grade 3 warm environments where they have one teacher who has a close relationship with them in terms of meeting learners' individual needs, giving assurance and assisting in LOLT without the learner feeling anxious. The teacher reads with the learners and discusses with them. Learners' various senses are engaged. Unfortunately, when they move to Grade 4 it is a completely new intimidating environment. They feel like misfits in this new environment. Teacher participants cited that transition brought challenges to learning.

Another observation that was made by the current study is that the Grade 3 teachers treat their learners as individuals, whereas Grade 4 teachers treat their learners as part of a crowd. The research also discovered an interesting occurrence where learners are continuously reshuffled when they start a new grade. Grade 4 learners now have new teachers, new subjects, new subject-teachers, new class mates, and increased workloads; these heighten anxiety thus affecting academic performance.

## 5.9 LOLT TEACHER-PEDAGOGY: A CHALLENGE DURING TRANSITIONING

This is highly contentious as the teachers did not want to admit that LOLT is a challenge during teaching-learning, but they do agree that it was not language *per se*, but how that language is taught to the child. As the researcher probed further, teachers alleged that the learners struggle to comprehend reading matter. This shows that teachers were indirectly acknowledging that LOLT affects learners' performance. The teachers interviewed did not exactly cite LOLT as a learning challenge during transitioning, but they agreed that teaching strategies affect academic achievement.

Interviewer: What language related problems did you notice?

*Teacher F: I would not say the language, but I would say it is the work load,*

*Interviewer: How so?*

*Teacher C: We have a challenge in spellings, if you do not understand the LOLT that you learn then you struggle with all subjects, not English only. Obviously if you do not comprehend it, LOLT can cause you to fail. We cannot say it is the major challenge in our school. Although we sometimes have learners who can read, but do not comprehend. Some of our learners are good in LOLT.*

This led me to unearth that teachers displayed the lack of teaching for sustainability. For the teachers to be able to maintain progress during transmission, they must know their pupils and study their strengths and weaknesses because in Grade 4 it takes a while, because the teachers have these classes for a short time (one or two periods). One respondent indicated that learners require concrete, visual, tactile, and auditory approaches to improve teaching-learning situations. Teachers need to understand the academic levels and psyche of 8 to 10-year-old learners as learners have different/unique forms of remembering.

### 5.9.1 Learners from Sesotho-medium schools

The teachers cited that they have a problem in English LOLT especially with learners who started school in a language other than English LOLT. Such learners generally fail to adapt to grade transition into Grade 3/4. All teachers agree that the learners who start English at a later grade have learning challenges; none of them expressed that they could be failing because of the pedagogic approach. The Grade 4 teachers commented that the learners who started with the English LOLT in Grade 3 were.

### **5.9.2 Teacher-pedagogy in LOLT**

Teachers did not follow a certain way of teaching English, but instead engaged approaches that were congruent to their background experience. They were more concerned in moving on with the syllabus content; their methods did not consider learners as individuals or learner-development needs thus creating an environmental for theory. Most Grade 4 teachers did not engage learners in free conversation, but instead the learning space was more strongly framed and characterised by strong classification consequently highlighting visible pedagogy. All participants concurred that sound teacher-strategies are core during transition. Interview findings revealed that teachers' pedagogies do influence learning, especially in the language of teaching since they must be fully conversant with the language medium of instruction to effectively explain content in the medium of instruction. One participant indicated that "teacher strategies affect learners because learners have different learning techniques. The way that you are presenting will affect learners; some will like it, some will not because some learn by doing things practically, some learn by interpreting pictures and other visual aids". In addition, learners falter because of limited English vocabulary because at home they don't speak the school language (English).

### **5.9.3 Pacing of lessons**

Grade 4 teachers explained that their major challenge is to move with the pace of prescribed work according to DoE guidelines and prescriptions, thus causing teachers to present their work at a very fast pace, and in the process compromising the ability of the learner to understand and properly interpret what had been taught to him/her. To draw further on my assertion that LOLT could be the silent determinant variant during transition, the researcher explored the lessons and the interview-response implications, and the following points were brought to the fore:

### **5.9.4 Disjuncture between LOLT and access**

The comparative table between Grade 3 and 4 findings from lesson observation explain the disjuncture between LOLT and access. Below is a diagrammatic representation of a comparison between Grade 3 and 4 teacher-approaches as observed during data collection (cf. Table 5.3).

**Table 5.3: Comparative findings between Grade 3 and 4**

GRADE 3	GRADE 4
Repetition and persistence to stress language skills	Direct instruction
Expansion on language	No expansion on language
LOLT stressed during English content lessons	English LOLT expanded during English lessons only
Practice of LOLT discussions	LOLT not practised, lecture method
Teacher and learner-centred pedagogy	Teacher-centred pedagogy
	Rigidly defined content
Increased pressure to make students understand	Increased pressure to cover syllabus
Strong teachers	Weaker teachers
ways of problem-solving	One way of working
Driven by developmental level	Driven by content

### 5.10 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

From the Grade 3-4 books, the research compared Mathematics, English, and Life skills. In Grade 3, the learners study four subjects and in Grade 4, the subjects increase to six subjects (cf. Table 4).

**Table 5.4: Grade 4 vocabulary per subject, week 1**

MATHEMATICS PLATINUM UNIT 1: PG5	ENGLISH WEEK 1	NATURAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY WEEK 1	SOCIAL SCIENCE WEEK 1	LIFE SKILLS WEEK 1
Rounding off, ascending, descending value, Digit, Place, Value, expand, expanded notation	Venomously, terrorising, spurs and sorrowfully, bewildered, furiously, ungrateful	Bread mould, germs, reproducing, excreting, environment, sensing then vocabulary germinate, organism	Settlement, farm, crops, village, town, city	Strength, weakness, successful experiences

Table 5.4 above shows a child must learn 30+ new words per week, and the words must be contextualised for better understanding. How then can learners pass content subjects if content subject teachers worry only about content-related matters? One participant cited the challenges that in the structure of the curriculum, especially the progression. In Grade 4, suddenly there is more and deeper vocabulary. Grade 4 work starts from a high order; it seems the textbook does not accommodate language adaptation. In Mathematics, there is much new vocabulary, in addition to complex concepts. In English, the child must have a dictionary at hand, and the texts are too long for comprehending and reading effectively – there is no logical progression from the simple to the complex, thus leaving the learners mesmerised.

### **5.11 CURRICULUM ANALYSIS**

According to the Curriculum Review Committee (Dada *et al.*, 2009:67), the findings implied that there was a far too big leap between the foundation phase and intermediate phase. Upon analysing the curriculum dispensation, it was found that for different curriculum dispensations, teachers' duties were spelled out differently. My findings corroborate Chamane's (2015:133) earlier findings which indicated that the NCS and CAPS documents were structured differently, and hence indicate different teacher and learner roles.

"The NCS is competency-based because the focus is on what learners know and can do; and it therefore appeared to be weakly framed between educators and learners, because learners seem to have more control in the classroom than the educator" (Chamane 2015:134). The CAPS is a performance model and this curriculum stipulates the value of knowledge and is to be taught within specified periods using specific assessment types (DBE 2011:4). The CAPS curriculum is too prescriptive and poses challenges when relating to transition especially concerning language issues. Previously, NCS was competency-based because the focus was on what learners knew and what they were able to do in terms of framing.

### **5.12 DATA TRIANGULATION**

The researcher collected data from multiple sources in multiple ways as the aim of triangulating data was to interpret, compare, and integrate results. The themes derived from the four instruments (document analysis, questionnaires, observations, and interviews) were compared to evaluate whether there is corroboration.

Firstly, data on lesson-observation on teachers' pedagogic practices, and data generated from questionnaires on teachers' biographic background, together with the data generated from interviews, substantiate that teachers' didactic practices are imperative to learning.

However, data triangulation did not always validate some findings. For example, findings in interviews ascertained that LOLT is not a challenge in learning, yet in lessons observed especially at Grade 4 level learners seemed not to understand the pedagogy. In one Mathematics class in Grade 4, the learners kept complaining that they do not know what to do.

In another school, the teachers stated that their learners were good in English LOLT, but

lesson-observations and interviews revealed a pattern of spelling errors. About language proficiency, the teachers exhibited some language errors (cf. Appendices I-H; Table 4.1-4.6). The teachers generally exhibited a lack of proficiency in the language of learning and instruction, which is a serious drawback because the language of instruction must be rightfully modelled so that the learners adopt the correct patterns of language structure.

Common themes that emerged from the collected data elicited from questionnaires and interviews pointed to Grade 4 teachers' backgrounds, their pedagogic approaches, and their view on Grade 4 transition; an indication that teacher pedagogy is a vital link. Interviews and lessons observed indicated that there is a transitional challenge at grade level; but what differed was the level of difficulty. Teacher pedagogy was noticed as a "common-thread" theme emanating from comparative pedagogies between the two grades and varied teacher- approaches in different classes for different subjects. Furthermore, even in interviews, the responses corroborated that teaching-approaches are significant to teaching-learning environments.

### **5.13 CONTENT TEACHERS NOT TEACHING LANGUAGE SKILLS**

Results also revealed that most Grade 4 subject-teachers who were interviewed were mostly concerned with the content of the subjects - not the proficiency in LOLT. The teachers showed minimal interaction with learners; this was evidenced in their positional authority, and hence focused on content and raced through the syllabus. The teachers consider teaching language as an extension of their work because they feel that it is the language teacher's duty. The teachers did not realise that language and LOLT teacher-pedagogy could be responsible for low achievement in their subjects.

### **5.14 CLASSIFICATION AND FRAMING**

Classification and framing are two ways which were used to unpack differentiation of the nature of contents, and the nature of pedagogical practices. Furthermore, these were suitable as analytical concepts which helped the researcher to scrutinise the pedagogical relay - whether contents were divided, bounded or insulated from other contents or whether subjects were well-defined content-wise.

#### **5.14.1 Framing**

Findings in Grade 3 classes indicated that learner-control was within the parameters of

defined boundaries following consultation with the teachers. This resulted in moderately weak Framing (F--). In one lesson, the learners were asked to sit with a friend and choose a work card in breaking up sums. The learners could select how learning will occur and the nature of the relationships. This learner-centred approach was good in that it relaxed the sequencing and pacing rules giving the learners opportunity to acquire content according to their own pace and with the assistance of a peer. The rules for engagement were within boundaries that were defined by the teacher and made known to all. In Grade 4 classes findings indicate that framing was strong (F++) because the teachers' control was apparent as they determined how learning occurred in terms of the selection of content, communication mode, site, pacing, sequencing and evaluation criteria. Also, the nature of the relationships between teacher-learner, learner-learner, and the rules for engagement were explicit and determined by the teacher.

#### **5.14.2 Hierarchical rule**

The Grade 3 hierarchical rule was weakly framed (F-) because the acquirer-transmitter relationship was more personal; for example, the Grade 3 teachers sometimes occupied the learning space of learners where there was a lot of interaction at personal level - for example, the teacher would go and sit beside a learner and correct the work. The teachers' authority was not very assertive and seemed concerned about how students were working.

On the other hand, in Grade 4, the hierarchical rule was coded as (F++) because the pedagogic space was demarcated by lines of authority as the physical distance between teacher and learner was evident. Grade 4 teachers were very impersonal and rarely moved around in the class (taught from one spot). Positional control was very visible as learners were always seated since there was limited freedom of movement.

#### **5.14.3 Sequencing and selection**

As far as sequencing and selection is concerned, this entirely lies within the teacher's control, hence coding is (F++). The lessons taught are regulated by the DoE and are expressed in the syllabus where themes and periods are set. Considering the CAPS curriculum, which is strongly framed, the teachers just worked within the confines of DoE policy.

#### **5.14.4 Curriculum**

With respect to the curriculum in Grade 3 classes, it was weakly classified because the subjects are not exactly isolated from each other. With reference to Grade 3 Life skills, the subject comprises of the language aspect, Social Science, Natural Science and Technology, Creative Arts and Physical Education. In the Grade 3 classes, the weak classification of knowledge and the weak criteria for selection of knowledge caused by subject integration allow teachers to select content and pace it according to learner-needs. Therefore, classification of knowledge becomes weaker, allowing teachers more space and flexibility in their subjects. This results in linking LOLT to content subjects, thereby strengthening capacity to use English as LOLT.

In Grade 4, there is reduced insulation between contents. Compared to Grade 3, the Grade 4 curriculum was strongly classified, and subject-content was taught in isolation from each other. For example, Mathematics was strongly insulated from Natural Science and Technology, Mathematics was distinct from English as a subject, and English LOLT is strongly insulated from content subjects. Teachers were mainly interested in their subject content as they rarely referred to other subjects and this may be caused by teacher-challenges in using English LOLT. This results in minimal conversation in LOLT and hence incapacitates the learners' potential to use English as LOLT. There is strong boundary between each subject; the current Grade 4 CAPS curriculum dictates that the criteria for the selection of knowledge lies outside the realm of the teachers, hence resulting in a strongly classified curriculum where subjects are highly insulated.

#### **5.14.5 Pacing**

The lesson pacing is discussed below (5.14.5.1 & 5.14.5.2) to show how teachers pace their work.

##### **5.14.5.1 *Grade 3***

In Grade 3 classes, there was a variation in terms of pacing of transmission. Firstly, the teachers gave work, secondly, they instructed the students to work, and explained exactly how they should work. Thirdly, the teachers would follow up giving co-extension of meaning, and lastly the teachers would attend to individual students as they marked work indicating what was correct and what was wrong. The Grade 3 lesson-pacing ranged from



very strong framing to weak framing (F++/F--) because during oral lessons pacing appeared very strong but when it came to writing, the degree of pacing slackened. The Grade 3 working environment was relaxed and less intimidating. Firstly, because the teachers' pacing seemed to match the learners' developmental levels in the sense that the teachers interacted with learners during learning. Secondly, the teachers corrected mistakes immediately by writing out what should have been done or by re-explaining and giving a co-extension to the lesson. In Grade 3 classes, the pacing was not a one-size-fits-all approach. Below is an extract from a lesson to sample pacing of transmission.

*Extract from Teacher A:*

*Teacher: Now take your writing books and write the activity, you must write and finish (teacher moves round to see what the learners are doing, suddenly she stops by Tshepho).*

*Teacher: Tshepho, where did the learners in the story go to? Give me the place not what they did?*

*Tshepho: Outside*

*Teacher: I want exactly where they went. Class who can help Tshepho?*

*Learner: They went to the garden.*

*Teacher: Good, that's correct.*

*[Teacher moved round correcting learners, marking and confirming correct responses].*

*Extract from Teacher B:*

*Teacher (gives example): We are going to look at the pictures 1-4 and then put them in sequential order. What is happening in picture 1, picture 2, picture 3, and picture 4?*

*Teacher: Look at the pictures and write sentences about the pictures. Any questions?*

*[The students chorused a no].*

*(Teacher was checking learners' individual work and making immediate corrections). Teacher noticed a boy who was not writing and asked him why. The child said he was not sure of what to do, then the teacher re-explained to the whole class. The teacher only left after the learner started writing).*

In Grade 3 the sequencing rules were highly visible because framing was strong. Repeatedly, the teacher made the learners aware of what they must do and how they must write. The teachers moved in between rows, sometimes writing and all the time indicating what is legitimate text.

#### **5.14.5.2 Grade 4**

The pacing was strongly framed, and this seemed to disadvantage many learners who only had one acquisition site. Grade 4 teacher-pacing was strongly framed in that teachers controlled the working time.

*For example (an extract from lesson Teacher B).*

*Teacher: When I say what the difference is I am saying subtract.*

*[Teacher snaps] You are no longer in Grade 3, don't behave like Grade 3s. You must be able to read on your own. Look on the board. I want you to read on your own. I don't want to repeat myself.*

*Learner 1: [in a fearful manner] Teacher, I don't know what to do.*

*Teacher: Because you are not listening!*

*Learner 2: Me too. I don't know what to do.*

*Class: [Murmuring] All of us teacher!*

*[Many learners asked what they must do. Learners looked confused as pacing was too fast for learners]*

*Teacher: I just said, answer number 3 and 4.*

The teacher's pacing was fast, seemed to lack content knowledge of the subject, and was not good in English LOLT as she does not explain the reasons for errors to the learners, sometimes uses Sesotho in a class where there is a mixture of races. It was evident that the teacher was rushing through the lesson as she did not want to entertain any questions, and this frustrated learners.

*Teacher I:*

*Teacher [demonstrated working out the sums 4 – 9] It cannot, so we borrow 1 ten from 8. Then 8 tens become as 7 tens and 4 units becomes 14 units because we borrowed 1 ten or ten units. Then 14 minus 9 gives us 5. From there we now say 7 tens minus 8 tens. It can't, so we borrow 1 from 6 hundred and we are left with 5 hundred. We now have 7 minus 8 and the answer is 9; now we go to the hundreds and say 5 hundred minus 7 - it can't. Therefore, we borrow 1 from 2 thousand and give to 5 to make it 15. We therefore say 15 minus 7, we get 8. Then we say 1 thousand minus nothing and it remains 1. Therefore, our answer will be 1 8 9 6.*

*Now I want you to work alone, Do this sum: 3478-699.*

*Teacher: Lesego why are you not writing*

*Learner 1: What must I do?*

*Teacher: I want my work done fast, as the bell is going to ring now*

The teachers' focus on framing of time. This teacher used a one-size-fits-all in pacing, although learners possess dissimilar competencies. The teachers indicated that there was a gap between the home and school in terms official pedagogic discourse. In Grade 4, the teachers expect learners to do more work at home to stay abreast with curricular demands and the rate of sequencing and pacing. Findings indicated that the rate of pacing makes it impossible for the learners to be able to adapt during transition. The absence of second LOLT site of acquisition seems to affect learners during transitioning. The strong pacing rule demands for two sites of acquisition. Learners in this study failed to meet the requirements of the pacing and sequencing rules. The locus of control for all aspects of curriculum, pedagogy, and evaluation (assessment) reside with the teacher – a traditional teacher-centred education.

### 5.15 EVALUATION

With respect to evaluation, framing was strong (F++) in Grade 3 because the teacher systematically pointed out what was correct or incorrect in a clear and detailed way. Sometimes the teacher wrote out the steps leading to the answers for the learners or stopped them to work on the chalkboard. Regarding the grade 4 evaluation of criteria, findings generally showed that this ranged from strong framing to moderately weak framing (F+) (F-). Both Grade 3 and Grade 4 teachers explained to the learners what was supposed to be done and how to proceed with given tasks during lessons. However, Grade 4 teachers sometimes pointed out what was incorrect (F+) yet did not correct the errors (F--). This is weak framing when the teacher acknowledges the learner's productions, and the questions asked by the learners were only intended to explain the meaning of those productions.

*Extract of lesson:*

*Now I want you to work alone. Do this sum: 3478-699.*

*Teacher: Lesego, why are you not writing?*

*Learner 1: What must I do?*

*Teacher: I want my work done fast, now that the bell is going to ring.*

From this example, the teacher does not explain to Lesego about the details of the task at hand. However, the teacher had initially explained the task, but she did not give co-extension so that Lesego could understand exactly what was required from the text.

Both Grade 3 and 4 teachers used a uniform approach in giving out concerning the evaluative criteria; however, there was an obvious difference in that the Grade 3 teachers used various approaches to make the evaluative criteria visible. This was characterised by walking around the class and checking what was being done and correcting learners when they made errors. In Grade 4, learners exchanged their books and marked their written work, after the teacher discussed the answers, but teachers seldom checked whether the marking and corrections were accurate. The major problem observed was limited interaction between the learners and the teachers, thereby raising concerns over the teachers' ability in the LOLT pedagogy.

### 5.16 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The findings highlight a differential approach in framing and classification. Regarding pace

of transmission, notable differences are evident in terms of opportunities given to control pacing of lessons and learning of content. Whilst the framing of pacing varied in Grade 3, Grade 4 pacing was noticeably strongly framed in that there was less interaction and the mode of transmission was teacher-centred. The Grade 4 teachers explained that their major challenge was to keep up with the pace of prescribed work as per DoE guidelines, thus teachers progressed with their lessons at a blistering pace, forgetting the different abilities of the learners.

Grade 4 teachers were mostly concerned about reaching their goal of finishing the syllabus according to Departmental regulation. Considering the impact of transitioning, the thematic strands discovered at Grade 3 and 4 levels affects the learners; and in Grade 4 there is the widening relationship-distance between teacher and learners. Learners are confused and traumatised by having too many teachers, too many demands, too much movement from point A-B. Also, the teachers appear as if they are dealing with adults because the Grade 4 learners must know how to manage their school day concerning use of stationery, relationships, managing set time-frames, regardless of their developmental level and capabilities. All learners are treated homogeneously, and a one-size-fits-all approach is implemented. This cannot work because language development does not follow the same pattern in all learners. In Grade 4, findings indicated a strongly framed context in pacing and sequencing because the quality and quantity of content to be delivered in lessons seemed very dense.

The lack of variation in pedagogy in Grade 4 classes results in a non-stimulating environment, which may thus weaken learners' cognitive development. The CAPS curriculum being highly prescriptive, has resulted in teachers pursuing a homogenised learner-identity approach. Since CAPS does not give space for flexibility, teachers tend to overlook differentiation especially in Grade 4 due to CAPS framing of time. This means subject teachers do not give much attention to LOLT since their teaching is assessment-driven. This study shows evidence that teacher LOLT pedagogy influences learning during transitioning because pedagogic practice changes between Grade 3 and 4. Since the teachers are teaching according to grade-level rather than the developmental level of the learner, the LOLT strategies used in Grade 4 seem to have failed to bring positive results. Also, the goals of the education system have been narrowed; hence, this research uncovered that huge disparities were experienced in different schools. Sometimes bilingual learners may experience challenges in the medium of instruction, hence resulting in them failing to express themselves. This, therefore, results in them having feelings of inferiority.

These “feelings” are misinterpreted as maladjustment, while other researchers have pinned this to behaviour challenges. The point is the learners either do not understand, or do not know what to do. The teachers’ problem is the pursuit of curriculum coverage. The teachers asserted that the time factor is mainly a challenge in Grade 4, and that they do not have sufficient time to revise to ensure understanding of what they have covered. One interesting transition issue that was discovered, was that every year the learners are redistributed into a new class; so, in every grade-transition, a learner may not remain with the same peers, thus requiring each learner every year to adjust to new classmates.

## CHAPTER 6

### NEW WAYS OF THINKING ABOUT THE INFLUENCE OF PEDAGOGY DURING GRADE 3-4 TRANSITIONS

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#### 6.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This study was largely based on Bernstein's themes of visible and invisible pedagogy and utilised as theoretical constructs alongside Bronfenbrenner's theory. The theoretical constructs have been adopted as lenses to focus on, understand and examine the English LOLT pedagogy in English-medium schools concerning transitional issues between Grades 3 and 4. The framework attempted to illuminate the options that can be adopted by teachers during transitioning. The findings in the study point to a rethinking of the way in which transitioning may be handled pedagogically. This study has implications for all teachers, policy-makers and researchers; hence, part of the discussion in this chapter will address issues related to theory, policy, and teacher-practice.

This chapter summarised the main findings and then put them into context. Findings were elicited from responses to questions thus giving direction on how this study advanced the relevant theoretical principles while providing suggestions for future research. Also, conclusions are drawn based on the data presented and analysed in relation to the major focus of the study. It is important to restate the study's research questions here and then draw conclusions from the facts that emerge from the analysis of data.

The main objective of this study was to make sense of the ways in which teachers' pedagogical practices influence learner-transitions from Grade 3 to Grade 4, in classrooms where English is used as the LOLT. To achieve this, specific subsidiary objectives were considered. However, this chapter restated the study's objective; that is, *to arrive at new ways of thinking about the influence of teachers' pedagogical practices on learner-transitions in classrooms where English is used as the LOLT*. The objectives set draw from collected data directly connected to the responses to the study's research questions which will be outlined later to highlight whether the stated objectives were fulfilled.

#### 6.2 RECAPITULATION OF PURPOSE AND FINDINGS

The purpose of the study was to explore affective, social, and educational factors that may

influence teacher pedagogy in English as LOLT when learners transition from Grades 3-4. The aim of exploring the impact of pedagogical practices in the LOLT and how it influences Grades 3-4 learner-transition using genres of pedagogy (visible and invisible pedagogy) led to the discovery of various misconceptions about pedagogy concerning transition issues. What I found was that Grade 3 teachers follow a familiar pattern in teaching and they employ both visible and invisible pedagogy; for example, by walking between rows and giving learners individual attention. On the other hand, most Grade 4 teachers follow a "lecturing" approach, which is less interactive and focuses on content coverage rather than conceptual understanding. In line with this type of teaching, learners in Grade 4 must fit into the teacher's context and plans, instead of the teacher adapting his/her pedagogy to suit the various learner developmental levels.

My interest in transition was first stimulated by the work of Kvaslund (2000:27) who stated that "transition is also determined by what students transition from" implying that previous knowledge, experience and skills are also important, although the "Grade 4-slump" phenomenon is also highly attributable to diverse psychological factors. Another interesting factor originated from Holas and Huston (2012:343) cited in the works of Midgely *et al.* (1989) and Eccles *et al.* (1993), who suggested that moving out of elementary school does not necessarily introduce a change in functioning if quality is maintained, because transitioning implies adjusting to new contexts and therefore this is greatly influenced by the congruence of the past and present contexts. The findings of this study indicate an incongruence or disjuncture in that there is a gap(s) in maintaining the groundwork laid in the foundation phases, specifically with reference to Grade 3.

This congruency of the past and present therefore recommends that Grade 4 teachers continue with the multi-teaching interactive approach where all learning styles and learner developmental levels are considered. Advisedly, Grade 4 teachers must merge their pedagogies, especially during term 1 to allow for smooth learner-adaptation from grade 3 to Grade 4. In addition, Grade 4 teachers need to adapt to learner-development and readiness-levels and thus use innovative or a variety of approaches - not a "one-size-fits-all" approach. Another view emanates from Gee and Lou (2008:10) who hold that the most important negative influence on academic achievement is the lack of language mastery (especially vocabulary acquisition) since content subjects at school are more embedded in understanding knowledge via the academic language.

Teachers' approaches must therefore influence interaction to the maximum. During data

collection, teachers cited an overloaded syllabus, which must be covered in limited time; this is done at the expense of the learners' understanding because too much pacing can leave "slow" learners behind. This unfortunately exacerbates in grades further up the school system, and sometimes their understanding of content affected by this time-constraint factor, cascades into life after schooling has been "completed".

A study on grade-transition that bears some similarities to this study, was conducted by Loban (1976:33) who found a drop-in performance after transitioning, but reasons for this decrease in performance in Grade 4, were not clarified. To explore these further, a framework informed by Bernstein (2000:6) was used to express the *how* of pedagogy where classification and framing became instrumental in describing the structuring of discourses and the amount of control that teachers had over selection, sequencing, and evaluation.

Knowing that there was already a considerable body of work on transition, which not only explained the drop in academic performance, but also aspects of language and learning, the researcher diverted to exploring encounters between Grade 3 and 4 classrooms. Specifically, the diversion afforded the chance of combining transition and LOLT teacher-pedagogy in a comparative context, which offered a new direction in learner-transition. The researcher became aware that the past learning context and present context were inextricably intertwined, and consideration of this fact should be paramount when interrogating learner-performance. Hence, Grade 3 learner-experiences and teacher-practices are of great significance in finding out whether *what* they transition from, is *what* is affecting *what* they transition into.

A few Grade 3 teachers cited that sometimes challenges are experienced by learners (and teachers) when transitioning from Grade 2-3, especially during the Grade 3 first-term. So, for students to adapt during the first term they carry out many Grade 2 revision activities, then transition gets smoother during the second term of Grade 3. This shows that the Grade 3 teachers give all their time during the first term of Grade 3 to adapt to transition challenges; and they acknowledge that there could be transitional issues at every stage, but these differ according to the specific grade.

Despite the recognition of the importance of language in education in South Africa, it appears that learner-transition concerning language issues between Grade 3 and 4 has been neglected in the South African context. There is limited literature, which so far, has



only cited vocabulary and reading challenges around Grade 4. A review of the relevant literature revealed that many researchers like Sanacore and Palumbo (2009:69) and Pretorius (2014:69), confirmed that reading challenges contribute as a salient factor in learner-transitions; hence, they suggest intensive reading intervention programmes as a remedy to the "Grade 4-slump".

### **6.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

To Bernstein, pedagogy is a power-relationship where teacher visibility or student visibility may take centre stage. Pedagogic practice is not a given but is influenced by a teacher's background experience, because the teacher can only take the students as far as he/she can "see". There is a gap experienced when teachers try to facilitate learners from restricted to elaborate codes. The teachers should be aware that each learner contextualises learning on an individual level, therefore teachers should facilitate learning according to learner- preparedness or in response to their observation of children. The decision on whether to enact a visible or invisible pedagogic practice in classrooms, is dependent on the teachers' experience. However, Bernstein's theoretical framework places emphasis on frequent teacher-student interactions as a prerequisite for academic achievement; which could go a long way in smoothing the Grade 3-4 transition.

The theoretical framework chosen (Bernstein 2000:169) holds that power to learn resides with the teacher because it is the teacher who oversees what you learn, how you learn, and when to learn. Current findings corroborate that indeed it is the teacher who controls the process of transmission and acquisition of knowledge. This was evidenced by comparative pedagogical approaches which were observed between the two grades. The ecological approach emphasises the importance of relationships in language and learning, because the child as a learner is affected by bidirectional influences in the environment. The context contributes to determination of meaning since the structure of social relationships determines the principles of communication (Bernstein 1977:25). The context in the learner's environment, refers to people such as parents, teachers and peers who enhance children's learning by selecting and shaping the learners' knowledge. Thus, the learner is immersed in an environment where he/she must extract potential meanings where the importance of language and context are never underestimated.

Meanings will gradually become internalised by the learner as he or she interacts with the environment. The teacher's presence and the teachers' practices are instrumental in learning relationships.

## 6.4 RESTATING RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND THEIR FINDINGS

The main questions guiding this study were:

- *What are the contemporary understandings of the influence of teachers' pedagogical practices on learner-transitions, both internationally and in SA contexts?*
- *What is the link between the language of learning and teaching, and teachers' pedagogical practices and learner transitions in primary schools?*
- *What kinds of LOLT pedagogical practices do Grades 3 and 4 teachers use?*
- *How do these pedagogical practices influence the transitions of Grades 3 and 4 learners?*
- *How do contemporary understandings of teachers' pedagogical practices influence learner transitions from Grade 3-4?*

## 6.5 MAIN FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The main findings of the study were based on the following themes, which were elicited from the responses to the questions listed in the questionnaire, information got from the discussions, observations and relevant literature.

Question 1: What are the contemporary understandings of the influence of teachers' pedagogical practices on learner transitions both internationally and in SA contexts?

The findings indicate that teacher pedagogies in English LOLT have an influence on learner-transitions from Grades 3-4. This was evidenced in lessons which were observed and in teacher interviews where it was established that teacher pedagogy in LOLT differs per teacher, and therefore results in sending different messages to the learners. The findings of this study prove that learners derive understanding from the contexts that influence teaching-learning. In other words, learners only understand from interacting with the environment because knowledge and skills are imbibed through social interaction. From the interview sessions, it was confirmed that transition is indeed a problem in South Africa, especially between Grades 3 and 4.

In South Africa learners move to Grade 4, from the Foundation Phase block (Grades 1–3) to the Intermediate Phase (beginning in Grade 4). Further, the study established that at the commencement of every grade, learners are reshuffled just to keep creating mixed-

ability groups. This results in learners having to create new relationships annually by learning to adapt to different people such as new teachers and generally new classmates, thus creating new expectations. The findings of this study support Rockwood and Lockoff (2010:8-10) and Rosenblatt and Elias (2008:43) whose observations conclude that transition brings about a drop in academic performance as a result of new beginnings in terms of adjusting to new situations, moving to new classrooms, making new friends, meeting new teachers, experiencing new pedagogical approaches, and learning to adjust from close to distant teacher-pupil relationships. When participants were probed (Grade 4, Teacher A) they indicated that at the beginning of the term there is a decrease in marks, as compared to Grade 3. In Grade 4, learners usually work a little slower pace. From this, it was implied that LOLT contributes to transitional challenges.

Question 2: What is the link between the language of learning and teaching, and teachers' pedagogical practices concerning learner-transitions in primary schools?

The pedagogic practices of English as LOLT of Grade 3 teachers differ from that of the Grade 4 teachers concerning the teaching of different subjects and different classes. This resulted in increased workloads, burdensome vocabulary catch-up activities, problems in adjusting to different pedagogic styles, disjuncture between LOLT and access-abrupt transitions, different expectations from both teacher and child, loss of the bond between teacher and pupil leading to different expectations, and teachers' failure to address the issue.

The contemporary understandings are that transitioning is synonymous with a drop in academic achievement. It has been established through research that in lower grades learners seem to achieve higher or acceptable levels of achievement, yet in upper grades they achieve lower marks. Teacher pedagogy was found to be one of the main factors affecting performance. In Grade 3, the teacher matches the approach that matches the current needs of learners; whereas the Grade 4 teachers use the teacher-centred approaches, which are highly framed in content and hierarchical relationships. Question 3 responses confirm pedagogical practices as being fundamental (and detrimental) to transition challenges.

*Question 3: What kinds of LOLT pedagogical practices do Grades 3 and 4 teachers use?*

The findings related to this question indicate that indeed there is a relationship between

pedagogy of English as LOLT and learner achievement in Grade 4 after transition. The pedagogic practices of English as LOLT of Grade 3 teachers differ with that of the Grade 4 teachers in the teaching of different subjects. This led to a drop in academic performance.

Question 4. How do these pedagogical practices influence the transitions of Grades 3 and 4 learners?

Firstly, findings indicated that teacher pedagogies in English LOLT have an influence on learner-transitions from Grades 3-4; this was discovered through lesson observations. Secondly, there is a significant relationship between transition and academic achievement, from Grade 3 and 4, which brought about various challenges during the Grade 4 academic year. Thirdly, the pedagogic practices of English as LOLT of Grade 3 teachers differ with that of the Grade 4 teachers in the teaching of different subjects resulting in a significant disjuncture between pedagogy and students' performance. Lastly, there is an association between the pedagogy of English as LOLT and learner-achievement in Grade 4 after transition. In other words, academic performance is adversely affected by the nature and context of transitioning from Grades 3-4.

Question 5: How contemporary understandings of teachers' pedagogical practices influence learner-transitions from Grade 3 to Grade 4?

Bernstein's theory of curriculum (2000) explains "how the structure of social relationships influences the structure of communication, and how the structure of communication shapes people's consciousness and identity – through the curriculum". Considering this approach of Bernstein, when teachers teach, the teacher must be part of the process of recontextualising content in the movement of knowledge. This knowledge is first contextualised by policymakers, then it is recontextualised from the ideological standpoint, then to the curriculum, and finally to the teaching and classroom context (Bertram, 2012:124). In the case of LOLT there must be the ability to recontextualise the semantics of language; that is, putting language items into meaningful contextually-related communication. In LOLT language cannot be used in isolation because language must give learners a communicative competence and added value to teaching-learning situations. Findings indicate that communication strategies in the LOLT are generally ineffective, and this poses a severe challenge to grade-transitions (3-4), thus affecting learners' performance.

## 6.6 SOUTH AFRICA'S CHALLENGE

Grade 4 learners in South Africa are faced with the challenges of an “overload” of subject content in the sense that, in Grade 3 the learners only study four subjects, then suddenly in Grade 4 the number of subjects and their expansive content increases sometimes to unmanageable levels. According to Mkhwanazi (2014:1), the moment the number of subject increases, the number of teachers increase too. Not only is there an increase in subject-load, but the vocabulary (Sibanda 2017:13) becomes more intricate thereby making transition a “rough-ride”. The concern is that exposure to different teacher-expectations may consequently lead to learners struggling to follow various instructions from different teachers. This becomes a serious challenge for learners when it comes to meeting curricular demands per subject. Each teacher exerts his/her authority and demands on learners. Findings point to a problem in South Africa’s educational system in that it draws from a prescriptive and overloaded curriculum, which poses challenges in the Intermediate Phase transitioning (Matavire 2016:33; *PIRLS* 2016:23, Sibanda 2015:14; Pretorius 2014:55).

When students are faced with complex texts that contain unfamiliar words and scenarios, learning becomes difficult as such texts go beyond the everyday experiences of the learners and thus learners underperform and hence become disinterested in school activities. From the researcher’s experience as a Grade 4 teacher in South Africa, each subject introduces at least 10 new words per week, which the child must master. Hence, transitioning from learning to read, to reading to learn, happens simultaneously; and this is exacerbated by the change in the teacher-pupil relationship since the Grade 4 teachers are not class-teachers (they specialise in teaching a particular subject in the curriculum) subjects as the Grade 3 teachers. These changes result in the child’s inability to adapt and match the Grade 4 expectations. As a result, teachers sometimes “promote” the learners (as per DoE recommendations) who may not have mastered the content and foundational competences of the preceding Grade.

The South African DoE curriculum in Grade 4 should talk to the needs of the learners. It should be simplified such that novice teachers are easily able to interpret curriculum content and its requirements in order to prepare lessons that stimulate learning. Designers of curriculum in the DoE should perform curriculum case study comparing states like Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Botswana to see how their curriculum speaks to the needs of the learners. Bernstein (2000:183) asserts that classroom practice is socially structured by

discourse and this is realised through classification and framing.

This study found the current DoE curriculum as incongruent to contemporary learner needs. Additionally, whilst the curriculum policies are based on the principles of social justice and equality, this only applies to a certain section of the population. This is because the needs of the learners as clients are contextually different. The same applies to the ability, values and skills of the teachers. For example, the lack of resources in the rural schools versus availability of certain resources and skilled manpower in urban schools, does not lead to equality, but to a "differentiated" curriculum which may be relevant, depending on teachers' pedagogy within a specific context. Grade 4 challenges are further compounded by the lack of effective assessment policies (which are sometimes ambiguous and convoluted) and effective control in curriculum reproduction, because stakeholders are mainly focused on students' performance at the expense of informative assessment of the processes of teacher-pedagogy during transitioning.

## **6.7 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FINDINGS AND PREVIOUS RESEARCH**

Part of these findings are broadly in harmony with those of researchers such as Rockwood and Lockoff (2010:8) who discovered a decline in learner-achievement, Bellmore (2011:262) and Gordon *et al.* (2011:38) allude to a decrease in motivation, Perry *et al.* (2014:8) point to inabilities to cope with change. Eccles and Midgley (1989) state that instructional practices of many middle-schools do not meet learner-development needs, Parker and Neuharth-Pritchett and Pritchett (2009:22) maintain that the achievement drop is due to the mismatch between teacher pedagogical practices and learner developmental needs coupled with social problems. Lastly, Viliami (2005:483-485), asserts that learning challenges are affected by teaching-quality.

The findings run counter to the conventional widely expressed view that it is the within child-factors that affect transition because most researchers look at what the learner is failing to do during transition, not what the adverse contextual elements are, or that teachers are failing to deliver quality lessons to the learners. Hence, Kavslund (2007:27) indicated that "ask not what's inside your head but ask what your head is inside of".

Although findings may somewhat differ with other studies on the topic, there is a degree of compatibility with other studies in several areas. Firstly, the fact that transition does not cause behaviour problems but that failure to communicate during transition leads to

maladjustment, which therefore results in indiscipline. Secondly, South Africa's Grade 3 teachers' approach shows a balance between visible and invisible pedagogy thus promoting learning. Thirdly, Grade 4 teachers' approaches cause a disjuncture in learning in that the teacher-pupil relationship becomes somewhat distant. Fourthly, the Grade 4 teachers are weaning the learners too early by treating them as mini adults by using the lecturing approach abstractly thereby creating an anti-learning environment.

Lastly, the researcher attributes the transitional challenges to unsuitable teaching methods. Teachers make everything to become advanced in a short space of time. Teaching methods and teaching attitudes must embrace individual learner needs, not merely using a homogenous approach. It must be remembered that learners reach different developmental stages at different times so the teachers' approach should be compatible with learner- developmental uniqueness.

Concerning the curriculum journey and findings, previous studies blamed the subject overload coupled with the LOLT problem. This study confirms that these problems still exist because the same type of teachers are still part of the educational system. However, it must be borne in mind that subject overload is still an issue for teachers and learners and it becomes compounded because the learners only rely on one site of acquisition, which is the school, hence making it difficult for teachers to satisfy curriculum demands.

This chapter set out to translate research information into data. The focus was on how teachers translated curriculum into knowledge and how much power teachers wielded and what teaching strategies were adopted to smoothen the process of transition. The results suggest that there are two strands of teaching pedagogy that are demarcated between phases. In the foundation phases, the teachers are more interactive in approach, whereas in the intermediate phase the teachers are less interactive and more formal. In Grade 3, learners are afforded long stretches of time to complete given work; the Grade 4 learners are not given much chance to alter the rate of acquisition.

Another interesting finding blamed the DoE as contributing to transitional challenges by interfering with teacher-decisions regarding learners who have failed a grade – such learners are 'pushed' into the next grade even if they did not fulfil the basic requirements in a particular grade. In addition, some teachers cheat by making undeserving learners to pass in order to manipulate the pass-rate in their subject in order to avoid castigation by Departmental officials. Below is an excerpt from one of the interviews held with a participant. The finding below also corroborates findings from Estyn's (2011:12) study who

discovered that a minority of schools in Wales presented their Foundation Phase learners with unchallenging tasks when it came to assessments in order that they pass easily into the Intermediate Phase. A similar response was elicited from the interviewer's probing question: When Grade 2s are taught by you, will they be ready for Grade 3. Do they struggle to adapt to Grade 3 work?

*Teacher E: Some of them are ready, but most of them are not ready. Some of the learners fail but when the Department official comes, he/she passes non-deserving learners. Some are promoted on age. But in some cases, it is not even the issue of age cohort. They are on par with their peers. They cannot read, they cannot count, but they have never failed. I want to show you an example of one learner who is in this class and is said to have never failed.*

The teacher showed the researcher non-syllable spellings that did not make sense at all. The learner seemed to be really struggling judging from what was seen in the workbooks. For one to imagine that this child to be in Grade 3 seemed an injustice to both the learner and the system. The researcher probed further:

*Interviewer: Are you allowed to take this to the principal? Have you ever taken this issue to the HOD or principal explaining that you have a learner who is assumed to have never failed, but the learner does not know the basics for a Grade 3 class?*

*Teacher E: (in a whisper): Yes, I have done several times. I was told the learner passed. But remember when a learner fails in your class you are called by the principal. You have to account for what have you done, and you have to show evidence. You must show that you have helped this learner to improve, you are accountable, so now some people don't want to be in trouble with the principal, so they just pass learners somehow to avoid accountability. They do not want to be in trouble with the principal. They just help the learner and say do this, do that. From the Department, sometimes even if you have evidence, they just pass some learners. They also call the parent to ask a permission for the learner to fail. If the parent says "no", the learner cannot fail. If the parent says "yes", then the learner can fail.*

If you look at the interview findings, some views seem to corroborate ANA findings (DBE 2012:9) that the higher the grade the lower the assessment marks. The argument being that after the DoE (2009) recommendations, Grade 4 subjects were reduced from nine to six, yet research has proved that this has not worked because 7 years on, transition is still regarded as a problem in South Africa. This study argues that this has not worked because PIRLS' results of 2011 and 2016 speak otherwise. The objective of the study was to establish whether transition is still a challenge in South Africa and whether English LOLT pedagogy affects learners during transition. Considering the findings of DBE (2009:6), transition was cited as a pressure point and this was attributed to learner inability in LOLT and subject-overload. In citing LOLT, it was just attributed to learner inability. This research



was intended to discover where the learner inability is coming from, and where the missing gap in learner-transitioning is, especially between Grade 3 and 4.

The findings of DBE (2009:6) also cited teacher-quality as being questionable because the teachers were said to being unable to interpret the curriculum. These teachers are still teaching even though they are unable to recontextualise content and knowledge. This point is emphasised by Bernstein (1992:56) who stated that education is affected by the message sent, the carrier of these messages, what is being relayed, how it is being relayed, and the structures involved in relaying the intended message. Bernstein further states that people only relay what they know. In the case of teachers, they draw on their own social positioning and relate school knowledge and local knowledge to communicate with learners. Bernstein (1992:88) further criticised agents who only concern themselves with the pattern of what is written and said, instead of studying the structure of what makes conveying the message possible.

In the learning scenario, it is ironically evident that one can only teach as far as one understands something, not as per DoE requirements. In teaching, if there are weak interactions, then language learning is not achieved, and this is worsened when learning in second Language as LOLT. Thus, effective LOLT pedagogy has been cited as the stimulant to learning because this study has already highlighted that teachers' approaches affect interaction. If the approach is weak or not well received, then the learners will fail to adapt to engaging in relevant activities in the class. This failure to adapt means that learners fail to navigate knowledge with limited communication. That is why this study was not necessarily interested in "within child factors"; the study was interested in observing how teachers stimulate learning and how visible their strategies and content-delivery were. Findings in this study exposed teachers' approaches as being very restrictive in that there was scanty interaction, and the questions asked (if asked) were mostly of the closed type.

Furthermore, the aim of this study included exploring previous studies to determine whether the problem in transitioning still persists; and whether there have been any new findings. What the researcher found was that there was a definite difference between Grade 3 and Grade 4 teacher-pedagogy; Grade 3 teachers have a tendency of balancing visible and invisible pedagogy and they also employ a variety of interactive teaching strategies, but Grade 4 teachers were very formal and content-centred in their approach. For example, in the Foundation Phase, most learning is through play but when they move to Grade 4, learning becomes very formal, thus making the issue of transition a challenge.

The issue of transition is viewed differently by different researchers, hence for Perry *et al.* (2014: V1) transitioning in learning may be regarded as being dependent on certain stimuli because most researchers have the perception that there is usually discontinuity in learning or decelerations of previously well-done activities, like reading. This study has cited the pedagogy in LOLT as the stimulant to learning. The study explored the learning environment from Grade 3-4, and the question that arose regularly was how the learner navigates his way if he has limited language ability to match the requirements of different subject discourses, if the language used in Grade 4 is unfamiliar to the learner?

How then do the pedagogical practices of the teachers pave way for adaptation? The researcher argues that the reason other researchers maintain that transition is influenced by misbehaviour, is because when learners lack coping mechanisms, teachers misinterpret this as indiscipline during transition. Hence, when relationships seem unfamiliar to learners and if their desires cannot be linguistically communicated, they look for other avenues sometimes resulting in the behaviour, which is deemed as inappropriate in a learning environment. With reference to indiscipline, Cummins (2000:32) asserts that if the learners are unable to negotiate cultural discourses with critical insight, they become less autonomous and become isolated. Failure to adapt to available discourse gives rise to behavioural problems because if one feels disempowered within a language of communication, especially in a school set-up, then emotional instability is likely to be experienced. Hence, some researchers term this emotional instability as maladjustment.

This study in South Africa has proved that teacher LOLT pedagogy is the chief contributory factor to learner-transition challenges. Having witnessed a marked difference in approaches between Grade 3 and Grade 4 at English-medium schools where all learners start their Grade one in English LOLT. How can Grade 4 learners, with different learning styles, adapt to one teaching approach, especially from various teachers? The researcher maintains that Grade 4 learners are not ready for Grade 4 literacy challenges because, in addition to rigid teacher- approaches, there is a sudden leap in Grade 4 vocabulary usage in the various subjects. In the schools that were part of the study, the learners could respond to given questions in a minimal way; the conversations were too limited. What was apparent was the lack of innovative strategies that stimulate LOLT skills. The researcher's observation of lessons was viewed through visible and invisible pedagogy and within Bernstein's distributive rules of communication. The researcher's conclusion is that there were weak interactions observed in the Grade 4 lesson presentations.

Consequently, weak interactions may negatively shape relationships as learners' experiences are normally impacted by their relationships within each system. The relationships they have with the LOLT impacts on how they interact through the medium of instruction because the experience in the language of learning may not enable them to adapt in content subjects where LOLT is supposedly the vehicle to understanding and comprehending knowledge and information. The learners in this case at school level, transition from one environment and set of relationships, to another. In addition, transitioning from a play-based exploratory curriculum to a more formal curriculum may lead to adaptation challenges for the learner (Holas & Huston 2012:334; Perry *et al.* 2014: V1).

Most researchers have neglected exploring the factors that contribute to language issues but have placed a lot of emphasis on social behaviours, and sociocultural theory at the expense of interrogating teacher's practices, which may have possibly yielded interesting facts or disjunctures. The debate arises out of whether these learners are well-prepared before they move on to the next phase; and if they were well-prepared, to what extent would they be affected academically when challenged with social issues?

To answer this question, the researcher cited Midgley *et al.* (1989:22) and Eccles *et al.* (1993:34) who assert that the transitioning period from elementary school does not necessarily introduce a change in functioning if quality is maintained. Specifically, this study found that there is a disconnection in the quality of pedagogy between Grades 3 and 4.

One of the themes to emerge from my analysis of English LOLT and pedagogy was that Grade 4 teachers are not ready for facilitating the individual Grade 4 children but are ready to lecture to for a crowd of Grade 4s. Hence, the researcher agrees with the assertion of Barber and Mourshed (2012:63) who maintain that the excellence of an education system could not exist without quality teachers. The findings suggest that teacher-readiness is a strong motivational factor during learner-transition. Also, the Grade 4 teachers have the perception that what the Grade 3 teachers taught is good enough to continue learning, hence the lessons are mostly based on simple decoding and are highly teacher-centred.

The researcher also found out that the discontinuity of a familiar teaching approach (where the child moves from an LOLT interactive and motivational environment to a strong framing and strong classification environment i.e. a less interactive environment) results in having a negative impact academically on learners. The Grade 4 teachers need to know that

language is not a private cognitive affair, but that it must be socially constructed within a community of practice.

The participants all concurred that learner-transition is a challenge in South Africa and they are baffled as to why in their schools there is early immersion of English LOLT.

Transition from the ecological-theoretical angle, recognises the contributions of the learner as being a product of being influenced by social contexts. The teaching in Grade 4 was context- disengaged, while in Grade 3 it was context-embedded. It was also observed that Grade 4 teachers were treating the learners according to chronological age instead of academic developmental level, which deprived the learners of a shared understanding. Hence, it was observed in two class most learners kept asking the teacher what to do. In another class, learners seemed very lost and this was evidenced by the spelling mistakes that the researcher observed when the learners where doing corrective work.

According to MacIver (1990:17), many changes do affect a learner's psychological adjustment, especially their self-esteem and motivation, and these changes lead to a decline in the quality of life. Although studies like that of MacIver have cited psychological and emotional factors as challenges within learner-transition as being primary in causing a drop in academic achievement, the researcher suggests that the lack of effective communication between teachers and learners is the major obstacle in transition.

On the other hand, if one does not adapt to the linguistic culture of the general population, one may end up feeling inferior and isolated; hence, some researchers attribute emotions of inferiority to behavioural problems. The problem may be discovered in the language of learning and teaching since language is regarded as a tool for thinking (Vygotsky, 1978:35). In support of this assertion, Howie (2008:17) cited inadequate communicative ability in LOLT between teachers and learners. Therefore, if a learner does not develop language communicative skills early in life, then the learner is devoid of academic language tools this resulting in communication, behavioural, emotional, and social problems, considering that behaviour is a situation-dependent attribute influenced by various factors in the environment.

What may be viewed as maladjustment is the failure to adapt? This sometimes means learners are inclined to act, think and behave in a certain way as they have done in the foundation phase; but now in Grade 4, they have to adapt to new situations which is mostly

challenging. Understandably, the previous knowledge will affect assimilation of new knowledge, thus this study investigated what transition issues can be traced to language and linguistic issues, especially when a learner is moving from one context to another. Schwerdt and West (2011:3) and Parker & Neuharth-Pritchett (2009:20) assert that the learner's wellbeing, emotions, physical state, attitude, and ability are also put to test. Moreover, Grade 4 signals a shift in the depth of the medium of instruction - a shift from the "comfort zone" of Grade 3 where language was simple, and teachers provided all the support in the learning context. This should have prepared learners and teachers for teaching-learning processes in Grade 4.

The rationale for using language as a lens in transition issues is that the second or third language of instruction may lead to a lack of understanding of content since the learner rarely uses the language of instruction as general form of communication, thereby resulting in the language of instruction becoming marginalised by learners. This is because, teaching in a second or third language causes a break in communication between the teacher and the learner presumably because the teachers who teach in English as LOLT could be 2nd or 3rd language speakers of English thus there is a disconnection between teacher pedagogical practices and learners ways of understanding.

So far, researchers argue that language is a crucial element of communication that both teacher and learner require to develop knowledge, skills and values; therefore, it is crucial that both teacher and learner acquire communication skills within discourses by using LOLT to develop in accordance with perceived gaps. Hoadley (2012:193) states that the nature of the relationship between academic performance and transition is far from being conclusive because studies do not exactly specify *why* and by *how* much language affects performance. It is important to note that learners can only access subject-content through language and other symbols in the language of learning. Therefore, if a learner is not exposed to the language of instruction in his/her daily life, then it means that he/she cannot interpret the dominant school language especially when writing and reading. This is the central issue affecting transitions, and ultimately performance.

## **6.8 CONCLUSIONS BASED ON FINDINGS**

Firstly, the study concludes that children struggle with the increased workload and it is a serious challenge for learners when it comes to meeting curricular demands per subjects as each teacher exerts his/her demands on the child.

Secondly, the DoE has “pushed” an overloaded curriculum into the hands of teachers who now struggle further to cover syllabus. Not only is there an increase in subject load, but the vocabulary becomes dense, thereby making transition a complicated process for learners and teachers alike. The DoE has to relook at this situation, which is worsening year-by-year.

Thirdly, teachers who are mainly non-native speakers of the LOLT language generally cannot accurately teach content when their ability in the language of delivery is not of standard quality, and this seems to be part of transitional barrier. In addition, Grade 4 teachers’ pedagogies show a trace of the old Christian National Education system, which gave teachers authority over learners. The Christian National Education system saw that teachers were sole custodians of knowledge; hence, the current Grade 4 teachers have centred the curriculum around themselves, instead of making the teaching-learning situations more learner-centred. This was compounded by the absence of interactive modelling. If the Grade 4 teachers had implemented interactive modelling it could have assisted the learners to first practice routines before working independently. As a result, Grade four learners lack the relevant tools that are applicable to the Grade 4-level.

A look at the findings indicate that very similar findings were noted for both foundation phase and intermediate phase (Grades 3-4) regarding teachers’ transitional barriers that they encounter with the learners. Teachers of both phases reported that there are transitional issues experienced, consistent with the cited literature; for example, Bellmore’s (2011:262) reasons for the decline in learners’ academic performance. It is evident that Grade three teachers do not know exactly how to prepare Grade 3’s towards transitioning into Grade 4 so that they (Grade 3 learners) are well-prepared to meet the new challenges.

The conclusions of the study indicate that there are different pedagogical approaches between Grade 3 and Grade 4 teachers. These differences in pedagogical orientations are a result of different teacher backgrounds and different teacher experiences. The LOLT proves to be a very critical factor during learning, hence Christie and Martin (2011:309), state that a connection exists between language and knowledge since what we know affects how we know. This is supported by Gee and Lou (2008:10), and Myburg *et al.* (n.d:573) who also observe that as the learners’ progress in the language of learning, communication becomes more complex, more abstract, more precise and specialised, and less and less like every day conversational language; especially the language of content areas like Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.

It is during the foundation years that the pillars of LOLT are laid for meeting the demands of comprehending academic content. If the language of learning foundations is not well laid, the learner experiences learning challenges.

## **6.9 IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS**

This study has an instrumental influence on pedagogics in general by indicating that teaching involves certain approaches that bring a semblance of equilibrium between English LOLT and subject content. Teaching is therefore a social activity that is done in social context. The most important outcome to emanate from this study is that academic performance is definitely affected by the nature and context of transition from Grades 3-4. Hence, the study offers suggestions, which are evidence-based for the need for interactive teaching methods in all subjects, including the need for learners to be treated as unique individuals during teaching-learning situations.

On the interactional level, there is need to adapt expectations in relationships, with either friends or teachers. Relationship with others underpin learners' ability in school because relationships may be instrumental to their success (or may be detrimental), because learners co-construct experiences when learning (Perry *et al.*, 2014:VI; & INTO 2008:6). Sometimes in the Foundation Phase the learners had a close relationship with the teacher because in Grade 1, they are taught by a single teacher, but suddenly in Grade 4 the learners must deal with about seven teachers using different pedagogical approaches and who have different expectations. The teachers' pedagogical practices are part of the process of interaction so if the approach is not well received, the learners fail to adapt. Transitioning is dependent on the quality of the interactional level because learners' competency can be affected by how strong (or weak) their relationships are; and this inevitably affects them when moving up phases.

As indicated earlier, the learner's relationship with teachers, learners, and parents may also be affected positively or negatively by the context in which they are part of (Gordon *et al.*, 2011:45).

The study suggests that the *stage environment fit theory* advocated by Eccles and Midgley (1989:23) which explains how "behaviour, motivation, and mental health are influenced by the fit between individuals' developing needs and the characteristics of the learning situations" can be an important factor during transition. Hence the theory implies that the

learner's desire to learn declines, if the educational context does not support their current developmental level. The learners cognitive and emotional growth may be stifled too if there is non-alignment between student learning needs and classroom support.

Findings in the study make clear for the need for interactive teaching strategies that are matched to learner developmental strategies that are matched with the learner level.

In relation to matching learner level, the findings for this study suggest that there is need to have control and experimental classes where by both Grade 3 and Grade 4 teachers engage the same approach give learners more time to work. There is need also to experiment on Grade teaching versus departmentalization/subject teaching. Findings from interviews indicated that some schools have reduced number of teachers at Grade 4 level, and they even reduced learner movement to reduce number of negative influences during transition. Looking at above cited implications this would suggest that Grade teaching or classroom teaching may be an important factor in dealing with transitional challenges.

### **6.9.1 Teacher-pedagogy**

Grade 4 teachers' pedagogy included fast pacing that does not favour all learners; it may favour children from middle-class backgrounds because they have an already elaborated code of language symbols. In the schools the researcher visited a greater percentage of the learners were from working-class environments. The teachers indicated that most of the children stay in the locations and are bussed daily to school while a smaller number were from the middle-class areas. The working-class children as cited by Betram (2012:167) fall behind on the pacing and instruction. Observations at this school unearthed that the type of Grade 4 teacher instruction mostly suited the middle-class children.

The findings of this study add to research on learner-transition that confirm that within-child-factors are at play during transitioning. Furthermore, there is a sound link between teacher pedagogy and the learning context. This may mean that teachers need to teach according to learner-readiness and learners' cognitive developmental levels because student characteristics are not homogenous in any grade; so too does teacher proficiency and background training.

Other schools in the study have begun to take measures at Grade 4 level. For example, School A has reduced the number of teachers who teach Grade 4s; and the teachers



instead are teaching at least three subjects meaning the number of teachers has significantly gone down from six to three. The interview responses indicated that the approach seems to be working in that there is a reduction in discipline problems, and an improvement in overcoming learners' academic challenges.

School B has introduced what they call extra lesson teaching at Grade 4 levels after school. This means the teachers and the learners stay behind so that teachers help them with problems in English LOLT and Mathematics. The interview showed that learners' work improved greatly in English and Mathematics; unfortunately, the learners underachieved in content subjects, where there were no extra lessons. This also implied that extra lessons during after-school hours can lead to improved results; and that others must follow suit.

### **6.9.2 Policy**

The current study is descriptive in nature, and therefore the current results may be used primarily to gain a better understanding of Grade 3 and Grade 4 teachers' practices and perceptions on factors affecting smooth transition. Specifically, this current study may call for policy change especially the rethinking of the introduction of many teachers at Grade 4 level. It may be imperative to start training Grade 3 and 4 teacher specialists, instead of highlighting issues of transition without acting on the problem. The researcher proposes that it may be useful for universities to introduce a module (part-time or full-time) on Grade 3 and 4 learner-transitions so that prospective teachers (and qualified ones) can be equipped with knowledge and skills to handle "transitioning" learners.

### **6.10 RECOMMENDATIONS DRAWN FROM THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY**

Although previous work had not specifically identified the Grade 4 teacher's increased pressure to cover syllabus, concerns about the drop in academic achievement have been addressed. Research has not specifically pinpointed the differences between Grade 3 and 4 pedagogical approaches as being the major causative factor during transition. Regarding teacher's pedagogical practices, Manditereza (2015:48) cautions that "the inadequacies in the pedagogic practices of teachers need to be acknowledged"; accordingly focus should be on improving how teachers practise in the classroom. The study discovered that teachers seem to interpret new concepts differently considering implications and findings on South Africa's curriculum journey in relation to their background practices. Therefore, teachers' pedagogy exhibits habits and attitudes from their previous training and understanding of the subject knowledge.

The study proves that insufficient attention has been paid to doing away with departmentalisation at Grade 4 level and remain with class-based teaching. It seems research has not considered the issue of introducing class-teaching or reducing the number of teachers at Grade 4 level, thus reducing the plethora of challenging factors like reshuffling classes annually. Remaining in same classes, and instead, let the subject-teacher come to the learners' venue, instead of having the children to move six times a day. The time they spend moving and settling down in their subject-classroom can be used more usefully.

The issue of transition has been studied for years but the challenges persist.

Therefore, this study decided to take a different approach instead of focusing on within-child-factors. Therefore, the study has stated from the beginning that there is a relationship between the language of learning and the practice of teaching. Language can be equated to an agent of communication, so if there is a disturbance or obstruction between the sender and receiver, then there will be a disequilibrium in the bi-directional context - within the individual, and in the learning relationship.

The findings of this study suggest that sound teacher-pedagogy is a strong driver for academic achievement. Although the study did not analyse tests comparatively to check on academic achievement, but the fact the Grade 4 learners kept asking the teachers what to do every time, led to confirming that English LOLT pedagogy was a major perceived influence since it could result in teachers' limited instruction abilities.

The lessons observed confirmed that teacher pedagogy is consequential to learning as was corroborated by the interviews results. However, the findings of this study do not imply that all Grade 3 teachers in South Africa are using a mixture of visible and invisible pedagogies, and that all Grade 4 teachers fail to consider learner-developmental level. However, from the lessons observed, the findings, which are limited to South Africa's ex-Model-C schools, show that there is early English LOLT immersion. Unfortunately, the nature of this study's data does not lead to the determination of the extent of the "fourth Grade slump" since the study did not access Grade 3 and 4 tests to draw a comparison. Lastly, it is suggested that although content is instrumental to learning, but within a discourse of early-school year learning, the teacher must adapt or simplify the curriculum to cater for the various aptitudes of the learners.

The study drew conclusions that Grade 3 teachers teach differently from Grade 4 teachers. This is because the Grade 3 teachers' activities which were observed imply that the teachers know more about the learners' abilities and had a "personal one-on-one academic relationship" with them in that lessons were presented to match learners' levels of development and not subject-content matching the grade level. Hence, high levels of participation were experienced in Grade 3 classes.

Conversely, in the Grade 4 classes, where there was strong framing and strong classification, lower levels of participation and performance were observed, resulting in either limited or short-term gains. Teachers must practise how to co-extend language lessons to assist learners who do not have help outside the school.

### **6.11 STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The following limitations and delimitations were anticipated and considered in the study.

The study was conducted in Bloemfontein, and hence may not be applicable to other areas of the Free State or in other provinces. Questionnaires, Interviews, and lesson observations were used to collect data and although they may have limited the expanse of the study, respondents gave relevant and exhaustive information. However, it was not possible to ascertain whether they were giving their honest opinions.

Strengths that were prominent in the study included the three-way process and triangulation of data, which produced results that are more credible. This was strengthened further with the study being spread over at least five schools and compared the two Grade streams to establish illuminating points.

### **6.12 CONTRIBUTIONS**

In summary, the study makes contributions theoretically, in addition to the provision of some directions for future research. This study has made three major contributions to literature on the differences between Grade 3 and Grade 4 teacher-pedagogy. The study did not focus on learner-deficit but on teacher-deficit factors. This study contributes immensely to the understanding of learner-transition versus teacher pedagogy in the LOLT, and whether the strategies are supportive or destructive.

This thesis contributes to the research base that explores the influence of English LOLT instruction for English second language learners. The results of this study will alert the DoE to investigate whether Grade 3 teachers plan poor quality tests resulting in learners' performance falling in Grade 4. It would be also interesting to investigate learner-transition results from the position of learners whose LOLT is their home language. This will give a different perspective to this study. The results will help in establishing the impact of power relationships in learning and may lead to facilitating social change in the classrooms. Teachers may be motivated to teach innovatively and differently, and hence reduce number of stressors in Grade 4 classes.

### **6.13 DIRECTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Possible areas for further investigation include whether teachers know how to structure English LOLT content, because from the findings most teachers are English second language speakers and some of them were even educated in their home language at college, which is different from the language they teach in. Future research into transition should also gainfully focus on the following question: At what point is LOLT pedagogy a barrier in learning and how best can we merge Grade 3 and Grade 4 teacher pedagogy?

Without further research using a comparative context study where there is a controlled Grade 4 class and an experimental Grade 4 class where there are transitional challenges, authentic results may be evasive. Also, the DoE needs to start improving the transition situation by verifying whether all Grade 3s are given credible tests and tasks that can influence significant progress.

### **6.14 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The objectives, which were set for the study, were met and all research questions answered. Many questions on the transition issue bothered me over the years. Firstly, what are the pedagogical needs of learners during the year of transitioning in Grade 4? Second, do the needs lie in the LOLT? Thirdly, how do the needs lie in the LOLT? The researcher discovered that at Grade 4 level we need not teach in accordance to Grade level but teach to meet individual learner developmental needs using different interactive learning styles to empower the learner especially when concerning communication in English LOLT.

The major challenge discovered in the lessons observed is that there is an unavoidable

change in the structure of social relationships from Grade teaching to subject teaching, thereby resulting in a change in communication. Therefore, the degree of adjustment is reliant on the similarities or differences between the Grade 3 and Grade 4 contexts. Consequently, this affects forms of consciousness. In this study, it was observed that there was a fundamental difference in teacher approach in Grade 3 and Grade 4. The study has also discovered that teaching and learning time is lost through adjustment. Moreover, the LOLT may be foreign to both the teachers and learners and this aspect consequently affects teacher effectiveness in knowledge impartation through the LOLT of the school.

In addition, English LOLT structures are mainly practised in Language lessons. Content subject teachers are only engrossed on their subject content at Grade 4 level. The LOLT ability influences learner performance, hence teachers need to re-evaluate their roles and strategies in content lessons and need to be reminded that every teacher is a language teacher, in addition to realising the inextricable importance of English as the global tool of opportunity. The teachers need to know that LOLT must not be divorced from content because children learn content through LOLT, which is English. Pinnock and Vijaykumar (2016:8) suggest that the teachers need to be trained (or to be retrained) in bilingualism and in the pedagogy for dealing with LOLT in content subjects when teaching English LOLT second language to learners. Likewise, Jordan (2011:3), Howie *et al.* (2008:9), Murasi (2014:5), and Kasanda and Smit (2015:45), emphasise language capability as both the means and end to educational accomplishment.

This means teachers need to know how language is used in schools for delivering the curriculum. From this study, considering the finding that there are incongruent pedagogical relationships between Grade 3 and 4 as per this study's analysis, it can be concluded that teacher-pedagogy is consequential to the acquisition of LOLT since classroom teaching articulates the bi-directional relationship of using language between the learners and the teachers. In this regard, one realises how power is distributed within the learning and teaching contexts where interactive teaching-learning situations should be the norm. Teachers in most cases are non-native English LOLT speakers and they may teach LOLT using the rules (and strategies) of their L1. Hence, teachers' levels of understanding English may therefore affect the type of knowledge they select, value and present. If children do not speak the language of education, then there is no authentic teaching and learning. The level of language proficiency can either limit or expand the content to be learnt because learning depends on language (Pinnock & Vijaykumar 2016:8).

Lastly, teachers and stakeholders need to know that it is the LOLT that is at the core of learning since it mediates between the learner and the environment and it acts as a facilitation tool, which enables the learner to understand and to decontextualize the learnt matter. Due to several key issues that stand out during Grades 3-4 transitioning. The child is immersed in an environment that consists of potential challenges between the language and the content therefore the teacher must mediate between the, LOLT and the child.

What the study concludes from the engaged framework is that as learner's transition from Grade 3-4, the strength of classification and framing on production of new knowledge within and between agencies changes, so does the basis of communication and the realisation rules. Whilst the Grade 3 environment and pedagogy is public property suddenly, in Grade 4, knowledge becomes private property and children work as private individuals. The children are compelled to learn within a set frame and accept the structure of the message system as it is. Whilst reviewed literature by Kitson (2011:10) advises that teachers must match content to learner developmental levels this study cautions that failure to align teacher pedagogies in English LOLT and failure to align the rules of pedagogic device to the concepts and framework of Grade 4 content results in insistent transitioning challenges.

Considering all the above concerns, this study suggests that Grade 4 educators need to advocate pedagogical practices that address the social justice perspective in learners who come from diverse and differing contexts because Bronfenbrenner's (1979:6) theory states that contexts are the portrayal of systems within social practices. Hence, when Grade 3 learners' transition to Grade 4, it means coming to terms with differences in knowledge-acquisition. The teachers in Grade 4 are generally failing to meet transition challenges pertaining to instructional practices in order to bring about a blending or congruence relevant to the child, context, and valued knowledge.

The findings were anticipated in advance because South Africa is one of the countries that follows departmentalisation in Grade 3. The researcher anticipated that the problem lies within the teachers - not the learners as is widely documented that child factors affect learners during transition. Therefore, of interest, is the factor that the teachers are also failing to transition in their pedagogical practices in order to meet the academic demands of individual learners. To add to the problem of transition, learners are being 'passed' to the next level resulting in the Grade 4 teacher being burdened to struggle with such a child who had not passed Grade 3 in the normal way. It was observed that teachers slavishly

teach according to the curriculum and follow the CAPS requirements to the letter. All these concerns require feedback from all stakeholders; and in the absence of a national examination at Grade 7 level, we would not know how much damage is being done.

In conclusion, this study prompts many questions concerning LOLT and learning. In Grade 4, there is a growing differentiation of knowledge perceived at a higher level. At the same time, the second language issue is raised on how universities can train teachers in bilingualism to engage learners in a new form of socialisation using the Language of learning and teaching in content subjects, which is mainly English. This study also considers how different subject teachers attend to the language of learning concerning content subjects? The study has brought out key factors as to what schools and teachers can do to help learners in English LOLT, especially those who are transitioning from Foundation Phase to Intermediate Phase, which can have a positive influence on the enacted curriculum in these grades.

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**ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER**

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**Faculty of Education**

30-Jan-2017

Dear Mrs Blandina Manditereza

**Ethics Clearance: THE INFLUENCE OF TEACHER PEDAGOGIES IN ENGLISH AS A LANGUAGE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING ON LEARNER TRANSITIONS FROM GRADES 3 TO 4 :A PEDAGOGICAL PERSPECTIVE**

Principal Investigator: Mrs Blandina Manditereza

Department: School of Education Studies (Bloemfontein Campus)

**APPLICATION APPROVED**

With reference to your application for ethical clearance with the Faculty of Education, I am pleased to inform you on behalf of the Ethics Board of the faculty that you have been granted ethical clearance for your research.

Your ethical clearance number, to be used in all correspondence is: **UFS-HSD2016/1525**

This ethical clearance number is valid for research conducted for one year from issuance. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension.

We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure we are kept up to date with your progress and any ethical implications that may arise.

Thank you for submitting this proposal for ethical clearance and we wish you every success with your research.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. ...', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

**APPLICATION TO DEPARTMENT**

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64 Du Plooy Crescent  
Fichardt Park  
Bloemfontein  
9301

17 November 2016

The Director: Strategic Planning, Policy and Research  
Room 319, 3rd floor  
Old CNA Building  
Charlotte Maxeke Street  
Bloemfontein,  
9300

Dear Ms Kitching

**PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH IN FREE STATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

I hereby request to do research in 7 schools in Bloemfontein, Free State Province. The focus of my research is on learner-transition between Grades 3 and 4. I intend to give teachers closed-ended questionnaires, followed by interviews and class observations.

As my focus will be on the teachers, I will not directly involve learners in my research. I would appreciate if permission could be granted to me to conduct this research in selected schools.

Yours sincerely



B. Manditereza

## DEPARTMENTAL PERMISSION

Enquiries: BM Kitching  
 Ref: Research Permission: B Manditreza  
 Tel. 051 404 9283 / 9221 / 082 454 1519  
 Email: [berthakitching@gmail.com](mailto:berthakitching@gmail.com) and [B.Kitching@edu.fs.gov.za](mailto:B.Kitching@edu.fs.gov.za)



Mrs B Manditreza  
 84 du Plooy Crescent  
 Fichardt Park  
 BLOEMFONTEIN, 9301

084 755 3368

## APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

1. This letter serves as an acknowledgement of receipt of your request to conduct research in the Free State Department of Education.

**Research Topic:** Influence of teachers pedagogies in English as language of learning and Teaching on learner transitions from grade 3 to 4: A pedagogical perspective.

**Schools:** [REDACTED] in Motheo District

**Target Population:** [REDACTED] Schools in Motheo District

2. **Period of research:** From the date of signature of this letter until 31 March 2017. Please note the department does not allow any research to be conducted during the fourth term (quarter) of the academic year nor during normal school hours.
3. Should you fall behind your schedule by three months to complete your research project in the approved period, you will need to apply for an extension.
4. The approval is subject to the following conditions:
  - 4.1 The collection of data should not interfere with the normal tuition time or teaching process.
  - 4.2 A bound copy of the research document or a CD, should be submitted to the Free State Department of Education, Room 319, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Old CNA Building, Charlotte Maxeke Street, Bloemfontein.
  - 4.3 You will be expected, on completion of your research study to make a presentation to the relevant stakeholders in the Department.
  - 4.4 The attached ethics documents must be adhered to in the discourse of your study in our department.
5. Please note that costs relating to all the conditions mentioned above are your own responsibility.

Yours sincerely

  
 DR JEM SEKOLANYANE  
 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

DATE: 13/01/2017

Enquiries: BM Kitching  
Ref: Notification of research: Manditreza B  
Tel. 051 404 9221 / 082 454 1519  
Email: [berthakitching@gmail.com](mailto:berthakitching@gmail.com) and [B.Kitching@fseducation.gov.za](mailto:B.Kitching@fseducation.gov.za)



The District Director  
Motheo District

Dear Mr Moloi

#### NOTIFICATION OF A RESEARCH PROJECT IN YOUR DISTRICT BY B MANDITREZA

1. The above mentioned candidate was granted permission to conduct research in your district as follows:

**Topic:** Influence of teachers' pedagogies in English as language of learning and teaching on learner transitions from grade 3 to 4: A pedagogical perspective.

**Schools involved:** [REDACTED]  
Schools in Motheo District

**Target Population:** 6 Teachers teaching Maths, English and Life Skills to grade 3 learners and 6 Teachers teaching Maths, English and Life Skills to grade 4 learners.

**Period:** From the date of signature of this letter until 31 March 2017. Please note the department does not allow any research to be conducted during the fourth term / academic quarter of the year nor during normal school hours.

2. **Research benefits:** The study will be of benefit to the primary school educator who teaches English LOLT at Grade 4 level. The study will highlight perennial transitional issues which affect learners and teachers. It will also expose whether there is weak pedagogical practices and policies that delimit teacher practices. The study will also direct researchers to contextualising language as being a challenging issue in learner transition.
3. Logistical procedures were met, in particular ethical considerations for conducting research in the Free State Department of Education.
4. The Strategic Planning, Policy and Research Directorate will make the necessary arrangements for the researcher to present the findings and recommendations to the relevant officials in your District.

Yours sincerely

  
DR JEM SEKOLANYANE  
CFO

DATE: 13/01/2017

RESEARCH APPLICATION MANDITREZA B NOTIFICATION 23 NOV 2016 EDITED

Strategic Planning, Research & Policy Directorate

Private Bag X20565, Bloemfontein, 9300 - Old CNA Building, Room 318, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Charlotte Mexeke Street, Bloemfontein

Tel: (051) 404 9283 / 9221 Fax: (086) 6678 678

**INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM**

---

64 Du Plooy Crescent  
Fichardt Park  
Bloemfontein  
9301

17 November 2016

Dear Principal

Re: Permission to conduct research at your school.

I am a PhD candidate at the University of the Free State and I do hereby seek permission to carry out my research using 2 Grade 3 and 2 Grade 4 educators and their learners at your school. The study seeks to investigate prevalent English LOLT pedagogical practices between Grades 3 and Grade 4 teachers, as well as the impact of the teaching methodology during learner-transition. The topic under study is entitled:

**THE INFLUENCE OF TEACHER PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES ON LEARNER-TRANSITIONS IN ENGLISH-MEDIUM CLASSROOMS FROM GRADES 3-4**

The researchers seek to observe at least 10 lessons in English and interview teachers as to why they select specific teaching approaches. Also, I seek permission to access learners' written work and textbooks. Furthermore, I intend to audio-tape the interviews purely for academic purposes. The interviews will be held outside learning time.

The following steps will be taken to ensure participant confidentiality.

Confidentiality and anonymity for all participants: All information will be treated with utmost confidentiality; all names will be withheld, and participants will be identified by pseudonyms in all publications.

*Confidentiality:* The supervisor, co-supervisor and I are the only people who will be allowed access to data and information which I will gather. All digitally collected data will be protected by passwords which I will keep and protect. *Anonymity:* All interactions and interviews with participant teachers will be held in the strictest of confidence. Please note participation is on a voluntary basis. Data collection will be spread over 6 months.

The goal of this study is to investigate, establish and possibly highlight issues of learner-transitions which are affected by the language of learning. I hope to bring to attention how learners can be assisted in transitions when they move up grades and how language knowledge can empower them in learning. Your participation as a school will go a long way in creating a literate nation.

If you may have any queries, concerns or even recommendations regarding my research, feel free to contact me, or alternatively my supervisor on the details which follow (Promoter Prof LP Louw University of the Free State (051 401 9281 or email [louwlp@ufs.ac.za](mailto:louwlp@ufs.ac.za) If you are willing to grant me your permission may you kindly sign the form provided below.

Yours sincerely

B Manditereza (Mrs)

Please sign the form below if you are willing to grant permission for me to conduct the research at your school. The signatory below grants permission for the abovementioned research to be carried out at your school site.

Principal

Date:

SCHOOL STAMP



**INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM TO TEACHERS**

---

Dear class teacher

Date:

Re: RE: Seeking permission to involve you as a participant in my research.

I am a Doctoral student at the University of the Free State and I do hereby seek permission to carry out my research with Grade 3, Grade 4 educators. The study seeks to observe Grades 3 and Grade 4 teachers in their day to day teaching in any subject taught as English LOLT and the impact of their teaching methodology on learner transition. The topic understudy is entitled: **THE INFLUENCE OF TEACHER PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES ON LEARNER TRANSITIONS IN ENGLISH MEDIUM CLASSROOMS FROM GRADES 3-4.**

I am interested in investigating challenges that affect learners as they transition Grades or as they move from Grade 3 to Grade 4. I want to explore why there is a sudden drop in academic achievement which is therefore punctuated by low marks and low Grades.

I would like to observe you as you teach as I want to establish the link between your pedagogical practices and how you translate text into knowledge. After lesson observation, I would like to interview you I want us to draw a link between your theoretical understanding and you class practice. I also request access to learners’ text books and written work.

You are promised that your identity will be withheld, and I will take measures to maintain confidentiality and anonymity.

I will be grateful to have you aboard but be advised that you are under no obligation to be a participant. You are encouraged to participate voluntarily, and should you not be happy along the way you are also freely allowed to withdraw from the study. Please sign consent form below if you willing to be involved in my study.

Yours Sincerely

B Manditereza.

I \_\_\_\_\_ (first name and surname)

Have read and understood the contents of this letter. I do hereby agree to participate in the study conducted by B. Manditereza and give her permission to use the information gathered from the study in conference proceedings, seminars and in articles in accredited journals. I understand that the information generated from this study may be published although real names are not published. I understand that participation is purely voluntary I can avoid questions I do not wish to answer. I grant permission to Blandina Manditereza to observe my pedagogical practices in my class. I give Blandina Manditereza permission to observe class proceedings in the classroom. I understand that all information will be confidential, and all my responses will be coded to maintain anonymity. All data collected will be stored in a locked cabinet or in a password-protected electronic document(s). None of the collected information will affect my employment and status at this school

I may withdraw from the study at any point in time. Should I decide to withdraw, the decision will and cannot result in the loss of my job, and all information linking me to the study will therefore be destroyed.

Signature.....

Date.....

**QUESTIONNAIRE TO TEACHERS**

---

Dear colleague

You are kindly requested to assist me in the pilot study of my PhD thesis: **THE INFLUENCE OF TEACHER PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES ON LEARNER-TRANSITIONS IN ENGLISH-MEDIUM CLASSROOMS FROM GRADES 3-4.**

Do not write your name. If you do not understand any question you are welcome to skip it.

Participant X      Tick where appropriate

Q 1. Gender

Male	
Female	

Q 2: State your age range

21-30	
31-40	
41-50	
51 and above	

Q 3. Which best describe your educational level

Master's in Education	
Bachelor's in education	
Bachelor of Technology	
Post Grad certificate in education	
Advanced certificate in Education	
Senior Primary Teaching Diploma	
Junior Primary Diploma	
Head of. Department	

Q 4. Where did you obtain your teaching qualifications?

University	
Teachers college	
In service Training	
Other	

Q 5. What language do you speak as home language?

English	
Afrikaans	
Sotho	
Zulu	
Tswana	
Sepedi	
Xhosa	
Tsonga	
Ndebele	
SiSwati	
Venda	
Other	

Q 6. What medium of instruction was used during your training as a teacher?

English	
Afrikaans	
Mother Tongue education	
Bilingual education	

Other write it:	
-----------------	--

Q 7. How many years of experience do you have teaching Grade 3?

Novice teacher	
1-5 years	
5-10 years	
10-15 years	
15-20 years	
25-30 years	
35 and above	

Q. 8 How many years of experience do you have teaching Grade 4?

Novice teacher	
1-5 years	
5-10 years	
10-15 years	
15-20 years	
25-30 years	
35 and above	

Q 9 ALL in all for how long have you been practicing as a classroom teacher?

Novice teacher	
1-5 years	
5-10 years	
10-15 years	
15-20 years	
25-30 years	
35 and above	

Q 10. Which subjects do you teach?

English	
Mathematics	
Life skills	
Afrikaans	
Social science	
Computers	
Natural Science and Technology	

**LESSON OBSERVATION SCHEDULE**

---

Teacher: .....

Time: .....

Lesson unit: .....

Subject: .....

Topic: .....

Tick the appropriate box

Type of pedagogy	Visible/ (strong framing /strong classification)		Invisible (weak framing and strong classification)	
Hierarchical rule	explicit		implicit	
Pacing	explicit		implicit	
Selection	explicit		implicit	
Criteria	explicit		implicit	

**OBSERVED LESSONS**

---

GRADE 3

**GRADE 3: TEACHER A: ENGLISH  
TOPIC: NOUNS**

**Teacher:** We want to learn again about nouns. Who can tell me what nouns are. There is a lot of things that can be nouns. Either you tell me how we know a noun? Or you can tell me what a noun is. Who can explain to me what a noun is. You can teach me what a noun you have to teach me is

**Learner:** 1: a noun is a thing

**Learner** 2. a noun is a place

**Learner** 3: a noun is a name

**Teacher:** Now you must give me a noun

**Learner:** Cape town B...

**Learner** 2: Bellevue

**Teacher:** okay good but now I want something else not name of place (It can be something you can feel something you can touch you can't tell me you can't see anything). Now I don't want a place, I don't want a country, I don't want a river, I want something else

**Learner:** A chair and a pen,) **Learner:** B teacher, teacher a desk

**Teacher:** we want to draw the nouns that we can touch or feel. Then make a list of nouns that we can't touch. Green Group: don't write yet am coming to you.

It seems the teacher has a group of slow learners, she goes to the group and ask the learners to explain what she said they must do, when she is convinced they know she moves around the whole class checking and confirming.

**TEACHER: LESSON B: GRADE 3 ENGLISH READING: THE CHEST WITH THE TOYS STORY**

**Teacher:** Take out your work books and let's open on page 19

(Teacher moves around checking whether learners have opened the books)

**Teacher:** Thabo and Tebogo follow instructions.... Class I am going to read for you whilst you listen.

[Teacher read the whole story whilst learners listened]

**Teacher:** who wants to read for us.

**Learner:** I am going to read ...the learner read the story fluently but at a much slower pace.

**Teacher:** Now I want everyone to read 1.2...3

[The whole class read the story]

**Teacher:** Let us try to answer the questions in the story Next one. Number 1 let's read where did the learners go (Remember I need a short easy sentence).

**Learner:** They went to the garden...

**Teacher:** (repeats answer after learner then probes further and said): What else could I have said if I didn't I like to say garden)

**Learner:** (learner They went to play outside. Then teacher gives them the answer again the learners went to play outside.

**Teacher:** Now I want a word from the story that can have the same meaning with something else what does it mean a word with the same meaning.

**Learner:** It means like look and see

(Teacher teaching and going up and down rows)

**Teacher:** ok, yes now can someone Give me a word that I can use instead of small I mean a similar word to small. Yes, Tebogo

**Learner:** fat

**Learner:** me. me..., teacher small doesn't mean fat, small is tiny

**Teacher** Yes Karabo but next time don't just shout answers

**Teacher:** Give the word in the story that means the opposite you must take the word in the story. I would like the opposite of close

**Learner:** open

**Teacher:** correct

**Teacher:** I would like the opposite of empty

**Learner:** full

**Teacher:** Now take your writing books and write the activity, you must write and finish (teacher moves round to see what the learners are doing, suddenly she stops by Tshepho).  
**Teacher:** Tshepho where did the learners in the story go give me the place not what they did?)  
**Tshepho:** outside  
**Teacher:** I want exactly where they went. Class who can help Tshepho?  
**Learner:** They went to the garden.  
**Teacher:** good, that's correct.  
**Teacher** moved round correcting learners, marking and confirming correct responses.

### **GRADE 3 TEACHER C: MATHEMATICS -SUBTRACTION AND BREAKING UP NUMBERS**

**Teacher:** take out your Mathematics readers and writing books. Today we want to do break up activity, I expect everyone to respect our visitor by doing as I say.  
**Teacher:** Look at the board everybody we want to work out  $47+58$  then break this number  
**Teacher:** break this number, break up means decompose  
We want to break up and add, no new words introduced, our sum is  $47+58$   
**Teacher:** Break up to  $40+50$ , Then  $7+8$ , Then  $90+15$  Put totals on all  
Steps in examination. That is what I want to see  
**Teacher:** Can you tell me what we should do if we have  $38 + 28$   
**Pupil:** we break up  $30+20$  then add  $8$  and  $8$   
**Teacher:** Correct. Where do we write answer?  
**Pupil:** There maam (pointing) at the correct position  
(Teacher walks in rows checking whether learners are involved)  
Why do we write the answer?  
**Learner:** Because its correct  
**Teacher:** If you don't write the answer then you don't get the mark in tests  
In your tests, you must show all steps to *get a/* /marks. In our books lets write  $65+33$   
Break down put tens on their own and add units on their own then add. Indicate all steps.  
(In your groups I want you to work out  $1,2$ , and  $3$ . One of you must write down. Pupils were given work and teacher moved in rows correcting the work and discussing with pupils what must be done.)

### **GRADE 3 LESSON D: ENGLISH CONSONANTS AND VOWELS**

**Teacher:** Look up here everybody. Let's look at the board and read a and an after me  
**Learners:** a .... An  
**Teacher:** How to use an and a. Last week we were talking about vowel sentences  
I said the alphabet has two families. What are they  
**Learner:** A: a e i o u  
**Teacher:** I want the names not what it is  
**Learner:** B (vowels and consonants)  
**Teacher:** Yes, correct ...Right now tell me when we use a tell me do we use it with a consonant or vowel  
**Teacher:** example do we say. Last week I said the alphabet has two families' consonants and vowels, Between the two families when do we use a Do we use it in a vowel or consonant? Who can give me a sentence using a consonant word with a/ an  
**Teacher:** Can we say a apple  
[no response teacher changed approach]  
When do we use an? Ok tell me how many vowels we do have  
**Learner 1:** 3  
**Learner 2:** 4  
**Learner:**3 we have 5 teachers  
**Teacher** yes very good [a e i o u]. consonants begin with b c d f g h they do not begin a word with AEIOU]  
So, we use an on all vowels and a on consonants, so do I say a-dog /a class a mat, give me examples;  
**Learner:** Teacher a dog  
**Learner 2:** a flower  
**Learner 3:** a window  
**Learner 4:** a orange  
**Class:** no noooooo

**Teacher:** all words starting with a, e, i, o, u we say an / you see orange starts with o

**Teacher:** alright let's go to vowel sounds. What do I say? Do I see a/an ice-cream?

**Learner:** an ice cream

**Teacher:** give me examples

**Learner 1:** an egg

**Teacher:** yes, well done. somebody else

**Learner:** a book

**Teacher:** no, you can't say any to a word that does not begin with a e i o u

**Learner:** an umbrella

**Teacher:** very good. Now class I want you to write the work on the board for today I want you to work with a friend but do it quietly. (As learners started writing the teacher went around the class to see how they were doing. The teacher corrected learners' mistakes).

### **GRADE 3 TEACHER E: ENGLISH COMPREHENSION LESSON: STORY FIRE SAFETY**

**Teacher:** right class we want to read the words on the board. You read when I point. now we are going to clap and read and clapping to the sound...Our, family, brother, class started on phonic reading Clap and read

**Teacher:** Who will come on the board and write the word family

(everyone wanted to write the word family

Teacher selected one learner....

Pupil spelled correctly

**Teacher:** is it correct?

(and class affirmed explicit criteria good pacing)

learners: yes, mam

**Teacher:** well done, now Open your book go to page 20. Write this date 30january 2017.

Teacher making sure learners are doing the correct thing

The learners go to do the activity fire safety

**Teacher:** Do you know what to do? What picture must be number one, number two, Tell me picture number one. Write one sentence about each picture? Write what you see happening. (both strong and weak framing).

**Teacher** (Then teacher gives example): We are going to look at the pictures 1-4 and then put them in sequential order. What is happening in picture 1, picture 2, picture 3, picture 4

**Teacher:** Look at the pictures and write the sentences about the pictures. Any questions?

The students chorused a noo.

(Teacher was checking learners individual work and making immediate corrections). Teacher noticed a boy who was not writing and asked him why. The child said he was not sure of what to do, then the teacher re -explained to the whole class again. The teacher only left after the learner started writing).

### **GRADE 3 TEACHER F: MATHEMATICS: PLACE VALUE**

**Teacher:** Turn to page 10. We want to do place value

**Learners:** but teacher we already done it last week

**Teacher:** I said page 10 and stop that. Now Tell me how many circles do you see?

**Learners:** which one maam?

**Teacher:** I mean how many circles of 9

How many blocks do they make of 10 they are?

How many blocks of 4 4

**Learner:** madam what must we do

**Teacher:** I am coming to you

**Learner 2:**me too madam

**Learner 3:** me too madam

**Teacher:** wanted to teach break up of place value

19, 43, 69, 54 and 35.

Teacher strategies very poor. (Teacher tried attending to individual learners)

### **GRADE 3 TEACHER G: LIFE SKILLS: WHAT I LIKE TO DO**

**Teacher:** What did you do over the weekend...?

**Learner 1:** I played

**Learner 2:** I slept

**Learner 3:** I studied

**Learner 4:** I was playing soccer with my friends

**Teacher:** Now I want you to write about what you see in the pictures that are in your books. From there I want you to write about what you like to do. (The learners did their given work but were free to write what excites them). Secondly, they had to do a mind map. Teacher We are going to do a mind map who can tell me what's a mind map....

**Learner:** it's a road to go

**Learner:** Pupil it's a road

**Teacher:** It's a drawn diagram to put some ideas down. I want you to work in your groups. (teacher drew a mind map and gave two example) There you go I want you to finish writing the mind map. (as the class was writing the teacher was going around checking and asking why on the mind map they haven't written)

### **GRADE 3 TEACHER H: TEACHING TENSES**

**Teacher:** boys and girls you remember tenses, we talked about 3tenses

**Learners:** we talked about 3 tenses which are they

**Learner 1:** answer, simple present,

**Teacher:** Yes, well done next

**Learner 2:** future tense

**Teacher:** very good and last

**Learner 3:** and past tense

**Teacher:** What is simple present tense E.g. I am hungry simple present tense: What is past tense? Teacher gives examples and highlights. The teacher asked the learners to work in pairs. Exactly what should be done and how it should be done.

### **GRADE 3 TEACHER I: TOPIC: PHONICS**

LI LIII LLIIII the lion leaf log

From these pictures tell me which one has a name that begins with LIII. Give me words with the LI sound

**Learner A:** Picture lion

**Teacher:** well done next...

**Learner 2** Picture: Leaf

**Teacher:** well done next

**Learner 3:** log

**Teacher:** Discuss with your friend more LL words.

(The learners could bring in L sounding words).

**Teacher: well done.** Now I want us to write in our books. The following:

l-i-o-n- l-e-a-f, l-o-g,

**Teacher:** Let's write our Letter LIIII IIIIIII in the air and sound it

Let's write in our books

As the learners were working the teacher moved to check what they were doing

**Teacher:** Tshiamo why are you not writing?

**Learner:** sorry maam

**Teacher:** Let's write the letter LI in our book in a line then write the words leaf, log, lion

Write capital L and small l in a line when you write space with your finger

Then write a line of word lion, a line of word leaf, and a line of word log then draw the lion, the leaf and log.

### **GRADE 3 TEACHER J: TOPIC: TELLING TIME**

**Teacher:** take out your Mathematics clocks which I gave you yesterday during home time. Show me your clock; hold it up.



**Teacher:** Mpho where is your clock?

**Learner:** I can't find it in my b...a...g.

**Teacher:** OK come get another one, next time keep everything in your folder.

Class look at me ...yaaa Our clock has numbers 1 to 12 if we hold it up straight like this (demonstrating) which number Now tell me which number goes to the top of the clock. which number faces the top of my page.

**Learner:** 12

**Teacher:** yes .... Now class I want your clock to face you so make it face now. what happens if my short hand is on 3 and my long hand is on 6? When learners delayed responding the teacher. The teacher then sends by Bluetooth a picture of the clock on the large TV screen in their class.

**Teacher:** Now, everybody looks at my big clock. Let's start from 1 o'clock to 12 o'clock.

**Class:** 1 o'clock, 2 o'clock, 3 o'clock, 4 o'clock, 5 o'clock, 6 o'clock, 7 o'clock, 8 o'clock, 9 o'clock, 10 o'clock, 11 o'clock, 12 o'clock.

**Teacher:** ok well done. Now tell me if my short hand is on 3 and my long hand is on 6 what's the time?

**Learner:** half past 3

**Teacher:** good, what happens if my long hand is on 3 and my short hand is on 5. yes, Lameck?

**Learner:** quarter past 5

**Teacher:** well done

**Teacher:** what happens if my long hand is on the 9 and my short hand on 7. what time is it yes, Maya?

**Learner:** quarter to 7

**Teacher:** no, Maya my long hand is on 9 my short hand is in here in between a 7 and 8

**Learner:** quarter to 8

**Teacher:** yes, well done

**Teacher:** Alison, don't pull out the chair if you talk now and fool around now you stay in for break. You better concentrate (to naughty learner)

**Teacher:** what do we count in in between clock numbers

**Class:** 5. 10.15,20,25,30,35,40,45,50,55,60

**Teacher:** well done class now if we count in between numbers on the clock in minutes how many minutes will it be from 1 on the clock to four o'clock.

yes, Jolene

**Learner:** 20 minutes

**Teacher:** yes, well done. Now I want you to colour your clock the one that you are holding. Colour it in 4 quarters. From 12 to 3, 3 to 6, then 6 to 9 and 9 to 12 again. Everybody let's start working now if you do not finish you stay in for break.

**Teacher:** Hey Tshepho stop what you are doing or else you stay in for break. Maya what is wrong there. You guys better do my work.

## **GRADE 4 LESSON OBSERVATIONS**

### **GRADE 4 TEACHER A: ENGLISH: COMPREHENSION AND NOUNS**

**Teacher:** boys and girl let's take our department books page 23

Look at that insect, an insect has 3 body parts

Look at the words that sounds the same

An insect has 3 body parts, a head,

If only we look at the first verse a head thorax and abdomen

Are all the parts we see?

Which words sound the same?

Look at the words which sound the same,

Ok Now let's turn to page 24

What is a noun? we said if it's a noun we see it we touch it we feel it.

**Teacher:** Rodrick what is an abstract noun...

**Rodrick:** You feel it with your heart.

**Teacher:** Let's identify nouns from the following questions. On page 24 I would like you to learn about animals and insects. Underline animals and insects. Join the environmental club, underline club.

**Teacher:** in the next sentence, what is happening during this holiday? What is happening this

holiday? what is the noun there?

**Learners:** chanted happening

**Teacher:** no and kids chanted holiday. Now in the sentence a special insect sporting trip. Trip is a noun. Let's go to page 25, Lets complete the questions. Question number one what trip were the Grade 4 learners invited on Go to the blue line and write: A special insect sporting insect trip is planned for the April school holiday...write on the first line

The next question is the pink one.... Wednesday 6 April write the comma after Wednesday so you write Wednesday comma 6 April. Then the next one what must the learners bring with them

**Learners:** Pens, notebook, camera, sunhat, Lunch and a drink.

**Teacher:** The next question is the pink one: On what day and at what time will the trip start?

Wednesday 6April

**Teacher:** On the blue line the question is What does it mean: Don't disturb the bugs ... write that start with capital letter and end with full stop? write in your own words. Remember you have only 20minutes to finish. (Teacher went to sit down and kept on reminding learners to tone down the noise and also hurry up).

#### **GRADE 4 TEACHER B: MATHEMATICS: SUBTRACTION STORY SUMS AND BREAKING**

**Teacher:** Today we are doing subtraction story sums and breaking so Our sum is 684-237

Okay when we subtract we start from the end then if the top number is small we borrow from the number on the right.

684-237(concept of borrowing) one learner kept saying they do not understand teacher worked sum thrice...I suspect the learner could not comprehend the story sums.

**Teacher:** doing a lot of talking. Assessment criteria very clear

**Teacher:** when I say, what is the difference I am saying subtract.

(teacher: snaps you are no longer in Grade 3) don't behave like Grade 3s You must be able to read on your own. To look on the board. I want you to read you on your own. I don't want to repeat myself.

**Learner 1:** (in a fearful manner) Teacher I don't know what to do?

**Teacher:** because you are not listening

**Learner 2:** me too I don't know what to do

Class: Murmuring all of us teacher

(A lot of learners asked what they must do. Learners looked confused pacing too fast for learners)

**Teacher:** I just said answer number 3 and 4.

**Learner:** Ek veerstan teacher meaning I don't understand). (vernacular) .

**Teacher:** teacher in (vernacular Sotho) I am going to do number 3 for you but I am not going to give you the answer.

**Learner:** What is the difference between the parcels delivered Wednesday between week 1 and 2

**Teacher:** Difference means minus

**Learner 2:** Is it possible to say 4 minus 7?

If it's not possible what are we supposed to do.

**Learner:** What is the difference between the parcels delivered Wednesday between week 1 and 2

**Teacher:** (in Sesotho) Look in your book to get it. Stop asking all these questions you are not kids anymore. I want my work done and finished remember the bell rings now.

The learners did not finish the work and most learners could not work out the story subtraction sums). As the children were working the teacher was busy at her table.

#### **GRADE 4: TEACHER C: MATHEMATICS: CAPACITY**

**Teacher:** What is capacity?

**Learner:** volume

**Teacher:** at home go and look for things which show capacity

look for things in your mother's grocery cupboards that show capacity

I want things that holds liquid. What did we say are examples of things that hold capacity?

**Learner:** Things like tins and bottles.

**Teacher:** What are examples in your house that contain liquid

**Learner:** Cooking oil,

**Learner:** water,

**Learner:** tomato sauce

**Learner:** milk

**Teacher:** Good it seems you know about capacity, then go and write about capacity at home bring containers that hold capacity.

**Teacher:** For now, work on your yesterday's corrections you only have 20minutes to do that.

#### **GRADE 4 TEACHER D: TWO FROGS**

Teacher: We are going to take readers and we are going to read on page 12 the story of THE TWO FROGS. Remember it's our assessment so after reading the story you are going to tell me about the two frogs for example you will say once upon a time there were two frogs.... Now let's read once more teacher asker about 10 different learners to read and they were all able to read. Teacher corrected pronunciations here and there.

#### **GRADE 4 TEACHER E: ENGLISH SPELLING LESSON**

Learners were given these spellings the previous day to spell. On the day of the visit the class was revising the spellings.

**Beautiful, industrialist, beauty, character, classroom, island, character, Maharaja, plural, plot, rejoice, setting, environment, imaginary, village, violent, beautiful, beauty, nature, noisy, countable, country, Indian**  
pacing too fast no feedback.

**Teacher:** take out your Spelling assessment books

**Learners:** which ones

Teacher asked learners to take out assessment books. The learners seemed not sure of what to do. the teacher had to go to the learners herself and collected the book

**Teacher:** write corrections in your spelling books. Open your spelling books you must have them for spelling books

**Teacher:** stop saying I don't know what to do you are not foundation phase anymore; you can't forget your book you must have your books.

**Teacher:** what must I do? Learners going to the teacher to tell her that they don't understand. I said take out your Platinum English home language and correct the spellings you failed. Write one word 3 times. Extract from pupils' book: Enevironmet, caterer, counteble, aberigenel, beyoutfall, cantry, emegenery, beyouty (this is how one boy wrote his spelling). The learners were just asked to copy the correct spelling and write it 3times. The learners just took their books and started copying the correct spellings.

#### **GRADE 4: TEACHER. F: LESSONS SOCIAL SCIENCE LANDMARKS**

**Teacher:** Let us take out our social science books and open on page 1.

**Learner:** Maam I don't have a book

**Teacher:** Am not going to take excuse anymore

You are not in Grade 3 anymore; you have to be in charge of your things

Why are you standing up everyone must have their own pencil? I said open your homework please Let's go to page one. write down one word that has to do with sea, Storm, signals and rain. Then page 2 (teacher going over homework and checking whether learners have the correct materials) pencils text books and are on the correct page]. Next, I want you to Write down the words that describe the sea.

**Learner:**(PP storm, signals,) learners marking their own work

**Teacher:** which sentence did you choose why? How can we do find out about the local area, you are guys are not Grade 3s anymore you don't leave your stuff lying around you move with your stuff everywhere. You guys are wasting time every day is the same thing.

Teacher gave ways of getting information and explaining the words one by one with pupil interaction.

**Teacher:** In your exercise books, I want you to do the work on page 91. Pg 91 Now you see photograph 1,2,3 .... Now look at these 3 pictures. explain what's happening at those pictures. These 3 photographs show how the city of Johannesburg changed from the past to the present.

Environment, caterer, counteble, aberigenel, beyoutfall, cantry, emegenery, beyouty [this is how one boy wrote the spellings].

## GRADE 4 LESSON G: COMPREHENSION STORY READING: THE BOY WHO CRIED WOLF

**Teacher:** Today we want to look at a folktale. Before we start write in your book the date is the tenth of February write it on both pages.

**Teacher:** stop that singing please, who is singing. We are going to read that story you are going to read it aloud when I am down. folktales were stories that people told each other were passed on long ago. they were not written down. they spread as people retold them a folktale gives the message through. we are going to read about the folktale.

Teacher reads the story for learners whilst they all listened. Now let's read as a class

(learners read as a class (from their reading they are reading well most of them)

Teacher you see the new words in our story guys I want to know from you what they mean. I will give you the words one by one: First AMUSED

**Learner:** entertainment

**Teacher:** yes, correct

**Teacher:** scolded:

**Learner:** to be shouted at

**Teacher:** yes, correct

**Teacher:** grinned

**Learner 1:** grind

**Learner 2:** I don't know

**Teacher:** okay it means grinned when you pleased with your self

Next word is grumble:

**Learner:** complain

**Teacher:** yes, very good

**Teacher:** Next word sobbed

**Teacher:** hey class stop fidgeting who is making noise can I have an answer please?

**Learner:** crying

**Teacher:** okay now find the words following words in the crossword and circle them (grumble, frightened, grinned, scolded, amused) look for the words in the word block. let me show you the example. teacher showed the learners an example. You just going to colour the words found. Use different colours. Firstly, lets revise the questions:

**Teacher:** why did the boy cry wolf?

**Learner:** because there was a wolf

## GRADE 4 LESSONS: H ENGLISH READING LESSON: BEN'S BIRTHDAY

**Teacher:** Let's go to story reading, Story reading Bens birthday

Before we read we want to learn new words

First our new word extremely, who can tell me what it means

**Learner:** it means happy

**Teacher:** Give me a sentence using extremely

**Learner:** I ...I... am extremely happy.

**Teacher:** Extremely means excited about tomorrow (wrong definition from teacher).

**Teacher:** Who has had a birthday party before?

**Learner:** me teacher

**Teacher:** tell us about it? [ creating co extended meaning]

**Learner:** I got a big cake and I had a party and my friends came.

**Teacher:** Good that was really nice: Ok now let's read the story from beginning to end. If you have questions, ask me. Then we can talk about the story.

(Class reading whilst teacher checking on children reading)

Teacher listening and checking as children are reading

Comprehension reading

**Teacher:** Thomas why are you not reading? (teacher bends down and try to coerce the child.

**Teacher:** ok now let's stop reading the bell has gone it's time for Mathematics.

## GRADE 4 LESSON: I: MATHEMATICS LESSON: PLACE VALUE

**Teacher:** today we want to practice subtraction. To subtract means to take away or the difference of a sum. Remember the small number does not take away the big number. Teacher writes on the

board the sum.  
Th H T U  
1 8 9 5  
- 3 8 9  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Teacher:** Keisha read the sum

**Learner:** one thousand eight hundred and ninety-five minus three hundred and eighty-nine.

**Teacher:** OK So look at the board everybody. I am going to subtract coming from the units. I say 5 minus 9 .it can't because 5 is smaller than 9 then I borrow from 9 under the tens and. I borrow one ten and 9 becomes 8 tens. (TR cancels 9 and put 8 under tens) Then my new units are 15 then I subtract 9 and the answer is ....

**Learners:** 6.

**Teacher:** Good then I go to the tens and subtract 8 tens minus 8 tens what is the answer

**Class:** 0

**Teacher:** Ok I go to the hundreds and say 8hundreds minus 7 I get one. Then I go to thousands and say I thousand take away nothing and it remains 1. My answer is 1106.

**Teacher:** Now I want you to write this sum in your book 2684 -789.Remember to put the value of the sum if its hundreds put it under hundreds. (The learners wrote in their book the sum). When revising, most children could not get it right.

**Teacher:** what's wrong? Don't you understand. Let's work it together.

Th H T U  
2 6 8 4  
-7 8 9

Teacher demonstrated working out the sum.4 – 9 it can't we borrow 1 ten from 8 then 8tens remains as 7 Tens and 4 units becomes 14 units because we borrowed I ten or ten units. Then 14 minus 9 gives us 5. From there we now say 7 Tens -minus 8 tens. It can't we borrow 1 from 6 hundred and we are left with 5 hundred. We now 17 minus 8 and the answer is 9, now we go to the Hundreds and say 5hundred minus 7 it can't. So, we borrow 1 from 2 thousand and give to 5 to make it 15. We therefore say 15minus 7 we get 8. Then we say 1 thousand minus nothing it remains 1. So, our answer will be 1 8 9 6.

Now I want you to work alone, Do this sum: 3478-699.

**Teacher:** Lesego why are you not writing

**Learner 1:** what must I do?

**Teacher:** I want my work done fast, now the bell is going to ring now,

#### **GRADE 4: TEACHER J: COMPREHENSION: THE LITTLE TURTLE**

**Teacher:** Take out your department books and let's go to page 19 Let us read the poem. I am going to read while you listen. (teacher read the poem twice. Anyone with a question (all kids were quite.)

**Teacher:** Lets read quietly when you are done you answer the questions in your book and answer in full. Write neatly. Remember the bell will ring now so better hurry up). (ALL learners read quietly one wonders whether they could all read, or they were just staring. Some already began by writing the teacher did not stop them.

**Learner:** Teacher Kamo is not reading.

**Teacher:** Hey stop that the bell is going to ring now. Kamo read and do your work. You must finish up. (Anyway, the bell rang, and the learners were still writing).

**GRADE 3 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

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1. When Grade 2s come to you, will they be ready for Grade 3? Do they struggle to adapt to Grade 3 work?
2. Explain whether it's true that learner's achievement drops after transitioning into Grade 4,
3. What challenges (if any) are exhibited in the Language of Learning and Teaching? If there are challenges how do you deal with the challenges?
4. What challenges do you notice in this school? What other factors can you cite that are related to this issue?
5. What differences are there between Grade 3 work and Grade 4 work that you think may affect learners once in Grade 4?
6. Can we say the language of learning and teaching is the major challenge during transitioning?
7. Do you think teachers' strategies contribute to learner failure?
8. Do you teach language skills in your subject like spelling, sentence construction, and punctuation?
9. What can you recommend as a solution to overcome challenges in learner transitioning?

**GRADE 4 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

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1. When Grade 2s come to you will they be ready for Grade 3. Do they struggle to adapt to Grade 3 work?
2. Explain whether it's true that learner's achievement drops after transitioning into Grade 4,
3. What challenges (if any) are exhibited in the Language of Learning and Teaching. If there are challenges How do you deal with the challenges?
4. What challenges do you notice in this school? /what other factors can you cite that are related to this issue
5. what differences are there between Grade 3 work and Grade 4 work that you think may affect learners once in Grade 4
6. Interviewer: Can we say the language of learning and teaching is the major influence during transitioning
7. Do you think teacher's strategies contribute to learner failure?
  - i. Do you teach language skills in your subject like spellings, sentences, punctuation?
8. What can you recommend as a solution to control challenges in learner transitioning?

## GRADE 3 INTERVIEWS SAMPLES

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### Interview A

**Interviewer:** When Grade 2s come to you will they be ready for Grade 3. Do they struggle to adapt to Grade 3 work?

**Teacher A:** Sometimes you meet learners who are not ready for Grade 3. School readiness is important.

**Interviewer:** From your experience do learners acquire sufficient LOLT skills when they leave Grade 2 coming to you in Grade 3.

**Teacher A:** Sometimes it's not language of learning skills in English but the challenge is in Maths, marks go down in Maths. not in Language

**Interviewer:** What challenges (if any) are exhibited in the Language of Learning and Teaching.

**Teacher A:** spelling challenges our learners suffer with spelling challenges

**Interviewer:** Do you agree that learners are moving to Grade 4 without having acquired the necessary foundation skills?

**Teacher A:** Learners fail when they get to Grade 4...but remember learners are individuals That's an adage, it's always the case that they underperform in Grade 4. Sometimes parents force learners to be put in the next Grade because they don't want their learner to stay behind. But again, Sometimes the learners go to the next level not ready

**Interviewer:** what differences are there between Grade 3 work and Grade 4 work that you think may affect learners once in Grade 4

**Teacher: A.** Teacher pupil relationship and how teachers treat the Grade 4s like they are now old to be on their own.

**Interviewer:** Do you think teacher strategies are affecting learners when they transition

**Teacher A:** I think teacher strategies can affect learners during transition definitely.

**Interviewer:** Do you teach language skills in other subjects beside English subject for example like spellings, sentences, punctuation?

**Teacher A:** I do not teach language skills I use the language but not so intense

**Interviewer:** How do learners progress to Grade 3/ 4? What measure do you use?

**Teacher A:** in the baseline assessment

**Interviewer:** Any recommendations

**Teacher A:** You must change your teaching technique teachers must look at their technique if it's not working they must change it because some learners may prefer visual objects

### Interview B

**Interviewer:** When Grade 2s come to you will they be ready for Grade 3. Do they struggle to adapt to Grade 3 work?

**Teacher B:** When they come to us they are not ready for Grade 3 because during term one they will always drop a bit in marks and they pick up again. They are usually very slow term one.so term one is based on revision of Grade two week.in our school the problem of LOLT is mostly pronounced in newcomers who did not start Grade one here. Sometimes we do, personally for us Grade 3s we have a bad year group and good year group, and sometimes they have Behaviour problems.

**Interviewer:** From your experience do learners acquire sufficient LOLT skills when they leave Grade 2 coming to you in Grade 3

**Teacher B:** Term one is mostly recap of Grade 3 work. What we are only properly teaching is cursive.so you will see term one their marks drop down and sometimes term 2 again then we have term 3 and 4 that is when you can tell who is where and what this is all the recap of Grade 2 work. term one is mostly recap of Grade two work. Remember the holiday is too long.

**Interviewer:** What challenges (if any) are exhibited in the Language of Learning and Teaching. If there are challenges How do you deal with the challenges?

**Teacher B:** Just some spelling errors but oral and writing it's not a problem.

**Interviewer:** Do you agree that learners are moving to Grade 4 without having acquired the necessary foundation skills?

**Teacher B:** I think Grade 4 they are turning ten, in Grade 5 turning 11. i think learners are lacking in readiness, it's a readiness. the learners battle with instructions. They are at a crucial point of no longer being a baby like in Grade one and two.at the same time they are not old enough to adapt to



the demands of Grade 4. The maturity hasn't adapted but the attitude is saying I am 4 learners.

**Interviewer:** what differences are there between Grade 3 work and Grade 4 work that you think may affect learners once in Grade 4

**Teacher B:** I think Grade 4 teachers do not bond with learners like us Grade 3 teachers and that relationship between teacher and learner is very crucial to pupil learning. Teacher approach also greatly impacts. Another aspect is that terminology increases in Grade 3, so a few falls behind. So, in Term 1 we revise Grade 2 core elements,

**Interviewer:** Do you think teacher strategies are affecting learners when they transition

**Teacher B:** Teacher approach 100% can affect a learner that is why in some years we have good Grade 3s and bad Grade 3s. if you have a teacher who is not interested or who is not up to date with learner development stage it's a challenge. For example, I am a tactile learner, one may be an auditory, visual or kinetics learner, so your approach may either fail or pass learners. kids need enthusiasm, praise, concrete materials. learners adapt to who is giving them instructions and learners need visual learning, tactile learning, audio learning. Your strategies must appeal to all learners' senses. the teacher has to know what he is dealing with, understand the learners' background so that they understand why certain learners have certain problems

How much does LOLT contribute to student challenges during movement of Grades

**Teacher B.** The challenge in LOLT is seen in learners who were not at our school previously, either they will be learning in English for the first time or their previous schools English wasn't as high as our school's language. Those learners usually fail. Some learners might fight terminology as a problem especially if there are learners from other schools entering Grade 3 at our school. Their understanding is often sometime times lower than those produced by our Grade 2s.

**Interviewer:** How do learners progress to Grade 3/ 4? What measure do you use?

**Teacher B:** Baseline assessment

**Interviewer:** Do you teach language skills in other subjects beside English subject for example like spellings, sentences, punctuation? At Grade 3 level we give a lot of language activities in every subject. Remember we are the foundation to Grade 4.

**Interviewer:** Any Recommendations

**Teacher B:** Your strategies must appeal to all learners' senses. the teacher has to know what he is dealing with, understand the learners' background so that they understand why certain learners have certain problems

### Interview C

**Interviewer:** When Grade 2s come to you will they be ready for Grade 3. Do they struggle to adapt to Grade 3 work?

**Teacher C** The biggest challenge is when they come from a Sotho school in Grade2.we got a few of them who are struggling remember you get fast learners nd slow learners. I think learners struggle from Grade 2 to Grade 3 because it's also a huge gap. The higher the Grade the higher the gap. This gap is big in Grade 2 for example in mathematics they count up to 100 but suddenly I Grade 3 they have to count to a thousand it's kind of the step is big then in Grade 4 they go up to 10 000.

**Interviewer:** Explain whether it's true that learner's achievement drops after transitioning into Grade 4

**Teacher:** It is a reality they do drop in performance

**Interviewer:** From your experience do learners acquire sufficient LOLT skills when they leave Grade 2 coming to you in Grade 3.

**Teacher C:** Some learners yes, Vocabulary its more or less the same although in LOLT the sentences to be constructed. But in Grade 3 we start teaching them the nouns the basic language structures, started to teach them paragraphs. It's also quite difficult because the Grade 4 teachers sometimes have to teach our learners they go back to where we could have started.

**Interviewer:** What challenges (if any) are exhibited in the Language of Learning and Teaching. If there are challenges How do you deal with the challenges?

**Teacher C:** Learners coming from Sotho schools and failing to adapt to the LOLT of the school.

**Interviewer:** What challenges do you notice in this school? /what other factors can you cite that are related to this issue

**Teacher C:** This gap is big in Grade 2 for example in mathematics they count to 100 but suddenly I Grade 3 they have to count to a thousand it's kind of the step is big then in Grade 4 they go up to 10 000. It's a huge adjustment for the Grade 3 learners too.

**Interviewer:** what differences are there between Grade 3 work and Grade 4 work that you think

may affect learners once in Grade 4

**Teacher C:** On the other hand, the Grade 4s are faced with a huge challenge for example, no more one class but in Grade 4 many classes because they are changing classes per period. The absence of the comfort of having one teacher and now having 5 teachers. No more 3 periods to finish work. They struggle to adapt, learners coming from Sotho schools and failing to adapt to the LOLT of the school. Grade 3 syllabus: learners are confused with multimethod that they are exposed to. Difference between Grade 2 and Grade 3 sentence construction. Language fluency. We are working a little bit slower.

**Interviewer:** Can we say the language of learning and teaching is the major influence during transitioning?

**Teacher C:** I can't exactly blame our LOLT as the barrier causing learner problems here because at this school we have an early immersion approach however we have learners coming from Sotho schools and failing to adapt to the LOLT of the school. In Grade 2 we don't use textbook and we make extra worksheets.

**Interviewer:** Do you think teacher's strategies contribute to learner failure?

**Teacher C:** Yes, teachers must not be driven by content but by learner developmental level because what's the point of sticking to the set lesson instead of learner developmental level. We need to help that one failing. Passing learners who do not deserve to pass. The foundation must be revisited, and the syllabus checked because of a poor foundation in education. Sometimes teachers pass learners who do not deserve to pass just to avoid accountability.

**Interviewer:** Do you teach language skills in your subject like spellings, sentences, punctuation?

**Teacher C:** In Grade 3 no matter what subject one has to teach all language skills in order to maintain their LOLT ability in the language structures.

**Interviewer:** What can you recommend as a solution to control challenges in learner transitioning?

**Teacher C:** I think the department listen to class teachers because the teachers know the learners better. We are tired of the department passing the learners on age, the learners are passed because the marks are close e.g. 46% or 36% perhaps the learner is really struggling. The system is pushing learners if a learner is pushed in Grade 4 in the end of Grade 4 he can't repeat he is too old for the grade. He gets promoted again on age. In the intermediate phase he can't repeat although he is failing because he has already repeated so the learner is pushed. Teachers must not go on with the next thing if they didn't master the first thing. Teachers must not be driven by content but by learner developmental level because what's the point of sticking to the set lesson instead of learner developmental level. We need to help that one failing. Passing learners who do not deserve to pass. The foundation must be revisited, and the syllabus checked because of a poor foundation in education.

## Interview D

**Interviewer:** When learners come to you in Grade 3 will they be ready for the Grade?

**Teacher D:** Yes, learners struggle in Grade 4

**Interviewer:** Explain further ...

**Teacher D:** We have struggling learners in Grade 3 who manage to pass either on age cohort or they were passed because they once repeated ...and they are part of the failing Grade 4s. Secondly mmmm I don't wanna say this... giggling.

**Interviewer:** Let me ensure you that whatever we discuss is confidential it's just between you and me

**Interviewer:** Do you think teacher's strategies contribute to learner failure in Grade 4?

**Teacher D:** ...let me put it this way... let me say every teacher has a different approach, different mannerisms with the learner. If once a learner doesn't like a teacher, the learner won't like the subject the learner won't pick a good mark.

**Interviewer:** I saw you going to that boy who was not reading how did you pick i.e.

**Teacher D:** Just picked it when he came to Grade 3. He didn't speak and when I asked the neighbour who brings him after school he said he won't talk but now he is talking, and I involve him a lot.

**Interviewer:** Are the Grade 4 teachers aware that they are pushing the learners a little too early?

**Teacher D:** I don't know but in Grade 4 two three years ago, it seems there was an adjustment whereby teachers now teach Grade 4s almost 4 subjects per teacher unfortunately it was a huge adjustment on the teacher's part who has to learn to teach other subjects.

**Interviewer:** Did it improve results ...

**Teacher D:** I don't know maybe... 8yr old to early we are fast maturing them.

Teacher in the 4th term I take a step back and say ok what do you think you must do I do prepare them for Grade 4. I don't push them away. I call parents during term 4 and tell them look here your learner passed but has been struggling in Grade 3 so work on that. True that learners start failing?

## **Interview E**

**Interviewer:** When Grade 2s come to you will they be ready for Grade 3. Do they struggle to adapt to Grade 3 work?

**Teacher E:** Some of them are ready but most of them are not ready. Some of the learners fail but when the department comes they pass non-deserving learners. Some promoted on age. In some cases it's not even the issue of age cohort. They are on par with their peers. They can't read they can't count but they have never failed. I want to show you an example of one learner who is in this class and is said to have never failed (Teacher showed the researcher non-syllable spellings that didn't make sense at all). The learner seemed struggling from the work seen

**Interviewer:** Are you allowed to take this to the principal. Have you ever taken this issue to the HOD or principal that you have a learner who is assumed to have never failed but the learner does not fit in the Grade 3 class?

**Teacher E** (in a whisper): Yes, I have done several times. I was told the learner passed. but remember when a learner fails in your you are called by the principal you have to account what have you done, you have to show evidence and you say I have helped this learner with this thing, you are accountable so now some people don't want to be in trouble with the principal, so they just pass learners somehow to avoid accountability. They don't want to be in trouble with the principal. They just help the learner to say do this do this. From the department, sometimes even if you have evidence they just pass some learners. They also call the parent to give a permission for the learner to fail, if the parent says no the learner cannot fail. If the parent says yes, then the learner can fail.

**Interviewer:** I want to reassure you again that, whatever we discuss here is confidential, and you also have the right not to answer some questions. Researcher probed further, and this is what came out:

**Teacher E:** (in a more relaxed tone now) I also think the system is failing these learners. From your experience do learners acquire sufficient LOLT skills when they leave Grade 2 coming to you in Grade 3.

**Teacher E:** sometimes yes

What challenges (if any) are exhibited in the Language of Learning and Teaching. If there are challenges How do you deal with the challenges?

**Teacher E:** Our problems in language of learning and teaching is spellings we don't have that much of a problem in Language. What I think is it's the confusion among the three languages that they are exposed to but now in Grade 3 they are doing it from Grade 3, in addition to English, Sesotho and Afrikaans at the end of the day the learners are confusing the an aa of Afrikaans or Sesotho in Spellings.

**Interviewer:** Do you agree that learners are moving to Grade 4 without having acquired the necessary foundation skills?

**Teacher E:** Maybe it could be linked to tests given. Because my learners in class would fail my class work but excel in school tests for example in their English test you could find a question like arrange these pictures in order. Yet this is more of Grade one work. Learners seem to be given easy tests. The learners who are supposed to fail will definitely pass then it becomes somebody else's problem in Grade 4.

**Teacher E:** what differences are there between Grade 3 work and Grade 4 work that you think may affect learners once in Grade 4.

Again, in the foundation phase we have 4 learning areas with one teacher. So, I give them as much time to finish. But there they don't have that time everything is rushed. Work load increase, and unnecessary Teacher work load (paper work)

**Interviewer:** Do you think teacher strategies are affecting learners when they transition?

**Teacher E:** Obviously, I have mentioned the tests that are given, it's a bad strategy

How much does LOLT contribute to student challenges during movement of Grades How do learners progress to Grade 3/ 4? What measure do you use?

**Teacher E:** Baseline assessment

**Interviewer:** Do you teach language skills in other subjects beside English subject for example like spellings, sentences, punctuation?

**Teacher E:** Workload is too much hence our pace is faster. We don't have time to revise anything

we are hurrying with the syllabus. I can't say it's the gap, but I think it has to do with a learner

**Teacher E:** Introduction of learner movement at Grade 3 level, getting them ready for Grade transition whilst in Grade 3 to minimize the shock once they are in Grade 4.

### **Interview F**

**Interviewer:** When Grade 2s come to you will they be ready for Grade 3. Do they struggle to adapt to Grade 3 work?

**Teacher F:** Sometimes the learners go to the next level not ready and also teachers sometimes are not ready for learners

**Interviewers:** what do you mean

**Teacher F:** a teacher's strategies must match the current students it's not one method throughout. The reason why we have a challenge at Grade 4 is because we are using the same wrong method.

**Interviewer:** Explain whether it's true that learner's achievement drops after transitioning into Grade 4.

**Teacher F:** Sometimes not in language but marks go down in Maths not in Language per say. Learners fail when they get to Grade 4...but remember learners are individuals. Sometimes parents force learners because they don't want their learner to stay behind. Parents want to protect their ego by saying my daughter is in the next Grade.

**Interviewer:** What challenges (if any) are exhibited in the Language of Learning and Teaching. If there are challenges How do you deal with the challenges?

Obviously, learners will have difficulties here and there.

**Interviewer:** What challenges do you notice in this school? /what other factors can you cite that are related to this issue

**Teacher F:** Our learners struggle with spellings and Sometimes you meet learners who are not ready for Grade 3

**Interviewer:** what differences are there between Grade 3 work and Grade 4 work that you think may affect learners once in Grade 4

**Teacher F:** Teacher pupil relationship and a confusing environment whereby the learner now must deal with more than 4 adults per day with different teaching approaches, discipline approaches and even attitude approaches.

**Interviewer:** Can we say the language of learning and teaching is the major influence during transitioning

**Teacher F:** If the learners did not start with English medium of instruction especially and teacher pedagogy in the language can affect.

**Interviewer:** Do you think teacher's strategies contribute to learner failure?

**Teacher F:** I think teacher strategies can affect learners during transition how close you are and how effective you are. The way you handle learners and the way you approach their learning.

**Interviewer:** Do you teach language skills in your subject like spellings, sentences, punctuation?

**Teacher F:** does not teach language skills I use the language but not so intense

**Interviewer:** What can you recommend as a solution to control challenges in learner transitioning?

**Teacher F:** You must change your teaching techniques teachers must look at their technique if it's not working they must change it because some learners may prefer visual objects, some perform better if they hear, some if they see it and some if they feel it. Teachers are guilty of not appealing to students' senses.

### **Interview G**

**Interviewer:** When Grade 2s come to you will they be ready for Grade 3. Do they struggle to adapt to Grade 3 work?

**Teacher G:** I think they will have just finished Grade 2 work but school readiness after the long December break then suddenly they start counting up to 1000 from 100 in Grade 2 and they start reading longer passages we actually struggle during term 1.

**Interviewer:** Explain whether it's true that learner's achievement drops after transitioning into Grade 4

**Teacher G:** From my experience, I always see my good learners dropping in performance

**Interviewer:** What challenges (if any) are exhibited in the Language of Learning and Teaching. If there are challenges How do you deal with the challenges?

**Teacher G:** my opinion they supposed to start there at the foundation phase Grade 3s fail because they lack a foundation when they come to us as Grade 4 teachers they can't read. we struggle. The learners. must be taught at the foundation phase from the basics. teachers lack didactics.... they must take learners for didactical lessons to those learners with language barrier. Another language problem is that, what they do is they read without understanding and in assessment they tend to just start without a clue.

**Interviewer:** Do you think teacher strategies are affecting learners when they transition?

**Teacher G:** learners fail Grade 4 that's true because teachers lack the relevant didactics

**Interviewer:** How much does LOLT contribute to student challenges during movement of Grades

**Teacher G:** The learners affected by LOLT at Grade 4 level are those learners coming from the locations where they were learning in an African language then suddenly its English. Language of learning is affecting them because our learners come from the townships without knowledge of English language learning...the parents must prepare their learners maybe send them to advanced crèche so that the learners will know the language. The poor learners suffer because they can't even answer a simple question like what your name is they come from townships where their English vocabulary is limited.

**Interviewer:** what differences are there between Grade 3 work and Grade 4 work that you think may affect learners once in Grade 4

**Teacher G:** The teacher pupil relationship and the teaching approach that uses sensory experiences not abstract teaching. In Grade 3 we use various approaches to appeal to all the senses of the learner. Sometimes the learner maybe in Grade 3 but the learner cognitive development is not matching the Grade. You see I have seen my very good learners begin to drop when they are in Grade 4, so I decided last year. On my wall i have pasted charts with Grade 4 high frequent words for example, in Grade 4 they use the word adjective they have no clue here we talk of describing words on these charts for instance i have put instruction on how to start a sentence instead of I have put variety

**Interviewer:** Do you think teacher's strategies contribute to learner failure?

**Teacher G:** some teacher's strategies .... remember some teachers don't know that teaching is not their calling. learners are moving unnoticed... the problem is in the foundation.... teaching is a calling you must be passionate, and eye contact is critical. The Grade 4 teachers say our Grade 3s when in Grade 4 cannot interpret a question, I also ask m ex Grade 3 learners what they struggle with and I make notebooks

**Interviewer:** Do you teach language skills in your subject like spellings, sentences, punctuation?

**Teacher G:** I try to teach English and spellings only.

**Interviewer:** What can you recommend as a solution to control challenges in learner transitioning?

**Teacher G:** I think it will be best to do class teaching in Grade 4 to minimize failure. plus, there must be somebody to carry on with what the Grade 3 teachers has started. I think it will be best to do class teaching in Grade 4 to minimize failure. plus, there must be somebody to carry on with what the Grade 3 teachers has started. The teacher must enjoy the learners and the learners must enjoy the teacher.

The foundation phase teachers need to make a strong foundation you know if a house does not have a good foundation the house becomes unstable. In our school, we have devised a plan where we give extra lessons in mathematics and English this proved beneficial.

**GRADE 4 TEACHER-INTERVIEW SAMPLES**

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**Grade 4: Interview A**

**Interviewer:** Have you taught Grade 3 before?

**Teacher A:** no

**Teacher A:** learners don't fail Grade 4 only their marks go down during first term because Grade 4 is a lot of work to catch up with

**Interviewer:** Explain whether it's true that learner's achievement drops after transitioning into Grade 4

**Teacher A:** no... no not really at the beginning of the term there is a decrease in marks as compared to Grade 3s. there's a difference as compared to Grade 3,

**Interviewer:** What challenges do you notice in this school? /what other factors can you cite that are related to this issue?

**Teacher: A** the new environment, different teachers teaching them, the new environment, they still want to be in one class all and learners have to learn to adapt. In our schools although we have departmentalization the Grade fours were made to stay double periods in order to cater for their adaptation. Some teachers are treating Grade 4s as adults already there is no relationship. During the day, they change classes a lot of parents get worried, and the parents must not get worried because the decrease in marks happens first term only.

**Interviewer:** When learners come to you are they ready language wise to be in Grade 3

**Teacher A:** When the Grade 3s come as Grade 4s they are not really ready I wouldn't say they are ready because they are not used to the pressure in Grade 4,

**Interviewer.** Do you think teacher's strategies contribute to learner failure in Grade 4?

**Teacher A:** remember different teachers' different pedagogies.

**Interviewer:** Can we say the language of learning and teaching is the major influence during transitioning?

**Teacher A:** Not at this school, like I said its only in first term that marks drop and rise up again.

**Teacher A:** Recommendation.... The learners are exposed to a lot of changes and these changes are also introduced at a fast pace at the same time traumatizing some learners,

**Interviewer:** What language related problems do you notice

**Teacher A:** Most of them are usually able to read although spellings seem to be a challenge

**Interviewer:** Do you teach language skills in your subject like spellings, sentences, punctuation?

**Teacher A:** since I am an English teacher I must teach language skills

**Interview B**

**Interviewer:** Have you taught Grade 3 before?

**Teacher: B:** Yes, I have been in the foundation phase before

**Interviewer:** When learners come to you are they ready language wise to be in Grade 3

**Teacher: B** That's difficult to judge but generally they also need adjustment to the current Grade. Generally, they seem very confused because everything is moving fast even if they were ready you can't tell because changes in their status affect their ability.

**Interviewer:** Explain whether it's true that learner's achievement drops after transitioning into Grade 4

**Teacher B:** The marks go down; performance drops for some it drops only first term but for some it stays like that. I guess there is a drop-in performance.

**Interviewer:** What challenges do you notice in this school? /what other factors can you cite that are related to this issue

**Teacher B:** The Grade 4s are not responsible they leave their things everywhere and, on that side, they don't teach them they write answers for them... They lose their staff because on that side they do it for them, in Grade 3 they don't do what we do for example lots of homework, they also write a lot of homework, you must be very patient with them. When they come here it's reversed they must look after their own staff. The Grade 3s do things differently from Grade 4. When you give work, they keep coming to ask what they must do 'maam' this 'maam' that. There is a reverse of learnt habits. What the teachers were doing for them they do it by themselves. They must get them in this Behaviour of listening, Grade 4 is perfect for transition. Challenges in RSA: they are not responsible; they leave their staff everywhere. [One learner was confused between natural science

and technology and social science book and the teacher had to show them what they were supposed to use].

**Interviewer:** What language related problems do you notice

**Teacher B:** Lack of listening skills, they still struggle with the listening part and understanding part. Here we are not reading answers on the board I think the challenges that we experience in Grade 4 is spellings writing skills not good. Some learners are writing very slow according to Grade 3 pace. The big thing in language is spellings and grammar A learner can say "the boys is instead of are", in our school English is our Home

**Interviewer:** Can we say the language of learning and teaching is the major influence during transitioning?

**Teacher B:** I think yaa the language of learning can affect because the language of learning and teaching Grade 4 is up there, Grade 3 is down here. Language can influence, unfortunately the learners have limited vocabulary, English as a home language can impact on learner's academic performance because we treat English as first language Home language is very difficult.

Especially if the learner is coming from a school where English was not the language of learning.

**Interviewer.** Do you think teacher's strategies contribute to learner failure in Grade 4? I don't know but I think when they are in Grade 4 you must come to their level you have to teach them on a different level their level so that there is interaction between the teacher and the learner. You should not lecture but teach them and make sure they understand. You must come down so that they understand.

**Interviewer:** Do you teach language skills in your subject like spellings, sentences, punctuation?

**Teacher B:** there is some challenges in terms of time, so we don't have time to teach language skills after all with content subjects the pass mark is 40%

**Interviewer:** What can you recommend as a solution to control challenges in learner transitioning?

**Teacher B:** You should not lecture but teach them and make sure they understand. You must come down so that they understand. What we did yesterday we repeat again ...Can we blame LOLT ---- Vary your teaching approaches make sure you appeal to all learners, remember there are visual learners, audio and those we want to c concrete material.

**Interviewer:** Have you taught Grade 3 before?

**Interviewer:** Since you say when learners come to Grade 4 they are not ready do you think we should include Grade 4 as part of foundation phase:

**Teacher B:** We can't leave them as part of foundation phase because somewhere somehow, they must mature. We shouldn't leave it for too long.

**Interviewer:** Do you think teacher strategies affect learning?

**Teacher B:** Teacher strategies affect learners because learners have different learning approaches. The way that you are presenting will affect learners some will like it some will not because some learning by doing things, some learn by pictures learners suffer because of limited English vocabulary because at home they don't speak the school language. We are using. Spelling books, phonics and spelling books. It's difficult to say wat exactly fails Grade4

## Interview C

**Interviewer:** When learners come to you are they ready language wise to be in Grade 3

**Teacher C:** I wouldn't say so because, In the first term we work a little but slower in term 1 and we tell them everything, pick up your things, skip a line, write the date because they want to be told what to do they are not yet ready to be independent. Write the date...we notice the shock of our Grade 4s during transitioning.

**Interviewer:** Explain whether it's true that learner's achievement drops after transitioning into Grade 4.

**Teacher C:** I wouldn't say so because, In the first term we work a little but slower in term 1 and we tell them everything, pick up your things, skip a line, write the date because they want to be told what to do they are not yet ready to be independent. Write the date...we notice the shock of our Grade 4s during transitioning.

I think it's natural to struggle because it's a new environment. Sometimes we used to send our books to Grade 3 so that they see what is happening here with progression. There are challenges to be expected. It's just like you start a new job. Challenges experienced every progression there comes challenges that is a new learner. Starting a new group, it's almost like starting a new Grade you are always unsure. New, teachers its new learners in the classroom.

**Interviewer:** What challenges do you notice in this school?

**Teacher C:** In our school, we struggled with failure to write homework and Behaviour problems.

**Interviewer:** What language related problems do you notice

**Teacher C:** Spellings and writing skills

**Interviewer:** Can we say the language of learning and teaching is the major influence during transitioning

**Teacher C:** Sometimes have learners who can read but don't comprehend. Although our learners are good in LOLT we have a challenge in spellings. LOLT affects in a way because learners must get 50% in English home language if they don't get 50 in LOLT they fail but other subjects its 40%. Home language in other subjects they just need 40%. If they get less than 50. During Grade 4 transitioning, there is a definite drop in achievement. It seems natural in all phases that there is going to be a stage of elapsing. As long as finally you will cross the bridge.

**Interviewer:** What challenges do you notice in this school?

**Teacher C:** I think at this school we have done fairly well to cross that bridge, many of these learners learn in English as their first language yet it's not their mother tongue, If you don't understand the LOLT that you learn in you definitely struggle with all subjects not English only. Obviously if you don't comprehend it LOLT Can cause you to fail. We can't say it is the major challenge in our school. Although we sometimes have learners who can read but don't comprehend. Although our learners are good in LOLT we have a challenge in spellings. Struggling learners go for support teaching.

**Interviewer:** What language related problems do you notice

**Teacher C:** we have a challenge in spellings

If you don't understand the LOLT that you learn in you struggle with all subjects not English only. Obviously if you don't comprehend it LOLT Can cause you to fail. We can't say it is the major challenge in our school. Although we sometimes have learners who can read but don't comprehend. Although our learners are good in LOLT

## **Recommendations**

It's difficult to say but definitely Grade 3 teachers need to know what we are teaching first term, what challenges we usually face hence prepare the learners for Grade 4s and also Grade four teachers need to know what the Grade 3s are teaching. We need to prepare the Grade 4s for term 1. expectations so that the transition isn't such a huge shock academically, socially, emotionally. In Grade 4 they are expected to do cursive writing which takes a while to master so in this school. in the school we asked Grade 3 teachers so long introduce cursive writing for us before Grade 4 so that when they come the problem of slow writing won't be that bad although they are still a little bit slower. Another important factor is that learners have different learning styles, so teachers must not stop using the approaches that are appealing,  
(interviewer: how do you mean?)

**Teacher C:** the teachers must know their pupils, study their pupils, in Grade 4 it takes a while, because the teachers have the classes for a short time. Learners need concrete, visual, tactile and auditory approach. Teachers need to understand the academic accomplishments of 8 to 10-year olds. Remember learners have different forms of remembering. What the school did was to reduce movement of learners by making them have at least two subjects in one place. Because the movement affected a lot the noise loss of time, Adapting.

**Interviewer:** Do you teach language skills in your subject like spellings, sentences, punctuation?

**Teacher C:** not because in Natural science and Technology, we correct the errors and make we are not as strict as in English because the pass mark is 40%. It seems Grade 4 teachers are quickly pushing learners into formal book-based learning early. This could be the source of their Behaviour and learning problems.

**Interviewer:** Do you think teacher strategies affect learners during transitioning?

**Teacher C:** I think so yes. If you get teachers not committed who go through the motions. My goal is not to let a learner fail. Struggling learners are taken for support teaching in the school.

**Interviewer:** What can you recommend as a solution for dealing with learner transitioning?

**Interviewer:** recommendations:

**Teacher C:** It's difficult to say. I think definitely we need to know what is causing the plunge.

## **Interview D**

**Interviewer:** Have you taught Grade 3 before?



**Teacher D:** No am a n intermediate phase teacher

**Interviewer:** When learners come to you in Grade 4 are they ready language wise for Grade 4

**Teacher D:** These kids when they come they are not ready. Not at all, we struggle when it comes to reading and writing you struggle for a whole month it's going to be month end and they are still struggling. Before you teach them, you have to tell them what Geography is, what is natural science, and the school load is just too much. I don't know what to say?? We don't have that time, remember again the are used to their Grade 3 teachers.

**Interviewer:** Explain whether it's true that learner's achievement drops after transitioning into Grade 4

**Teacher D:** Obviously, the performance changes negatively because of a lot of issues. There are issues like having many teachers and some learners refuse to go to allocated teachers they are scared because of what the big learners tell them. The big learners tell them of the hard work with teacher X or that teacher X is very unfriendly. The learners don't realize that teacher X is not the one giving too much work but it's the system the prescribed work. WE struggle a lot in Grade 4.I am telling you. They take too much time to finish work. Sometimes I give them that class work as a homework just to finish. For example, in Maths they can take two periods for one period. Grade 4 its stressful for the teacher and the learner. The vocabulary is steep in Grade 4.

**Interviewer:** What challenges do you notice in this school? /what other factors can you cite that are related to this issue

**Teacher D:** They take too much time to finish work. Sometimes I give them that class work as a homework just to finish. For example, in Maths they can take two periods for one period. Grade 4 its stressful for the teacher and the learner. The vocabulary is too deep in Grade 4books compared to Grade 3. Again, we have learners who don't like male teachers in my case I had to get the learners who preferred the female teacher. In Grade 3 it's like they are drawing but now in Grade 4the subjects increase. From 4 subjects' Natural science and Technology, Life skills, Art, Mathematics, English It's like you have to train them. When it comes to more subjects to them it's a struggle we do not have that time. What language related problems do you notice

**Interviewer:** Can we say the language of learning and teaching is the major influence during transitioning?

**Teacher D:** I Think so because the vocabulary is too deep in Grade 4books compared to Grade 3. Everyday every subject they must learn new words.

**Interviewer:** Do you think teacher's strategies contribute to learner failure in Grade 4?

**Teacher D:** Yes, I think so because teachers approach subjects differently and also their relationship with learners is different.

What can you recommend as a solution to control challenges in learner transitioning?

**Teacher D:** I think the learners are exposed to too much work too early that's why they do not cope also we have a lot of administration work that

Do you teach language skills in your subject like spellings, sentences, punctuation?

**Teacher D:** We don't have time to specialize in other subjects, CAPS is too loaded, so we won't finish the syllabus if we take other work the language teacher deals with that.

## Interview E

**Interviewer:** When Grade 2s come to you will they be ready for Grade 3. Do they struggle to adapt to Grade 3 work?

**Teacher E:** Can't say they are ready because the learners struggle with the amount of work, also introduction of essays, and spellings, they can't spell the basic spellings right, heppy, .I think its interference of too many interacting languages(e.g. here at Fauna there is English AS a home language, An additional language and their very own home language.in Grade 3 they write one paragraph but in Grade 4 it will be two paragraphs (ten sentences) It's a big difference between Grade 3 and 4.the one who were doing well continue passing the ones who struggled are ready.

**Interviewer:** Have you taught Grade 3 before?

**Teacher E:** no am an intermediate phase teacher

**Interviewer:** When learners come to you are they ready language wise to be in Grade 3

**Teacher E:** Even if they were ready think of the effect of the long school holiday. I Can't say they are ready because the learners struggle with the amount of work, also introduction of essays, and spellings, they can't spell the basic spellings right, heppy, I think its interference of too many interacting languages (for example here at this school there is English as a home language, plus Afrikaans including their own additional language.in Grade 3 they write one paragraph but in Grade

4 it will be two paragraphs (ten sentences) It's a big difference between Grade 3 and 4. the one who were doing well continue passing the ones who struggled continue struggling but it's a definite case that learners' performance change.

**Interviewer:** Explain whether it's true that learner's achievement drops after transitioning into Grade 4.

**Teacher E:** yes, learners struggle with adapting.

**Interviewer:** What challenges (if any) are exhibited in the Language of Learning and Teaching.

**Teacher E:** spellings and understanding.

**Interviewer:** what differences are there between Grade 3 work and Grade 4 work that you think may affect learners once in Grade 4.

**Interviewer:** Can we say the language of learning and teaching is the major influence during transitioning.

**Teacher E:** Yes, partly because if they can't read in the home language they won't be able to read in the content subjects. In Grade 4 there is no time to read because of the influence of social media they do not read books like we did anymore luckily in our school we have the white board so it kind of gets their attention. In our school, we have the white board it's a bit better.

**Interviewer:** Do you think teacher's strategies contribute to learner failure in Grade 4?

**Teacher E:** the way you are going to present a lesson affect.

**Interviewer:** Do you teach language skills in your subject like spellings, sentences, punctuation?

**Teacher E:** in English subject, I do so.

**Interviewer:** What can you recommend as a solution to control challenges in learner transitioning?

**Teacher E:** Perhaps the department need to look at the issue of promoting non-deserving older learners. Grade 3 and 4 teachers need to collaborate sometimes I go back to what they did in Grade 3 so as to contain challenges.

## Interview F

**Interviewer:** Have you taught Grade 3 before?

**Teacher F:** No, I am a foundation phase teacher.

**Interviewer:** When learners come to you are they ready language wise to be in Grade 4.

**Teacher F:** Not the language per say like the medium of instruction here is English. They can read but mostly without understanding.

**Interviewer:** Explain whether it's true that learner's achievement drops after transitioning into Grade 4.

**Teacher F:** I know students fail when they go to Grade 4 I have always wondered why mm they fail

remember in Grade 4 the learners' workloads increases the load is a lot of them remember they move from 4 simple subjects.... now suddenly the learner has to do 6 subjects, learners do fail Grade 4 because the transition is this big.....like now they are still Grade 3s they are used to one teacher teaching them. it's only this year we decided we are going to give them all the subjects. The transition is big because the Grade 3s still think now they are Grade 3s when they come here they still think they are Grade 3s and when they come here there is a lot of adaptation that they have to do....

**Interviewer:** What challenges do you notice in this school? /what other factors can you cite that are related to this issue.

**Teacher F:** from Grade 3 to Grade 4 some of them may not cope with many work in Grade 4 there are many works. I wouldn't say the language, but I would say it's the load. but now there's many works. In Grade 4 we have more work remember its more subjects. I would say the amount of load. geography, history, natural science, new subjects, new vocabulary, here and there, new environment, new subject matter, new teachers....

**Interviewer:** What language related problems do you notice.

**Teacher F:** I wouldn't say the language, but I would say it's the load.

**Interviewer:** Can we say the language of learning and teaching is the major influence during transitioning.

**Interviewer:** Do you think teacher's strategies contribute to learner failure in Grade 4?

**Interviewer:** What can you recommend as a solution to control challenges in learner transitioning?

**Teacher F:** recommendation ...offering extra lessons for Maths and English .... there was an improvement... interview...so

**Interviewer:** if they taught Math and English it means its indirect agreement that the language needs more attention

**Teacher F:** mmmmmm maybe since it worked. Not really, the standard of Maths in Grade 4 is very difficult in Grade 4. The transition is a huge jump it's not balanced.

**Interviewer:** Do you teach language skills in your subject like spellings, sentences, punctuation?

**Teacher F:** yes, but in the lesson, it wasn't evident.

## **Interview G**

**Interviewer:** Have you taught Grade 3 before?

**Teacher G:** No only intermediate phase.

**Interviewer:** When learners come to you are they ready language wise to be in Grade 4.

**Teacher G:** Usually they can read but cannot comprehend because the vocabulary suddenly gets deeper. If I can give you a graph every year, the strong ones stay up there but only a few. every year I see when learners come to Grade 4 I am speaking about the average learner now if there is an average learner the strong ones they stay there but they are only a few.

**Interviewer:** Explain whether it's true that learner's achievement drops after transitioning into Grade 4.

**Teacher G:** learners do fail ...because from Grade 3 to Grade 4 it's a huge jump. I am teaching Grade 4 for 22 years now my experience is that it's a huge jump from Grade 3 to Grade 4. What we did last year with the fundamentals Mathematics English. What we did as Grade 4 teachers last year what we saw was there was a problem with Maths and English we came up with the plan to give extra lessons in English and Maths, surprisingly 95% of the learners who attended extra classes passed English and Maths they passed the subjects that were offered as extra lessons. Unfortunately, they failed subjects like Natural Science and Technology and social science. (for learners to pass Grade 4 they must pass English, Maths and Sesotho) let's talk about the average learner what happens to the average learner is during the first term. term 1 they usually have a small drop because it's all new to them and then after the first term as they get know me the teacher, and the get to know the different subjects and they get to know the way how things are done then they grasp it then they start performing well.

**Interviewer:** What challenges do you notice in this school? /what other factors can you cite that are related to this issue.

**Teacher G:** I was teaching for all the Grade 4s English and natural science. not only was it working not so well. you didn't know the learners so well. It was also bad for the discipline because e you were just finished with one class and then they have to pack up and change and for the Grade 3s it was very traumatic in the beginning to pack up and now where must we go and who is our teacher. who is our teacher.

the Grade 3s have one teacher in our school like in the past in the last end of last year the Grade 4s were changing classes going to different teachers so the different teachers were presenting different subjects.

**Interviewer:** What language related problems do you notice.

**Teacher G:** no, I don't think we can blame the language because English is the medium of instruction since from Grade R (the reception) class.

**Teacher G:** If the learners started in a Sotho school, they have challenges.

**Interviewer:** Can we say the language of learning and teaching is the major influence during transitioning.

**Teacher G:** I don't think we can blame the language, I think the parents must be very much involved.

**Interviewer:** Do you think teacher's strategies contribute to learner failure in Grade 4.

**Teacher G:** Teachers pedagogy does influence learning especially in language of teaching you have to know the medium of instruction and to explain the medium of instruction. Take for instance Grade 3 is one teachers' strategies whereas in Grade 4 its many strategies for one learner.

**Interviewer:** What can you recommend as a solution to control challenges in learner transitioning?

**Teacher G:** Now the it is much more beneficial for the learners to stay in Grade 4 to one teacher. they are staying with me all the Grade 4s are staying with the register teacher except Sesotho...what we had experienced is that it's better for the Grade 4s to stay with one teacher. you have a better picture. in Grade 3 its just numeracy, English, Afrikaans and life skills now in Grade 4 they have History, Geography, Natural science, English, Sotho, Physical education, for them it was hard on them this year we already experience much better discipline you get to know your learners better, you have a clearer picture of the learner quickly pick where the problem is with the learner learners reshuffled. but since last year the Grade 4s in my school came together and we decided to go back

to class teaching because learning time is lost through adjustment.

**Interviewer:** Do you teach language skills in your subject like spellings, sentences, punctuation?

**Teacher G:** Yes, I teach terminology in content subjects and I write it on the board, but I do not go deep in teaching, language skills in content because the pass mark is 40%. I do add on vocabulary they have to understand the vocabulary... in any subject you do language. you need to even specifically check the date.in every subject they do language there is different terminology.

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*THE INFLUENCE OF TEACHER-PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES ON LEARNER-TRANSITIONS IN ENGLISH-MEDIUM CLASSROOMS FROM GRADE 3 TO 4*

**BLANDINA MANDITEREZA**  
**UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE**

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

This certificate confirms that the above-mentioned student submitted her draft PhD thesis to me for language-editing, including the correcting of in-text referencing and the reference list. This was duly edited by me and sent back for revisions. I make no claim as to the accuracy of the research content. The text, as edited by me, is grammatically correct. After my language editing, the author has the option to accept or reject suggestions/changes prior to submission to the supervisor who will look for plagiarism and check the accuracy of the content.

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