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**ENHANCING IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIES TO EMPLOY ENGLISH AS
LoLT IN INTERMEDIATE PHASE BUFFALO CITY CLASSROOMS**

By

ZIKHONA NJOLI

Three Interrelated Publishable Articles

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF EDUCATION

With specialisation in subject education in Languages

In the

Department of Languages in Education

Faculty of Education

University of the Free State

Bloemfontein

November 2023

2016252112

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DECLARATION

I, Zikhona Njoli, hereby declare that this thesis entitled ***"ENHANCING IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIES TO EMPLOY ENGLISH AS LoLT IN INTERMEDIATE PHASE BUFFALO CITY CLASSROOMS"*** (three interrelated publishable articles) is my own work and all sources that have been used in this thesis are indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. I also further declare that this work has not been submitted previously in parts or entirely for examination for a degree at any institution.

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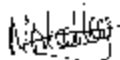
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1. The Almighty for giving me the strength and courage to undertake this study.
2. My supervisor, Dr AM Grobler, for her guidance and continued support throughout the study.
3. My family, for their love, patience and support during my studies.
4. My friends, for being my cheerleaders during my studies.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

BCM	Buffalo City Metro
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CS	code-switching
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
EFAL	English First Additional Language
ESL	English Second Language
FAL	First Additional Language
ICT	Information & Communication Technology
IP	Intermediate Phase
L1	first language
L2	second language
LoLT	language of learning and teaching
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
SGBs	School Governing Bodies

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Language plays a pivotal role in teacher education programs and the educational development of children. In the South African context, English is often used as a First Additional Language (FAL) and becomes the primary Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) from Grade 4 onwards, as outlined in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) by the Department of Basic Education (DBE, 2011). This transition poses significant challenges for both learners and educators.

The foundation of language acquisition in a learner's first language (L1) plays a crucial role in their ability to learn a second language (L2), such as English. According to Cummins' Interdependence Hypothesis (Cummins, 2000), skills developed in the first language can transfer to the second language, thereby aiding in the acquisition of L2. This hypothesis underscores the importance of a strong L1 foundation, as the cognitive and academic skills developed in L1 are instrumental in mastering L2.

Research by Lightbown and Spada (2013) highlights that successful L2 acquisition is significantly influenced by the learner's proficiency in their L1. Learners with a robust foundation in their native language tend to acquire the second language more efficiently because they can leverage their existing linguistic knowledge and cognitive skills. This perspective is supported by Pretorius and Spaul (2016), who emphasize that learners' reading skills in their home language (HL) serve as a critical basis for developing similar skills in their second language, English.

The adoption of English as the LoLT in Intermediate Phase (IP) classrooms, especially from Grade 4, introduces several multifaceted challenges. One of the primary hurdles is learners' difficulties in acquiring proficiency in English, which affects their overall academic performance (Nel & Muller, 2010). This challenge is compounded by the fact that English is used as the LoLT across various subjects, not just in language classes, adding to the complexity (Smith, 2019).

The South African educational landscape is unique due to its diverse socio-economic and linguistic context. Many learners come from homes where English is not the primary language spoken. In urban areas, languages such as IsiXhosa are predominantly used, while rural areas may feature a variety of regional languages (Spaull, 2022; Setati, 2020). This limited exposure to English outside the classroom restricts learners' opportunities to practice and improve their language skills (Heugh, 2020).

Moreover, learners from low-income backgrounds often face significant disadvantages in language learning. These disadvantages include limited access to educational resources such as textbooks and reading materials in English. According to Van der Berg et al. (2020), socio-economic status is a strong predictor of academic achievement, and students from poorer households are less likely to receive the support and resources necessary for effective language learning. Parents or guardians in low-income households may have limited educational backgrounds themselves, which constrains their ability to assist with homework or provide a language-rich environment at home (Taylor & Coetzee, 2013).

The educational environment in many South African schools is challenging. Issues such as overcrowded classrooms, limited resources, and underqualified teachers further exacerbate the situation (Maseko, 2021). Schools, especially those in disadvantaged areas, often face severe resource shortages. Spaull (2019) notes that many schools lack basic educational materials, such as textbooks and supplementary reading materials, which are critical for language learning. Moreover, overcrowded classrooms further exacerbate the problem, making it difficult for teachers to provide individualized attention and support to learners struggling with English (Muchiri, 2009).

Teachers often struggle to provide sufficient language exposure and practice opportunities within the confines of a standard 35-minute lesson, as stipulated by CAPS (DBE, 2011). This minimal exposure is insufficient for effective language acquisition, as learners need both quality and quantity of exposure to the language (Cummins, 2019). Moreover, the pressure to complete the curriculum within a stipulated time frame, often accelerated by district education authorities, leaves little room for teachers to focus on language acquisition and practice (Gathumbi, 2013;

Kanga'hi & Indoshi, 2012). This rush through the curriculum can impede effective learning and comprehension. Furthermore, the linguistic and cultural diversity in South African classrooms can pose significant challenges. Each classroom may have students with varying levels of English proficiency and different home languages, complicating the teaching process. Makalela (2019) highlights that teachers need to be adept at managing this diversity and creating inclusive learning environments that cater to all students.

Teachers may also lack proficiency in English, which affects their ability to teach the language effectively. Consequently, an Intermediate Phase educator must possess specialized proficiency in English, although this criterion may not consistently be met. As CAPS outlines, the prescribed standard for learners within the Intermediate Phase necessitates attaining a high level of competence in their additional language. This proficiency is designed to prepare them adequately for advanced education or entrance into the workforce (DBE, 2011:12). The stringent requirement for English proficiency in the Intermediate Phase can have a profound impact on learners' attitudes. According to Dagenais et al. (2020), when learners struggle to meet language proficiency standards, it can lead to frustration and anxiety, negatively affecting their motivation and engagement with the language.

This is particularly true for learners from non-English-speaking backgrounds who may feel overwhelmed by the dual challenge of learning a new language while also using it to learn other subjects. Moreover, learners' self-esteem and confidence can be adversely affected when they perceive themselves as less capable compared to their peers who are more proficient in English (Choi & Lee, 2019). This disparity can create a negative attitude towards English, which is seen as a barrier rather than a tool for learning. As a result, learners may develop resistance or apathy towards English language instruction, which can hinder their overall academic progress.

In addition, socio-cultural factors such as learners' attitudes towards English can hinder their progress. Many students view English as difficult and are reluctant to engage with it, stemming from their limited linguistic competence (Usó-Juan & Martínez-Flor, 2021). This negative attitude further impedes active participation in classroom activities, which is crucial for language development. Moreover, learners' attitudes towards English and its perceived value, also influence language learning.

Learners who do not see the relevance of English in their daily lives may lack motivation to engage with the language (Macedo, 2019).

Given these challenges, it is essential to explore effective strategies that can help teachers navigate the complexities of using English as the LoLT. Strategies such as culturally responsive teaching, increased language exposure, and the use of bilingual resources can potentially mitigate some of these issues (Gay, 2018; Makalela, 2019). Furthermore, professional development programs focused on enhancing teachers' proficiency in English and their pedagogical skills are crucial (Kuzborska, 2021).

Given this background, the present study explores effective strategies for mitigating the challenges of using English FAL as the LoLT within IP classrooms in Buffalo City, South Africa. It also seeks to recommend effective strategies to overcome these challenges, ensuring that learners receive the support they need to succeed academically.

1.2. OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1

This chapter provides the background information and an introduction to the study. This section sets the stage for the study, outlining the importance and relevance of the research. It introduces the context of the study, focusing on the implementation of English as a First Additional Language (FAL) in the Intermediate Phase within Buffalo City classrooms. It also provides historical and contextual background, including current educational policies and practices such as the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). Moreover, it highlights the problem statement by identifying the specific challenges faced by educators and learners in using English as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT).

Chapter 2

This chapter provides an overview of the chapter and recaps the context and importance of the study. It will further unpack the study's research question, aim and objectives in article format. Moreover, it clearly articulates the aims and objectives derived from the research questions. Summarizes key literature related to the research

questions, highlighting how it supports the study's aims and objectives. It further describes the theoretical underpinnings of the study and their relevance to the research questions. It also explains the research design and methods in detail, including data collection and analysis procedures. Lastly, it presents and discusses the key findings from the research, integrating them with existing literature and summarizes the main points of the chapter and provides a transition to the final chapter.

Chapter 3

This chapter summarises the findings and reflect on the research study. It recaps the main findings from Chapter 2 and discusses their significance. It also explores the practical implications for teachers, learners, and policymakers, and suggests areas for future research. And lastly, it offers a personal reflection on the research journey, including challenges encountered and insights gained.

CHAPTER 2

ARTICLES

2.1 ARTICLE 1

Identification of challenges facing teachers in using English as a First Additional Language in Intermediate Phase classrooms in Buffalo City, South Africa

ABSTRACT

With its array of eleven official languages, including English, Afrikaans, IsiXhosa, IsiZulu, IsiNdebele, Sesotho, Setswana, Sepedi, TshiVenda, and Xitsonga, South Africa stands as a nation characterized by diversity and multilingualism. Despite the official recognition of these languages, it is essential to note that only the Foundation Phase classroom, covering Grades R to 3, incorporates using nine African languages for instructional and learning purposes. In contrast, from Grade 4 onward through the tertiary education level, English takes precedence as the primary Language of learners primarily speak African languages gives rise to a set of distinctive challenges for Intermediate Phase teachers. It is important to note that learners proficient in English or Afrikaans as their native vernacular can pursue their education in these languages from early childhood through the post-secondary level.

This article comprehensively explores the myriad challenges Intermediate Phase (IP) English teachers face within the educational landscape of Buffalo City Metro (BCM). Data utilized in this research emanates from a combination of teacher interviews and classroom observations. The study focuses on six primary schools within the BCM circuit where English functions as a First Additional Language (FAL) and the primary Language of Learning and Teaching from Grade 4 onward. To structure the data, study questions are employed, forming the basis for category construction using an interview template analysis technique. The research outcomes are then conveyed through tables, thematic analysis, and themes and categories derived from the interview questions. The research findings highlight many challenges teachers in the Intermediate Phase classrooms face when implementing English as a First Additional Language (FAL) as the Language of Learning and Teaching.

Keywords: English First Additional Language (FAL), classrooms, Intermediate Phase teachers, Language of teaching and learning (LoLT), Second Language (L2), English as a Second Language (ESL).

INTRODUCTION

Educators play a pivotal role in facilitating the multilingual classroom environment, where all learners actively participate in instructional sessions, regardless of their native languages and English as the primary instructional medium (Nel and Muller, 2010). Consequently, educators must embrace a shared pedagogical philosophy and a substantial knowledge base concerning the education of English language learners. When the beliefs of both educators and learners align, it fosters an environment conducive to enhanced learning outcomes (Riley, 2009).

Additionally, educators must possess proficiency across diverse domains, including second language acquisition, competency in both the native language and English, understanding of socio-cultural factors influencing learning, effective pedagogy for first and second language instruction, informal assessment methods, and strategies for interacting with culturally and linguistically diverse families and communities (Kuzborska, 2011). These encompass expertise in second language acquisition, competency in both the native language and English, understanding of socio-cultural factors influencing learning, proficiency in effective pedagogy for both first and second language instruction, adeptness in informal assessment methods for tracking progress, particularly in language and literacy development, and competence in strategies for effectively interacting with culturally and linguistically diverse families and communities.

English as a Second Language (ESL) refers to the use or study of English by speakers with different native languages. The term "second language" in this context highlights that English is not the primary language spoken by the learners in their everyday lives. Instead, it is an additional language learned after their native language(s), primarily for educational, professional, or social reasons (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). The acquisition of ESL involves developing proficiency in the four key language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This process is influenced by various factors, including the learners' age, motivation, the amount of exposure to English, and the methods used for instruction. According to Krashen (2020), effective ESL acquisition hinges on providing learners with ample comprehensible input—language input that learners can understand, which is slightly above their current proficiency level.

Many scholars acknowledge the overburdened nature of the primary English curriculum within educational context, which constitutes a significant obstacle to effective classroom instruction (Gathumbi, 2013; Kanga'hi & Indoshi, 2012). The pressure to complete grade-level curricula rapidly leaves learners disadvantaged, as educators are compelled to navigate a fast-paced schedule, ultimately impeding effective classroom instruction. Free primary education policies have substantially increased learner enrolment in primary schools, resulting in larger class sizes and a disproportionate teacher-learner ratio, further complicating the delivery of effective language instruction (Muchiri, 2009; Glasson, 2009). Therefore, as learners struggle to adjust to English as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT), they face the unfortunate reality that educators cannot afford additional time for language acquisition and practice.

Free primary education policies have substantially increased learner enrolment in primary schools, resulting in larger class sizes (Muchiri, 2009). The disproportionate teacher-learner ratio has compounded the challenges of managing these larger classrooms, exacerbated by a severe shortage of educators. This, in turn, places considerable strain on teachers' ability to deliver effective language instruction. Furthermore, the policy's emphasis on inclusive learning further compounds these challenges, as overcrowded classrooms compromise the provision of personalized attention due to the diverse needs of learners and the increased workload on teachers (Glasson, 2009).

The limited availability of educational resources, primarily textbooks, is a critical issue arising from the enrolment surge. Recent studies emphasize the importance of the ratio of students to textbooks as a critical indicator of effective pedagogy, given that learners heavily depend on these resources (Spaull, 2019; Van der Berg et al., 2020). Educators face substantial hurdles in implementing effective teaching practices in an environment characterized by a scarcity of textbooks, especially during the transitional phase from instruction in native languages to English.

Educators face substantial hurdles in implementing effective teaching practices in an environment characterized by a scarcity of textbooks, particularly during the transitional phase, where learners must shift from instruction in their native languages to English. This phase necessitates comprehensive support and supplementary learning materials, and the shortage of textbooks in schools severely restricts

teachers' ability to provide this essential assistance, presenting a substantial challenge.

Karpman (2020) noted that parents from low-income backgrounds often contend with the considerable challenges of making ends meet, leaving them with limited time and resources to support their children's learning at home. In light of these circumstances, effectively educating learners from such socio-economic contexts can be demanding, especially within the Intermediate Phase (IP), given the reduced motivation among learners to engage in English language learning. Consequently, educators may experience frustration when learners arrive at school with incomplete or undone homework assignments to enhance their English language proficiency.

In addition to the studies mentioned above, recent research has disclosed that some educators favour adherence to conventional, formal rules in second language (L2) learning. They believe that these rules require learners to participate in discussions in the target language and cultivate communicative language skills, which are essential for attaining a high level of proficiency in the L2 (Ellis, 2015; DeKeyser, 2020). However, an opposing viewpoint advocates for using code-switching (CS) in English Second Language classrooms (Probyn, 2019; Makalela, 2019).

In an investigation conducted by Metila (2009), evidence was presented in favour of the argument that code-switching employed by English teachers has an adverse impact on learner learning. Metila's study demonstrated that the use of code-switching by educators resulted in a decline in learners' comprehension of the lessons. I concur with Metila's perspective because when code-switching is applied, learners tend to rely on their native language, which hampers their comprehension of examination questions presented in English. This often leads to learners struggling in examinations as they may not fully grasp questions posed in English due to their familiarity with code-switching.

It is crucial to recognize that English, functioning as a second language, continues to be the predominant mode of instructional delivery. This circumstance gives rise to apprehension and hinders active participation in English classrooms (Kodero et al., 2011). As a result, educators confront considerable difficulties when utilizing English First Additional Language (FAL) as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in the intermediate phase. Teachers in this context must navigate several obstacles,

including limited English exposure outside the classroom, socio-cultural barriers, and diverse linguistic backgrounds of students. Therefore, this study explores teachers' challenges in using English as an FAL in IP classrooms.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What challenges do teachers experience in using English FAL in the IP classroom?
2. How do the challenges affect learning and teaching in IP EFAL classrooms?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research employed the grounded theory methodology, initially established by Glaser and Strauss (1967), as its overarching framework to address the research question at hand. The grounded theory approach, as devised by Glaser and Strauss, is characterized by its dedication to constructing a theory rooted in empirical data, with the acknowledgement that such a theory evolves through a rigorous analysis of qualitative data. Grounded theory emphasizes collecting and analysing empirical data to develop an approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Therefore, this study means collecting first-hand qualitative data directly related to teachers' challenges when using English as a First Additional Language in Intermediate Phase classrooms. According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), the grounded theory approach is inductive, allowing theory to emerge from the data rather than being imposed on it. So, in this study, it involved identifying challenges from the experiences and perspectives of the teachers, providing a deeper understanding of the issues.

In contrast to alternative methodologies, grounded theory stands out as an explicit methodological approach that forges a theory derived from meticulously gathered and analysed data (Charmaz, 2006). This approach inherently adopts an inductive strategy, permitting the data to guide the ultimate conclusions of the investigation rather than imposing preconceived patterns. Using grounded theory as a research method facilitates the discovery of overarching concepts, the formulation of theoretical

explanations, and the provision of fresh insights into various relational experiences of participants in connection with the phenomenon under study (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

In this context, grounded theory was deemed particularly pertinent, as the study revolved around the intricate challenges encountered by Intermediate Phase English First Additional Language (EFAL) educators when employing English as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT). Grounded theory, as delineated by Charmaz (2006) and Kolb (2012), operates on an inductive basis, offers flexibility from pre-existing theoretical constraints, is frequently executed in local languages, and excels in capturing authentic life experiences and narratives. These attributes make it especially suited to explore the real-life challenges confronted by Intermediate Phase EFAL teachers as they navigate the use of English as the LoLT. Grounded theory methodology, as defined by Du Plessis and Marais (2017), represents an approach to constructing a social theory centred on a particular subject matter by closely examining the experiences of individuals directly engaged with it. The choice of this methodology was deliberate, as it empowered the researcher to anchor the investigation within the participants' responses in alignment with the research's core findings.

RESEARCH PARADIGM

A research paradigm encompasses individuals' viewpoints, attitudes, and methodologies within a research community (Goduka, 2012:126). These paradigms are crucial in shaping and elucidating the epistemological, ontological, and methodological aspects relevant to a particular study (de Jager et al., 2012; Bahari et al., 2010). The current study has adopted an interpretivist paradigm. According to Burrell and Morgan (1979), interpretivism is a large family of different paradigms rather than a single one. Interpretivism is concerned with exploring and understanding the subjective experiences, perceptions, and meanings that individuals attribute to their experiences. Adopting an interpretive paradigm in this study allowed the researcher to delve into the teachers' subjective experiences as they navigate the challenges of using English as a First Additional Language.

Moreover, interpretivism emphasizes the importance of understanding phenomena within their social and cultural context (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). In Buffalo City, South Africa, the socio-cultural context is crucial to understanding the challenges faced by teachers. Therefore, an interpretive paradigm allowed the researcher to explore how the local context influences the teachers' experiences with using English. Finally, interpretive research does not predefine dependent and independent variables but focuses on the comprehensive intricacies of human sense-making as they unfold (Kaplan & Maxwell, 1994).

Interpretivists, according to Willis (1995), are anti-foundationalists who believe there is no single correct or precise technique for acquiring information. The interpretivism method is founded on many realities' epistemology and ontology and the formation of subjective knowledge (Creswell 2013; Nieuwenhuis 2007). This article is interpretive because the researcher wanted to explore teachers' challenges in their EFAL classrooms. Hence, the researcher's responsibility is to attentively observe and listen to the participants' narratives and the encounters they undergo in their English classrooms. In alignment with this paradigm, First Additional Language (FAL) teachers have the opportunity to elucidate their practices and attribute meaning to them (Mertens, 2014). This implies that FAL teachers can communicate the pedagogical choices they make. They can articulate the reasons behind specific instructional strategies, curriculum decisions, or classroom management approaches, contributing to transparency and understanding among stakeholders and underscoring the

importance of viewing teachers as knowledgeable professionals who can provide insights into their practices.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of English FAL Implementation in South African Schools

Implementing English as a First Additional Language (FAL) in South African schools, particularly in the Intermediate Phase, has been subject to persistent scrutiny and inquiry. Notably, recent studies assert that the proficient application of English as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in these classrooms is a multifaceted matter influenced by diverse factors (Makalela, 2019; Van der Berg et al., 2020). This literature review delves into the obstacles teachers face when employing English FAL as the LoLT in Intermediate Phase classrooms in Buffalo City, South Africa.

Transition to English LoLT in Grade 4- Challenges

The transition to Grade 4 presents a unique and formidable challenge within the South African educational context. During this pivotal phase, the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) switches to English, a significant departure from the Foundation Phase, where instruction is primarily conducted in African languages (Spaull, 2019; Taylor, 2020). Consequently, learners are confronted with the dual task of developing proficient oral communication skills in English and cultivating a more academically oriented, literacy-based competence in the LoLT. This adaptation is vital for learners to effectively navigate the increasingly demanding literacy demands encountered in the Intermediate Phase.

Importance of Home Language Foundation

A critical facet of this adaptation lies in the learners' ability to leverage their reading skills in their Home Language (HL) as a robust foundation for acquiring equivalent reading skills in their second language, English, as recent studies have emphasized (Pretorius & Spaull, 2016; Goldenberg, 2020). The researcher aligns with the viewpoint put forth by these scholars, underlining the significance of a solid foundation in the HL as a precursor to comprehending a second language. Furthermore, it is well-established in the literature that the teacher occupies a pivotal role in educational reform, particularly one that directly impacts classroom dynamics (Spaull, 2019). While

teacher training and innovative capabilities are deemed essential, they are necessary but insufficient prerequisites for facilitating effective learning (Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Code-switching and Code-mixing

The widespread occurrence of teachers engaging in code-switching and code-mixing in second language (L2) Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) classrooms in South Africa underscores the limited implementation of LoLT policy in analogous contexts within the nation (Probyn, 2019; Makalela, 2019; Heugh, 2020; Wildsmith-Cromarty, 2021). According to recent studies, code-switching is identified as a prominent linguistic feature in classrooms where both teachers and learners share a common language but are required to use an additional language for learning purposes, with the learner's language serving as a form of instructional support (Department of Basic Education, 2020). This observation underscores the need for a more comprehensive examination of language policy implementation in these contexts.

Discrepancy Between Policy and Practice- Code-switching and Code-mixing

In many disadvantaged South African schools, the official claim of using English as the second language (L2) LoLT does not align with classroom practices. Within these institutions, learners are expected to read and write in English. Yet, instruction predominantly occurs in either the first language (L1) or the second language (L2) through code-switching and code-mixing (Heugh, 2013). This discrepancy between the officially stated LoLT and what transpires in classrooms has adverse consequences, hampering learners' progress (Probyn, 2019). Notably, despite having received instruction primarily in their L1 as the LoLT, South African learners are assessed in English (L2) and are awarded zero marks for responses provided in their L1, even when they are accurate (Heugh, 2020). Teachers' code-switching during lessons inadvertently sets learners up for failure during assessments. Across Africa, studies consistently reveal a similar pattern, highlighting learners' inadequacy in the L2 LoLT as the primary factor negatively impacting their performance during assessments (Clegg & Simpson, 2016). Limited exposure to English outside the classroom further compounds this challenge. Consequently, teachers face obstacles

in providing sufficient language immersion and practice opportunities (Wildsmith-Cromarty, 2021).

Furthermore, teachers' use of code-mixing during instruction is even more prevalent in South Africa than code-switching (Wildsmith-Cromarty, 2021). Consequently, the prevailing language model in such educational settings is often characterized by code-mixing, which represents the closest approximation that teachers instructing in a second language can achieve in delivering education in English. This becomes problematic, especially in contexts where the aim is language acquisition, as clear linguistic boundaries between the first language (L1) and the second language (L2) are crucial for the effective learning of either language (Probyn, 2019).

Research emphasizes the problematic nature associated with code-switching and code-mixing in early education. These activities create obstacles to learning and impede learners' cognitive development as they intersect in areas where language and conceptual development should ideally converge for optimal cognitive growth (Williams, 2016). In early education, language acquisition and conceptual understanding are closely linked, and effective learning occurs when these areas develop concurrently. However, frequent switching between languages can cause confusion, making it difficult for learners to fully grasp and apply new concepts in either language, thereby hindering their overall cognitive growth (Williams, 2016; Macaro, 2018; Garcia & Wei, 2014). Furthermore, it is contended that classroom code-switching hinders learners' language acquisition, as they are not sufficiently challenged by the language inputs encountered during the teaching and learning process (Clegg & Simpson, 2016).

Socio-Cultural Factors and Language Acquisition

According to Landsberg, Kruger, and Swart (2016), the optimal approach to learning is through one's mother tongue, and the acquisition of a second language, like English, is significantly enhanced when the learner already possesses a strong foundation in their mother tongue. Expanding on this perspective, Owen-Smith (2014) contends that learners who cannot access education in their mother tongue face a disadvantage, limiting their ability to perform to their full potential. Consequently, learners who speak a second or third language encounter challenges.

Concerning the challenge of understanding the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT), prior research undertaken by Taylor and Coetzee (2013) on exposure to the LoLT beyond the classroom indicated that learners receiving education in a second language mainly originate from households where they receive minimal academic assistance. Furthermore, it was noted that parents or caregivers often possess limited formal education, and the learners have restricted exposure to English (the LoLT) through mediums such as television and their home surroundings. The general agreement was that the quality of schooling and the home environment substantially influence learners' academic performance (Van der Berg et al., 2020).

Influence of Socio-Cultural Contexts

Freeman and Freeman (2011) underscore that acquiring a first additional language is significantly shaped by the linguistic environment in which an individual is immersed. Exposure to the target language is pivotal in facilitating the acquisition of an additional language, rendering the process more accessible, and aligning with the understanding that the challenges educators face directly impact learners. Insufficient exposure to English and limited opportunities to practice the language in diverse contexts can hinder learners' academic progress and foster negative attitudes toward English (Macedo, 2019; Liziwe & Moodly, 2018). The proficiency levels of First Additional Language can vary from rudimentary to advanced. In the context of this study, learners encounter limited exposure to English since they predominantly come from communities and households where English is not the primary language for communication. Furthermore, their instructors may not be native English speakers. Hence, it is argued that socio-cultural factors substantially influence the development of learners' second language acquisition. This contention aligns with the perspective that a child's acquisition of the target language is greatly enhanced when they have proficient peers (Van Lier, 2004). This peer interaction provides a robust social context in which learners can efficiently absorb the grammatical rules of the target language (Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

Challenges in Disadvantaged Schools

Numerous schools, particularly those located in disadvantaged areas, face resource deficiencies, including a shortage of textbooks and instructional materials to support English language teaching (Spaull, 2019). Educators frequently encounter the dual

challenge of mastering English proficiency and effective pedagogical techniques to cater to a diverse learner population (Makalela, 2019). Research consistently emphasizes the significance of a solid foundation in learners' Home Language (HL) as a crucial factor in facilitating language acquisition and comprehension in a second language, such as English (Pretorius & Spaull, 2016). As a result, teachers must receive comprehensive training and support to address the multifaceted challenges associated with using English First Additional Language (FAL) as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT). Teacher preparation should involve training in second language acquisition, language instruction methodologies, and strategies for effectively engaging learners from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Van der Walt, 2020).

.The deficiency of exposure to English beyond the confines of the classroom can present a significant impediment to the learning process. Even when learners exhibit motivation and receive support from their teachers, they may encounter challenges in making substantial progress if they lack opportunities to apply and hone their English language skills daily. Understanding these challenges is essential for developing strategies to support teachers and learners as they transition to English as the LoLT in Intermediate Phase classrooms in Buffalo City, South Africa.

Recommendations for Teacher Support and Training

It is well-established in the literature that the teacher occupies a pivotal role in educational reform, particularly one that directly impacts classroom dynamics (Spaull, 2019). While teacher training and innovative capabilities are deemed essential, they are necessary but insufficient prerequisites for facilitating effective learning (Darling-Hammond, 2017). This insight directly informs the research question about the impact of these challenges on learning and teaching in IP EFAL classrooms.

The research questions are closely aligned with this context. The literature indicates that learners' ability to leverage their reading skills in their Home Language (HL) as a robust foundation for acquiring equivalent reading skills in their second language, English, is crucial (Pretorius & Spaull, 2016; Goldenberg, 2020). This supports the study's focus on understanding how a strong foundation in the HL aids second language comprehension and literacy. The literature supports the research questions by providing a comprehensive background on the multifaceted nature of these

challenges and their impact on learning and teaching. By integrating these insights, the study aims to develop effective strategies to support teachers and learners in transitioning to English as the LoLT in Buffalo City, South Africa, and similar contexts globally.

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Research Approach

Qualitative research, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:21), is “inquiry in which researchers collect data in face-to-face situations by interacting with selected persons in their settings”. According to Creswell and Poth (2017), the qualitative approach is a strategy in which researchers make assertions about knowledge primarily based on constructivist viewpoints. A qualitative case study design aligned with this research's focus on social and cultural phenomena. This approach allows the researcher to gain insights into how social, environmental, and cultural contexts influence human behaviour, especially given the intimate, classroom-based nature of the study (Yin, 2014). Hence, the qualitative research approach is deemed suitable for the objectives of this study.

The qualitative research method offers access to unquantifiable information about a topic in a broader context. It is about figuring out what, why and how it happens (Henning, 2010; Berg, 2007). The primary advantage of qualitative research lies in its capacity to closely approximate reality. In seeking this proximity to reality, I aim to gain a profound understanding of the participants' circumstances. Consequently, the researcher intended to comprehend the challenges experienced by EFAL teachers by delving into their experiences within the English classroom. Through a qualitative investigation, the researcher aspired to capture the authentic situations of the participants, providing the researcher the opportunity to immerse herself in the natural environment of both learners and teachers. This approach involved direct observation of activities during English FAL teaching and learning, offering an in-depth exploration of the lived experiences in the educational setting. Teachers were also interviewed to collect their individual experiences and opinions regarding the problem under investigation.

The objectives of this study aim to uncover the specific difficulties that teachers encounter when using English First Additional Language as the LoLT. The qualitative methodology is well-suited for this purpose as it facilitates a deep understanding of participants' experiences through direct interaction. By conducting face-to-face interviews, the researcher can gather detailed accounts of the challenges teachers face, providing a comprehensive picture of the issues within their real-world context.

Research Design

The research framework asserts the existence of numerous subjective realities, and the researcher aims to acquire a profound comprehension by observing how teachers in diverse contexts address the challenge of employing English as the LoLT in their classrooms (Holliday, 2007). A case study design was identified as the most suitable method for this exploration. In this study, the case study design entails a thorough and comprehensive examination of the challenges teachers confront when implementing English as the First Additional Language (EFAL) in Intermediate Phase (IP) classrooms within a cluster of schools in Buffalo City.

This study adopted the case study design because the design enables a focused exploration of teachers' challenges (Maree, 2012; Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995). Rather than a broad overview, a case study allows for a thorough investigation into these challenges' nature, causes, and implications, providing a nuanced perspective (Yin, 2014). Through interviews and observations, a case study can capture the views and experiences of teachers directly allowing the researcher to gather rich qualitative data reflecting educators' day-to-day realities.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The data collection process for this study was designed to gather comprehensive insights into the challenges faced by teachers using English First Additional Language (EFAL) as a LoLT in Intermediate Phase classrooms in Buffalo City, South Africa.

The sampling strategy for this study involved purposive sampling to select six English First Additional Language (FAL) teachers from the Intermediate Phase at Buffalo City. Purposive sampling was chosen to ensure that participants had specific characteristics relevant to the research questions. The criteria for participant selection included teaching experience of teachers with a minimum of 1 year of experience teaching English FAL in the Intermediate Phase. This criterion ensured that participants had

sufficient experience and insights into the teaching strategies and challenges specific to this educational level. Furthermore, participants were required to have at least a Bachelor of Education degree or an equivalent qualification. This ensured that the teachers had formal training in educational theories and practices.

Before data collection, all participants were provided with an informed consent form detailing the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits. Participants were assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Diversity of school contexts consisted of teachers from various schools within Buffalo City, including urban, peri-urban, and rural settings. This criterion aimed to capture a wide range of teaching contexts and student demographics. Teachers who expressed a willingness to participate in the study and provide in-depth insights into their teaching practices and experiences were selected.

The rationale for selecting these criteria is rooted in the need to gather rich, context-specific data from knowledgeable and experienced educators. Experienced teachers are likely to have developed and refined various teaching strategies over time, providing valuable insights into effective practices and common challenges. Including teachers from diverse school contexts allows for a comprehensive understanding of how different environments influence teaching strategies and learner outcomes.

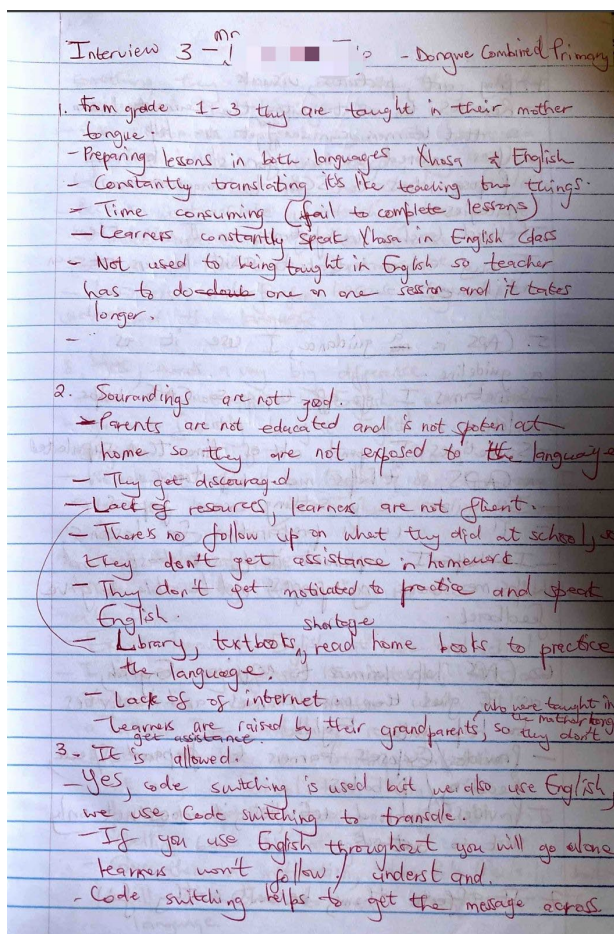
Several potential biases may arise from this sampling strategy. The reliance on purposive sampling could introduce selection bias, as the sample is not random and may not represent the broader population of English FAL teachers in Buffalo City. This could affect the generalizability of the findings. Moreover, teachers who volunteer to participate might have a particular interest in the subject matter or may have distinct experiences and perspectives compared to those who do not volunteer. This self-selection could skew the data towards more proactive or reflective practitioners. While including teachers from diverse school contexts aims to mitigate this, but it is still possible that the specific environments and resources of the selected schools could influence the findings, making them less applicable to different settings.

The small sample size of six teachers limits the ability to generalize the findings to all English FAL teachers in Buffalo City or beyond. However, the in-depth qualitative data obtained can provide valuable insights into specific teaching practices and experiences. On the other hand, the study is confined to Buffalo City, and the findings

may not be applicable to other regions with different socio-economic and linguistic profiles. Moreover, the data collection is cross-sectional, capturing a snapshot of teaching strategies and experiences at a particular point in time. Longitudinal studies could provide more comprehensive insights into how teaching strategies evolve over time. Lastly, the presence of the researcher during interviews could potentially influence the behavior of participants, leading to responses or actions that are not entirely reflective of their typical practices.

Data was collected qualitatively through in-depth interviews conducted with six English FAL teachers to gain insights into their teaching strategies, experiences, and challenges. Interviews were chosen because they provided a platform for teachers to articulate the rationale behind their strategy selection. Understanding the thought processes and motivations guiding specific strategies is crucial for developing a nuanced picture of instructional decision-making (Merriam, 2009).

Figure 1.1: Sample of Interviews



Qualitative data from interviews was analyzed thematically. Thematic analysis allowed for an in-depth exploration of the data's patterns, themes, and meanings (Braun & Clarke, 2019), aligning with the objective of understanding the intricate details and nuances of teaching strategies in Buffalo City's Intermediate Phase. The steps included data familiarization, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Thematic analysis encouraged the researcher to consider the entire data set, promoting a holistic understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. This is essential for capturing the complexity of challenges faced by IP teachers as revealed in the data. Lastly, using thematic analysis provided the researcher with a step-by-step approach, making it accessible and promoting transparency in the analytical process (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The steps include data familiarization, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing the report. This method aligns with the research goals and promotes a systematic and transparent analysis of the complex data.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The study was conducted to investigate the challenges faced by EFAL IP teachers when using ENGLISH as LoLT in Grade 4 classrooms in Buffalo City Metro (BCM). The qualitative data from the interviews was analyzed using thematic analysis. The researcher repeatedly read the interview transcripts to gain a comprehensive understanding of the content. The data was systematically coded using an inductive approach. Initial codes were generated based on recurring patterns and significant statements related to the challenges faced by EFAL teachers. Codes were grouped into potential themes that represented broader patterns of meaning.

Themes were identified based on their relevance to the research questions and the frequency and significance of the codes. The themes were reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately represented the data. This involved cross-checking themes against the original data to confirm their validity and coherence. Each theme was clearly defined and named to capture its essence. Detailed descriptions were developed for each theme, highlighting the key findings and supporting evidence from the data. The final step involved writing a detailed report of the findings, including

illustrative quotes from participants to provide rich, contextualized insights into the challenges faced by EFAL teachers.

The interpretation of findings involved contextualizing the themes within the broader literature on EFAL instruction and identifying implications for practice and policy. The researcher compared the findings with existing studies to highlight similarities and differences and to draw conclusions about the unique challenges in Buffalo City. Recommendations for addressing these challenges were formulated based on the identified themes and the literature review.

Several ethical considerations were addressed throughout the study to ensure the protection of participants and the integrity of the research. Participants were fully informed about the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights, including the right to withdraw without penalty. Written consent was obtained before data collection. Participant confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing all data. Identifiable information was removed from transcripts, and pseudonyms were used in reporting the findings. Data were stored securely, accessible only to the researcher. The study was designed to minimize any potential harm or discomfort to participants. Questions were framed sensitively, and interviews were conducted in a respectful and non-intrusive manner.

The research proposal was reviewed and approved by an institutional ethics review board to ensure that the study adhered to ethical standards. In ensuring research validity, the data collection method (interviews) was used to triangulate the findings, enhancing the validity and reliability of the results. The researcher engaged in regular debriefing sessions with colleagues to discuss the research process, emerging themes, and interpretations. This provided an external check on the research process and helped to identify any potential biases. Therefore, the following section presents the data that was analysed and its findings.

Table 2.1: Biographic information

School	Participants	Age	Gender	Qualifications	Grades/(s) taught	Subjects taught	NOY teaching ENG	Teaching Experience
A	P1	36	Male	Bachelor of Education	4	English FAL&Maths	5	8
B	P2	26	Female	Bachelor of Education	Multigrade	All	3	4
C	P3	31	Male	PGCE	4& 5	Maths and English FAL	4	3
D	P4	47	Female	Foundation Phase Degree	3 and 4	English FAL, L/skills, Tech and NS	18	19
E	P5	40	Female	Bachelor of Education	4 and 5	English FAL, IsiXhosa HL & NS	10	12
F	P6	27	Female	Bachelor of Education	4	English FAL, Maths and SS	2	4

As outlined in Table 2.1, interviews were conducted with two male and four female teachers. The gender distribution was not intentionally balanced, as the teachers were already employed and assigned EFAL as their teaching subject. Most participants were in their 30s and above 40s and had between two and 18 years of teaching experience. Data revealed that all of the six teachers were qualified to teach EFAL. However, challenges were still encountered when teaching English as a LoLT in IP Grade 4. The following challenges were indicated by the participants and are discussed under five themes.

Table 2.2: Themes generated from participants' data indicating challenges

Themes	
Theme 1	Limited resources
Theme 2	Time constraints
Theme 3	Lack of vocabulary
Theme 4	Overcrowding
Theme 5	Fear of speaking

Limited resources/ Lack of resources

Out of the six participants, two schools had access to enough resources, and these teachers managed to introduce blended teaching as a teaching strategy to assist IP learners. It was observed that the two schools had well-established classrooms with projectors which the other four schools did not. However, teachers from the four schools were innovative and creative in locating reading material for the learners since they also did not have enough textbooks.

P3: *"I just picked an old book that was used by my daughter in Grade 4, and I made copies because the school has old textbooks that are not in a good condition. Some pages are teared up. So, I try to get extra resources externally."*

P4: *"During the English lesson, I badly wanted the learners to have a clear understanding of what I was teaching. I wanted them to see because they learn better when they see visuals. So, because the school does not have a projector, I then decided to bring my laptop to class and used it even though it was not big enough for all the learners to see properly."*

P5: *"Books are not enough. Learners are restricted in reading so that others can get a chance. So, they do not get enough exposure to the English language as they cannot go home with the books to practise reading and speaking the language. However, I asked parents to assist with donating books."*

P6: *"The challenge is that we do not have funding for purchasing study guides, grammar books and reading material to support the transition phase of these learners. I asked parents during the progress meeting to assist."*

The results align with the research by Román et al. (2019), indicating that Grade 4 teachers commonly rely on traditional educational materials such as chalkboards and wall charts. This observation is consistent with the findings of Dawson and Shand (2019), who note that many schools in disadvantaged contexts lack modern technology, which could potentially address challenges associated with using English as the LoLT in Intermediate Phase primary schools. These four schools were located in the rural side of BCM. The schools were not as developed as the other two schools in town. The issue of limited resources was a dominant challenge that stood as a barrier for teachers to explore different strategies that could help address the challenges they experienced when they used English as a LoLT in the IP phase. However, teachers are trying to support these learners during the transition phase. One teacher asked parents to donate books so that learners can practice the language more. So, limited resources do not assist during the transition phase but make it even more difficult for learners to adapt to the language.

Numerous schools, particularly those in disadvantaged areas, face resource deficiencies, including a shortage of textbooks and instructional materials (Spaull, 2019). Educators frequently encounter the dual challenge of mastering English proficiency and effective pedagogical techniques for a diverse learner population (Makalela, 2019). Comprehensive teacher training in second language acquisition and instructional methodologies is essential for addressing these challenges (Van der Walt, 2020). This supports the need for strategies to enhance teacher preparation and resource allocation, directly informing the study's investigation into the effects of these challenges on teaching and learning.

According to the Department of Education (2011), every lesson is limited to 45 minutes. Teachers shared a common challenge where they complained about having a heavy workload in a limited time. They highlighted that they fail to fully express

themselves in English because they are limited to a 45-minute class. And they end up not completing lessons. Moreover, teachers must rush the syllabus because they spend much time explaining the language, which takes most of their teaching time. However, they try to cover the important content even if it means not completing the entire syllabus.

P3: "I spend a lot of time in explaining the work than on assessing because learners do not understand the English language."

P4: "I have to prepare lessons in both IsiXhosa and English because I teach village learners. It is extremely difficult to teach in English because they do not understand, and a lesson becomes unsuccessful."

One teacher highlighted that she went the extra mile and decided to try the one-on-one teaching strategy, but unfortunately, she could not be consistent as it was taking a lot of her teaching time.

P5: "I have to do a one-on-one session with these learners because they do not interact during lessons because they do not understand the language and they cannot speak the language. This is very time-consuming."

P6: "I am constantly translating when I am teaching. It is time-consuming because it's like I am teaching two things at the same time."

Teachers highlighted time as a barrier in their EFAL classes, which was made possible by the challenges identified above. So, no matter how they try to support IP learners' transition, time will always be a challenge because they have limited teaching time and, therefore, cannot accommodate these challenges within that time and be able to finish lessons.

Lack of vocabulary

Findings revealed that Grade 4 learners commonly displayed limited English vocabulary proficiency. Many learners struggled with basic English words and expressions, impacting their comprehension and communication ability.

P1: "Learners do not know how to speak the language; they cannot even speak the basics. This is mainly caused by their background. They stay in a rural area, and their parents are uneducated, so they only come across English at school when they leave."

They do not use the language again. This is a challenge as it does not help improve their vocabulary.”

Findings also show that learners had difficulties comprehending texts, which was a significant barrier to learners' comprehension of English texts.

P3: “In all my English classes, my learners struggle to understand the meaning of the words. As a result, they encounter difficulties in understanding academic materials such as notes, reading comprehension exercises, and classroom instructions.”

The study observed that learners with limited English vocabulary were often reluctant to participate in classroom discussions and activities. They lacked the confidence to express themselves in English, hindering their language development.

P4: “I always speak alone when I conduct a lesson. Whenever I ask learners to interact during the lesson using English, they do not speak even though a learner knows the answer. They are shy because they cannot fluently speak the language.”

P5: “Learners fail to participate in class because they get embarrassed when they speak English incorrectly, and this affects their lesson assessment and vocabulary development. The minute I tell them they can give me the answer in IsiXhosa, that is the only time they excitedly interact within the lesson.”

The results are consistent with Behroozi and Amoozegar's (2014) findings, emphasizing the necessity to reassess the methodologies employed in English teaching. Through interviews and observations, it became evident that there is a requirement for teachers to enhance their understanding of how to incorporate innovative strategies. However, teachers recognized the need for targeted vocabulary enrichment programs. These included providing context-based explanations and encouraging learners to use bilingual dictionaries or digital language resources aligning with Ferris's (2018) findings, which assert that English teachers in Intermediate Phase primary schools face difficulties related to knowledge, skills, and strategies for facilitating the instruction of English as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in the Intermediate Phase.

Overcrowding

Overcrowding in Intermediate Phase English classes is a pressing issue that can significantly impact the quality of education and learners' learning experiences.

Virtually all participants conveyed unfavourable teaching encounters related to class size. Teachers perceived their ability to maximize their teaching effectiveness in English as compromised by large class sizes. The challenges associated with managing, planning, and assessing in overcrowded classrooms were noted (Atkins, 2018). In contrast, smaller classrooms were considered less disruptive, with learners displaying greater attentiveness and completing tasks promptly. Teachers found it easier to employ various reading strategies, contributing to the provision of quality education (Powers, Bierman & The Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 2013).

P1: "A big classroom is a problem. You cannot exercise discipline. I am unable to implement other strategies except teacher-centred approach and traditional teaching, which is not effective."

P3: "Majority of the learners I teach feel reluctant to participate in discussions or ask questions in a crowded environment, which results in reduced learning opportunities."

Findings show that overcrowding limits Teacher-Learner Interaction.

P4: "Overcrowding places an additional burden on us as teachers. Most of the time, I struggle to provide individualized attention and feedback to learners, hindering the development of language skills."

P5: "Active learning strategies, such as group discussions and interactive activities, are less effective in overcrowded classrooms. In my class, learners have less space and fewer resources to engage in hands-on learning experiences."

Managing an overcrowded classroom can be challenging for teachers. Maintaining discipline and order becomes difficult, which can disrupt the learning environment for all students, both academically and socially.

P6: "Overcrowding makes it challenging to conduct fair assessments and evaluations. Grading a large number of assignments or tests is time-consuming."

During observations, it came to the researcher's attention that two classes in the other two schools visited were spacious but lacked sufficient furniture and proper ventilation, devoid of fans. The challenging physical environment made it difficult to maintain discipline. These observations align with the insights of Siperto (2018), who emphasizes that large classrooms contribute to chaos, inattentiveness, and disruptions in lessons. Overcrowding in intermediate phase English classes has a

range of negative consequences for both students and teachers. These findings underscore the importance of addressing this issue in the educational system to ensure quality learning experiences and equitable access to education.

Fear of speaking

The "Fear of Speaking" theme encapsulates a critical aspect of teachers' challenges in using English as a First Additional Language (EFAL) in Intermediate Phase classrooms in Buffalo City, South Africa. This theme delves into the complex psychological and sociolinguistic factors contributing to learners' apprehension or reluctance to engage actively in spoken English classroom activities.

This psychological barrier can manifest in various forms, from a hesitancy to answer questions in class to a reluctance to participate in group discussions. The fear of making mistakes, being judged, or facing ridicule from peers can significantly impede learners' willingness to speak English aloud.

P4: "Addressing the fear of speaking in English was a priority in my classroom. I observed that many students hesitated to speak up, and it became clear that this fear hindered their language development. To tackle this challenge, I introduced strategies aimed at creating a supportive and non-judgmental environment."

The fear of speaking has profound implications for learners' overall participation in classroom activities. It may result in reduced involvement in class discussions, limited peer interaction, and avoidance of oral tasks. This, in turn, can hinder the development of crucial language skills, particularly in pronunciation, fluency, and communicative competence.

P2: "One effective strategy that I used in my class was incorporating peer learning activities. I structured group discussions and paired assignments where students could engage in English conversations with a sense of shared learning. This not only reduced the fear of speaking in front of the entire class but also allowed students to support and learn from each other."

To mitigate the fear of speaking, teachers play a pivotal role in creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment. Implementing instructional strategies that build learners' confidence, such as encouraging small group discussions, incorporating interactive activities, and providing positive reinforcement, can be instrumental.

P1: *“During my English lessons, I emphasized the importance of learning through trial and error. I shared stories of famous individuals who faced setbacks on their path to success, emphasizing that mistakes are an integral part of the learning process. This shifted the perspective from a fear of judgment to an understanding that mistakes are opportunities for growth.”*

The "Fear of Speaking" theme sheds light on the multifaceted challenges embedded in the linguistic and psychological landscape of EFAL Intermediate Phase classrooms in Buffalo City. Recognizing and addressing this fear is essential for enhancing oral proficiency and fostering a positive and inclusive language learning experience. By understanding the nuances of learner inhibition and anxiety, teachers can employ targeted strategies to create a classroom environment where learners feel empowered to overcome their fear of speaking and actively engage in language acquisition.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings show that teachers face numerous challenges when using English as a LoLT in IP classrooms. A comparative analysis was done to show practical case studies from my area of study, BCM.

In school A Grade 4 English analysis, learners have a challenge in comprehension or understanding English; this stems from a lack of basic skills in reading English as a language (Pearson, 2010). They struggle to comprehend texts, and they don't have a reading culture or study extensively for the enjoyment of language. Whereas, in school B Grade 4 analysis, learners show vocabulary deficiency, they do not have enough language exposure, they lack English structure and the basics of LoLT due to lack of English resources, making English a habit, daily reading and communication using English (Krashen, 2006), this school is in the rural. Therefore, learners only learn English in the classroom, but there is no continuity in the language after school.

On the other hand, the analysis of school C reveals that the Grade 4 learners struggled to understand English; the teacher had to explain a project in IsiXhosa. He did not only code switch and mix but also changed the entire LoLT to the mother tongue, and it was only then that learners could understand and respond.

Contrary to school C, school D English analysis, learners could comprehend English, interact in English, and pose questions. However, learners could not write down the

language, so they struggled to apply what they learned in writing, leading to them failing the classwork the teacher gave them after the lesson. Moreover, the English analysis of school E shows that learners in this school only understand a lesson when a teacher overuses code-switching. Learners cannot respond to questions in English; the teacher has to repeat a question twice using the mother tongue, which takes a lot of teaching time, showing that learners are not exposed to the language enough, e.g., speaking it at home to adapt to it. However, in school F Grade 4 analysis, learners in this school show a significant development of LoLT; they are good at speaking, reading and writing using English. They were groomed from lower grades and used English throughout their learning; therefore, they are more familiar with the language because they speak it daily.

The trend here is that learners who have a strong English background or come from homes where English is a norm and culture will show significant development in the language as they progress. However, learners from socioeconomic backgrounds who don't have resources struggle with English as a language of teaching and learning and tend to have language deficiencies (Krashen, 2009). So, teachers are faced with such challenges.

Findings from different schools in Buffalo City show a range of challenges, from comprehension issues and vocabulary deficiencies to over-reliance on code-switching and lack of resources. These findings underscore the need for tailored strategies that address specific contextual challenges, highlighting the importance of understanding and adapting to the unique dynamics of each educational setting. The findings offer valuable insights into effective teaching strategies that can be adapted and applied in various multilingual and resource-constrained educational environments globally. By emphasizing the broader applicability of these outcomes, this research contributes to the ongoing discourse on improving ESL education in diverse contexts.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that teachers do not have sufficient support concerning training for skills and knowledge to teach the English language. It also concludes that English Language lessons on the timetable are insufficient, so learners do not get enough exposure to English as a LoLT. Moreover, the number of English teachers is limited,

which puts more pressure on teachers' capacity to provide effective language teaching to learners.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that the Department of Education (DoE) train Intermediate Phase (IP) teachers to use English as a Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) because these teachers are pivotal during the critical transition phase from home language instruction to English instruction. This recommendation is justified despite the highlighted problem of learners struggling with English comprehension. Training teachers in more effective teaching strategies and techniques can help bridge the language gap, making the transition smoother for learners. Additionally, while learners' limited English proficiency is a significant challenge, it is equally important to recognize the influence of their first language (L1) acquisition. Research indicates that a strong foundation in L1 supports second language (L2) learning (Cummins, 2017; García & Kleifgen, 2018). Thus, the recommendation also emphasizes the need to increase learners' exposure to English through more language lessons, which aligns with research suggesting that greater immersion in L2 can enhance proficiency (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Moreover, employing more English language teachers can provide the necessary individualized support and reduce the burden on current teachers, further facilitating effective language acquisition and improving educational outcomes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Macaro, 2018). Therefore, while acknowledging the importance of L1, the focus on strengthening English instruction is crucial for addressing the core challenges identified in the study.

2.2 ARTICLE 2

Teaching strategies to enhance using English as the Language of Learning and Teaching in the Intermediate Phase at Buffalo City

ABSTRACT

The transition from the mother tongue to English as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in South African Intermediate Phase (IP) classrooms presents a host of challenges for both educators and learners. This study delves into the multifaceted issues that manifest when English is adopted as the primary medium of instruction and explores the potential teaching strategies that can alleviate these challenges.

Data was collected from interviews with teachers and classroom observations. The target population were six primary schools in the BCM circuit that use English First Additional Language as a LoLT from Grade 4. Categories were constructed from the study questions using an interview template analysis technique. Data was presented in themes and categories developed from research interview questions. Data was then analysed using thematic analysis. The study revealed the challenges as limited language exposure, resource deficiencies, and socio-cultural influences. It, therefore, recommends that teachers expose learners to different teaching strategies when using the English language and seek support from the principals to provide them with resources such as projectors, access to WIFI, and enough textbooks to use in class for effective English teaching.

Keywords: First Additional language (FAL), Intermediate phase (IP), strategies, Language of teaching and learning (LoLT), Grade 4.

INTRODUCTION

The use of English as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in South African Intermediate Phase (IP) classrooms has been a topic of extensive discourse and concern within the educational landscape (Chisanga, 2014). This phase marks a crucial juncture in learners' educational journeys as they transition from being instructed in their home languages to being taught predominantly in English. Kamwangamalu (2010) highlights the adoption of English as the LoLT, a significant educational policy intended to equip learners with proficiency in this global lingua franca. However, it brings forth an array of formidable challenges that both teachers and learners must navigate.

In a linguistically diverse nation such as South Africa, attaining high proficiency levels in multiple languages is paramount for its learners. The imperative is that learners not only achieve proficiency in two or more languages but also acquire the capacity to engage effectively in linguistic interactions across various language mediums (DoE, 2002:4). The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) is a pivotal educational framework that supersedes and supplants the Revised National Curriculum Statement, Grades R–9 (NCS) articulated by the Department of Education in 2003. According to the CAPS, a fundamental expectation is that by the culmination of the third grade, children should demonstrate exceptional reading proficiency and a mastery of advanced communication skills (DBE, 2010:7-9). Implicit in these educational policies is the necessity for educators to possess the requisite knowledge, methodologies, and competencies essential for facilitating learners in the acquisition of both communicative proficiency and advanced reading abilities, particularly in their first additional language, notably English.

The policy landscape in South Africa emphasizes using English as the LoLT in IP classrooms (DBE, 2000). The aim is to equip learners with English proficiency to facilitate access to broader educational and employment opportunities (DBE, 2011). While this policy is well-intentioned, its effective implementation in the classroom setting is far from straightforward. Challenges often arise from teachers' linguistic competence, the availability of resources, and the sociocultural context in which teaching and learning occur. A second language (L2) refers to the language learners acquire after their mother tongue, often for broader communication, academic purposes, or integration into a multilingual society. The process of learning an L2

involves understanding its grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and cultural nuances, which can differ significantly from those of the L1.

L2 acquisition is a complex process influenced by various factors, including the learners' age, motivation, exposure to the language, and the learning environment. According to Lightbown and Spada (2013), effective L2 acquisition requires substantial exposure and opportunities for practice in meaningful contexts. This aligns with Krashen's (2020) Input Hypothesis, which posits that learners acquire language best through comprehensible input slightly above their current proficiency level.

The challenges faced in IP English as a First Additional Language (EFAL) classrooms are multifaceted and rooted in the South African education system's sociocultural, linguistic, and pedagogical aspects (Heugh, 2018). A rich linguistic diversity, with learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds, characterizes the environment. These learners have typically been educated in their home languages (L1) during the Foundation Phase, which contrasts with the English LoLT that awaits them in the Intermediate Phase (Heugh, 2018). As a result, learners must not only adapt to the complexities of the English language but also navigate the transition from everyday conversational English to the more formal and academic variant necessary for effective learning (Macedo, 2019).

As asserted by Manten, Le Roux, Geertsema, and Graham (2020:1), early literacy skills, specifically phonological awareness (PA), hold the capacity to forecast future success in literacy, underscoring the vital role of effective instruction in assisting English as a Second Language (ESL) learners in mastering these skills. These learners often struggle to acquire the requisite PA skills to facilitate English reading proficiency. Furthermore, Taylor, Draper, Muller, and Sithole (2013:32) have established a substantial association between instruction in one's mother tongue and scholastic achievement, emphasizing that learners can more effectively absorb knowledge and skills when educated in their native language. Conversely, Taylor et al. (2013:32) concur that the absence of suitable instructional strategies creates learning impediments, particularly for learners lacking proficiency in the language of instruction, ultimately hindering their academic advancement.

Phatudi and Motilal (2014:21) characterize English First Additional Language (EFAL) as the language learners spend the least time acquiring. Given that learners in Grade

4 are introduced to English for the first time, they may require an extended duration for its acquisition and acclimatization. Additionally, Subtirelu and Lindeman (2014:1) contend that second language (L2) acquisition parallels the process of learning any language after one's native tongue (L1). Strategies, such as songs, are advantageous for expanding vocabulary and being relatively accessible for learners. Additionally, meaningful conversations are instrumental in establishing language structures, and stories are conventionally deemed highly effective in nurturing the oral proficiencies of young learners (Isenbarger & Willis, 2006:125; Gunning, 2005:532). However, the efficacy of these strategies hinges on the teacher's proficiency and ability to integrate them with educational materials seamlessly.

The complete immersion approach is often recommended for instructing young learners in English, particularly when the aim is to facilitate their integration into a new cultural and linguistic milieu. This method immerses them fully in the English language and way of life. However, a different set of challenges emerges when focusing on English literacy. To effectively teach English literacy, educators must first comprehend the underlying purpose of this instruction, as it significantly influences their teaching methodologies. Simply acknowledging that learners should achieve literacy in both reading and writing by the end of the third grade is insufficient; an understanding of the overarching objectives and motivations is imperative (Pence & Justice, 2008: 304–313; Schmitt, 2008: 292-293; Myers-Scotton, 2006:9), raising the pivotal question: Was English literacy instruction in the foundational phase designed to nurture communication skills and prepare learners for its application as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in Grade 4? Consequently, the researcher concurs with the notion that teachers must possess the requisite teaching skills and continuously advance their professional development to integrate new methodologies into their classrooms effectively.

Nel and Muller (2010) highlight the importance of educators in creating a multilingual classroom environment where all learners can participate actively, regardless of their native languages. This requires teachers to possess a deep understanding of L2 acquisition principles and to implement strategies that address the specific needs of English language learners. Riley (2009) further suggests that aligning the beliefs and expectations of both educators and learners can foster a positive learning environment, enhancing L2 acquisition.

Additionally, Kuzborska (2011) emphasizes the significance of educators' proficiency across various domains to support L2 learners effectively. These domains include expertise in second language acquisition theories, proficiency in both the native language and English, understanding socio-cultural influences on learning, and employing effective pedagogical strategies for L2 instruction. Educators also need skills in informal assessment methods to track learners' progress, particularly in language and literacy development, and strategies for engaging with culturally and linguistically diverse families and communities.

Researchers, scholars, and educators have grappled with the complex task of identifying strategies and best practices to mitigate these challenges and ensure learners effectively acquire English language skills during the Intermediate Phase. However, there is a shortage of teaching strategies to address the challenges of using English as the LoLT in IP classrooms. Therefore, the study explores the challenges of using English as a LoLT in Intermediate Phase Buffalo City classrooms and devises strategies to address these challenges.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How do the identified challenges affect learners' academic performance and engagement in the classroom?
2. What strategies can be used to overcome challenges teachers face when using English as LoLT in the EFAL IP classrooms?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Language Policy and Planning (LPP) is used as a theoretical framework for this study, especially regarding bilingual education and language-in-education policy. *Language Policy and Planning* is a theoretical framework that explores the complex interplay between language choices, educational policies, and their practical implementation (Ricento, 2006). In the context of this study, it is essential to understand the (IP) classrooms in Buffalo City. This framework will help in understanding the challenges

of implementing English as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) and the strategies to address them in the specific context of Buffalo City.

LPP enables examining language shift and maintenance within specific contexts (Ricento, 2006). When interpreting the data, the researcher explored patterns of language use over time and the factors contributing to language continuity or change. Moreover, LPP involves an examination of language ideologies, which are beliefs and attitudes about languages and their use. When interpreting data, the researcher can analyze how language ideologies influence language choices, policies, and the social dynamics surrounding language use.

The Bilingual Education Policies will help investigate the language-in-education policies in Buffalo City and South Africa; this includes understanding the official language status of English and policies related to multilingualism and the role of learners' home languages. Bilingual education policies often emphasize equal educational opportunities for students from diverse linguistic backgrounds (Goldenberg, 2008). When interpreting data on teaching strategies, it will assess whether the strategy contributes to equitable learning access for all students, irrespective of their language backgrounds. According to Goldenberg (2008), bilingual education policies may address the need for teacher preparation and ongoing professional development. Through data interpretation the researcher was able to understand if teachers are adequately prepared to implement teaching strategies that enhance the use of English as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT).

Therefore, the Language Policy and Planning framework provides a comprehensive perspective for understanding the challenges of using English as the LoLT in IP Buffalo City classrooms and identifying strategies to address them within the context of language policies and educational planning. The bilingual policy framework provides a structured approach to analyzing and understanding the impact of teaching strategies on implementing English as the LoLT in the intermediate phase at Buffalo City.

RESEARCH PARADIGM

A research paradigm is a framework that reflects a specific research community's underlying beliefs, assumptions, and methodologies. It guides how researchers understand and investigate reality, shaping the epistemological, ontological, and methodological dimensions of a study (Goduka, 2012:126). This study is situated within the interpretivist paradigm, which is fundamentally concerned with understanding the subjective experiences and meanings individuals attach to their world.

The interpretivist paradigm, as articulated by Burrell and Morgan (1979), encompasses a range of approaches rather than a single, unified perspective. This diversity allows for a rich exploration of human experiences, emphasizing the complexity and multiplicity of social reality. Interpretivism rejects the notion of a single, objective reality, instead acknowledging that knowledge is constructed through social interactions and individual perceptions (Creswell, 2013; Nieuwenhuis, 2007).

In adopting an interpretivist stance, this research seeks to explore the nuanced experiences of teachers implementing English as a First Additional Language (EFAL) in their classrooms. Unlike paradigms that rely on predefined variables and hypotheses, interpretivism emphasizes understanding phenomena from the perspective of those experiencing them. As Kaplan and Maxwell (1994) suggest, the focus is on the process of sense-making as it naturally occurs, without imposing external frameworks.

Willis (1995) highlights that interpretivism is grounded in epistemological and ontological pluralism, recognizing the existence of multiple, co-existing realities. This pluralistic approach is particularly suited to educational research, where the experiences and practices of teachers can vary widely based on context, culture, and individual perspectives. By employing interpretivism, this study aims to capture the richness and diversity of these experiences, providing a deeper understanding of the challenges and strategies involved in EFAL instruction.

As a researcher within this paradigm, my role involves engaging deeply with participants, listening to their stories, and interpreting their insights. This engagement allows for a co-construction of knowledge, where teachers articulate their practices and the meanings, they ascribe to them (Mertens, 2014). Through close observation

and dialogue, this study aims to illuminate the lived experiences of EFAL teachers, shedding light on effective teaching strategies and the contextual factors that influence their implementation.

In conclusion, the interpretivist paradigm provides a robust framework for exploring the subjective and contextual dimensions of teaching practices. It enables a comprehensive understanding of how EFAL teachers navigate their instructional challenges and develop strategies to enhance language learning. By embracing the interpretive approach, this research contributes to a deeper, more nuanced understanding of educational practices in diverse settings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Significance of the Transition to English LoLT in South African Education.

In the South African educational landscape, the transition from the Home Language (HL) to English as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in the Intermediate Phase (IP) is a crucial juncture in learners' academic journey. This shift necessitates developing English proficiency and acquiring essential cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). As such, educators are tasked with preparing learners to effectively learn subjects like mathematics and science in a language that is often not their mother tongue (Wray, 2006).

Historical Context and Language Policies

The historical legacy of apartheid significantly influences language policies in South African education (Heugh, 2007). Post-apartheid, there has been a shift towards inclusivity and equal opportunities, impacting the adoption of English as a medium of instruction (Jansen, 2009). However, this transition is not without challenges, as the historical legacy continues to shape linguistic dynamics within classrooms (Makalela, 2011). Mesthrie (2010) states South Africa's linguistic diversity is crucial to EFAL instruction. Teachers grapple with students with varying levels of language proficiency in English and other languages (Mesthrie, 2010). The challenge lies in designing strategies that accommodate this linguistic diversity and foster language development for all students (Buthelezi, 2016).

Teacher Preparation and Professional Development

Effective teacher preparation is crucial in overcoming challenges in EFAL instruction. Teachers need training emphasising bilingual pedagogy, cultural sensitivity, and strategies for managing linguistic diversity (Creese & Blackledge, 2010). Ongoing professional development is vital, ensuring teachers stay abreast of evolving language policies and teaching methodologies (Makalela, 2011). Implementing effective EFAL teaching strategies is a central challenge.

Integrating Language Across the Curriculum

Cummins (2008) advocates for the integration of language across the curriculum to enhance language proficiency. Teachers must employ interactive and contextually relevant strategies that cater to the diverse needs of students (Makalela, 2011). Assessing language proficiency and academic achievement in a multilingual context presents unique challenges. Kamwangamalu (2010) stresses the importance of developing fair and culturally sensitive assessment practices. Striking a balance between standardized assessments and contextually relevant evaluations becomes a critical consideration for teachers.

Importance of Laying a Solid HL Foundation for L2 Acquisition

Numerous studies emphasize the significance of laying a solid foundation in learners' HL for successful second language acquisition (Geva & Zadeh, 2006). In South Africa, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) recognizes the importance of EFAL (English as a First Additional Language). It underscores its role in enhancing reasoning, critical thinking, and communication skills (DBE, 2011). As delineated by Harmer (2007), a language usage strategy encompasses a theoretical framework concerning the nature of language, its utilization, and its consequential influence on classroom practices. This framework offers a rationale for instructional decisions and clarifies how language is employed while providing a template for language proficiency. Harmer underscores the significance of recognizing the diversities among individual learners within a classroom setting. The author contends that a uniform approach may not be suitable for all learners, necessitating educators to tailor their teaching methods according to learners' distinct aptitudes by incorporating diverse instructional strategies.

Conversely, Rose (2015) points to a certain vagueness in defining pivotal concepts in language education. Macaro (2006) introduces further debate, highlighting the

absence of consensus regarding whether language learning strategies are intrinsic or extrinsic to cognitive processes and if they encompass knowledge, intention, action, or a combination of all three. Ambiguities persist concerning the universality of these strategies across various learning circumstances, tasks, and contexts, thus raising questions about their integration with, or supplementation to, language processing.

Innovative Bilingual Practices and Scaffolding Techniques

Academics have consistently emphasized re-evaluating pedagogical methodologies to address these challenges. The national Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) advocates using English as a primary medium for cognitive processes and effective communication (DBE, 2011). This policy mandates a shift in educators' approaches and resourcefulness (Al Asmari, 2016; Uzunboylu & Selcuk, 2016). The English across the Curriculum (EAC) strategy aims to integrate content subjects with language learning, emphasizing a content-based approach to language instruction (DBE, 2013). Prominent researchers, exemplified by Clegg and Afitska (2011), have recognized the essential requirement for "innovative bilingual practices" when classrooms lack a shared language of instruction. This underscores the pivotal role of teachers' adaptability and resourcefulness in facilitating language acquisition within multilingual educational settings.

Landsberg et al. (2011) have introduced the concept of scaffolding techniques, encompassing methods such as repetition, personalized attention, and diverse instructional approaches aimed at systematically guiding learners towards a more profound comprehension and increased self-sufficiency in their learning journey. In these teaching approaches, teachers offer incremental layers of temporary support to assist English-speaking learners in attaining higher comprehension and skill acquisition levels that would be challenging without personalized assistance (Rothenberg & Fischer, 2007). As outlined by Landsberg et al. (2011:82), one specific scaffolding technique entails instructors presenting learners with a simplified version of a lesson, assignment, or reading material, progressively increasing its complexity over time. Another method involves educators employing various explanations or illustrations of a concept, problem, or process to ensure a comprehensive grasp of the subject (Landsberg et al., 2011).

Code-Switching and Code-Mixing

Teachers resort to various methods, such as code-switching and code-mixing, to enhance learners' comprehension and active participation during lessons. These methods, which involve the combined use of the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) and learners' first language (L1), are influenced by teachers' perspectives on these strategies and their language proficiency. Typically, teachers employ code-switching and code-mixing to compensate for their limited command of the LoLT, as evident in the research conducted by Banda, Mostert, and Wikan (2012). In many instances, teachers find themselves compelled to employ code-switching and code-mixing, as reflected in a statement from Mwinsheikhe's research (2003:97): "I was compelled to switch to the learners' L1, Kiswahili, due to a sense of helplessness stemming from my inability to make learners understand the subject matter when using English."

As explained by Bock and Mheta (2014), the audiolingual method utilizes a systematic approach that involves repetitive instruction to aid learners in acquiring the language of learning and teaching (LoLT). This method concentrates on promoting the mechanical formation of habits through the repetition of basic language patterns. Furthermore, Bock and Mheta (2014) clarify the concept of code-switching, wherein more than one language is employed within a single communicative context to emphasize points, restate information, offer clarification, or facilitate translation.

Translanguaging as the “silent way method”

Furthermore, a non-verbal modelling approach, often called the "silent way method," is employed for teaching the LoLT to second language (L2) learners. In this method, teachers intentionally minimize their verbal interactions, allowing learners to actively explore and construct language rather than passively memorizing and repeating what is taught (Landsberg et al., 2011). For instance, the teacher may point to various phonemic symbols on a chart, model their pronunciation, and then signal the learners to reproduce the sounds. García and Wei (2014) introduce translanguaging as an educational approach that leverages multiple languages in a single learning activity, allowing students to use their entire linguistic repertoire to make sense of content and communicate effectively. This approach promotes cognitive and linguistic flexibility,

helping learners to acquire a second language while using their first language as a scaffold. This approach promotes cognitive and linguistic flexibility, allowing learners to leverage their first language (L1) skills while acquiring a second language (L2).

Collaborative and Inclusive Educational Practices

Gibbons (2006) underscores the value of pair work as a highly effective classroom technique for promoting the use of the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) among second language (L2) learners. This approach encourages L2 learners to engage with the LoLT to the greatest extent possible. Friend and Cook (2009) emphasize that collaboration plays a pivotal role in inclusive education, highlighting the significant impact that arises when parents and teachers work in partnership within early education settings. Such collaboration substantially contributes to a child's overall development. Homework assignments allow learners to reinforce and practice the content taught in class. By assigning regular homework to L2-speaking learners, teachers provide them with increased opportunities to enhance their language fluency while engaging with the subject matter (Callahan, Rademacher & Hildreth, 1998). Consequently, homework must be thoughtfully designed and presented to support parents in facilitating the learning process for their second language learners.

Collaboration Between Parents and Teachers

Acquiring a deeper understanding of learners' backgrounds enables teachers to provide tailored support, enhancing language proficiency and academic performance (Wyse & Jones, 2008; Pickering, 2003). Addressing challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, limited resources, and diverse learner backgrounds requires innovative teaching strategies (Maseko, 2021). Wyse and Jones (2008) strongly emphasise encouraging learners to apply the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) outside the classroom to enhance their proficiency in the instructional language. Landsberg et al. (2011) stress the significance of promoting LoLT usage within the classroom, asserting that improving sentence construction skills involves consistent LoLT utilization. They propose addressing recurrent sentence construction errors by discussing the correct approach to illustrating proper language usage and structure. In contrast, Haslam, Wilkin, and Kellet (2005) argue that concepts and ideas can be

effectively developed in any language, not necessarily limited to the LoLT, which, in this context, is English.

Challenges and Recommendations

Uys van der Walt, van den Berg, and Botha (2007) acknowledge that not all teachers are proficient in the Home Language (HL) of learners instructed in English as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT). To tackle this challenge, teachers might seek support from learners proficient in HL to translate instructions and content for peers whose LoLT is English. While considering the merits of this approach, it's crucial to consider Fleisch's (2008) apprehension that code-switching may prevent learners from fully grasping the language used for assessment, potentially leading to academic difficulties. In addressing Minister Motshekga's apprehensions about the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) serving as an impediment to learning, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) has created two manuals: "Manual for Teaching English across the Curriculum 2013" and "Manual for Teaching English across Curriculum: Book 2." The English across the curriculum (EAC) strategy aims to seamlessly incorporate the teaching of content subjects with language learning, emphasizing a content-based approach to language instruction within the South African context.

In conclusion, the transition to English as the LoLT in IP classrooms poses unique challenges that require innovative teaching strategies. Educators need to navigate the intricate landscape of multilingualism, limited resources, and diverse learner backgrounds to foster English proficiency and academic success. This literature review highlights the existing gaps and challenges in English FAL education and sets the stage for further exploration into effective teaching strategies to address these issues.

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Research Approach

This study will employ a qualitative research approach, chosen for its appropriateness in yielding descriptive data necessary for addressing the research question (Patton, 2015). Qualitative research allows a detailed exploration of teachers' perspectives, experiences, and beliefs regarding using English as the LoLT. This is essential for understanding the lived experiences of educators in Buffalo City (Merriam, 2009). Moreover, A qualitative approach is well-suited for gaining a nuanced understanding

of the specific cultural, linguistic, and educational context of Buffalo City, aligning with the need to consider local factors influencing the effectiveness of teaching strategies (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

According to Patton (2015), Teaching strategies are often complex and context-dependent. Qualitative methods, such as interviews and observations, will enable me to capture the intricacies of these strategies and how they unfold in real classroom settings. In addition, qualitative research allows for an emergent research design, providing flexibility to adapt to the evolving needs of the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2017); this is crucial when exploring teaching strategies, which may reveal unexpected themes and insights during the course of the research.

According to Merriam (2009), qualitative research generates rich, descriptive data beyond numerical measures. So, this type of data is valuable for constructing a holistic narrative of the teaching and learning process, as it will offer me insights into the contextual factors shaping instructional practices in IP EFAL classrooms. Qualitative methods are particularly adept at capturing unseen phenomena and uncovering hidden patterns. In teaching strategies, this approach helps identify innovative and effective practices that may not be immediately evident in quantitative data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Merriam (2009) asserts that qualitative findings can potentially inform educational policies and practices by providing context-specific recommendations. Thus, this aligns with the practical application of research findings to enhance English as the LoLT in Buffalo City classrooms (Merriam, 2009).

Interviews and observations served as the primary data collection method, allowing for retrieving information about teachers' utilization of strategies and providing insights into the rationale underpinning their selection and implementation of these strategies. Qualitative interviews were used because they directly explore teacher perspectives, experiences, and beliefs (Merriam, 2009). By engaging teachers in conversations, the researcher is able to uncover valuable insights into their attitudes towards teaching strategies and their challenges (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Classroom observations are valuable for uncovering implicit teaching practices that might not be explicitly stated during interviews (Patton, 2015). By observing actual classroom dynamics, the researcher was able to identify strategies teachers employ in practice, shedding light on the implicit aspects of their instructional methods.

Teaching strategies are dynamic and context-dependent (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Utilizing both interviews and observations allows researchers to capture the evolving nature of strategy in real time, acknowledging the fluidity of instructional practices within the classroom setting.

In summary, the qualitative approach is justified for its ability to provide in-depth insights into teacher perspectives, contextual nuances, and the complexity of teaching strategies, ultimately contributing to the development of informed recommendations for enhancing English as the LoLT in Buffalo City's Intermediate Phase. The objectives of the study focus on identifying and evaluating the strategies teachers use to address these challenges. Through qualitative methods such as interviews and classroom observations, the researcher can explore the effectiveness and practicality of various teaching approaches. This detailed examination allows for a nuanced understanding of how these strategies are implemented and their impact on teaching and learning processes. The qualitative approach enables the researcher to capture the contextual factors that influence the success or failure of these strategies.

Research Design

The research design is premised on recognising that multiple subjective realities exist, which the researcher aims to comprehend comprehensively. This comprehension will be achieved by closely observing how teachers in various contexts employ strategies to tackle the challenge of using English as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in their classrooms, as articulated by Holliday (2007). The primary objective is to gain insight into the diverse strategies teachers employ, assess their efficacy in addressing the challenges inherent to teaching in English as the LoLT, and discern the impact of these strategies on teachers' attitudes, awareness, and readiness in dealing with linguistically diverse learners. A case study was deemed the appropriate research design for this study.

In the context of this study, a case study design refers to a research approach that involves an in-depth and detailed examination of a specific case or cases, such as a particular group of teachers or classrooms (Yan, 2014), within the Intermediate Phase schools in Buffalo City. This design allows the researcher to thoroughly investigate and understand the complexities and nuances of the chosen case, mainly focusing on the teaching strategies employed to enhance the use of English as the Language of

Learning and Teaching (LoLT) (Maree, 2012; Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995), which can be achieved through interviews and observations. Case study can capture the perspectives and experiences of teachers directly. Therefore, a case study design was relevant to this study as it allowed for a nuanced exploration of teaching strategies in the context of the Intermediate Phase at Buffalo City. It provided valuable insights for both theory and practice in language education.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The sampling strategy for this study involved purposive sampling to select six English First Additional Language (FAL) teachers from the Intermediate Phase at Buffalo City. Purposive sampling was chosen to ensure that participants had specific characteristics relevant to the research questions. The criteria for participant selection included teaching experience of teachers with a minimum of 1 year of experience teaching English FAL in the Intermediate Phase. This criterion ensured that participants had sufficient experience and insights into the teaching strategies and challenges specific to this educational level. Furthermore, participants were required to have at least a Bachelor of Education degree or an equivalent qualification. This ensured that the teachers had formal training in educational theories and practices.

Diversity of school contexts consisted of teachers from various schools within Buffalo City, including urban, peri-urban, and rural settings. This criterion aimed to capture a wide range of teaching contexts and student demographics. Teachers who expressed a willingness to participate in the study and provide in-depth insights into their teaching practices and experiences were selected.

The rationale for selecting these criteria is rooted in the need to gather rich, context-specific data from knowledgeable and experienced educators. Experienced teachers are likely to have developed and refined various teaching strategies over time, providing valuable insights into effective practices and common challenges. Including teachers from diverse school contexts allows for a comprehensive understanding of how different environments influence teaching strategies and learner outcomes.

Several potential biases may arise from this sampling strategy. The reliance on purposive sampling could introduce selection bias, as the sample is not random and may not represent the broader population of English FAL teachers in Buffalo City. This

could affect the generalizability of the findings. Moreover, teachers who volunteer to participate might have a particular interest in the subject matter or may have distinct experiences and perspectives compared to those who do not volunteer. This self-selection could skew the data towards more proactive or reflective practitioners. While including teachers from diverse school contexts aims to mitigate this, but it is still possible that the specific environments and resources of the selected schools could influence the findings, making them less applicable to different settings.

The small sample size of six teachers limits the ability to generalize the findings to all English FAL teachers in Buffalo City or beyond. However, the in-depth qualitative data obtained can provide valuable insights into specific teaching practices and experiences. On the other hand, the study is confined to Buffalo City, and the findings may not be applicable to other regions with different socio-economic and linguistic profiles. Moreover, the data collection is cross-sectional, capturing a snapshot of teaching strategies and experiences at a particular point in time. Longitudinal studies could provide more comprehensive insights into how teaching strategies evolve over time. Lastly, the presence of the researcher during interviews and classroom observations could potentially influence the behavior of participants, leading to responses or actions that are not entirely reflective of their typical practices.

The data collection process for this study was designed to gather comprehensive insights into the teaching strategies used to enhance English as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in the Intermediate Phase at Buffalo City. Data was collected qualitatively through in-depth interviews conducted with six English FAL teachers to gain insights into their teaching strategies, experiences, and challenges. Interviews were used because they provided a platform for teachers to articulate the rationale behind their strategy selection. Understanding the thought processes and motivations guiding specific strategies is crucial for developing a nuanced picture of instructional decision-making (Merriam, 2009). Classroom observations will also be conducted to understand the practical application of teaching strategies. Observations allow researchers to capture non-verbal cues, such as body language and classroom dynamics, providing additional layers of understanding beyond what may be conveyed in interviews alone (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Both interviews and observations facilitate an emergent research design, allowing researchers to adapt their approach based on evolving insights (Creswell & Poth,

2018). This flexibility is particularly valuable in exploring teaching strategies that may reveal unexpected dimensions during the study.

Figure 2.1: Sample of observation tool

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FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Department of Languages and Social Sciences

Title: Enhancing implementation of strategies to employ English as LOLT in Intermediate Phase Buffalo City classrooms

OBSERVATION TOOL

Participant M. [redacted] Observation number [redacted] Date 14/08/2023

Venue: Berlin Primary School	
Time 12:15	
Participant P. [redacted]	
Researcher's role	To observe challenges of using English as LOLT and to identify teaching strategies implemented.
Descriptive notes of the researcher (During observation):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learners are interacting using English. - Learners responded well to questions posed. - Learners reading was coherent and good. - Resources were used such as textbooks and learners were able to interpret the short story because of pictures. - The teacher used the teacher centred approach at the beginning of the lesson to guide learners on what to do, but shifted to learner centred approach as time went by to allow learners to read themselves.
Reflection:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The teaching strategy that the teacher used worked perfectly for this lesson. - Learners were all engaged and were using English as LOLT throughout the lesson. Learners read the short story with comprehension. - Teacher used a combination of learner centred and teacher centred approach and it worked very well because learners engaged well. Also using the pictures to activate learners thinking helped because learners were brainstorming and consistently using English. - The lesson was so interesting, learners were excited and the teacher assessed learners understanding by giving them a classwork based on the short story.

Figure 2.2: Sample of interviews

Interview - 2 - M. [redacted] in Berlin Primary School

- Difficulties to express thoughts and ideas.
 - failure to fully explain everything in English.
 - Expressing fully in second
- Language barrier
 - Can't understand English
 - Comprehension
 - Expressing themselves
 - Struggle to write everything in English
 - fail to answer in English often ask to code switching.
- You can codeswitch, when you are trying to explain something.
 - Understanding what I'm saying to convey meaning.
- Learner centred approach - allows them to teach me, it allows them to think critical thinking.

Teacher centred - I have to finish the syllabus so I have to use the teacher centred at some point.
- I use CAPS as a guidance of what I must teach.

I implement CAPS, I follow topics given however, I don't follow the time frames. I focus on reading and language so, I am concerned with this mostly.

Qualitative data from interviews and classroom observations was analyzed thematically because thematic analysis allowed for an in-depth exploration of the data's patterns, themes, and meanings (Braun & Clarke, 2019), aligning with the objective of understanding the intricate details and nuances of teaching strategies in Buffalo City's Intermediate Phase. Moreover, thematic analysis is known for its flexibility and adaptability, making it suitable for various research questions and data types (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This flexibility aligns with the dynamic nature of qualitative data collected from interviews and classroom observations.

Thematic analysis encouraged the researcher to consider the entire data, promoting a holistic understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This is essential for capturing the complexity of teaching strategies, as revealed in interviews and observations. Lastly, using thematic analysis provided the researcher with a step-by-step approach, making it accessible and promoting transparency in the analytical process (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The steps include data familiarization, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing the report. Therefore, this method aligns with the research goals and promotes a systematic and transparent analysis of the complex data.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The study investigated the teaching strategies to address the challenges of using English as the LoLT in BCM IP classrooms. Codes were used, for example, P1 (Participant 1). Schools were categorised, for example, School A. The qualitative data from the interviews and observations were analyzed using thematic analysis. The researcher repeatedly read the interview transcripts to gain a comprehensive understanding of the content. Field notes from classroom observations were also reviewed in detail.

The data were systematically coded using an inductive approach. Initial codes were generated based on recurring patterns and significant statements related to teaching strategies and challenges. Codes were grouped into potential themes that represented broader patterns of meaning. Themes were identified based on their relevance to the research questions and the frequency and significance of the codes. The themes were reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately represented the data. This involved cross-checking themes against the original data to confirm their validity and coherence. Each theme was clearly defined and named to capture its essence. Detailed descriptions were developed for each theme, highlighting the key findings and supporting evidence from the data.

The final step involved writing a detailed report of the findings, including illustrative quotes from participants to provide rich, contextualized insights into the teaching strategies used in the Intermediate Phase at Buffalo City. The interpretation of findings involved contextualizing the themes within the broader literature on EFAL instruction

and identifying implications for practice and policy. The researcher compared the findings with existing studies to highlight similarities and differences and to draw conclusions about the unique challenges and effective strategies in Buffalo City. Recommendations for addressing these challenges were formulated based on the identified themes and the literature review.

Several ethical considerations were addressed throughout the study to ensure the protection of participants and the integrity of the research. Participants were fully informed about the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights, including the right to withdraw without penalty. Written consent was obtained before data collection. Participant confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing all data. Identifiable information was removed from transcripts, and pseudonyms were used in reporting the findings. Data were stored securely, accessible only to the researcher. The study was designed to minimize any potential harm or discomfort to participants. Questions were framed sensitively, and interviews were conducted in a respectful and non-intrusive manner.

The research proposal was reviewed and approved by an institutional ethics review board to ensure that the study adhered to ethical standards. To ensure research validity two data collection methods (interviews, and observations) were used to triangulate the findings, enhancing the validity and reliability of the results. Participants were invited to review the interview transcripts and preliminary findings to confirm the accuracy of the data and interpretations. This process helped to ensure that the findings accurately represented participants' perspectives. The researcher engaged in regular debriefing sessions with colleagues to discuss the research process, emerging themes, and interpretations. This provided an external check on the research process and helped to identify any potential biases.

Table 2.3: Biographic information

School	Participants	Age	Gender	Qualifications	Grades/(s) taught	Subjects taught	NOY teaching ENG	Teaching Experience
A	P1	36	Male	Bachelor of Education	4	English FAL&Maths	5	8
B	P2	26	Female	Bachelor of Education	Multigrade	All	3	4
C	P3	31	Male	PGCE	4& 5	Maths and English FAL	4	3
D	P4	47	Female	Foundation Phase Degree	3 and 4	English FAL, L/skills, Tech and NS	18	19
E	P5	40	Female	Bachelor of Education	4 and 5	English FAL, IsiXhosa HL & NS	10	12
F	P6	27	Female	Bachelor of Education	4	English FAL, Maths and SS	2	4

Interviews and an observation schedule were used to scrutinize Grade 4 teachers during English reading sessions. To enhance the study's validity, lesson presentations were observed, documenting the organic interactions between teachers and learners within the classroom context. The participants' responses were organized under distinct themes, subsequently analyzed, interpreted, and discussed as outlined below:

Table 2.4: Themes generated from data

Theme 1	Blended teaching
Theme 2	Visualisation (Visual Aids)
Theme 3	Communicative learning
Theme 4	Scaffolding
Theme 5	Co-operative teaching

Blended teaching

Findings show that two of the six teachers utilized the blended teaching strategy, effectively supporting the transition to English as a LoLT in IP classrooms. Blended teaching is a pedagogical approach that integrates technology, typically in the form of online learning resources and activities, with traditional classroom-based instruction (Horn & Staker, 2011). It aims to provide students with a more personalized and flexible learning experience, allowing them to access content and engage in activities online while benefiting from in-person interactions with instructors and peers (Picciano, 2016).

P2: "I enjoy using blended teaching because it allows for greater flexibility. Whenever I use it, my learners become engaged in the lesson, and they get access to resources. So, it works for me because even parents are involved, and they support it."

P6: "Using the blended teaching exposed me to more strategies because it encompassed a flipped classroom, which I never thought could work in IP. For example, I play online lesson videos on my laptop since we do not have projectors at my school. I make sure that the online videos have practical examples if I see learners do not understand, which is something I used to recommend to parents to do at home."

Figure 2.3: School F- Blended teaching



The findings agree with those of Graham (2006) that blended teaching and learning allow greater flexibility, student engagement, and access to resources. It can encompass a range of strategies, including flipped classrooms, online discussions, video lectures, and interactive simulations, and is continually evolving as technology and pedagogical research advance.

Visualization

Visualization has been recognized as a valuable teaching strategy in language instruction (Smith, 2017). Teachers in the Intermediate phase encourage visual aids because Grade 4 learners get interested and curious when they see what is being taught. They highlight using visual aids as one of the effective strategies even though some schools have limited resources to use this strategy fully.

Three out of six teachers used visualization as a strategy; they highlighted how using visual aids improved learners' comprehension.

P6: "In one of my English lessons, a learner described how visual aids, such as diagrams and images, helped them understand complex English concepts. One learner mentioned the pictures in our textbook make it easier to understand what the words mean."

Figure 2.4: School F, shows use of images to understand complex English concepts.



Figure 2.5: School E, using images



P3: "In my school because we are in a rural area and we lack resources, I bring art and pictures to give my learners a visual lesson."

Figure 2.6: School C- Informative pictures



P4: “During my lessons, I used a projector to play folklore, and my learners engaged and enjoyed the lesson.”

Figure 2.7: School D- Folklore lesson using a projector



Integrating visualization in EFAL Intermediate phase classes has potential benefits, such as improved comprehension and increased engagement. Teachers play a pivotal role in leveraging visualization effectively, but resource availability remains challenging. Recognizing the diversity of learning styles is important in tailoring the approach to individual student needs.

Communicative learning

Findings show that teachers used the communicative learning strategy in different ways. A communicative learning strategy, also known as communicative language teaching (CLT), is an approach to language education that emphasizes developing communication skills and using a language in real-life contexts (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). This approach is often used in language teaching and learning to prioritize the ability to use the language for effective communication rather than just focusing on grammar rules or isolated vocabulary.

CLT aims to teach students how to communicate effectively in real-world situations. The focus is on speaking, listening, reading, and writing in contexts that mirror everyday language use.

P2: “I encourage learners to speak more English and, most importantly, to speak it at home as well. Even us as teachers, we should normalize speaking English to these

learners even outside a lesson. On the other hand, I make them use the learner-centred approach because it allows them to practice the language more.”

P5: “In my English EFAL class, I make use of peer learning because it allows them to work in groups; when they work in groups, I lay strict rules that they must strictly speak English during their group discussions. So, this improves their communication skills and the practical use of language.”

A teacher explained that when using CLT, learners are encouraged to interact with their peers and the teacher. Activities often involve group work, discussions, role-plays, and other interactive tasks that require students to use the language to convey meaning.

P3: “I make sure that I create competition, not only during class discussions but even outside the school. I take them out to poetry competitions, reading competitions, orals, spelling bee and narrating.”

Teachers highlighted that CLT builds contextual learning. Language is taught in meaningful contexts. Students learn language through scenarios and situations that reflect real-life communication needs.

P6: “Sometimes I use learners as the centre of the lesson by asking questions that excite them. For example, can you stand in front and tell us about your December holidays.”

Communicative Language Teaching has been widely discussed and researched in the field of language education, and it has had a significant impact on language teaching practices. Adapting CLT principles to specific teaching contexts and learner needs for effective language instruction is essential.

Scaffolding

Findings from both the interviews and observations show that most teachers (participants) utilized the scaffolding teaching strategy positively. The concept of scaffolding is based on the idea that teachers provide temporary support and assistance to students as they learn, gradually reducing this support as students become more competent in a particular task or skill (Vygotsky, 1978). This strategy is often used to help students learn new concepts or develop new skills, providing them with the necessary assistance to succeed, but without doing the task.

The study findings assert with researchers that scaffolding promotes independence. The ultimate goal of scaffolding is to enable students to become independent learners who can successfully tackle tasks or concepts independently.

P5: *“Using scaffolding assisted me to limit learners from using their home language because I would force them to strictly present orals in English.”*

P4: *“In my English class, I sit down and let learners play games in English. For example, they play charades, where they become in charge of asking questions and scoring each other points. This game helps with vocabulary and exposes them to using English.”*

Teachers indicated that they like using scaffolding as a strategy because it often includes opportunities for feedback and reflection, helping students become aware of their learning process and encouraging metacognition.

P1: *“I always make sure I provide explanations to help my learners understand English concepts and complete tasks.”*

P3: *“When my learners improve and gain confidence in a task or concept, I then gradually reduce the level of support, allowing my learners to take on more responsibility for their learning.”*

Figure 2.8: School A, Learners listening to a task being explained.



Scaffolding is one of the strategies used by intermediate phase teachers and is believed to address the challenge of using English as a LoLT in IP classrooms.

Moreover, it is widely used in education, especially in areas such as literacy, mathematics, and second language acquisition (Vygotsky, 1978). It recognizes that responsive learners can benefit from guided support and that this support should be flexible and meet individual needs.

Co-operative teaching

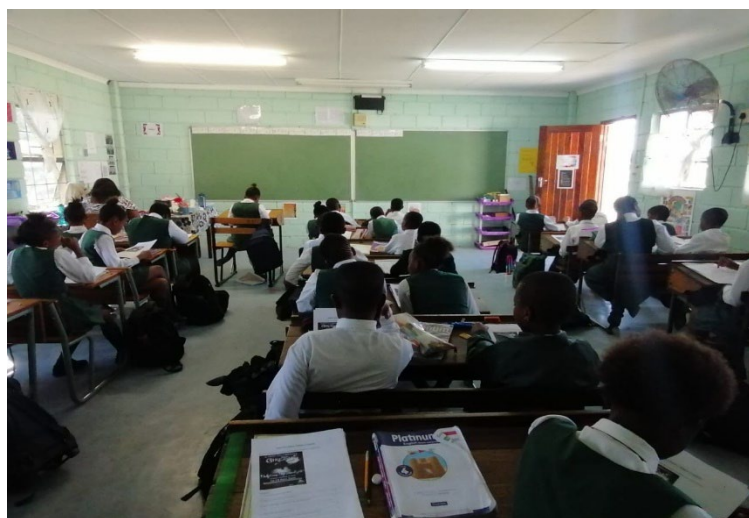
Co-operative teaching strategies were implemented by some Intermediate Phase (IP) teachers to foster collaborative learning environments (Friend & Cook, 2016). The aim was to encourage students to collaborate, share ideas, and collectively engage in learning (Holubec, 2013). Co-operative teaching promotes increased student interaction. Students are encouraged to interact with one another, fostering a collaborative learning environment (Johnson & Johnson, 2013). Co-operative teaching emphasizes student-to-student interaction, promoting peer learning and support.

Teachers indicated that they used cooperative teaching a lot in their classes, and they did not only limit it to learners working together but even themselves as teachers. They apply cooperative teaching, where they share the responsibilities of planning, instruction, and assessment. This collaboration allows teachers to leverage each other's strengths and expertise.

P5: "In my English classes, I introduced collaborative group work as a co-operative teaching strategy. I formed small groups of learners, each with diverse language proficiency levels. The groups worked on various tasks, such as brainstorming ideas for a story, analyzing texts, or even preparing short presentations. This not only facilitated peer-to-peer learning but also encouraged students to communicate and express themselves in English within their groups."

P6: "To promote co-operative teaching, I integrated interactive classroom discussions into my lessons. I encouraged learners to share their thoughts and opinions on English language topics. This not only improved their spoken English but also created a supportive environment where learners felt comfortable expressing themselves. Co-operative teaching through discussions allowed learners to learn from each other and build confidence in using English as a Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT)."

Figure 2.9: School E: Teacher facilitating learner discussion



Co-operative teaching in the IP phase emphasizes the importance of collaborative learning experiences, fostering a supportive atmosphere where students actively engage with the English language. Through these examples, teachers aimed to create dynamic classrooms that encourage students to interact, communicate, and learn collectively. Researchers such as Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec (2013) and educators like Friend and Cook (2016) have widely explored and discussed cooperative teaching in educational literature. These researchers highlight its positive impact on student learning outcomes and classroom dynamics.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Graham (2006) acknowledges blended teaching for flexibility, student engagement, and resource access, encompassing various strategies. Two out of six teachers utilized blended teaching, integrating technology with traditional instruction, effectively supporting the transition to English as a LoLT. Three out of six teachers used visualization, emphasizing visual aids to improve comprehension. Nevertheless, visualization in the EFAL Intermediate phase enhances comprehension and engagement (Smith, 2017), although resource availability poses challenges. On the other hand, teachers used CLT strategies, emphasizing English communication skills through peer learning and competitions. CLT promotes contextual learning, focusing on real-world communication needs (Kumaravadivelu, 2006) and aligning with teachers' strategies.

Moreover, most teachers used scaffolding positively, providing temporary support to promote learners' independence. Scaffolding promotes independence and metacognition, aligning with Vygotsky's (1978) concept and teachers' experiences. However, there were still challenges in other schools, such as limited language exposure, etc., even though the strategies some other teachers used shed light on the multifaceted challenges associated with the transition to English as the LoLT in South African Intermediate Phase classrooms.

The study identified limited language exposure as a prominent challenge during transitioning from the mother tongue to English as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT). This finding underscores the need for innovative teaching strategies that immerse learners in English. Educators must actively incorporate diverse methods to enhance language exposure, fostering a more comprehensive understanding and fluency.

Another critical challenge highlighted in the study is the deficiency in resources, including projectors, access to WIFI, and an adequate supply of textbooks. The lack of these resources impedes effective English language instruction. The study's recommendation for educators to seek support from school principals aligns with the imperative need for schools to invest in the necessary tools for quality language education.

The study recognizes the impact of socio-cultural influences on the transition to English as the LoLT. This aspect implies that cultural factors significantly shape learners' attitudes and receptiveness to the English language. Strategies to address this challenge should include culturally sensitive teaching approaches that resonate with the students' backgrounds, fostering a positive and inclusive learning environment.

The study strongly recommends implementing diverse teaching strategies for the identified challenges. These strategies should go beyond conventional methods and embrace innovative approaches that engage students actively. The emphasis on exposing learners to different teaching strategies underscores the dynamic nature of language acquisition and the need for tailored instructional methods.

The findings reveal diverse teaching strategies Intermediate Phase teachers in Buffalo City employ to enhance English as the LoLT. Blended teaching offers flexibility and

engagement, visualization aids comprehension despite resource challenges (Graham, 2006), CLT emphasizes communicative skills, and scaffolding fosters independence (Kumaravadivelu & Vygotsky, 2006). These strategies align with existing literature, demonstrating a tailored and context-specific approach to address the challenges of using English as the LoLT in IP classrooms.

The study's recommendation for teachers to seek support from school principals emphasizes the importance of a collaborative approach. Principals are pivotal in providing the necessary resources to facilitate effective English language instruction. Collaboration between teachers and school leaders is essential for creating an environment conducive to language learning.

All in all, the findings of this study shed light on the multifaceted challenges associated with the transition to English as the LoLT in South African Intermediate Phase classrooms. The recommended teaching strategies and collaborative efforts with school principals provide a roadmap for addressing these challenges and fostering an environment conducive to effective English language education. As language is a dynamic and evolving skill, ongoing adaptation of teaching methodologies is crucial for ensuring success in transitioning to English as the primary medium of instruction.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that teachers lack exposure to various teaching strategies that can address the challenge of using English as a LoLT. They are still glued to the teacher-centred approach, which becomes boring to learners when not mixed with other strategies. It also concludes that teachers do not have sufficient resources to support learners. Even though they want to try as many teaching strategies as possible, they are restricted by the lack of resources such as projectors, internet access (WIFI) and textbooks. Consequently, this does not address the challenges of using English as LoLT in IP.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that teachers expose learners to different teaching strategies to choose which works best for them, for example, blended teaching and visual aids. The researcher believes that learners become more curious and interested when they deal with practical or visuals. The study further recommends that teachers seek support from the principals to provide them with resources such as projectors, access to WIFI, and enough textbooks to use in class for effective English teaching. They must also incorporate a learner-centred approach. Lastly, the researcher would recommend that the DoE holds workshops with all IP EFAL teachers, where they exchange knowledge, ideas and effective strategies they could use to address their classroom challenges.

2.3 ARTICLE 3

Exploring the Impact of strategies used to address challenges of using English First Additional Language as a LoLT in IP classrooms.

ABSTRACT

Many students in schools within Buffalo City Metropolitan (BCM) encounter a language barrier in the educational setting. Students who cannot express themselves proficiently in their preferred language, typically their mother tongue, face a disadvantage and are less likely to achieve their full academic potential. This research investigation delves into the continual evaluation of the effectiveness and repercussions of the strategies implemented in teaching English as a First Additional Language (FAL) during the Intermediate Phase of education. The study aimed to shed light on the enduring effectiveness of instructional strategies employed in the context of FAL in previously identified IP classrooms in BCM, recognizing the crucial role of language proficiency in the academic journey of South African learners.

This study explored and revealed the impact of the strategies when implemented to address various challenges IP English teachers face in their classrooms during teaching and learning in Buffalo City Metro (BCM). It uses a qualitative research approach encompassing empirical data. Data is collected from questionnaires completed by the teachers. The target population is six primary schools in the BCM circuit that use English FAL as a LoLT from Grade 4. Categories are constructed from the study questions using a questionnaire template analysis technique. Data is presented in themes, tables, and categories developed from the research questionnaire. The findings of this research offer valuable implications for educational policymakers, practitioners, and researchers aiming to refine and optimize strategies in teaching and learning English FAL during the Intermediate Phase. Considering the persistent impact of instructional strategies, this study contributes to a more holistic and forward-thinking approach to language education, promoting academic excellence and proficiency among South African teachers.

Keywords: Strategies, English FAL, Intermediate phase, Reading and Writing skills, Language of learning and teaching (LoLT), Grade 4.

INTRODUCTION

The field of education is continually evolving, shaped by dynamic pedagogical approaches, diverse learner needs, and evolving curriculum requirements (Leach & Moon 2008). In this context, classroom strategies play a pivotal role in determining the quality and effectiveness of education. Within this landscape, English as a First Additional Language (FAL) instruction in the Intermediate Phase (IP) holds a unique position, given its importance in South African education (Al Asmari, 2016; Uzunboylu & Selcuk, 2016). The challenges and opportunities of teaching English FAL in IP classrooms are complex, and the effectiveness of instructional strategies employed in this context warrants close scrutiny.

Nonetheless, the Intermediate Phase, encompassing Grades 4 to 6 within the South African education system, represents a pivotal stage in the academic journey of learners. This phase signifies a crucial transition from education in their native language to achieving proficiency in English, a substantial shift with extensive consequences. In English First Additional Language (FAL) classrooms during the Intermediate Phase, effective instructional strategies are imperative for language mastery, academic success, and equitable access to educational opportunities. Various teaching strategies, such as task-based learning, collaborative learning, and communicative language teaching, can be applied in the English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom. Teaching approaches occupy a central role in teaching and learning, encompassing the knowledge and skills teachers must possess to make informed and justifiable decisions in the teaching process (Leach & Moon, 2008). Moreover, these effective approaches serve as the cornerstone for fostering active learning.

Nevertheless, learning a second language (L2) within multilingual settings often presents a more intricate challenge than language acquisition in alternative contexts, and this complexity arises from various underlying factors (Pitt, 2005). In these multilingual environments, existing communication patterns may perceive the introduction of a foreign language, particularly English, as a potential disruption to the already established system of interaction, particularly evident among child learners. The intricacies of literacy practices are further compounded by imbalanced linguistic relationships between the various languages employed (Asfaha & Kroon, 2011). This linguistic imbalance, in conjunction with contextual adjustments in the utilization of

standard languages (Pitt, 2005), leads to a propensity for linguistic adaptation and language amalgamation.

Grade 4 learners in the Intermediate Phase exhibit academic challenges stemming from their demanding transition from instruction in their native language to being educated in English (Wray, 2006). This transition is particularly arduous, leading to difficulties in various subjects, notably mathematics and science, attributed to a lack of cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) within the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT). Wray (2006) posited that effective strategies for achieving academic excellence in contexts where the target language is distanced from the learners' home language necessitate the concurrent development of comprehensive initiatives for productive L2 teaching and learning. This imperative underscores the need for a profound understanding of language acquisition processes to optimize educational outcomes in such linguistic transition phases.

Efforts to revamp the existing educational approach to language, marked by its academic inefficacy, inherent inequalities, and social controversies, must be explored and implemented. Educators embrace diverse pedagogical strategies and cultivate a welcoming classroom environment to tackle these challenges, creating a secure space conducive to learning and language development (Okrent, 2017). Moreover, the contemporary educational landscape is characterized by rapidly evolving pedagogical strategies, leading to the expedited obsolescence of knowledge across all academic disciplines, a trend well-documented in Kazu and Demiralp's research (2016). This evolution impacts the language field and has substantial implications for language instruction. An additional dimension is the acknowledgement of the complexity associated with teaching languages, as previously discussed in the works of Okrent (2017), Woods (1996), and Sapir (1929).

The South African Department of Education (DoE) places significant importance on First Additional Language (FAL), a critical subject. The DoE's Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) underscore the enhanced role of First Additional Language, particularly in the Intermediate Phase, focusing on its utilization for higher-order thinking and reasoning (DoE, 2011). Learners must elevate their cognitive academic skills to engage with subjects in the English language, such as science. Additionally, they are encouraged to explore literary works and cultivate their artistic and creative abilities in their second language (DoE, 2011). Language

educators must recognize that effective teaching and resourcefulness necessitate a substantial cognitive investment. This commitment entails ongoing professional development to enrich their pedagogical expertise, a principle articulated by Al Asmari (2016) and Uzunboylu and Selcuk (2016). In pursuing self-improvement, educators must also consider strategies to alleviate the challenges of using English FAL as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in Intermediate Phase (IP) classrooms.

As the educational landscape undergoes constant transformation, a follow-up examination of strategies is vital to ensure that they remain relevant, adaptable, and capable of addressing the unique challenges posed by IP English FAL instruction. This research seeks to offer valuable insights into the longevity and adaptability of instructional strategies and the factors influencing their sustained impact. Through an empirical and theoretical analysis, this study provides a foundation for enhancing and refining strategies in IP English FAL classrooms, contributing to the quality of education and language proficiency among South African learners.

This article explores the impact of strategies used in IP English FAL classrooms, offering a nuanced understanding of their effectiveness over time. By delving into the enduring implications of these strategies, this study addresses a critical gap in the literature, providing insights that can inform pedagogical practices, curriculum development, and educational policy. This section focuses on those strategies mentioned and observed that can promote effective pedagogy in intermediate phase EFAL classrooms. These are the insights that can be classified as good practice. However, the impact of each will differ based on context.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided the study:

1. Which teaching strategies are most effective in addressing the challenges of using English as the LoLT in EFAL IP classrooms?
2. How do the strategies employed by Intermediate Phase teachers in English EFAL classrooms impact learners' academic performance and language proficiency in the long term?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research adopts the Sociocultural Theory as its theoretical framework. Developed by Vygotsky (1978), Sociocultural Theory underscores the significance of social interaction, cultural context, and language in constructing knowledge and cognitive processes. The relevance of this theory is particularly evident in the domain of English as a First Additional Language (EFAL) instruction, where it places a robust emphasis on the role of language development and learning within social and cultural environments. In the context of learners' first language (L1) acquisition and its impact when they encounter a second language (L2), such as English, Sociocultural Theory offers critical insights. According to Vygotsky, cognitive development is deeply rooted in social interactions and is mediated by language (Vygotsky, 1978). This suggests that the proficiency level in L1 significantly influences how learners acquire and comprehend an L2.

Social Interaction

Aligned with Sociocultural Theory, the conceptualization of learning as a social process emphasizes its occurrence through interpersonal interactions. Vygotsky (1978) contends that learning is fundamentally social, attributing a pivotal role to social interaction in cognitive development. Specifically, within Intermediate Phase classrooms, the interweaving of social dynamics among teachers and learners, peer interactions, and collaborative learning activities significantly influence the progression of English language proficiency.

In environments where English is not commonly spoken outside of the classroom, learners have fewer opportunities to practice and reinforce their English skills. This limited exposure further hampers their ability to achieve proficiency in English (Taylor & Coetzee, 2013). Vygotsky's theory emphasizes the importance of social interactions and cultural tools in learning, suggesting that learners need ample opportunities to engage with English in meaningful contexts (Vygotsky, 1978).

This will help interpret data by allowing me to examine data through the lens of social interaction and help identify teaching strategies that foster language development through peer collaboration, discussions, and group activities.

Cultural Context

The cultural context in which learning takes place shapes the cognitive development of learners (Vygotsky, 1978). In the South African context, the diverse cultural backgrounds of learners, the historical and social context, and the use of English as an additional language all influence how learners acquire English language skills. In this study, data interpretation will consider the cultural context of EFAL classrooms. Strategies that align with learners' cultural backgrounds may be more effective in promoting language proficiency.

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

Vygotsky's (1978) ZPD concept suggests that learners can accomplish more with the support of a knowledgeable other, such as a teacher; this is particularly relevant in the study of teaching strategies in English EFAL classrooms, as the role of the teacher in scaffolding and supporting learners' language development is paramount. This helped with data interpretation, as the ZPD concept highlights the importance of assessing the impact of teaching strategies within the context of collaborative learning. Understanding how strategies facilitate collaboration and support learners within their ZPD informs their effectiveness.

Language as a Tool

Sociocultural Theory emphasizes the role of language as a tool for thought and communication (Vygotsky, 1978). According to Vygotsky (1978), learning is a social process, and social interaction plays a crucial role in cognitive development. In the context of English EFAL classrooms, the study of teaching strategies can benefit from examining how language is used to facilitate learning. So, analysing data through the lens of social interaction will help to identify teaching strategies that foster language development through peer collaboration, discussions, and group activities.

The transition to English as the LoLT in Grade 4 increases the cognitive demands on learners, especially those with limited L1 proficiency. According to Vygotsky (1978), cognitive development and conceptual understanding are mediated by language. Therefore, learners who are not proficient in their L1 are at a disadvantage when required to learn new concepts in English, as their cognitive load is increased (Spaull, 2019). Understanding the level of learners' L1 acquisition is essential for effectively implementing English as the LoLT. A strong foundation in the home language can

facilitate the learning of English, while deficiencies in L1 proficiency pose significant challenges.

By addressing these issues through the lens of Sociocultural Theory, educators and policymakers can better support learners' linguistic and academic development. Thus, sociocultural theory is deemed appropriate for this study. The framework provides a comprehensive perspective for examining the impact of teaching strategies in Intermediate phase English EFAL classrooms, considering the sociocultural and linguistic dynamics at play.

RESEARCH PARADIGM

A research paradigm encompasses the collective perspectives, attitudes, and methodologies that define a specific research community (Goduka, 2012:126). It shapes and elucidates the epistemological, ontological, and methodological elements essential to a particular study (de Jager et al., 2012; Bahari et al., 2010). This study adopts the interpretivist paradigm, which, as described by Burrell and Morgan (1979), comprises a range of paradigms rather than a single, unified one. Interpretivism focuses on understanding the world through the subjective experiences and meanings that individuals ascribe to their interactions and surroundings.

Unlike paradigms that rely on predefined dependent and independent variables, interpretive research seeks to understand the intricate and dynamic processes of human sense-making as they naturally occur (Kaplan & Maxwell, 1994). Willis (1995) emphasizes that interpretivists reject the notion of a singular, definitive method for acquiring knowledge, advocating instead for a pluralistic approach that acknowledges the existence of multiple realities and the construction of subjective knowledge (Creswell, 2013; Nieuwenhuis, 2007).

The interpretive approach is characterized by its emphasis on capturing the rich, detailed accounts of participants' lived experiences. According to Carson et al. (2001), this approach allows researchers to be guided by both emotions and reason, facilitating a deeper understanding of participants' narratives and perspectives. This paradigm recognizes that participants possess inherent knowledge and unique interpretations of events, and it seeks to understand specific contexts by applying suitable research methodologies.

In the context of this study, the interpretive paradigm is particularly fitting as it aims to explore and compare the teaching strategies employed by Intermediate Phase (IP) teachers in English First Additional Language (EFAL) classrooms. The researcher's role involves closely examining the strategies chosen by participants, gaining insights into their experiences, and analyzing the implementation of these strategies to achieve effective teaching outcomes. This approach enables First Additional Language (FAL) teachers to articulate their practices and attribute meaning to them, providing a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and successes encountered in their classrooms (Mertens, 2014).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The primary purpose of a literature review is to inform both the reader and the researcher. Expanding on this, Arshed and Dansen (2015:32) emphasize the importance of the literature review in a research study, as it furnishes essential information about the study's background and justifies the proposed research. In essence, the researcher extracts and synthesizes critical statements, findings, and issues relevant to the research study's focus through a critical review of existing literature (Nunan, 2003).

Teaching English as a First Additional Language (EFAL) in Intermediate Phase (IP) classrooms is essential in South African education. The impact of strategies teachers employ in these classrooms is a topic that has gained prominence within the educational discourse. This literature review provides an overview of critical studies and findings related to the impact of instructional strategies used by Intermediate Phase teachers in their English EFAL classrooms.

The Importance of English as a First Additional Language

The South African Department of Education (DoE) emphasises English as a First Additional Language within the IP curriculum (DBE, 2011). English is not only a means of communication but is regarded as a vital tool for reasoning, thinking, and the development of cognitive academic skills (DBE, 2011). To succeed in subjects like science, learners must enhance their cognitive abilities, and English is the medium through which they acquire and express their knowledge.

Challenges Faced in English EFAL Classrooms

Teaching English as a First Additional Language in IP classrooms presents educators with numerous challenges. Learners often struggle to adapt from being taught in their home language to English. This transition is particularly challenging in subjects that require a high level of cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), such as mathematics and science (DBE, 2011). Additionally, teachers must continually advance their expertise to provide effective instruction in the EFAL classroom (Al Asmari, 2016; Uzunboylu & Selcuk, 2016).

Addressing the Challenges

Teachers implement various instructional tools to address these challenges and create inclusive and supportive classroom environments. These efforts aim to foster a safe learning and language development space and facilitate effective communication between teachers and learners (Clegg & Afitska, 2011). However, today's changing nature of teaching and learning necessitates constantly evolving strategies (Kazu & Demiralp, 2016).

Literature shows that teaching strategies that focus on communication and collaboration can be very effective in helping learners learn English as a second language. For example, task-based learning, which involves giving learners specific tasks to complete in English, has improved learners' speaking, listening, and writing skills (Clegg & Afitska, 2011). Similarly, collaborative learning, which involves learners working together to complete tasks, has improved learners' motivation and engagement (Al Asmari, 2016; Uzunboylu & Selcuk, 2016).

A South Korean study by Park et al. (2018) comprehensively examined collaborative learning in language acquisition. Their research revealed that learners who engaged in collaborative tasks exhibited enhanced problem-solving skills and superior English language communication abilities compared to their counterparts who undertook individual studies. These findings underscore the efficacy of collaborative learning as a potent approach to teaching English as a second language. In South Africa, research by Smith et al. (2019) focused on teaching strategies in English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms. Their investigation illuminated the advantages of employing communicative language teaching strategies. Teachers who integrated these strategies into their ESL instruction witnessed substantial advancements in their

learners' English language proficiency compared to their counterparts who adhered to traditional teaching methodologies.

A noteworthy investigation by researchers at Stellenbosch University (van der Merwe et al., 2017) offers compelling insights into the efficacy of task-based learning strategies in the classroom. The study's findings illuminate those educators who integrated task-based approaches witnessed heightened learner engagement and motivation. Moreover, learners exposed to such strategies exhibited the development of critical thinking skills and a greater propensity for independent learning. These revelations underscore the instrumental role of task-based learning in fostering both learner enthusiasm and intellectual autonomy. In a parallel South African study, researchers from the University of the Western Cape (Mkhize et al., 2018) explored the impact of teaching strategies on learners' literacy development. Their research indicated that a combined approach encompassing communicative language teaching and task-based learning significantly improved learners' reading and writing proficiencies. Furthermore, the learners exposed to this teaching methodology were observed to cultivate a more positive attitude towards the English language.

A comprehensive investigation by researchers at the University of Pretoria (Smith et al., 2020) brings to the forefront the pivotal role of instructional strategies in language acquisition. Their study offers compelling insights, highlighting the potency of task-based approaches in enhancing learners' listening and speaking skills. This research is particularly intriguing due to its revelation that learners instructed through traditional methods exhibited a decline in their English language proficiency over time. The stark contrast between the outcomes of task-based instruction and conventional methodologies underscores the pronounced impact of teaching strategies on English as a Second Language (ESL) learners' language development. The corpus of research presented thus far consistently highlights the profound influence of teaching strategies on the language acquisition journey of ESL learners (Jones & Brown, 2019; White et al., 2017).

The impact of strategies Intermediate Phase teachers use in their English EFAL classrooms is a subject of substantial importance. Understanding the challenges and opportunities within this context and the strategy employed to overcome these challenges is crucial for enhancing language proficiency and academic success among South African learners. This literature review sets the stage for a

comprehensive investigation into the long-term impact of strategies used by Intermediate Phase teachers in English EFAL classrooms.

METHODOLOGY

The research will adopt a qualitative approach. The qualitative approach is suitable because it will provide descriptive data to answer the research question. This approach allows for a comprehensive exploration of the impact of teaching strategies in Intermediate phase English EFAL classrooms. Questionnaires will be used to elicit information on teachers' use of strategies to understand the reasoning behind their choice or implementation and to check the effectiveness of these strategies so that they can be shared/recommended to other IP EFAL teachers.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH

This article is grounded in a qualitative research methodology that comprehensively explores uncharted territory (Martella et al., 2013). Qualitative research offers a means to uncover additional insights into the unknown. As Creswell and Poth (2017) defined, the qualitative approach is a method where researchers formulate assertions about knowledge primarily rooted in constructivist perspectives. Furthermore, qualitative research centres on real-world contexts and non-manipulative environments.

The qualitative research method predominantly focuses on comprehending the context in which behaviour unfolds beyond mere observation of its prevalence (Martella et al., 2013). Opting for the qualitative approach provides flexibility and systematic methodologies to grasp the qualities of occurrences within the social context of the participants. Furthermore, the qualitative approach adopts a holistic perspective on events, enabling a comprehensive examination of the research process and outcomes. Hence, my interpretation of EFAL teachers' utilization of strategies will be rooted in their experiences in the English classroom, as revealed through the questionnaires.

Questionnaires will serve as a primary data collection method because they provide a structured and standardized approach to collecting data. Moreover, questionnaires afford participants a level of anonymity, promoting honest responses. Participants may be more inclined to share their genuine experiences, opinions, and perceptions without the potential influence of external factors contributing to the study's validity. Therefore, the study aims to assess the impact of teaching strategies in EFAL classrooms,

necessitating a systematic and comparable evaluation across a diverse range of participants. By employing a standardized set of questions, the research can ensure consistency in responses, allowing for a more rigorous and reliable analysis of the impact of strategies.

The objective is to evaluate the innovation of the strategies used. Qualitative research excels at exploring new and creative approaches within specific contexts. This hands-on approach provides insights into how teachers adapt and innovate in response to the challenges they face, highlighting best practices and areas for improvement.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design asserts that there are numerous subjective realities, and the researcher aims to achieve a profound understanding by contrasting how teachers in diverse contexts employ strategies to tackle the issue of using English as the LoLT in their classrooms (Holliday, 2007). A case study design was considered fitting for this study to facilitate this exploration.

In the context of this study, a case study design refers to a comprehensive and in-depth investigation of a specific case or cases within the English First Additional Language (EFAL) Intermediate Phase (IP) classrooms. This approach entails scrutinizing teachers' distinctive strategies to address challenges associated with utilizing English as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) and comprehending their impact on the learning environment (Maree, 2012; Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995). The objective is to comprehend the varied approaches employed by different teachers, evaluate their effectiveness in addressing challenges related to teaching English as LoLT in BCM, and ascertain how these strategies influence teachers' attitudes, awareness, and readiness to engage with linguistically diverse learners.

Therefore, a case study design is highly relevant for this study as it facilitates a focused and detailed examination of the impact of strategies used to address challenges in EFAL IP classrooms in Buffalo City, providing valuable insights for theory and practice in language education.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The data collection for this study on the impact of strategies used to address challenges in using English First Additional Language (EFAL) as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in Intermediate Phase (IP) classrooms was conducted through a multi-method approach to ensure a comprehensive understanding. Purposive sampling was employed to select six EFAL teachers from various schools within Buffalo City. This strategy ensured the inclusion of participants with relevant experience and insights into EFAL instruction. Participants were selected based on their teaching experience, professional qualifications, and willingness to participate in the study. This criterion ensured that participants had sufficient experience and insights into the teaching strategies and challenges specific to this educational level.

The rationale for selecting these criteria is rooted in the need to gather rich, context-specific data from knowledgeable and experienced educators. Experienced teachers are likely to have developed and refined various teaching strategies over time, providing valuable insights into effective practices and common challenges. Including teachers from diverse school contexts allows for a comprehensive understanding of how different environments influence teaching strategies and learner outcomes.

Several potential biases may arise from this sampling strategy. The reliance on purposive sampling could introduce selection bias, as the sample is not random and may not represent the broader population of English FAL teachers in Buffalo City. This could affect the generalizability of the findings. Moreover, teachers who volunteer to participate might have a particular interest in the subject matter or may have distinct experiences and perspectives compared to those who do not volunteer. This self-selection could skew the data towards more proactive or reflective practitioners. While including teachers from diverse school contexts aims to mitigate this, but it is still possible that the specific environments and resources of the selected schools could influence the findings, making them less applicable to different settings.

The small sample size of six teachers limits the ability to generalize the findings to all English FAL teachers in Buffalo City or beyond. However, the in-depth qualitative data obtained can provide valuable insights into specific teaching practices and experiences. On the other hand, the study is confined to Buffalo City, and the findings may not be applicable to other regions with different socio-economic and linguistic

profiles. Moreover, the data collection is cross-sectional, capturing a snapshot of teaching strategies and experiences at a particular point in time. Longitudinal studies could provide more comprehensive insights into how teaching strategies evolve over time.

A detailed questionnaire was developed to capture comprehensive data. The questionnaire included sections on demographic details, teaching strategies, challenges faced, and perceived impacts on learners. An in-depth analysis of the questionnaires completed by the six teachers was done to gain insights into their adoption of teaching strategies and experiences. Questionnaires efficiently collect a wide range of information from diverse participants (Beyman, 2016). By incorporating sections that explore demographic details, teaching strategies, challenges faced, and perceived impacts on learners, the questionnaire provides a holistic understanding of the multifaceted dynamics at play in EFAL classrooms, aligning with the assertion by Neuman (2014) that questionnaires are versatile instruments that can capture diverse dimensions of a research topic.

Figure 3.1: Questionnaire

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
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 FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Department of Languages and Social Sciences
 Title: Enhancing Implementation of strategies to employ English as LOLT in Intermediate Phase Buffalo City classrooms

QUESTIONNAIRE
 SECTION A: PERSONAL INFORMATION

Make a cross (x) next to the appropriate item

1. Age in years

21-25	<input type="checkbox"/>
26-30	<input type="checkbox"/>
31-35	<input type="checkbox"/>
36 and above	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

2. Gender

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

3. Qualifications

Bachelor of Education

1

The standardized format of questionnaires ensures consistency in data collection. The questionnaires were administered in person to facilitate immediate clarification of any questions, ensuring accurate and complete responses. All participants responded to

the same set of questions, minimizing the variability introduced by individualized interviews. This standardization not only facilitates ease of data analysis but also enhances the reliability of the findings (Bryman, 2016). Qualitative data from the questionnaires was analysed thematically. Thematic analysis was used because it is a flexible and widely used approach that allows researchers to systematically organize and interpret qualitative data, often text-based, to uncover meaningful patterns and insights. It familiarised the researcher with the data through repeated readings, gaining an overall sense of the content (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Themes related to teaching strategies, learner engagement, and challenges were identified.

The structured questionnaires were systematically administered to the selected EFAL teachers. Emphasis was placed on providing clear instructions to ensure uniformity in responses.

DATA INTERPRETATION AND FINDINGS

The findings reveal the numerous impactful strategies that were positively implemented and can be used by EFAL IP teachers and learners within the BCM environment. Questionnaires completed by the sample of six teachers show significant agreement about the strategies. The data analysis followed a systematic approach using thematic analysis to identify and interpret meaningful patterns within the data.

The researcher thoroughly read the questionnaire responses multiple times to gain a comprehensive understanding. An inductive coding approach was used to identify initial codes based on recurring patterns and significant statements related to teaching strategies and challenges. The initial codes were organized into potential themes representing broader patterns of meaning. Themes were identified based on their relevance to the research questions and the significance of the codes. Themes were reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately represented the data. This involved cross-checking themes against the original data to confirm their validity and coherence. Each theme was clearly defined and named to capture its essence. Detailed descriptions were developed for each theme, highlighting key findings and supporting evidence from the data.

A detailed report of the findings was written, including illustrative quotes from participants to provide rich, contextualized insights into the strategies used to address

challenges in using EFAL as LoLT in IP classrooms. The interpretation involved contextualizing the themes within the broader literature on EFAL instruction and identifying implications for practice and policy. The findings were compared with existing studies to highlight similarities and differences, drawing conclusions about the unique challenges and effective strategies in Buffalo City. Recommendations were formulated based on the identified themes and literature review.

With regards to ethical considerations, participants were fully informed about the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights, including the right to withdraw without penalty. Written consent was obtained before data collection. Participant confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing all data. Identifiable information was removed from transcripts. The study was designed to minimize any potential harm or discomfort to participants. Questions were framed sensitively. The research proposal was reviewed and approved by an institutional ethics review board to ensure adherence to ethical standards.

To ensure research validity, questionnaires were used to triangulate the findings, enhancing the validity and reliability of the results. The researcher engaged in regular debriefing sessions with colleagues to discuss the research process, emerging themes, and interpretations. This provided an external check on the research process and helped identify potential biases.

The data in table 2.5, reflects the participants and their biographic information which contributed to the findings which revealed the numerous impactful strategies that were positively implemented and can be used by EFAL IP teachers and learners within the BCM environment.

Table 2.5: Biographical information of the immediate phase EFAL teachers

School	Participants	Age	Gender	Qualifications	Grades/(s) taught	Subjects taught	NOY teaching ENG	Teaching Experience
A	P1	36	Male	Bachelor of Education	4	English FAL and Maths	5	8
B	P2	26	Female	Bachelor of Education	Multigrade	All	3	4
C	P3	31	Male	PGCE	4 and 5	Maths and English FAL	4	3
D	P4	47	Female	Foundation Phase Degree	3 and 4	English FAL, L/skills, Tech and NS	18	19
E	P5	40	Female	Bachelor of Education	4 and 5	English FAL, IsiXhosa HL and NS	10	12
F	P6	27	Female	Bachelor of Education	4	English FAL, Maths and SS	2	4

As indicated in Table 2.5, two male and four female teachers completed questionnaires. There was no attempt to balance the genders as the teachers were already employed and allocated EFAL as their teaching subject. Most participants were in their 30s and above 40s and had between two and 18 years of teaching experience. Four themes were generated from the findings and are presented in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6: Themes generated from findings reflecting effective strategies

Themes	Subthemes
1. Enhanced Language Proficiency	1.1. Improved Vocabulary Acquisition
	1.2. Enhanced Reading and Writing Skills
2. Enhanced Comprehension and Critical Thinking	2.1 Increased Comprehension Abilities:
	2.2 Improved Critical Thinking Skills
3. Enhanced Communication and Participation	3.1 Increased Student Participation
	3.2 Enhanced Oral Presentation
4. Positive Attitude and Motivation	4.1 Enhanced Motivation to Learn English
	4.2 Improved Attitude Toward English

Theme 1: *Enhanced Language Proficiency*

Improved Vocabulary Acquisition

The research findings revealed that the strategies employed in Intermediate Phase (IP) English FAL classrooms significantly contributed to enhanced vocabulary acquisition among students. Vocabulary-building techniques, such as word games and interactive lessons, played a pivotal role in expanding students' English language proficiency.

P2: "I made use of a game called 30 seconds as a vocabulary-building activity, and it was very effective. It aroused learners' curiosity, and their vocabulary improved as they learnt new words and their pronunciation from the game".

P3: "Learners were very interactive after reading a short story for them. They gave their opinions in English and took charge of the lesson."

Enhanced Reading and Writing Skills:

Many students exhibited notable improvements in their reading and writing skills. Strategies like guided reading sessions, writing workshops, and peer editing activities helped students develop their literacy skills and express themselves more effectively in written English.

P4: *“When I guide learners to read, I noticed that they get interested and eager to read. So, I make it a fun reading session by making them take turns in reading and it improves their reading skills. By the time I assess their understanding through a classwork, the writing flows.”*

Figure 3.2: School E- Reading



Theme 2: Enhanced Comprehension and Critical Thinking

Increased Comprehension Abilities

The utilization of comprehension strategies, such as questioning techniques and text analysis, had a positive impact on students' comprehension abilities. Students became more adept at understanding complex English texts, including academic materials.

P1: *“Doing a pre-reading activity, during reading activity, and post-reading activity increased my learners’ comprehension of the English language and had a positive impact in their answers.”*

P5: *“Adopting the use of a quiz after each listening comprehension works best for me. Learners answer the questions in the quiz and it helps me to keep track of their progress. And, this has a positive impact on their comprehension skills.”*

Improved Critical Thinking Skills

The research findings indicated that strategies aimed at promoting critical thinking, like open discussions and problem-solving activities, fostered higher-order thinking skills among students. They learned to analyse, evaluate, and interpret information in English more effectively.

P4: "Doing unplanned debates in my class helped to promote critical thinking because it allowed learners to openly discuss a particular topic using English language throughout."

P6: "I give my learners activities that challenge their thinking, like giving them a scenario and asking them to discuss solutions in groups. This has a positive impact because they become competitive and come up with ideas and present them in front of the class in English. This enhances their use of English as a LoLT."

Theme 3: *Enhanced Communication and Participation*

Increased Student Participation

Strategies focused on fostering student participation, such as collaborative group work and interactive classroom discussions, led to an increase in students' active engagement. Students were more willing to express themselves in English and participate in class activities.

P4: "I noticed a remarkable shift in student participation when I introduced collaborative group work and interactive discussions into my English classes. Initially, students were hesitant to speak in English, especially those who were still building their language proficiency."

P6: "During group activities, learners not only collaborated on tasks but also engaged in conversations in English. They were more willing to share their ideas and opinions with their peers. In interactive discussions, I observed a positive change in their confidence levels. Even the quieter learners started to express themselves more freely, contributing to the class discussions."

Figure 3.3: School D, collaborative group work



Enhanced Oral Communication

Speaking and listening strategies, including debates and presentations, significantly improved students' oral communication skills. They gained confidence in expressing their thoughts and ideas in English, leading to more effective communication.

Theme 4: Positive Attitude and Motivation

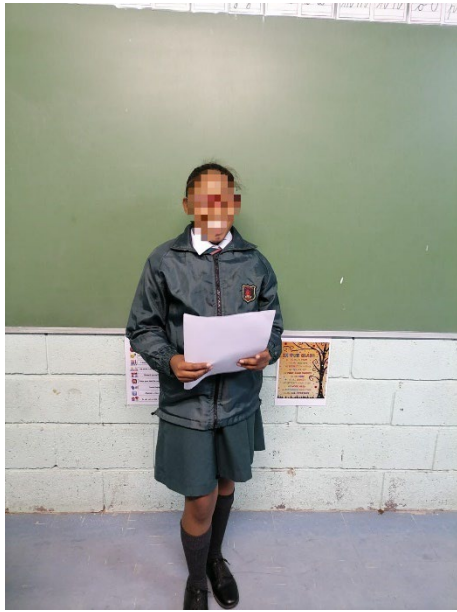
Enhanced Motivation to Learn English

The findings demonstrated that implementing motivational strategies, such as gamified learning activities and culturally relevant content, positively influenced students' motivation to learn English. Students displayed a greater interest in the language.

P5: "Recognizing the importance of fostering oral communication skills, I incorporated speaking and listening strategies into my English lessons. Debates and presentations emerged as powerful tools to enhance learners' ability to articulate their thoughts in English. Initially, many learners were reserved and hesitant, but as we progressed through these activities, I witnessed a transformative change."

P6: "I used debates more often. During debates, my Grade 4 learners not only engaged in passionate discussions but also learned to structure and present their arguments coherently. This not only improved their spoken English but also honed their critical thinking skills."

Figure 3.4: School E, Presentations



Improved Attitude Toward English

Strategies aimed at making English learning enjoyable and culturally relevant contributed to a more positive attitude toward the language among students. They viewed English as a valuable tool for communication and learning.

P3: "Recognizing the importance of fostering a positive attitude toward English, I incorporated strategies to make the learning experience enjoyable and culturally relevant for my students. One such strategy involved integrating elements of local culture into English lessons. We explored English through storytelling sessions that included folktales and traditions unique to our community."

Figure 3.5: - School D, Storytelling



P5: "I introduced interactive activities such as English language games, role-playing, and even incorporating popular English-language songs with relatable themes. The goal was to create a dynamic and enjoyable learning environment that resonated with the students' cultural background."

These research findings highlight the positive impact of strategies employed in IP English FAL classrooms, encompassing enhanced language proficiency, improved comprehension and critical thinking skills, increased communication and participation, as well as fostering positive attitudes and motivation among students. The utilization of effective teaching strategies plays a vital role in advancing English language education in the Intermediate Phase.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The research study explored the impact of strategies used to address the challenges of using English as a Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in English First Additional Language (EFAL) Intermediate Phase (IP) classrooms. The discussion is structured around key themes identified in the abstract.

The study began by emphasizing the significant language barrier faced by learners in Buffalo City Metro (BCM) schools, highlighting the disadvantage experienced by students who cannot communicate effectively in their native language. This assertion aligns with existing literature that underscores the link between language proficiency and academic performance (Cummins, 2000; Krashen, 1982).

The study's primary objective was to assess the effectiveness and repercussions of teaching strategies employed in the instruction of English as a First Additional Language (FAL) during the Intermediate Phase, aligning with the broader discourse on the influence of teaching strategies on language learning outcomes, as discussed in the works of Ellis (2008) and Larsen-Freeman (2000). The research aims to provide empirical evidence to contribute to this ongoing discussion.

The choice of a qualitative research approach was justified in the methodology. This approach aligns with the intention to understand the nuanced experiences of IP English teachers in BCM classrooms. The study opted for questionnaires as the primary data collection method because questionnaires provide a structured yet flexible means of gathering insights from teachers (Creswell, 2014).

Findings revealed that all six English FAL teachers rated the necessity of teaching English FAL to intermediate-phase learners as very important. They also indicated that the strategies they used to teach assist with improving the teaching of reading in their classes. Participants indicated that they have tried seeking solutions to address challenges that come with using English as the LoLT in the intermediate phase. Implementing other teaching strategies was the most effective way to mitigate the challenges.

The testimonies of teachers, notably the mention of the game "30 seconds," underscore the effectiveness of gamified activities in arousing curiosity and improving vocabulary (P1). Strategies like guided reading sessions and writing workshops contributed to notable improvements in students' reading and writing skills. The

emphasis on making reading sessions enjoyable and interactive positively impacted students' engagement and skill development (P4).

The incorporation of comprehension strategies, including questioning techniques and text analysis, had a positive impact on students' comprehension abilities. Pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading activities were highlighted as effective in enhancing comprehension (P1). Additionally, quizzes after listening comprehensions emerged as a successful practice (P5). Strategies promoting critical thinking, such as debates and problem-solving activities, were identified as fostering higher-order thinking skills. The involvement of students in open discussions and challenging scenarios contributed to their ability to analyse, evaluate, and interpret information effectively (P4, P6).

The research emphasizes the implications of its findings for educational policymakers, practitioners, and researchers involved in refining and optimizing strategies for teaching English FAL during the Intermediate Phase, aligning with the broader goal of educational research, which seeks to inform policy and practice (Creswell, 2014; Stake, 2010).

The study's overarching goal is to contribute to a more holistic and forward-thinking approach to language education, aiming to promote academic excellence and proficiency among South African teachers. This aligns with the broader educational objectives of fostering a conducive learning environment and enhancing student outcomes (UNESCO, 2015). Strategies aimed at making English learning enjoyable and culturally relevant contributed to a more positive attitude toward the language among students. Incorporating local culture into English lessons and using interactive activities created a dynamic and enjoyable learning environment (P3, P5).

The research findings underscore the significance of effective teaching strategies in advancing English language education in the Intermediate Phase. The positive impact on language proficiency, comprehension, critical thinking, communication, and motivation highlights the importance of thoughtful and engaging instructional practices. These findings offer valuable insights for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers aiming to enhance English language learning outcomes in EFAL classrooms.

Through its qualitative approach and focus on strategies, this research provides a valuable contribution to the ongoing discourse on language education. The findings

have implications for both the immediate context of BCM and the broader field of educational research, emphasizing the need for thoughtful and effective strategies to address language challenges in the Intermediate Phase.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that when teachers in the intermediate phase incorporate effective teaching strategies, they improve their English lessons. Most teachers use only a teacher-centred approach, and as a consequence, some learners do not participate in class because their English fluency is low. The study also concludes that a lack of resources still hinders some teachers; therefore, they cannot even use blended teaching.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that the Department of Education (DoE) expose teachers in the Intermediate Phase to training on how to use different strategies that will be flexible for IP learners, recognizing the diverse learning styles and backgrounds of these students. Specifically, the training should include methods for leveraging learners' first language (L1) skills to support the acquisition of English as a First Additional Language (EFAL). Research has shown that a strong foundation in L1 can facilitate L2 learning, as skills and knowledge transfer from the first language to the second language (Cummins, 2017). Additionally, the DoE should ensure that EFAL IP teachers are well-versed in blended teaching methods and the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Visual aids and multimedia resources can significantly enhance comprehension and engagement, particularly for learners who are transitioning from L1 to English (Goldenberg, 2020). Teachers should receive specific training on how to integrate these tools into their lessons effectively. Lastly, the study recommends that EFAL IP teachers be encouraged to maintain high levels of motivation and continually improve their teaching strategies.

CHAPTER 3

FINAL REFLECTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide me with an opportunity to critically analyze and evaluate my own learning, growth, and experiences in relation to the topic of the research. It will allow me to reflect on the insights gained from the research study, consider how these insights have impacted my understanding and perspective as an educator, and identify areas for future development or action. Therefore, this chapter will reflect on the key findings and implications of the research, consider the strengths and weaknesses of the research approach and findings, explore how the research has influenced own thinking, attitudes, and practices as an educator, identify lessons learned and insights gained from the research process and discuss implications for future research, practice, or action in the field.

Insights from Research: Understanding the Challenges

These three research studies have been instrumental in deepening my understanding of the challenges faced by teachers in South African IP classrooms when transitioning to English as the LoLT. The three articles provided a nuanced understanding of teachers' challenges in transitioning to English as the LoLT. This depth of insight has allowed me to empathize more profoundly with both teachers and learners experiencing these challenges. Recognizing resource limitations as a significant hindrance to implementing effective teaching strategies has highlighted the importance of advocating for better resources and understanding how they impact the learning environment. In addition, the studies emphasized the importance of exposing learners to diverse teaching strategies. This revelation has inspired me to diversify my teaching methods, incorporating elements of Blended Teaching and visual aids to enhance student engagement and curiosity.

Embracing Diversity: Advantages of Varied Teaching Strategies

The findings of the three articles shed light on my study. I have learned the power of diverse teaching strategies. All the articles above underscore the importance of exposing learners to diverse teaching strategies. This exposure not only enhances language proficiency but also fosters engagement and interest among students. However, there was a barrier of resource limitations. Resource constraints significantly impact the implementation of teaching strategies. The lack of projectors, WIFI access,

and textbooks hinder the effectiveness of English language instruction. So, this implies that in some situations, I need to be innovative and improvise as a teacher. I need to think out of the box and use what is available to achieve the aims of the lesson. For example, if there is no projector, I can bring images and posters to convey the message that is going to be covered by the projector.

Learner-Centered Approaches and Collaborative Learning

I like that the studies highlighted the shift towards learner-centred approaches as crucial because recognizing and catering to individual student needs is essential for effective language instruction. This has prompted me to reassess and adapt my teaching style to better cater to the diverse learning styles within my classroom. Moreover, I have learnt about the importance of collaboration and workshops. Collaboration among teachers and workshops facilitated by the DoE are vital for knowledge exchange. These platforms can help teachers share insights strategies, and collectively address challenges. And lastly, I like the strategy of continuous professional development. The studies highlighted the importance of ongoing professional development, that teachers should remain motivated and consistently improve their use of different teaching strategies to meet evolving learner needs. The emphasis on teachers remaining highly motivated and continuously improving their use of different teaching strategies has instilled in me a commitment to ongoing professional development. I now recognize the dynamic nature of education, and educators must continually adapt and refine their strategies.

Strengths and Weaknesses: Reflecting on Research Contributions

Each study identified key issues and proposed practical recommendations, contributing valuable insights to the field of English language instruction. The insights gained from these research studies have contributed significantly to my professional growth, revealing both strengths and weaknesses in my understanding and approach to teaching. Here is a reflection on what I have learnt, how the study helped me grow, the strengths, weaknesses, and the influence these studies have had on my perspective as an educator.

One of my great strengths in these articles was to be able to offer actionable recommendations. A significant strength is the provision of actionable recommendations in each study. These recommendations guide teachers,

policymakers, and educational institutions to improve English language instruction. The second strength is being able to produce contextual relevance. The studies are contextually relevant to South African IP classrooms, acknowledging the unique challenges faced in this setting. This relevance enhances the applicability of the findings to real-world teaching scenarios. Lastly, a notable strength is the comprehensive approach to tackling challenges, encompassing pedagogical strategies, resource provision, and institutional support. It recognizes the interconnected nature of issues in English language instruction.

My main weakness was the potential for generalization, as challenges and solutions may vary based on specific school contexts, regions, or demographics. A more nuanced exploration of these factors could strengthen the studies.

Guiding the Path Forward

These articles have influenced my perspective as an educator by highlighting the interconnectedness of challenges in English language instruction. It has emphasized the importance of holistic solutions, considering both pedagogical and resource-related aspects. They have reinforced the importance of adapting teaching strategies to meet the unique needs of students, the necessity of resource support for effective instruction, and the value of collaborative learning initiatives. The need for continuous learning and adaptation is evident, and the call for collaboration resonates with my belief in the power of collective knowledge.

Conclusion

The research articles have been enlightening, prompting me to reflect on my teaching practices and the broader educational landscape. As an educator, the insights gained from these studies will guide my efforts to create dynamic, engaging, and inclusive English language learning environments. I am now more attuned to the challenges faced by my peers and the significance of collaborative efforts in enhancing language instruction.

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LETTER TO REQUEST PERMISSION FROM EASTERN CAPE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

ACCESS LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

5 Legion Street

Berlin

East London

5660

The Eastern Cape HOD of Basic Education

45 Eales Street

King Williams Town

5601

Dear Ms/Mr

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I humbly request to conduct a research on teachers who teach English in the Intermediate Phase in one of your district schools. I am a registered Master's student in the **Department of Languages and Social Sciences** at the University of the Free State. My supervisor is Dr A.N Grobler. The proposed topic of my research is: **Enhancing implementation of strategies to employ English as LOLT in Intermediate Phase Buffalo City classrooms.**

The objectives of the study are:

- To identify challenges teachers face when using English as the LOLT in the EFAL IP classroom.
- To identify and evaluate teaching strategies that address challenges posed by using English as LoLT in the EFAL IP classroom.
- To evaluate the innovation of these strategies.

I hereby seek your consent to use your schools as data collection sites. To assist you in reaching a decision, I have attached the following documents:

1. A copy of ethical clearance issued by the university.
2. A copy the research instruments which I intend using in my research.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor. Our contact details are as follows:

Dr AN Grobler

0514017815

GroblerAM@ufs.ac.za

Zikhona Njoli

0678232627

quarnana@gmail.com

Upon completion of the study, I undertake to provide you with a bound copy of the publishable articles.

Your permission to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely



Zikhona Njoli

LETTER TO REQUEST PERMISSION FROM SCHOOLS

ACCESS LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

5 Legion Street

Berlin

East London

5660

The Principal

Dear Ms/Mr

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I humbly request to conduct a research on teachers who teach English in the Intermediate Phase in one of your district schools. I am a registered Master's student in the **Department of Languages and Social Sciences** at the University of the Free State. My supervisor is Dr A.N Grobler. The proposed topic of my research is: **Enhancing implementation of strategies to employ English as LOLT in Intermediate Phase Buffalo City classrooms.**

The objectives of the study are:

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- (f) A copy the research instruments which I intend using in my research.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor. Our contact details are as follows:

Dr AN Grobler

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Your permission to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely



Zikhona Njoli

LETTER TO REQUEST PERMISSION FROM THE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY (SGB)

ACCESS LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

5 Legion Street

Berlin

East London

5660

The SGB Chairperson

Dear Ms/Mr

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I humbly request to conduct a research on teachers who teach English in the Intermediate Phase in your school. I am a registered Master's student in the **Department of Languages and Social Sciences** at the University of the Free State. My supervisor is Dr A.N Grobler. The proposed topic of my research is: **Enhancing implementation of strategies to employ English as LOLT in Intermediate Phase Buffalo City classrooms.**

The objectives of the study are:

- To identify challenges teachers face when using English as the LOLT in the EFAL IP classroom.
- To identify and evaluate teaching strategies that address challenges posed by using English as LoLT in the EFAL IP classroom.
- To evaluate the innovation of these strategies.

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

I hereby seek your consent to use your schools as data collection sites. To assist you in reaching a decision, I have attached the following documents:

- (e) A copy of ethical clearance issued by the university.
- (f) A copy the research instruments which I intend using in my research.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor. Our contact details are as follows:

Dr AN Grobler

Zikhona Njoli

0514017815

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GroblerAM@ufs.ac.za

quarnana@gmail.com

Upon completion of the study, I undertake to provide you with a bound copy of the publishable articles.

Your permission to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely



Zikhona Njoli

Draft e-mail to recruit participants

Dear participant.

You are hereby invited to participate in a research project entitled: ***Enhancing implementation of strategies to employ English as LOLT in Intermediate Phase Buffalo City classrooms.*** The study has received ethical clearance from the General/Human Research Ethics Committee (GHREC) at the University of the Free State.

The study aims to find the best strategy to use to address challenges that teachers face in IP classrooms when using English FAL as a language of teaching and learning. Your participation in this study will help me enhance the implementation of the strategies and be able to identify which strategies work best and share with other IP teachers to address their challenges.

Below, please find the attached documents: participant information document, written consent form, and questionnaire. If you are interested in taking part in the study or you would like to learn more about it, please respond to my e-mail or contact me. The questionnaires should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

Your participation is greatly appreciated! Should you have any questions or concerns about the study, you are welcome to contact the researcher: Zikhona Njoli, quarnana@gmail.com or on 0678232627.

Otherwise, you may also contact the researcher's supervisor: Dr AN Grobler, GroblerAM@ufs.ac.za or 051 4017815.

If you have any concerns or complaints related to the research, please contact the Research Ethics Admin Office (rims@ufs.ac.za).

WHO IS DOING THE RESEARCH?

I, Zikhona Njoli is doing the research. And I am doing it for myself because of my concern about this challenge that has been long existing. I am really eager to find suitable strategies to address these challenges.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICAL APPROVAL?

This study has received ethical approval from the Research Ethics Committee of UFS.

Approval number: UFS-HSD2023/0052

WHY ARE YOUR INSTITUTION/ORGANISATION/COMPANY INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT?

I chose this participant because he/she is an intermediate phase teacher and has experience of teaching this grade for more than a year. So, this participant has been exposed to the challenges of using English as an LOLT in Intermediate phase (grade 4). I have obtained the participant's contact details from Facebook and referrals. This study will consist of 12 teachers, 2 teachers will be picked from each school.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The role of participants is to participate in interviews and complete questionnaires and audiotape them and lastly to allow me to observe their lessons. Participants will be asked questions that will contribute to finding the best strategy to address challenges. For example, they will be asked to tell about the challenges they face in IP class when English is used as a LOLT. They will also be asked how they deal with these challenges and which strategies they use to address these challenges and which strategies work better. The duration of this data collection should take about a day or two days per school, per participants. Time allocated for interviews and questionnaires will be 30 minutes per teacher and 45 minutes per lesson observation.m

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

There will be no direct benefit to the research participants. However, taking part in this competition will also help the participants in overcoming the challenges of using English as a LOLT in IP Phase. Participation will be kept confidential, especially in surveys, interviews and observations. It will be kept safe in University of the Free State with my supervisor.

WHAT IS THE POTENTIAL RISKS TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

The participants may lose track of time by participating in this research as they will be required to do interviews and complete questionnaires. Also, participants might feel uncomfortable in conducting

their lessons for observations with my presence. I will assure them that they must relax and understand that I am doing this for my study and educational purposes. If it happens that a participant gets emotional during the interview, or observation I will excuse the participant and schedule another appointment

WILL THE INFORMATION BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

What you say will be kept confidential. Your responses will be recorded without your names being mentioned. When responses are checked and interpreted, your answers will they will not be connected to your name in any case. The only people who will have access to the data is me and my supervisor, this data will be stored in the safe and kept safe to maintain confidentiality. The answers might be reviewed for making sure that my research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Committee. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records. So, because I am doing publishable articles your anonymous data may be used for other purposes, such as e.g. Journal articles, conference presentation, etc., but your privacy will be protected during this publication. Please note, a report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report. If at any point you feel like you want to stop participating and pull out from the study, you will not be in trouble.

HOW WILL THE INFORMATION BE STORED AND ULTIMATELY DESTROYED?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet with my supervisor at the University of the Free State for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. After five years, the data will be destroyed, recordings will be permanently deleted and hard copies will be burnt. The researcher will avoid asking questions that can cause psychological, physical and/or emotional harm. Should an injury occur, medical assistance will be provided by the researcher.

WILL THERE BE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

There will be no direct benefit to the research participants. However, teachers in the district and elsewhere will benefit from obtaining knowledge on how to improve teaching and learning by using the best strategies to overcome challenges of using English as LoLT in IP classrooms.

HOW WILL THE INSTITUTION / ORGANISATION / COMPANY BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS / RESULTS OF THE STUDY?

The researcher will conduct meetings with the teachers who participated in the study, the School Governing Body who granted permission for the study to take place in the school, the provincial department of education who granted permission for the study to be conducted in schools in the

Eastern Cape. These meetings will include a detailed report of the research findings. The results will also be made available in the relevant accredited journals. The findings will also be discussed in conference proceedings where the researcher will be exposed to various researchers and will be given the opportunity to discuss and market his/her research. The discussion of research findings will be from 30/11/2023 to 30/11/2024. Should the participants want to contact the researcher, you can use the following contact details: 0678232627, e-mail address- quarnana@gmail.com. Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact my supervisor Dr AN Grobler, contact details: 0514017815, email address: GroblerAM@ufs.co.za.

Yours sincerely

Zikhona Njoli



Department of Languages and Social Sciences

Title: Enhancing implementation of strategies to employ English as LOLT in Intermediate Phase Buffalo City classrooms

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What challenges do you as a teacher experience in using English FAL in the IP classroom?
2. What are the challenges faced by learners in English? Especially because these learners are Second language speakers of English.
3. Is it allowed to codeswitch to the learner's mother tongue, especially during English period?
4. Which teaching strategies are you currently using to conduct lessons? Are they working?
5. Please share with me your knowledge about CAPS and your implementation thereof.
6. Does the curriculum (CAPS) assist learners who are struggling to acquire English?
7. How does English as the LoLT affects learners' academic work?
8. Do you think there is a difference between the way you teach English and how you were taught?
9. Which teaching strategies do you think can be beneficial to address and challenges of using English as the LOLT in the EFAL IP schools?
10. How can the implementation of these strategies improve the teacher's practice?

Department of Languages and Social Sciences

Title: Enhancing implementation of strategies to employ English as LOLT in Intermediate Phase Buffalo City classrooms

OBSERVATION TOOL

Participant _____ Observation number _____ Date _____

Venue:

Time

Participant

Researcher's role

Descriptive notes of the researcher (During observation):

Reflection:

Department of Languages and Social Sciences

Title: Enhancing implementation of strategies to employ English as LOLT in Intermediate Phase Buffalo City classrooms

QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A: PERSONAL INFORMATION

Make a cross [x] next to the appropriate item

1. Age in years

21-25	<input type="checkbox"/>
26-30	<input type="checkbox"/>
31-35	<input type="checkbox"/>
36 and above	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Gender

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Qualifications

4. Grade/(s) taught

4	
5	

5. Subjects taught

6. Number of years teaching English in each grade

Grade 4	
Grade 5	

7. Teaching experience

0-3 years	
4-10	
11-15	
16 and above	

SECTION B:

1. Indicate by ticking the description that best describes your level of confidence in teaching using English as an LOLT in Intermediate Phase.

Very confident	Confident	Lesser confidence	Not confident	Not sure

1. Were you specifically trained at your college or university to teach in IP using English as a LOLT?

[Yes] [No] [Do not remember]

2. How much does your college/university training assist you in teaching English in Intermediate Phase using English FAL as a LOLT?

Very much	Not much	Average help	Does not help

3. Which strategies do you use in teaching English in Intermediate Phase?

4. List the challenges/difficulties that you encounter in your English lessons when using ENGLISH FAL as LOLT in your class.

5. Do you have a resource person/s you can consult to help you address the problems you encounter in using English FAL as a LOLT in IP? [Yes / No]

If yes who are they?

6. How would you rate the help you get from the resource person/s you have mentioned above:

Adequate help	Average help	Little help	No help at all

7. How would you rate the necessity of teaching using ENGLISH FAL in Intermediate Phase learners?

Very important	Average	Less important	Not important

8. How do the teaching strategies you use assist you in improving teaching of reading in your class?

Very much	Average	Not much	I have not used any strategy	I am not aware of strategies

If you have not used any strategies, state your reasons.

If you have used some, please explain are they effective?

9. What do you think are the most common causes of the challenges you face when using ENGLISH FAL as a LOLT in your class? (Tick one or more causes applicable in your class).

Child cannot communicate in English	
Mother tongue interference	
Poor reading in mother tongue	

Lack of motivation	
Laziness	
Chronic sickness	
Lack of textbooks and reading materials	
Past continuous failure in schoolwork	
Lack of support by parents	
Effects of poverty	
Genetic (inherited problem)	
Parents' illiteracy level	
Overloading of the curriculum	
Poor teaching	
Poor learning environment	

Other causes or reasons, specify

10. Have you tried seeking solutions to address challenges that come with ENGLISH FAL being used as LOLT in the intermediate phase?

11. What are the most effective ways that you have used to mitigate these challenges?

12. What are the most effective strategies that you have used to help learners who experience difficulties in when using ENGLISH FAL as LOLT?

13. Which other teaching strategies can be beneficial to address challenges of using English as the LOLT in the EFAL IP schools?

14. What are the recommendations you have with regards to strategies that are used to improve challenges of using ENGLISH FAL as LOLT among learners in your grade?
