

**Consequences of Ideology and Policy in the English Second Language Classroom: The
Case of Oshiwambo-speaking Students in Namibia**

By

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Keywords and Notes

Namibia

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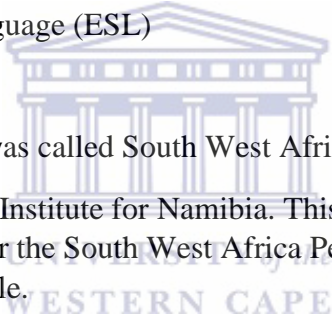
Intervention Strategies

Multilingualism

Translanguaging

Secondary school learners

Proficiency in English Second Language (ESL)

- 
1. Before independence, Namibia was called South West Africa (SWA).
 2. UNIN stands for United Nations Institute for Namibia. This was an organization established by the United Nations as support for the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) in Zambia during the liberation struggle.
 3. SWAPO is Namibia's sole liberation movement from the early 1960s and the current ruling party in Namibia.
 4. Oshiwambo is a language spoken in Namibia and Angola. It consists of seven mutually intelligible dialects. Among these seven dialects, the ones that form the written standardized versions are Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga. Hence, these two dialects are taught as school subjects in Namibian schools. Half of the Namibian population speaks Oshiwambo, and the majority lives in the central North, where the current study was carried out.
 5. For the purpose of this thesis, the terms 'medium of instruction' and Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) are used interchangeably.
 6. For the purpose of this thesis, the words 'learners' and 'students' are used interchangeably.
 7. The current Namibian Language in Education Policy (LEP) has never been adapted since its inception in 1990.

Abstract

At independence, Namibia chose English as its official language and therefore its language of learning and teaching (LOLT). This decision has been well supported and therefore there has been an expectation among Namibians that learning English as early as possible is important because it will open many doors to the future (Harris, 2011). However, since the introduction of English as LOLT, government documents and other relevant literature have revealed poor performance of learners and falling standards of teaching (Iiping, 2013). Despite this revelation, no study has been done in Namibia to investigate the effects of the current Language in Education Policy (LEP) on the teaching and learning of different school subjects. Therefore, this study focuses on critical questions regarding the effects of the current Namibian LEP on the teaching and learning of English Second Language (ESL) in Northern Namibia, with a special focus on one of the most demanding skills in second language learning: essay writing. Besides this, the study looks at the writing problems of learners and the intervention strategies that teachers are using to help learners overcome or reduce writing problems.

The study followed a ‘mixed method’ research approach. In this regard questionnaires, classroom observations, interviews (one-on-one and focus groups), learners’ written samples and document analysis were the main sources of data. The data was analyzed using different analytical tools: Thematic Content Analysis (TCA), Discourse Analysis (DA), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Error Analysis (EA) and Multimodal Analysis (MDA). In addition, the document analysis conducted in this study involved documents such as the Namibian LEP document, the ESL grade 12 syllabus, ESL grade 12 question papers, as well as two relevant previous studies carried out in Namibia. These documents were analyzed in order to establish how they affect teaching and learning in the ESL classroom and obviously to see how they contribute to the writing problems that learners in Northern Namibia experience when writing essays in English. In addition, the documents were analyzed in order to supplement data obtained from other sources such as interviews and classroom observations, and hence reinforce the validity and reliability of the study.

Applying ‘multilingualism as a social practice’ and the ‘social constructivist paradigm’ of education to address issues of language policies within multilingual settings like Namibia, the study revealed a number of critical findings. Among others, it has been found that because of the current Namibian pro-English policy, learners in Northern Namibia experience a lot of writing problems. Even though their ESL teachers are aware of these problems, they do not use realistic and practical intervention strategies to help them overcome or reduce these problems. Another consequence of the current Namibia LEP is that students do not succeed at school in general and in English in particular because they struggle to understand their subjects taught in English adequately.

Moreover, this study has revealed that even though learners in Northern Namibia are not good at English, ESL teachers do not use Oshiwambo in the classroom because of the ideology that the use of Oshiwambo compromises the effective mastery of English. Also, the ESL teachers do not use Oshiwambo because the current LEP does not allow it. Therefore, because teachers do not use Oshiwambo in the ESL classes despite the fact that learners’ English proficiency is not up to standard (at least when measured against standard English norms, as opposed to Namibian English


norms), it is evident that the learning which is taking place in these classrooms is far from satisfactory. Consequently, this study recommends that Namibia adapt its current pro-English policy and adopt a pro-mother tongue policy. The recommended policy should allow for mother-tongue instruction to be extended beyond the first three years of schooling in order to allow learners to acquire their mother-tongues fully and hence improve their learning outcomes in general and achieve better mastery of English in particular. Besides this, the pro-mother tongue policy will allow teachers to use translanguaging as a strategic means of facilitating teaching and learning in the classroom which in return will improve education outcomes.



Declaration

I declare that *Consequences of ideology and policy in the English Second Language Classroom: The case of Oshiwambo speaking Students in Namibia* is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other University, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Full Name: Kristof Ipinge

Signed 

Date: August 2018



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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my late mother (Bonafilia Nelago Ndanyengwa), as well as to my late grandmother (Eugenia Nankelo Nakale) for their love, support and endless prayers. I wish you were here to celebrate this memorable achievement with me. However, even though you are no longer with us physically, you will always hold a special place in my heart. I will always appreciate what you have done for us. *Tsikileni nokuvulukwa mombili!!*



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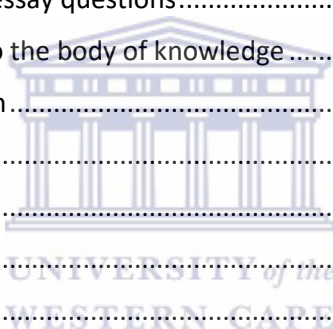
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Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

1.0 Introduction

This study poses a number of critical questions regarding the effect of the current Namibian Language in Education policy (LEP) on the teaching and learning of English Second Language (ESL) in Northern Namibia, with a special focus on one of the most demanding skills in Second Language (SL) - essay writing. Apart from the writing problems of learners, the intervention strategies that ESL teachers are using to help learners overcome or reduce writing problems in English have also been investigated. In addition, this thesis addresses issues of language policies within multilingual settings like Namibia, and the ideologies that lead to particular policies being enforced. Accordingly, this chapter provides a general overview and introduction to the study, including the background which includes a historical perspective of the Namibian LEP and the selection of English as the sole official language of an independent Namibia. Lastly, this chapter reviews other important aspects of the current study such as rationale and significance of the study, the problem statement, as well as a brief description of the research methodology.

1.1 The context of the study

Namibia is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the West, the republics of Angola and Zambia to the North and North-East respectively and the republics of Botswana and South Africa to the east and South respectively (SACMEQ, 2018). “It covers some 824 000 km² and is 1 440KM at its widest point and it is 1 320 KM from North to South” (Harris, 2011:10). Furthermore, Namibia is demarcated into 14 political and educational regions of which one of them is Omusati, and this is the region in which the current study was carried out.

According to the Omusati Regional Council (2018), the Omusati region borders Angola and three other regions in Namibia; Ohangwena, Oshana and Kunene. The region is the second highest populated region in Namibia, with the population of 243

000 and density of 17 people per square kilometer (Omusati regional council, 2018). In addition, this region is known for its abundance of Mopani trees, and is predominantly an agricultural region focusing on both livestock and crop farming (Omusati regional council, 2018).

Additionally, the Omusati region has a total number of 282 schools, of which 13 are senior secondary schools (Ministry of Education, 2018). Furthermore, the current study was carried out at 6 senior secondary schools in Omusati region, which were randomly selected. One thing which is worth mentioning about the schools that were part of the current study is that nearly all of the teachers and the learners at these schools speak seven different dialects of Oshiwambo which are mutually intelligible (see table 1 below).

Table 1: Number of teachers and learners who speak Oshiwambo and who do not

School	Learners			Teachers		
	Oshiwambo speaking	Non-Oshiwambo speaking	Total	Oshiwambo speaking	Non-Oshiwambo speaking	Total
A	807	5	812	30	2	32
B	625	0	625	27	1	28
C	658	2	660	29	0	29
D	513	1	514	19	1	20
E	650	0	650	24	0	24
F	796	43	839	36	2	38

As seen in the above table, the schools that were part of the current study are dominated by Oshiwambo speaking teachers and learners. This makes it hardly likely that both teachers and learners speak English after classes or during their free time. Hence, one can argue that the school environments in Northern Namibia are not conducive in terms of reinforcing English as LOLT because learners do not have decent exposure to

English and do not have enough opportunities to practice speaking English. Certainly, the Namibian Language in Education Policy (LEP) is ideologically skewed towards a language few Namibian speak or have access to and as a result is causing a lot of problems within the education system. Finally, another important fact about the Omusati region is that the learners in this region perform poorly in ESL. For example, in 2014, among the 3204 grade 12 learners who wrote ESL at ordinal level, only 14% passed and hence qualified for tertiary institutions (Ministry of Education, 2014). This is a serious problem because English is a critical subject within the Namibian education system.

1.2 Problem statement

“At independence in 1990, Namibia chose English as its official language and therefore its Language of Teaching and Learning (LOLT)” (Iipinge, 2013:3). This was a paradoxical decision because at that time, “only 0.8% of the Namibian population constituted first language speakers of English and English was not widely spoken in Namibian communities and rarely in rural regions” (Wolfaardt, 2002:67). Furthermore, the Namibian Language in Education Policy (LEP) stipulates that mother tongue is the medium of instruction from grade one to three, while English is the medium of instruction from grade four to grade twelve and beyond (Wolfaardt, 2002). On the hand, the mother tongue is used as the medium of instruction from grade 1-3, and at the same time is taught as a school subject from grade 4-12 (Iipinge, 2013).

Moreover, according to Totemeyer (2018), the adoption of English as LOLT was not well-thought through because the Namibian government introduced it in schools from grade 4-12 without training the teachers in the new language of instruction (English) and without taking decent time to provide relevant and suitable teaching and learning materials. In addition, the other problem was that “the pupils started with the mother tongue but at the same time, the second language is gradually phased in” (Totemeyer, 2018:10). This implies that the pupils find it difficult to learn through English as LOLT because they did not fully master their mother tongue. Therefore because of these

problems, “with a couple of years after the abrupt switch to English medium education, it became clear that teachers and learners were not enjoying education in the schools” (Totemeyer, 2010:15). Indeed, since the implementation of this new LEP, government documents and other relevant documents have been disclosing the learners’ poor performance and the falling standard of teaching (Benjamin, 2004).

Although the Namibian LEP has proven to be problematic, it appears that the Namibian educational stakeholders do not believe that it has negative impacts on the academic performance of learners. Harris (2011) for example found that Namibian parents, teachers and educationalists do not fully understand the problems learners face with language and often attribute poor learner performance to lack of interest and commitment. Accordingly, the current study is aimed at disclosing the effects of the current Namibian LEP on the teaching and learning of English Second Language (ESL) in Northern Namibia, with a special focus on one of the most demanding skills in Second Language (SL) - essay writing. Yes, the current study looks at the writing problems of learners and the intervention strategies that teachers are using to help learners overcome or reduce writing problems.

In the Namibian context, and in Northern Namibia in particular, writing problems are likely to be experienced because as mentioned already, learners switch to English medium too early and as a result, fail to attain the desirable reading and writing proficiency in both the mother tongue and English (Totemeyer, 2018). Also, learners do not have decent exposure to English and that the LEP does not allow them to use their mother tongues in order to strengthen and enhance the learning of ESL (Wolfaardt, 2002). Consequently, investigating ESL writing problems in Northern Namibia is sensible because it seems that learners do not acquire skills needed in writing English essays as a result of the mismatch between the language policy and the linguistic background of the learners, and other relevant factors.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are:

- a) To identify some of the problems caused for secondary school learners of English by the current language policy
- b) To establish the intervention strategies or remedies used by teachers in order to overcome their learners' different writing problems in English, as well as to establish their rationale for using those strategies.
- c) To examine whether teachers use Oshiwambo to help their learners with English, and
- d) To offer recommendations on how the training of English teachers can be improved as well as how the current national language policy can be adapted.

1.4 Research questions

This study attempts to find answers to the following questions:

1. What have been the main consequences for Oshiwambo-speaking students of Namibia's pro-English policy?
2. Given the differences between Oshiwambo and English, what intervention strategies do teachers use to help learners overcome or reduce writing problems in English? What are their rationale for using those strategies?
3. To what extent do teachers use Oshiwambo to help students understand English?
4. Based on our current understanding of the importance of indigenous languages in education, what adaptation could be recommended for both training of teachers of English as well as the current language policy?

1.5 Rationale and significance of the study

According to Nghikembua (2013:18) "Namibian secondary school learners' performance in ESL is unsatisfactory given the status of English as the official language in the country". This is not encouraging because for learners to be admitted

to tertiary institutions, they need to have good grades in English. Without a doubt, if learners do not achieve good grades in English, they are unlikely to have access to higher education and consequently are not likely to have brighter futures. In addition, the English proficiency of teachers in Namibia (and in Northern Namibia in particular) has been found to be very poor (Kisting, 2010). This is not a strange predicament because as Wolfaardt (2003) has attested, many teachers in Namibia (before independence) were trained in Afrikaans and have only done English as a second language. This, according to Wolfaardt (2003) negatively influences their overall proficiency in English, and this in turn impacts on their learners' level of proficiency and performance in English.

Equally important, the issue of teaching English as a second language in Northern Namibia to Oshiwambo speaking learners in particular is very challenging because the Namibian LEP demands that only English should be used as a LOLT from grade 4-12. Ultimately, this is posing a number of problems when it comes to the teaching and learning process in the classroom as indicated by the poor results for secondary schools every year (Harris, 2011). As Legere (1996:70) argues, "in the existing linguistic situation in Namibia, the focus on English obviously does not yield expected results since neither teachers nor students can cope with the targets set out in the curriculum". It is therefore against this background that this study focuses on critical questions regarding the effects of the current Namibian LEP on the teaching and learning of ESL in Northern Namibia with a special focus on one of the most demanding skills in second language – essay writing. Investigating the effects of the Namibian LEP on teaching and learning in Omusati region is important because as Beyer (2010:35) confirms, "far too many children fail school and university, not due to intellectual deficits, but due to vanity and false beliefs concerning language learning of politicians and policy makers". Moreover, the current study is focused on essay writing because of a number of reasons. Firstly, after teaching ESL at secondary school for more than ten years, I observed and concluded that one of the major causes of failure in ESL was students' struggles with writing essays in English. This observation is supported fully by the annual

examination report (2014) provided by the Ministry of Education in Namibia which showed that learners who wrote the ESL examination at ordinary level scored average marks (50%) or low marks (below 50%) on “essay writing questions”. Apart from the annual examination report (2014), Mungungu (2012:12) argues that “Namibian learners are generally very poor at English writing activities and their incompetence in writing ESL can be clearly observed in examination answer scripts”. However, English secondary school learners do not only show poor writing skills in examinations but in any other writing tasks presented to them on a regular basis (Nghikembua, 2013).

Additionally, “the ESL (ordinal level) syllabus in Namibia allocates 60% of assessment to the reading and writing paper for both core and extended level” (Nghikembua, 2013:20). The learners write about 150-200 words of continuous prose (Barry, Campbell & Daish, 2014). This implies that learners who are not good at writing are unlikely to pass ESL and consequently as mentioned already, they are also likely not to have access to higher education in Namibia and elsewhere.

Poor writing skills do not only have a negative impact on the performance of learners in ESL only, but also contributes to poor academic performance in other subjects. This was established by Pflaum (1998:12) who laments that “there seems to be some indication that for subjects which require discursive and extensive writing (e.g. Geography & History) results are lower and correlate closely with performance in ESL”. It is however important to mention that apart from learners, there are many people in the country who cannot write in English. Kisting (2012) for instance, has discovered that more than 70% of teachers in senior secondary schools cannot write Basic English.

Another reason why this study is focused on essay writing is because among the four language skills in ESL that are taught in Namibian classrooms, especially in Northern Namibia, learners tend to have the most negative attitudes toward writing activities and because of these kind of attitudes, learners are unlikely to write positively about any topic or task given to them (Harris, 2011). Indeed, one of the respondents in the study

done by Harris (2011) on 'language in schools in Namibia' commented on the issue of learners' negative attitudes towards writing:

I observed learners during learning in class. They will be positively involved in oral discussion but if it comes to writing I see a different side that learners are struggle with writing and reading. (p.55)

From the comment above, one may infer that negative attitudes towards writing in English stem from the many problems learners encounter when they have to do it. Hence, set within the broader context of Namibian history and its national language policy, this study hopes to shed more light on the range of problems encountered by ESL learners in Northern Namibia when they are writing essays as well as intervention strategies that their teachers use in order to help their learners overcome or reduce these writing problems. Therefore, this study is significant because its findings could offer educationalists, language policy makers and researchers with insight on how the current Namibian LEP affects learners' academic performance in general, and learners' performance in ESL in particular. Also, this study is important because its findings will explain why learners in Northern Namibia experience a lot of writing problems. Finally, the study will offer recommendations as to how the current language in education policy can be adapted, based on what the study reveals about the value of using the indigenous languages in education.

1.6 Delimitation of the study

This study was conducted in Northern Namibia. The central Northern Namibia is demarcated into four political and educational regions. However, the current study was only limited to one region - Omusati. Again, the current study recruited grade 12 ESL learners as well as their teachers and HODs. However, it excluded grade 8-11 learners as well as content subject teachers and their HODs. Therefore, the learners' sample work which was analyzed in this study was only written by the grade 12 learners. Similarly, the ESL lessons that I observed were solely those taught by the grade 12

ESL teachers, including their HODs. Finally, it is also important to mention that the learners' interviews which I conducted only targeted the grade 12 learners.

1.7 Background to the Namibian LEP

As a reminder, one of the main aims of the current study is to reveal some of the problems caused for secondary school learners of English by the current Namibian LEP. Hence, as the background to this study, the next few sections present the historical perspective of the current Namibian LEP, which includes the selection of English as the sole official language for an independent Namibia. Because formal education in Namibia was introduced by the missionaries during pre-colonial eras (Amukugo, 1993), it is important to first look at the characteristics of the Namibian LEP which was adopted during the pre-colonial era. This would then be followed by the accounts of LEP used during the colonial eras.

1.7.1 The Namibian LEP during the pre-colonial era.

According to Amukugo (1993), “western education” in Namibia was introduced by the Missionary of the London and Wesleyman society (1805), Rhenisch Missionary Society (1842), and the Finnish Missionary society (1870). After the arrival of the above-mentioned missionaries in Namibia, other missionary groups also came to Namibia. Namely; the Anglican and the Catholic missionaries (Amukugo, 1993). According to Katzao (1999:20), “the missionaries who came to Namibia established schools in order to supplement the work of Christianization to give a rudimentary education to catechists and, equally important, to change cultural patterns that were considered to be pagan”. Furthermore, it is worth pointing out that because different missionary societies established their own schools among specific ethnic groups in Namibia, they (missionaries) did not use the same LEP (Amukugo, 1993). The Rhenish missionaries adopted Cape Dutch as medium of instruction (MOI) whereas the Anglican and Catholic missionaries adopted English as MOI (Amukugo, 1993). In contrast, “the Finnish missionaries made an effort to learn Oshindonga (a local language) which they later implemented as MOI” (Amukugo, 1993:43). As Katzao

(1999:21) remarks, “missionaries learnt the vernaculars, elevated them to written languages, compiled dictionaries and textbooks and translated the Bible”. According to Katzao (1999:69), “this was done because the main objective of the missionaries was to spread Christianity and it was clear that if this was to be done effectively, it was better for it to be taught through the mother-tongue rather than through a second language”. In conclusion, it is important to highlight that the Namibian LEP which was used during the pre-colonial era was changed slightly after German’s occupation of the territory.

1.7.2 The Namibian LEP during the German occupation

“Namibia was colonized by Germany from 1884 to 1915” (UNIN, 1984:1). During this time, “German was introduced as the official language and hence the MOI” (Cluver, 1992:118). However, the introduction of German as MOI was more theoretical than practical. According to UNIN (1984) upon their arrival in Namibia, Germany concentrated on planning and organizing the education of white children only, completely ignoring the education of African children. In actual fact, “the education of Africans continued to be in the hands of the missionaries” (UNIN, 1984:4). This meant that different missionary societies had to maintain their respective medium of instructions that they had implemented before the Germans arrived in Namibia. “The missionaries even went to the extent of writing in local languages” (UNIN, 1984:1). “The Finnish missionaries for instance, gave prestige to the dialects of Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama, which are even today the only components of the Oshiwambo language group which have significant literatures, and which are taught as school subjects at both higher primary and secondary school level” (Harlech-Jones, 1990:73). This contributed to the failure of the German language to penetrate Namibian communities fully and its implementation as a medium of instruction only happened in white German schools. This situation persisted until Germany was defeated in World War 1 and South Africa took control of the administration of Namibia (Cluver, 1992).

1.7.3 The Namibian LPE during the South African occupation

“After Germany’s defeat in World War 1, Namibia became a League of Nations mandate category C, under the administration of what was then the Union of South Africa” (Cluver, 1992:118). “When South Africa took over the administration of Namibia in 1918, Dutch and English (the official languages of South Africa at that stage) were recognized as official languages while German was afforded semi-official status” (Cluver, 1992:119). However, “in 1925, in line with language changes in South Africa, Dutch was replaced by Afrikaans as one of the official languages of Namibia” (Cluver, 1992:119). As Harlech-Jones 1999 in (Cluver, 1992:20) explains, “the South Africa government never explicitly formulated a language policy for Namibia”. “Rather, the initial language policy of the South African government was determined by three main objectives: the need to administer the territory efficiently, the need to placate the German inhabitants of Namibia and the aspiration to incorporate Namibia into the Union of South Africa” (Cluver, 1992:120). These objectives evidently show that the main objective of the language policy of the South African government was more political rather than linguistic.

Furthermore, “the commission of inquiry into non-white education in South West Africa (Namibia), also known as the Van Zyl commission, recommended in 1958 that Afrikaans should be the first official language and that it should be introduced to Namibian children in their first school year” (Cluver, 1992:122). “English on the other hand was seen as the second official language and it was recommended that this language (English) be introduced in the third school year” (Van Zyl 1958 in Cluver, 1992:122). “Apart from those private white schools where German was allowed as MOI, the MOI in all the white and the majority of Coloured, Rehoboth and Nama schools in Namibia was Afrikaans throughout” (UNIN, 1984 :20). Here, it is important to focus on how the MOI was implemented in black schools, starting with primary levels.

In theory, “the mother tongue was the MOI in the lower primary level (grade 1-4) and then from standard 3 (grade 5) to standard 5 (grade 7) the medium shifted to Afrikaans,

while the mother tongue used as MOI in lower primary school varies according to regions” (UNIN, 1984:20). In terms of secondary school education, Afrikaans was the MOI in secondary schools in all regions in South West Africa (Namibia) except for the Eastern Caprivi where English was used (UNIN, 1984). “Alongside Afrikaans as MOI, the mother tongue was learned as a school subject through the lower and higher primary school phases, from sub-standard A to standard 5 (Grade 1-7)” (Harlech-Jones, 1990: 89). Harlech-Jones (1990:89) further claims that “in the case of Ndonga and Kwanyama (Oshiwambo languages), and Lozi in Caprivi, learning the mother tongue as subject continued up to the level of the national school-leaving senior certificate, namely standard 10 (grade 12) or the twelfth year of schooling”. In contrast, “speakers of various languages of the Kavango did not continue to learn their mother-tongue as school subjects in the secondary schools” (Harlech-Jones, 1990:89).

Moreover, Harlech-Jones (1990:82) asserts that “until the early 1980s, Afrikaans had been the major medium of all education for black children for seven decades in the central areas, and for several decades in the north”. “Decisions to switch to English as MOI were subsequently taken by the Owambo authority in 1981, by the Damara authority in 1984 and by the Nama authority in 1987. Schools in Windhoek under the Department of National Education also took a decision to switch to English as MOI in 1988” (Harlech-Jones, 1990:82). Although different authorities switched to English as MOI as noted above, this switch was not so effective and practical and in most cases children were taught in their vernaculars. As Harlech-Jones (1990:82) clarifies, “until 1980 English had a very subordinate position in the education of the majority of Namibians”. “This was because of the fact that English was never used as a medium of instruction - except in a small number of schools with white, English-speaking pupils - nor was it prominent in the curriculum except as a third language” (Harlech-Jones, 1990:82). “Another reason was that as a school subject English was not learnt until the third or fourth school years, and then not initially as a subject in which reading was done” (Harlech-Jones, 1990:82).

To conclude this section, it is important to reiterate the fact that the main objective of the language policy of the South African government was political not linguistic (Cluver, 1992). “It was aimed at promoting Afrikaans as the official language and as the lingua franca so as to reinforce the link between Namibia and South Africa as well as at promoting indigenous languages as a means of promoting ethnicity and separateness between the various linguistic communities of Namibia” (Cluver, 1992:124). At the dawn of the Namibian independence however, English was eventually adopted as the official language of the country.

1.7.4 English as the official language for an independent Namibia

“In 1976, the United Nations Institute for Namibia (UNIN) was founded following the UN General Assembly’s recognition three years earlier of SWAPO as the sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people” (Harlech-Jones, 1990:63). The main objectives of UNIN, primarily, were:

To provide to Namibians the necessary education and training so as to strengthen all their efforts, including those at the political level, in their struggle for freedom and to equip them for the future planning of and participation in the organization of various government departments and public services in an independent Namibia (UNIN 1987 in Harlech-Jones, 1990:63).

“A further aim of UNIN was to prepare, through research, the following: studies, draft legislation, reports and other publications which would be useful to the government of an independent Namibia” (Harlech-Jones, 1990:63). Accordingly, UNIN was tasked with the decision of formulating the theoretical framework for choosing the official language for an independent Namibia. “The decision by SWAPO to choose English as sole official language was taken by SWAPO in Lusaka in 1981 and was documented in a seminal paper by UNIN (1984) entitled *Towards education policy for Namibia: perspective and strategies*” (Ipinge, 2013:11). It is important to mention that English was chosen over and above languages such as German, Afrikaans, French and Namibia’s indigenous languages as the official language (Ipinge 2013). In table 1, adopted from Phillipson (1992), a brief outline is given of the criteria involved in the

rationale behind this choice. In this table, according to Phillipson (1992:290), “+ equals three points, -/+ equals one point, and – equals no point”.

Table 2: The suitability of nominated languages as Namibia’s official language

Criterion	Indigenous languages	Afrikaans	German	French	English
Unity	–	–	–	+	+
Acceptability	+	–	–	+	+
Familiarity	+	+	+	–	+
Science and technology	–	–	+	+	+
Pan Africanism	–	–	–	-/+	+
Wider communication	–	–	+	+	+
United Nations	–	–	+	+	+
Total Points	6	3	9	16	21

As can be seen in table 2, it is easy to conclude that the criteria used to select English as the official language were biased toward English (Iipinge, 2013). What follows now is a brief discussion of each of the above-mentioned criterion used by UNIN in the selection of English as Namibia’s official language.

1.7.4.1 Unity

The criterion of unity was of importance because the foremost priority for the new government in post-independence Namibia was to “minimize any divisive tendencies and practices in the country on one hand, and on the other hand, to reinforce all such factors that may contribute to national unity, that is; to create conditions conducive to national unity, whether in the realm of politics, economics, religion, culture, race or language” (Phillipson, 1992:289). “English was chosen because it was expected to contribute towards the new nation’s primary task of achieving unity and national

reconstruction in the wake of a deliberate policy of ethno-linguistic fragmentation pursued by the illegal occupying regime” (Iipinge, 2013:13). “The official language (English) was expected to strengthen national unity as well as to lessen competition among native languages” (Iipinge, 2013:37). In schools for instance, “learning and teaching through the medium of English would mean that learners, teachers and other educational stakeholders would be unified, contrary to what occurred in the past” (Iipinge, 2013:13). All in all, “English was expected to contribute towards achieving unity and national construction by neutralizing any competitive or disruptive sociolinguistic forces” (Iipinge, 2013:13).

In contrast, Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir (2001) deny that English was ever going to unite Namibia. According to them, a language that is spoken by less than one percent of the Namibian population cannot create unity within the nation. Bunyi (1999) also questions whether English can really help to unify a country like Namibia. According to Bunyi 1999 in Iipinge (2013:13), “whereas indigenous languages may divide people along ethnic lines, English divides them along class lines”. For example, “in Zambia, English has been adopted by competing language groups in the educational sector. Subsequently, it has divided those who have access to it (typical members of reasonably well-off urban groups) and those who do not (typically the members of poor urban and rural groups) (Iipinge, 2013:13). Finally, while English has the potential to reduce problems of ethno-linguistic divisiveness, it also has the potential of undermining Namibian cultural identities, which need to be defended in the long term (UNIN, 1981).

1.7.4.2 Acceptability

SWAPO wanted a language which has positive rather than negative associations, and which could not be associated with the oppression and injustices which have characterized Namibian history (UNIN 1981; Iipinge 2013). “Afrikaans for instance, was used on a daily basis to perpetuate attitudes of superiority and was the language in which many Namibians were resettled in so called ‘homelands’ and it was also a language in which Namibians were prevented from becoming full citizens in their own country” (Cluver, 1992:124). Hence, Afrikaans could not meet the criterion of

acceptability, unlike English. However, one can also argue that English does not meet this criterion, since it was also associated with colonialism in Namibia to a certain extent. “It needs to be remembered that it was used during the South African regime in Namibia along with German as MOI” (Cluver, 1992:120). Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir (2001:306) also feel that “English does not meet this criterion (acceptability) because while English was seen by many Namibians and in particular by SWAPO as the ‘language of liberation’ it was still a language built on European and western culture”.

1.7.4.3 Familiarity

“The language to be chosen was supposed to be a language with which Namibians inside and outside the country had some familiarity and with which there had preferably been some experience in the education system” (UNIN, 1981:38). One of the motives in selecting English as an official language was that “Namibians had some familiarity with the language due to the small amount of exposure to it they received during their school years (Iiping, 2013:14). Nevertheless, Cluver (1992:126) argues that, “at the time of Namibia’s independence, English did not meet this criterion because most Namibians were unfamiliar with the language”. Therefore, “English was expected to cause serious problems in social, political, educational and economic terms” (Cluver, 1992:127). Cluver (1992) further claims that, in Northern Namibia for example, many learners had not learned very much English after five years of being taught in it, because their teachers hardly knew any English and these learners also did not have any chance to use English outside the classroom. The disastrous results of the 1989 school-leaving examinations in Namibia were also a clear indication that most Namibians were unfamiliar with English (Cluver, 1992). In this regard, Cluver (1992) is supported by Iiping (2013:14) who also feels that “the argumentation in favour of English was unpersuasive”. Iiping (2013:14) claims that “the experience of migrant labour and exile has probably served to make major Namibian languages, particularly Oshiwambo, more familiar to Namibians than English”. Even more importantly, “among Namibians in exile, a merged Namibian language had developed based on

Oshikwanyama but with ingredients from other languages from the North” (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2001:306). “The possibility of developing this merged language further and give it official status was not looked into” (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2001:306).

1.7.4.4 Feasibility

The question of cost and efforts involved in promoting a language to official status has to be included amongst the criteria. That is, “the feasibility criterion involved consideration of the finances, logistics and administration required in the promotion of English as an official language in Namibia” (UNIN, 1981:38). English met this criterion because, as was suggested by UNIN (1981) there were adequate resources available in English for short-and long-term implementation plans. “There were also sufficient numbers of expatriate professionals who were fluent in English and were available for recruitment in terms of teaching, teacher training, curriculum design, educational administration and other areas crucial for any potential emergency language development situation” (UNIN, 1981:38). However, Cluver (1992:126) points out that “there were no indications that the aforementioned expatriates who had been trained in English at UNIN were indeed returning to Namibia in large numbers and could therefore be recruited in the implementation and promotion of English in Namibia”. The other serious concern of the selection of English as an official language was that the greater parts of the funds meant and available for developing indigenous languages was likely to be spent on English-related development programmes while indigenous languages were being neglected (UNIN, 1981).

1.7.4.5 Science and technology

According to Iiping (2013:15), “SWAPO wanted a language that could be utilized in Namibia’s economic and industrial development”. This was crucial because “countries and businesses which cannot communicate with (prospective) partners in the rest of the world, especially in the commercial, political, and scientific and technological sectors, will be left behind” (Iiping, 2013:15). However, it is vital to point out that “using English as an official language does not guarantee economic and social development”

(Cooke & William, 2002:314). Cooke and William (2002:314) further explain that “poorer countries that use English as a means of accessing development have not hitherto made great strides in terms of economic and social development”. For instance, “in Zambia, where the official language is English, the gross domestic product (GPD) had a real growth rate of -2% in 1998, and in 1993, 86% of the population was estimated to be living below the poverty line” (Cooke & Williams, 2002:314).

Moreover, “post-independence, the Namibian government wanted to harness various resources in order to develop the science and technology sectors of their country” (Iipinge, 2013:15). “This meant applying such resources to Namibia’s mineral wealth, crop and livestock production, and fishing, as well as to the specific challenges of desertification and aridity etc.” (UNIN, 1981:38). “Namibia was not different from the rest of the world because English was seen as a language of wider communication in virtually all fields of science and technology, in addition to being the language used for the publication of materials to facilitate training and research programs inside and outside the country” (UNIN, 1981:38). However, one can argue that at that time, languages such as Afrikaans and German also met this criterion but because they could not meet criteria such as unity and acceptability, they were not chosen as official languages (UNIN, 1981).

1.7.4.6 Pan-Africanism

According to the criterion of Pan-Africanism, “English was chosen as official language because it strengthened the bonds between Namibians and other progressive communities in Africa” (UNIN, 1981:38). Indeed, according to SWAPO “the selection of English as Namibia’s official language was valuable because it was common to many of Namibia’s immediate neighbouring countries, as well as being widely spoken throughout Africa” (UNIN, 1981:38). On the contrary, Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir (2001) feel that English does not meet the criterion of Pan-Africanism. They clarify that most people in African countries do not use English as their official language. Therefore, “the choice of Bantu languages such as Kiswahili which is spoken by more than 40 million Africans as the official language could have been considered equally

as Namibia's official language and would have been more likely to have supported and promoted Pan- Africanism" (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2001:305).

1.7.4.7 Wider Communication

"At independence, Namibia was likely to re-position its outlook from a South African to an international one" (UNIN, 1981:38). "Such an outlook was already developing as members of the liberation movement pursued pre-independence personnel training and other strategies in close liaison with many countries and organizations throughout the world" (UNIN, 1981:38). Accordingly, "this meant that a language with the status of English was needed as an official language because at that time, English was spoken globally as a mother-tongue by 300 million people and as a second language by 374 million speakers" (Cluver, 1992:127). In summary, "English was a significant means of connecting Namibia as a country with the rest of the world (Ipinge, 2013:16). There is no doubt then that English was necessary if Namibia was to develop sea and air communications, international trading as well as negotiations at administrative, diplomatic and commercial levels (UNIN, 1981).

1.7.4.8 United Nations

"The history of Namibia's struggle is intimately linked with the United Nations Organization (UNO) as the citizens of the country were greatly assisted by the UNO during the liberation struggle" (UNIN, 1981:38). "SWAPO therefore deemed it necessary to ensure that the official language of Namibia should be one of the principal languages of the UNO with which Namibian negotiators were then already familiar" (Ipinge, 2013:17). As a result, in relation to this criterion, "English was the only language which could be considered to fulfil the role of Namibia's official language, because English was going to give Namibia effective access to the UNO" (Ipinge, 2013:17). Although this criterion was fairly relevant, as mentioned earlier, some of the criteria that were used to select English as Namibia's official language were quite irrelevant. In the next section, these criteria are discussed further.

1.8 The relevance of the criteria used to choose English as Namibia's official language.

A number of scholars have criticized the criteria which were used in choosing English as an official language for an independent Namibia. Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir (2001) for example, feel that SWAPO failed to consider a number of important criteria. According to them (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2001:303) “criteria such as ‘ease of learning’, ‘Namibian cultural authenticity’, and ‘empowering the under-privileged’ (which could include democratization and self-reliance) are some of the criteria which were also supposed to be considered in choosing the official language of Namibia”. Another criticism is that “all Namibia’s own languages were just lumped together and none given separate treatment while the three European languages and the one European-based language (Afrikaans) were given separate treatment” (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2001:305). To a certain extent, this was a clear indication that SWAPO was not interested in choosing one of the Namibian languages as an official language of Namibia. Hence, Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir (2001:306) “do not deny the fact that the option of trying to merge some of the different orthographies of languages (some of which are actually just dialects) could have been considered to combat the divisiveness engineered by the South African regime”.

Moreover, Phillipson (1992) was also a strong critic of the choice of English as an official language for Namibia. According to him (1992) the criteria discussed above were quite similar. For instance, “the ‘United Nations’ criterion could be included under ‘wider communication’, as could Pan-Africanism” (Phillipson, 1992:293). Phillipson (1993:293) further claims that “according to the report (on choosing English as the official language) choosing an official language has two related purpose; the need to combat South African-engineered divisiveness, and the unity of Namibians. “These factors are national rather than international” (Phillipson, 1992:293). Therefore, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the criteria used to choose English as an official language have been selected so as to make English emerge as the absolute winner (Ipinge, 2013). As mentioned earlier, choosing English as the official language

for Namibia implied that English was to be used as LOLT in schools. The next section therefore provides a detailed account of the Namibian LEP after independence which was adopted following the selection of English as official language for an independent Namibia.

1.9 The Namibian LEP after independence

“Immediately after independence, the then ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport began the quest for a language policy acceptable to all which would determine the medium of instruction in Namibian schools” (Swarts, 1995:17). “It was not so much a medium of communication because by then, constitutionally, English had already been accepted as the official language and therefore the issue was more of the medium of instruction from the pedagogical point of view” (Swarts, 1995:17).

Furthermore, formulating a language policy is not an easy task. “One of the complicated factors is the need for national consensus” (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993b:2). In order to achieve this, “the Ministry of Education and Culture formulated the language policy only after making efforts to find out the views of the different language groups on the subject” (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993b:2). As Angula (1992:3) points out, “in order to gain public support for a viable language policy formation, evolution and implementation, policy makers must be conversant with the public mood”. That is why “the Ministry of Education and Culture first of all produced and sent out a document entitled *Provisional language policy for schools - Draft for discussion*” (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993b:2). “This document went to all regions of Namibia, with some guidelines and background information about language choices and suggestions for possible policies. The Ministry invited all readers concerned with education to fill in and return an enclosed questionnaire” (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993b:2).

“After all readers concerned with education had filled in the questionnaires, their responses were processed and these responses provided a basis for a provisional language policy” (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993b:3). “It was then decided to

invite representatives from all regional education offices to Windhoek for consultation and after roundtable discussions, the ministry finalized the language policy and issued it as Annex 1 to the official document *Education and culture in Namibia: The way forward to 1996*” (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993a:3). Subsequently, the new language policy for Namibian schools was announced. It was first published in November 1991, with the Ministry of Education and Culture emphasizing that the language policy was intended to be flexible and progressive. Therefore, “the policy would be continuously evaluated at all levels of implementation” (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993b:1). It is however worrying that this particular LEP has never been evaluated since its inception.

To conclude this section, before I look at the goals of the current LEP, it is worth mentioning that there was an attempt to revise the current LEP in 2003. However, the suggestions and the recommendations that were put forward to characterize the anticipated new LEP were never turned into a formal language policy document. These suggestions and recommendations remain a ‘discussion document’ to date (2018), and therefore the language policy that was adopted in 1990 remains the only legitimate and official policy for all public schools in Namibia (Ministry of Education, 2003). The following sections discuss the goals of this particular LEP in details.

1.9.1 The goals of the Policy

As Angula (1992:4) comments, “education is just one of the social agencies through which language is acquired, taught and learn. It is therefore an important agency”. The Namibian LEP embodies the twin goals of establishing English as the official medium of education and promoting the equal development of the main Namibian languages. However, apart from these two general goals, the policy also entails some specific goals:

1.9.1.1 Promotion of learners’ mother tongue and cultural identity through the use of mother tongue medium of instruction at lower primary level.

“For pedagogical reasons, it is ideal for children to study through their own language during the early years of schooling when basic skills of reading, writing and concept-

formation are being developed” (Swarts, 2000:40). Therefore, the Namibian LEP demands that, “education should promote language and cultural identity of the children through the use of the mother -tongue as a medium of instruction, at least at the lower primary grades, and the teaching of the home language throughout formal education” (Legere, 1996:44). However, according to Swart (2000:40), “the Namibian language policy does not achieve this goal because there have never been enough resources”. That is; “there are insufficient number of teachers qualified to teach in the mother tongues, the resources for reading, teaching and learning materials have not been adequate and support for the development of African languages in general has been poor” (Swarts, 2000:40). In addition, “since Namibian independence in 1990, the intentions of the LEP have been manipulated to foster certain agendas and serve certain interests and those at fault include the government itself, as well as politicians, schools and communities” (Swarts, 2000:40).

“In this process of manipulation, many reasons are advanced to justify why, in certain schools, learners in lower primary are not being taught through their mother tongues” (Swarts, 2000:40). That is; “some learners speak too many different mother tongues in one class, parents prefer that their children be taught through the medium of English in order for the children to be proficient in English as early as possible, and since many parents are illiterate, schools decided on their behalf to introduce English as the medium of instruction” (Swarts, 2000:40). All these reasons clearly indicate that in most cases parents and schools deliberately avoid using the mother-tongue as medium of instruction at lower primary level and it also shows that parents and schools do not know the necessity of teaching learners through the mother-tongue at lower primary levels (Totemeyer, 2010). One should also be cautious that if learners are taught through English at lower primary level by teachers who are not very proficient in English, this will have a very negative impact on the learners’ academic achievements in future (Wolfaardt, 2002). For this reason, Swarts (2000:43) proposes that, “in situations where English medium of instruction is unavoidable at lower primary level,

only teachers who are properly trained, competent and proficient speakers of English should be appointed”.

1.9.1.2 Proficiency in English by the end of the seven-year primary cycle

According to this goal, “during the seven year of the primary cycle, education should foster reasonable acquisition and command of the official language and prepare learners for the English medium of instruction throughout the secondary cycle” (Legere, 1996: 44). In other words, “proficiency in the official language by the end of the primary cycle (grade 7), should be sufficient to enable all children to be effective participants in society or to continue their education” (Swarts, 2000:40). Nevertheless, according to the study done by NIED in 1999 as cited by Swarts (2000), grade 6 learners in Namibia did not perform very well in reading, with only 25, 9% reaching the minimum level of competence in reading literacy, and only 7, 6% reading the desired level of competence. The same study also explicitly shows that “many learners at grade 6 level did not perform well in English” (Swarts, 2000:44). Therefore, from these findings, one could infer that “there would not be a dramatic improvement in these learners’ performance by the end of the primary cycle (grade 7)” (Swarts, 2000:44). This, in turn, according to Swarts (2000:44) “casts doubt on what their performance will be like at junior secondary level and higher, since reading and investigative skills are very necessary for success in secondary school”.

1.9.1.3 Promotion of language and culture through co-curricular activities

The Namibian LEP allows schools to freely organize co-curricular activities to promote any language and culture (Legere, 1996:44). This is because in Namibia, all languages are equal regardless of the number of speakers or the level of their development (Swarts, 200:39). Also, in the Namibian education system, language development is embedded within formal education, while cultural issues are treated within the sphere of non-formal education (Swarts, 2000:44). This, to some extent has fostered the brief that the promotion, cultivation and preservation of Namibian languages should be left mainly to the formal education sector (Swarts, 2000:44). However, As Swarts (2000) suggests, if Namibian languages are to be successfully maintained, it must be

everybody's responsibility. This could be done through the establishment of regional cultural centres (Swarts, 2000). The establishment of these regional centres would allow school activities (formal education) and cultural activities (non-formal education) to align more closely, allowing the one to spill over into the other, and promoting the building of a bridge between the school and the community its serves (Swarts, 2000:44).

1.9.1.4 Offering two languages as school subjects

“Ideally, schools should offer at least two languages as subjects and children who are not in a position to cope with such a requirement may be exempted or take a non-official language as non-examinable subject” (Legere, 1996:44). Nonetheless, “under special conditions and with the approval of the regional director of education, learners are also allowed to follow a one-language curriculum” (Swarts, 2000:45).

Furthermore, even though the official language policy promotes bilingualism, it is not easy to achieve this goal. “When it comes to incorporating Namibian languages into the curriculum for instance, it is not very practical because many Namibian teachers have never been trained to teach their mother-tongue or to use it as a medium of instruction” (Swarts, 2000:46). In the lower primary phase for instance, “many teachers are not professionally qualified to teach in their mother-tongue” (Swarts, 2000:46). Thus, given these reasons, one can conclude that “many Namibians teachers are not equipped either to teach literacy in the mother-tongue in lower primary education, or to facilitate the switch to English medium at grade 4” (Swarts, 2000:46). Certainly, such teachers would not be able to promote bilingualism in Namibian schools.

1.9.1.5 English as the medium of instruction beyond the lower primary level

According to this goal, English (the official language) should be the medium of instruction for all schools from grade 4-12 and beyond (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993b). To put it differently, “English will be the medium of instruction for all subjects at secondary school level, vocational-technical institutions and at teacher training colleges, as well as other tertiary institutions” (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993a:66). Ideally, “learners need to be proficient enough in English, (the

official language) at the beginning of secondary education level, either to gain access to further education or to be effective participants in society” (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993b:4).

1.9.1.6 Conditional freedom for private schools to use any language as the medium of instruction.

“This goal allows private schools, throughout the primary school cycle to use any other language as a medium of instruction provided that they will offer at least one indigenous language as a subject” (Angula, 1992:4). Indeed, “the Namibian constitution guarantees the right for any school to use a language other than the official language, English, as the medium of instruction provided that learners become proficient in English as well” (Swarts, 2000:45).

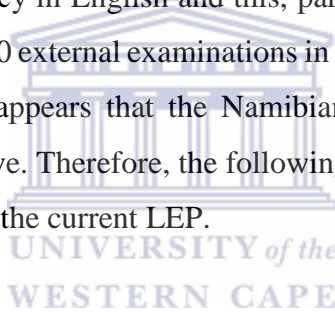
1.9.1.7 Promotion of international understanding through teaching a foreign language.

“The Namibian LEP requires that, where possible and suitable, foreign languages should be taught as a way of promoting international understanding” (Swarts, 2000). Swarts (2000:44) further points out that “French and German are offered at certain secondary schools in order to promote these languages and cultures in Namibia and hence encourage international understanding”. Consequently, these two languages (French and German) have been strongly advertised and supported by their respective countries and in return a fairly good number of Namibian learners have developed interest in learning them (Swarts, 2000). Here, it is important to explain that “learning these languages (French & German) is not only beneficial in terms of reinforcing ‘international understanding’ but they can and do offer the possibility of further study as well as opportunities for employment both in Namibia and elsewhere” (Swarts, 2000:45).

1.9.1.8 Conditional freedom for non-promotional subjects to be taught through a home language at the primary level.

“The Namibian LEP directs that state schools or state-subsidized schools wishing to teach non-promotional subjects at the primary cycle through the home language are

free to do so provided that such an approach would not promote intercultural tension and conflict in schools” (Legere, 1996:44). According to Swarts (2000:47), “teaching non-promotional subjects such as ‘Life skills’ and ‘Physical education’ within home language is encouraged in order to allow both teachers and learners a smoother transition to English-medium instruction when the time comes”. However, “it was pointed out in 1996 that the practice (teaching non-promotional subjects through the mother-tongue) was to be phased out by that year, and that from then onward, all subjects from grade 4 onwards were required to be taught through the medium of English” (Swarts, 2000:47). Nonetheless, “evidence that mother-tongue instruction after grade 4 continues to this day can be found as far up as grade 10, where even promotion subjects are still being taught through the mother tongue as a result of teachers’ lack of proficiency in English and this, partially accounts for learners’ poor performance in the grade 10 external examinations in some schools” (Swarts, 2000:47). Despite this situation, it appears that the Namibian people’s attitudes towards the current LEP remain positive. Therefore, the following section addresses the Namibian people’s attitudes towards the current LEP.



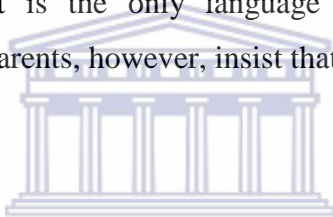
1.10 Attitudes towards the Namibian LEP

According to Chamberlain (1993:61) “parents in Namibia are positive about English as the medium of instruction”. For example, in a study carried out by Harris in 2011 on “language in schools in Namibia”, 100% of parents want their children to be taught in English even though they do not use English at home or in the community”. In fact, a big number of Namibian parents prefer their children to be instructed mainly in English as from the fourth school year at least (Totemeyer, 2010). That is why “there is a growing tendency among parents to remove their children from schools offering mother-tongue instruction and enrolling them at schools with English as the sole medium of English” (Totemeyer, 2010:55). It is therefore not surprising that “in 2008 there were 243 schools in Namibia that had ministerial approval to offer English as the sole medium of instruction from grade 1 on ward” (Totemeyer, 2010:55).

Totemeyer (2010:55) further laments that “it is disconcerting that in spite of the difficulties encountered since independence (1990) in the education arena, parents are still not aware that English medium instruction is contributing to their children’s poor performance in school”. This in a way shows that Namibian parents think that the best way to learn English is to have English as the only language of instruction (Haacke, 1996). “They (Namibian parents) also seem to think that the emphasis on local languages will take time away from the international (English) language” (Haacke, 1996:78). Here, one may also presume that “many parents are ashamed of their mother-tongue and culture, considering them as being inferior to English” (Totemeyer, 2010:54).

Furthermore, apart from the parents, Namibian teachers have been also found to have positive attitudes towards English as the medium of instruction. According to the study done by Harlech-Jones on “the implementation of English as a medium of instruction in Namibia” in 1988, “the respondents (teachers) showed overwhelming support for English as the medium of instruction in both the higher primary and secondary school phase- 78.1 percent and 85.4 percent respectively” (Harlech-Jones, 1996:96). Equally important, according to the study done by Ashton and others in 2008, when grade 1-3 teachers were asked in what language they would choose to teach if they had the authority to teach in any language, the majority responded “English” (Ashton, 2008). Similarly, the study carried out by Ipinge (2013) in Northern Namibia on “English lingua franca as a language of learning and teaching” revealed that teachers were very comfortable with English as a medium of instruction. Here, it is important to emphasize the fact that the majority of Namibian teachers have been found to have very poor English proficiency (Harris, 2011). However, despite that, teachers still prefer to teach in English. This explicitly shows that their attitudes towards English as the medium of instruction are very positive. One thing that reinforces teachers’ positive attitudes towards English medium instruction is the fact that “they (teachers) believe that pupils will do better at school if English is used as the only medium of instruction” (Harlech-Jones, 1996:97).

Finally, learners' attitudes towards English as medium of instruction are not so positive. According to the study done by Harris (2011) on "languages in schools in Namibia", "83% of learners indicated that they want to learn in their home language and 87% indicated that they want to talk to their teachers in their home language" (Harris, 2011:54). This possibly means learners do not really appreciate learning through English. Learners made it very clear that they do not understand their teachers or their subject matters if they are taught in English. In actual fact, 61% of Namibian learners struggle with English as LOLT (Harris, 2011). It is not easy for the Namibian child to learn a language at school and learn everything in that language, whereas at home life is in another language altogether (Diescho, 2014). Possibly, this is why Brock-Utne 1995 in Totemeyer (2010:53) reasons that "children often prefer the mother-tongue because it is the only language they understand; their parents particularly the educated parents, however, insist that they be taught in English".



1.11 Methodology

This study follows a mixed-method research approach, and engages with ESL teachers as well as learners in order to get their views and experiences on the teaching and learning of English and in particular on essay writing problems. Furthermore, this study was conducted at six senior secondary schools in the Omusati education region of Northern Namibia. At each school, I engaged twenty ESL grade 12 learners and all the teachers teaching ESL in grade 12, including their HODs. In addition, to obtain the data which informed the current study, I used a number of different data collection methods. Among others, these included interviews, document analysis and classroom observations. Finally, the data that was used within the current study was analyzed using analytical tools such as Thematic Content Analysis (TCA), Discourse Analysis (DA), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Error Analysis (EA), Multimodal Analysis (MDA) and Document Analysis.

1.12 Overview of chapters

Chapter 1: Introduction and back ground

This chapter provides a general overview and introduction to the study, including the background which includes a historical perspective of the Namibian language in education policy and the selection of English as the sole official language for an independent Namibia. This chapter also includes the rationale of the study and a brief description of the research process.

Chapter 2: Language ideology, planning and policy in Namibia

This chapter reviews literature on types of language ideologies which have enforced English as LOLT within the current LEP for Namibia. Besides this, the chapter presents literature on how language attitudes in Namibia have devalued the use of African languages within Namibian classrooms and obviously how these language attitudes have reinforced the use of English within the same academic settings. Finally, this chapter reviews literature on language planning and policy in an attempt to provide a reflection on how the current Namibian LEP can be adapted.

Chapter 3: Theoretical and analytical framework

This chapter provides the theoretical framework which governs the current study, which is the social constructivist paradigm and the contemporary notion of multilingualism as social practice. In addition, the chapter looks at the importance of applying translanguaging rather than code-switching in the ESL classroom. Lastly, the chapter presents accounts of analytical tools that were used to analyze the data that was collected within the current study.

Chapter 4: Methodology

This chapter describes the research process in depth, including research approach, research population, research tools, sampling procedures and ethical procedures.

Chapter 5: Research Findings: Document analysis

This chapter analyses a number of key documents impacting the ESL classroom in Namibia. Among others, these documents include the Namibian LEP document and the ESL grade 12 syllabus.

Chapter 6: Research Findings I: The Learners and their struggles with writing in English

This chapter provides an in-depth analysis of the types of problems learners in Northern Namibia experience when writing in English as well as the underlying causes of these problems. The chapter concludes with an analysis of learner attitudes towards English and their home languages within the educational context.

Chapter 7: Research findings II: The teachers and the HODs

This chapter specifically addresses the data collected from the teachers and their HODs regarding their training in English, their classroom methodologies including their reliance on code-switching to Oshiwambo, their perception of their own and their learners' problems with writing and finally their attitudes towards English and the language policy of Namibia.

Chapter 8: Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter puts forward the conclusions and recommendations arising from the study. In particular, it offers recommendations on how the training of English teachers can be improved as well as how the current national language policy can be adapted. Also, this chapter suggests some of the intervention strategies that teachers can use in order to help their learners overcome or reduce writing problems in English. Finally, the chapter addresses the limitations of the study as well as the recommendations for future research.

1.13 Summary of the chapter

The main aim of the current study was to disclose some of the problems caused for secondary school learners of English by the current Namibian LEP. In addition, the study is aimed at establishing some of the problems that learners in Northern Namibia encounter when they write essays in English as well as at revealing strategies that ESL teachers in Northern Namibia use in order to help their learners reduce their writing problems. This was reinforced by the idea that the Namibian LEP is responsible for a number of teaching and learning related problems that learners in Northern Namibia are experiencing. Therefore, this chapter presented a general overview of the current study and the background to the study, which include a historical perspective of the Namibian LEP and the selection of English as the sole official language for an independent Namibia.



Chapter 2: Language ideology, planning and policy in Namibia

2.0 Introduction

As mentioned earlier, the current study focuses on critical questions regarding the effect of the current Namibian language in education policy on teaching and learning ESL in Northern Namibia, with a special focus on one of the most demanding skills in a second language-essay writing. In fact, the current study deals with the consequences of a language policy which was ideologically skewed towards a language few Namibians either spoke or had access to. Therefore, this chapter reviews literature on types of language ideologies which have enforced English as a LOLT within the current language in education policy for Namibia. Besides, this chapter reviews literature on how language attitudes in Namibia have devalued the use of African languages within Namibian classrooms and obviously how these language attitudes have reinforced the use of English within the same academic settings. Certainly, this chapter reviews literature on language planning in order to offer insight as to how any language policy would need to be planned before it is implemented. Finally, literature on language policy and in particular on types of language policies is also presented in this chapter, in an attempt to provide a reflection on how the current Namibian language in education policy can be adapted.

2.1 Language ideologies

“Language ideologies refer to the set of beliefs, values and cultural frames that continually circulate in society, informing the ways in which language is conceptualized and represented as well as how it is used” (Makoe & Mckinney, 2014:2). Makoe and Mckinney (2014:2) further emphasize that “language ideologies include the values, practices and beliefs associated with language use by speakers, and the discourse which constructs values and beliefs at state, institutional, and global

levels”. Apart from Makoe and Mckinney (2014), Brown (2014:191) defines language ideology as “the body of assertions, beliefs, and aims that constitute a sociopolitical system within a group, culture, or country”. This implies that “all users of language and all speech communities possess ideological frameworks that determine choice, value, evaluation and use of language” (Mcgroarty, 2010:98). For instance, “people might believe that a particular dialect lacks grammar and thus cannot be used to express complex ideas” (Woolard 1998 in Wortham, 2001:258).

Additionally, it is important to mention that values and beliefs about languages can be addressed from two perspectives, namely ideologies of function and ideologies of form (Johnson, 2001). “Ideologies of function encompasses beliefs about the utility and purpose of languages and language abilities and on the most basic level, ideologies of function address an individual’s understanding of why a particular language is (or should be) used” (Johnson, 2001:5). “This orientation entails underlying assumptions about the value that particular languages have in comparison to others- for given purposes” (Johnson, 2001:5). “Some relevant examples include equating language proficiency to economic prosperity” (Gonzalez 2000 in Johnson, 2001:5). On the other hand, “ideologies concerning the form of a given language entail a perceived superiority and inferiority of particular dialect variation” (Johnson, 2001:6). Ideologies of form echo what Spolsky (2004) in Johnson (2001:6) describes as “an ‘ideology of purity’ that differentiate between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ language”. “These types of viewpoints mirror the fundamental tenets of prescriptivism- the notion that certain varieties of language are inherently more valuable than others” (Crystal 1986 in Johnson, 2001:6). Apart from the two perspectives of language ideology discussed above, Weber and Horner (2012) identified five types of language ideologies. However, for the purpose of the current study, I will only focus on two types of language ideologies. These are ‘language hierarchy ideology’ and ‘one-nation one-language’ ideology.

2.1.1 Language hierarchy ideology

“Where language hierarchies exist, there is usually one dominant language, followed in order of decreasing importance by other languages or varieties” (Antia & Dyers, 2016:530). This entails “assigning some languages higher status than others when they are labelled as national or official languages” (Abongdia & Foncha, 2014:625). This ideology is relevant to the Namibian situation because the Namibian language policy stipulates that “English is the sole medium of communication in all executive, legislative and judiciary bodies from the central government level down to the grassroots” (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2001:307). Here, one should highlight the fact that English is the official and national language of Namibia and in the education arena, English is used as a medium of instruction from grade four to tertiary levels (Harris, 2011). On the other hand, “Namibia has granted the Namibian languages the status of medium of instruction in functional literacy and in the three lower primary grades” (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2001:296).

Looking at the roles of English and African languages in Namibia in general and in the Namibian education system in particular, one can conclude that the language policy has given English a very high status compared to the status of Africa languages. As Antia and Dyers (2016:529) point out, “ideologies about languages can underpin, determine and affect many other domains of human activity such as people’s responses towards the use of particular languages in certain spaces”. As a result, in Namibia, people have developed an ideology that English is a better language compared to Namibian African languages. For example, “Namibians feel that the use of indigenous languages as media of instruction would lower the standard of education, impede the growth of science and technology, and retard the rate of national development” (Sukumane, 1998:208). Besides, Namibians also think that “the emphasis on local languages will take time away from the international language - English” (Brock-Utne, 2001:314). As Trewby (2001:29) laments, “there is no doubt that there is a widespread belief that because English is the official language, English should be used and taught as much as possible in schools and that the Namibian languages have very little value”.

Although the Namibian language policy reflects the ideological view that English is better than the Namibian African languages in all aspects of life (Harris, 2011), English has proven to be problematic when it comes to teaching and learning. For instance, as mentioned earlier, Harris (2011) found that 61% of learners in Namibia struggle with English as a LOLT. In actual fact, “learners want to succeed at school in general and in English in particular, but the problems of language hinder their ability to understand their subject well enough” (Harris, 2011:7). This implies that these learners are not expected to do well in English as a subject, as well as in content subjects that are taught in English. It could be argued it was an informed idea to have English as a sole official language from the point of view of business, politics and economic development (Harris, 2011). However, there is a counter argument that having English as a sole medium of instruction in Namibian schools does not work to the betterment of majority of Namibian learners. What is more worrying is that “the Namibian LEP is not explicit in providing guidelines on how the different mother tongues would be used in schools” (Wolfaardt, 2002:69). This implies that if teachers follow the policy as it is, they would not be able for example, to use effective multilingual teaching approaches such as code-mixing and translanguaging. Accordingly, “it might be a wiser choice for Namibia to strengthen the teaching of English as a foreign language through giving more time in school to the study of English as a subject and strengthen the Namibian languages as languages of instruction” (Brock-Utne, 2001:314). This will require Namibia to adopt an ideological view which is centered on the importance of the mother-tongue in learning foreign languages as well as other school subjects. Another ideology that Namibia needs to abandon in terms of learning and teaching is the ‘One-nation one-language ideology’.

2.1.2 The one-nation one-language ideology

According to Weber and Horner (2012) as cited in Abongdia and Foncha (2014:52), the ‘one-nation one-language ideology’ makes language equal to territory and national identity. In other words, the “one-nation-one language” ideology is the belief that monolingualism or the use of one single common language is important for social

harmony and national unity (Piller, 2014). In the USA for example, the one-nation-one-language ideology has a long history because English and English only has been seen as an important language for social cohesion (Piller, 2014). Apart from the USA, the ‘one-nation-one language ideology’ is also reflected within the Namibian language policy because “choosing an official language and hence the language of learning and teaching for Namibia had two related purposes; the need to combat the South African engineered divisiveness and the unity of all Namibians” (Brock-Utne, 2001:306). In other words, “the official language (English) was expected to reinforce national unity and at the same time to minimize competitions among indigenous languages” (Ipinge, 2013:37) because it was seen as an unbiased language (Sukumane, 1998). In schools, learning and teaching through the medium of English would mean teachers, learners and other educational stake holders would be unified, contrary to what happened in the past. In sum, “English was expected to contribute towards achieving unity and national construction by neutralizing any competitive or disruptive sociolinguistic forces” (Ipinge, 2013:60).

However, Bunyi (1999:348) notes that “whereas indigenous languages may divide people along ethnic lines, English divides them along class lines”. For instance, in Zambia, English has been adopted by competing language groups in the education sector. Concurrently, “it has divided those who have access to it (typical members of reasonably well-off urban groups) and those who do not (typically the members of poor urban and rural groups) (Cooke & Williams, 2002:314). In fact, “far from being a source of unity, the use of English in education in many poor countries such as Zambia has become a source of national debate” (Cooke & Williams, 2002:314). Therefore, in the case of Namibia, using English as language of teaching and learning, for the sake of unity instead of using mother-tongues is not helping much. In actual fact, this ideological view is more political rather than linguistic. As Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir (2001:304) claim, “the principal aspects of the Namibian language policy were already formulated and adapted before independence in the year of the liberation struggle”. It is therefore not surprising that the Namibian language policy is

more centered on political ideology rather than linguistic ideology. This has made people believe that using mother tongues as medium of instruction will divide the nation.

According to Shapwanale (2016) the minister of basic education in Namibia briefed the national assembly about the newly proposed education act this year (2016). According to the new (proposed) act, the language policy in public schools will allow for each learner to be taught in a language of their choice, where it is reasonably possible. “English will remain part of the curriculum, and that the new provision will just make sure that no learner will be forced to be taught in a language they do not agree with” (Shapwanale, 2016:3). Although the proposed act makes a lot of sense from the teaching and learning perspective, it received a lot of negative criticism because Namibian people feel that using different languages as medium of instruction will create disunity within the Namibian nation. For instance, one anonymous teacher complained in ‘the Namibian newspaper’ about this issue and here is what he or she wrote:

According to an article in The Namibian, the minister of education suggests that schools can decide on the language of instruction. I personally, as a teacher, do not agree with that because it will take us back to where we were before independence - Damara, Oshivambo, Otjiherero, Afrikaans, Kavango, Nama schools etc...let the medium of instruction remain English (The Namibian newspaper, 20 September 2016).

Looking at the above complaint, one can easily conclude that there is a need for Namibia to change its ideological view on the use of mother tongue in the teaching and learning settings. Obviously, adopting an ideology which is centered on ease of learning rather than on unity will ensure better academic results. Another important concept which is quite related to ‘language ideologies’ that would be discussed in this chapter is ‘language attitudes’.

2.2 Language attitudes

Language attitudes refers to “the feelings people have about their own language or the languages of others” (Crystal, 2008:266). In Elyildirin and Ashton’s (2006:2) words, “learners’ attitude toward a certain language begin developing early and are influenced by many things, including parents, peers, and interactions with people who have social and cultural differences”. Also, “these (language attitudes) may be positive or negative because for example, someone may particularly value a foreign language or think a language is especially difficult to learn” (Crystal, 2008:266). As Richards and Schmidt (2002:286) propose, “expressions of positive or negative feelings towards a language may reflect impressions of linguistic difficulty or simplicity, ease or difficulty of learning, degree of importance, elegance and social status”. For this reason, “language attitudes may have an effect on second language or foreign language learning” (Richards & Schmidt, 2002:286).

Furthermore, it is well-known that “negative attitudes towards the foreign language and group, which often comes from stereotypes and superficial contact with the target culture, can impede the learning of that language” (Elyildirim & Ashton, 2006:3). As a consequence, “negative attitudes towards the target language or its speakers, or the other member of the class may affect one’s determination and persistence to be involved in the classroom and its activities” (Gardner 1985 in Sciarini & Steinberg, 2006:130). “These same negative attitudes could impair memory functioning and detract students from focusing on the target language” (Sciarini & Steinberg, 2006:130). Consequently, all ESL teachers should ensure that their students possess positive attitudes towards learning English in order for them to attain decent levels of English proficiency (Elyildirin & Ashton, 2006).

Additionally, it has been argued that “positive attitudes to a language are necessary if one is to successfully learn that language” (Rubagumya, 1989:108). For example, Gardner (1985) in Rubagumya (1989) maintains that attitudes influence the success with which another language is acquired:

In the language learning situation, if the students' attitudes are favourable, it is reasonable to predict...that the experience with the language will be pleasant, and the students will be encouraged to continue (p.108)

Although 'positive language attitudes' foster successful foreign or second language learning, it must be understood that 'positive language attitudes' alone do not guarantee language learning success. Without rejecting the fact that language attitudes is a major factor in second or foreign language learning, Gardner (1985) in Rubagumya (1989:108) clarifies that "there are other factors that may influence language learning, such as the skill of the teacher, the methodology used, and the environment in which the second or foreign language is taught". All in all, "students' ability to learn a second or foreign language can be influenced by their attitudes toward that language (Elyildirim & Ashton, 2006:2). However, this is not always the case as research in Tanzania has indicated.

Like in many African countries, "the Tanzanian students see English as a global language which can open up educational and economic opportunities and believe that continuing to use English as the medium of instruction is the best way to learn English" (Hilliard, 2015:257). This clearly indicates that students' attitudes towards English are positive. However, according to Rubagumya (1989:113), "even though Tanzanian students' attitudes towards English are positive, English language competence has declined greatly in schools". These research findings undoubtedly show that in Tanzania, "positive attitudes towards English cannot be a good predictor of successful learning of the language" (Rubagumya, 1989:113).

Moreover, apart from Tanzania, research from Namibia has shown that teachers have positive attitudes towards English. Iiping (2013) for example found that the majority of teachers in Northern Namibia prefer to teach in English despite admitting that their English proficiency is not up to standard. They also seem to ignore learners who try to express themselves in mother-tongue during the lessons (Iiping, 2013). Hence in Iiping's (2013) study, one of the participants said:

I just ignore and repeat what I have said...if I was asking a question, I repeat that question in English and if she or he is still answering in the mother language, I tell the person specifically to answer me in English (p.64).

Apart from teachers, research has shown that “Namibian parents want their children to be taught in English even though they do not use English at home or in the community” (Harris, 2011:58). “It is disconcerting that in spite of the difficulties encountered over the past twenty years in the Namibian educational arena, parents are still not aware that English medium instruction is contributing to their children’s poor performance in school” (Totemeyer, 2010:55). Understandably, this is because in Namibia, “English is seen as a gateway to a good education and social advancement” (Iiping, 2013:54). As mentioned before, it seems that “many parents are ashamed of their mother tongue and culture, considering them as being inferior to English” (Totemeyer, 2010:54). It is therefore not surprising that parents’ attitudes towards English are very positive. In contrast, research in Namibia has shown that “83% of learners want to learn in their home language and 87% want to talk to their teachers in their home language” (Harris, 2011:58). According to Brock-Utne (1995) in Totemeyer (2010:53), “children often prefer the mother tongue because it is the only language that they understand”. Hence, in this regard, one can conclude that learners’ attitudes towards English is not quite positive and hence this may affect their academic performance in English in particular and in other school subjects in general. Therefore, language planning should always entail or consider learners’ attitudes towards the LOLT.

2.3 Language planning and language policy

Generally, the aim of language planning is to formulate and assess alternatives for solving language problems in order to find the best (or ideal) decision in a language setting (McKay & Hornberger, 1996). ‘Language planning’ and ‘language policy’ are therefore interrelated in such a way that ‘language policy’ is always a product of ‘language planning’ (McKay & Hornberger, 1996). Consequently, proper ‘language planning’ would imply an informed ‘language policy’ and evidently a better ‘language

policy' would imply better education outcomes. Indeed, for any country to achieve better education outcomes, proper 'language planning' is critical. That is why McKay and Hornberger (1996:109) argue that "language planning is a practical activity that attempts to socially benefit results". The following (two) sections therefore review literature on types of language policies and language planning.

2.3.1 Types of language planning

"Language planning involves the creation and implementation of an official policy about how the languages and linguistic varieties of a country are to be used" (Crystal, 2010:376). Apart from Crystal (2010), Kennedy (1983:1) defines language planning as "a problem solving activity concerned with deliberate language change for specific aims, which be social, political or educational or a mixture of all three". Certainly, "language planning is about deliberate efforts to influence the behavior of others with respect to the acquisition, structure of other language codes" (Cooper 1989 in Sukumane, 1998: 215) and "traditionally language has been planned 'from above' by those in power, usually in the interest of middle-class elites" (Heugh, Siegruhn & Pluddeman, 1995: vii).

Furthermore, "in developing countries like Namibia, decisions of fundamental nature need to be made during the process of language planning" (Crystal, 2010:376). This is because "through language planning, an official language policy is established and or implemented" (Richard & Schmidt, 2002:292). According to Mkhize, Mulaudzi & Madiba (2002), there are three main types of language planning. Namely; status planning, corpus planning and acquisition planning. These three types of language planning inform the current study in such a way that they provide understanding on how the proposed changes to the current Namibian language in education policy will be planned before implementations.

2.3.1.1 Status language planning

"If several languages are spoken within a country, it is usually necessary to choose a language or languages as norm(s) for official, educational, and other purposes" (Crystal, 2010:376). This is achieved through status language planning. This (status

planning) “deals with giving a language the status of an official language, national language, language of religion or medium of instruction” (Mkhize et al., 2002:252). As Bourdieu (1991) discloses, status planning regulates the power relationship between languages and their respective speakers in the linguistic market place. Concurring with Kamwangamwalu (2000) is Crystal (2008:268) who highlights that “status planning deals with the standing of one language in relation to others”. Thus, “status planning is more concerned with the social and political implications of choosing a language, and with such matters as language attitudes, national identity, international use, and minority” (Crystal, 2008:376). It is therefore not surprising that “status language planners are usually government officials, politicians or government bodies” (Mkhize et al., 2002:252).

Technically, “status planning relates to increasing or restricting the uses of language, but not to increasing the number of its speakers” (Kamwangamalu, 1997:236). “The communicative strength or expressive power which a particular language adopts is determined by the number of functions which the language performs in that particular community and the quality of those functions against the social structure” (Mkhize et al., 2002:252). “If a language is declared ‘official’ in a country, that language will assume the functions of the language of education, government, commerce and the court of law” (Mkhize et al., 2002:252). On the other hand, “the other languages not chosen for official purposes will assume a relatively lower status in terms of functions that they can perform in that society” (Mkhize et al., 2002:252).

In Namibia for example, the language policy adopted English as an official language and a national language at the same time while African languages, Afrikaans and German are given the status of local languages with an equal possibility of being developed as national languages (Haacke, 1996). However, this has just led to what Skutnabb-Kangas (1988) has called “linguicism”. “This is an ideology according to which the language of the politically or economically dominant group or class is given a higher social status than indigenous languages” (Kamwangamalu, 1997:244). ‘Linguicism’ can be clearly seen in the Namibian situation where by the African

languages have a relatively low status compared to English, the official language. “They (African languages) are only used as media of instruction from grade 1-3, taught a subjects from grade 4 to 12, and then used as media of instruction in functional literacy classes” (Legere, 1996:53). They (African languages) are also taught as subjects at tertiary institutions, even though this is not a commendable exercise as some of them are not taught there at all. In 1996 for example, among 10 major Namibian African languages, only three were taught as subjects at the University of Namibia (Legere, 1996).

Therefore, as Kamwangamalu (2000:59) argues, “the lack of bold initiatives to promote African languages ensure that African languages are only associated with their traditional role as vehicles for cultural heritage; while English is associated with the institutions such as government, and administration, the courts, banking etc.”. Furthermore, given the low status of African languages in a number of African countries, English remain the main medium of instruction despite the fact that it (English) has failed to stimulate the required literacy among learners (Kamwangamwalu, 1997). Possibly, it is time for African countries (including Namibia) to use African languages as media of instructions at all levels. According to Kamwangamalu (1997:248), “mother-tongue education might become an alternative to English medium education provided that it is “cleansed” of the stigma it has been carrying since the heyday of apartheid”. Indeed, “in order to give mother-tongue education a new look, massive resources would have to be committed for teacher training, curriculum-material design, and for campaigns intended to promote its importance of access to remunerative employment” (Kamwangamalu, 1997:249). If these languages (mother-tongues) would need systematic development or engineering before they can be used as media of instruction, appropriate ‘corpus planning’ would need to be in place.

2.3.1.2 Corpus language Planning

“Corpus planning involves attempts to define or reform the standard language by changing or introducing forms in spelling, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar”

(Kamwangamalu, 1997:23). In Haacke's (1996:59) words, "corpus planning means that changes are made to the language itself; for instance, by standardizing its orthography (spelling), by coining special vocabulary (terminology), by standardizing its pronunciation or even grammar; or by attempting to develop one variety as standard variety". As Kamwangamalu (2000:51) explains, "corpus planning attempts to adjust the inequalities between languages by modifying linguistic features so as to compete in a linguistic market place". For example, "in Malaysia, where Bahasa Malaysia has become the national language, attempts have been made to construct new vocabulary in areas such as business, education and research" (Richard & Schmidt, 2002:127).

"Although the application of technical linguistic skills is central to corpus planning, corpus planning involves more than simple linguistically based decision making" (Liddicoat, 2005:994). "If a certain language for instance has many dialects, the corpus language planners have a daunting task of deciding which dialect should be regarded as the standard dialect and why? Or should all the dialects of the language be considered when an orthography is created?" (Mkhize et al., 2002:253). Consequently, as Mkhize et al. (2002:253) propose, "it is important to note that not only linguistic, but also cultural, political and economic factors should be taken into consideration during corpus language planning".

Furthermore, "historically, languages such as the African languages are said to have been disadvantaged with regard to development by the colonial language policies and the apartheid language policies" (Mkhize et al., 2002:253). Therefore, they (African languages) always need to go through comprehensive corpus planning before they can be used along foreign or second languages as medium of instructions, which hardly happens because the focus is usually on the foreign or second language (Legere, 1996).

In Namibia for example, "after independence, the corpus planning activities for African languages was set out" (Legere, 1996:54). However, "the implementation of the suggested activities has not been systematically initiated because there was neither a programme of action, nor a timetable for steps to be taken and allocation of responsibilities" (Legere, 1996:54). "This lack of organizational and concomitant

professional involvement in a serious setback for African languages, which are further losing ground compared with English where these professional skills, know-how and expertise have been built up over the years and are also provided by expatriate experts” (Legere, 1996:55).

“Apart from a lack of organization and professional involvement, the corpus planning for Namibian Africa languages showed a lack of information and materials on the current orthography for almost all African languages, which is detrimental to language teaching in schools and non-formal education” (Legere, 1996:55). “Teachers and literacy promoters for instance are in urgent need of various orthographies and have to be trained in how to write African languages” (Legere, 1996:55). Besides, “the textbooks where the orthography is applied in texts and exercises are not sufficient for them to deduce orthographical conventions” (Legere, 1996:56). “The consequence of this is that most learners in the lower grades cannot write a text correctly for lack of competence in orthography and evidently learners who cannot write their own language will certainly face tremendous problems writing English” (Legere, 1996:56). This clearly indicates that the ‘language planning’ which was done to prepare Namibian African languages to be used as the medium of instructions in schools (from grade 1-3) was not sufficient. Another type of language planning which was not handled effectively was ‘acquisition language planning’.

2.3.1.3 Acquisition language Planning

“Acquisition language planning refers to planning that is directed to how to promote and facilitate acquisition of the new language” (Cooper 1989 in Sukumane, 2000:2006). In other words, “this type of planning is directed toward increasing the number of users; for example, speakers, writers, listeners, or readers” (Cooper 1989 in Kamwangamalu, 1997:236). Further, according to Cooper (1989) in Mkhize et al. (2002:253), “language acquisition goals may be achieved through programs or types of acquisitions planning designed to improve the incentives to learn, and those designed primarily to create or to improve the incentive to learn, and those designed to create or improve both opportunity and incentive simultaneously”. Thus, “acquisition language

planning is important because in South Africa for example, it is expected that each person should at least be competent in three languages, that is, the language of wider communication, another regional language and the vernacular” (Mkhize et al., 2002:272). This implies that “there will be a need to learn English which is the language of wider communication by the majority of the population” (Mkhize et al., 2002:272).

Additionally, in Namibia, after independence in 1990, the national literacy programme was launched to teach illiterate adults basic language skills in the mother tongue as well as English (Legere, 1996). This was a creditable achievement because “at independence in 1990, Namibia had an illiteracy rate of more than 60% of the adults” (Legere, 1996:53). Apart from the national literacy programme, the government took the initiative of improving teachers’ English teaching skills and supplied a number of teaching and learning materials written in English to schools (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993b) which were not enough and hence despite these efforts from the government, “the use of English in Namibia remain largely restricted to part of business community where it is the language mainly of middle and top management” (Cluver, 1990:66). “To become competent in second language, there should be opportunity to use that language outside the school and university” (Cluver, 1990:66). Apart from that, to be competent in second language requires a language policy which would effectively strengthen and facilitate competence in second language and hence foster academic achievements. In the section that follows, different types of language policies are discussed.

2.3.2 Types of language policies

“Language policy refers to the stated position of a government on the official or legal status of a language (or languages) in a country, often including the role of a language in education, commercial, and political institution” (Brown, 2014:375). “One of the most important ways in which a country’s language policy manifest itself is in the kind of provision it makes for the linguistic education of children” (Crystal, 2010:378). Therefore, the language in education policy of any given country stipulates which languages and language variety are to be taught in schools, from what age and for how

long (Crystal, 2010:378). Hence, the current study draws on types of language policies in order to gain insight and recommendations on how the current Namibian language in education policy can be adapted.

2.3.2.1 Monolingual language policies

A monolingual language policy is a language in education policy which only allows one language to be utilized as a language of learning and teaching from grade one onwards (Totemeyer, 2010). Possibly, People who advocate monolingual language policies believe that using mother languages alongside foreign or second languages will impede successful learning of second language or foreign language. They also believe that using a foreign language as medium of instruction throughout the school cycle implies better education (Totemeyer, 2010). As Early and Norton (2014 :676) argue, “when it comes to the use of English as a sole medium of instruction from grade one onward, community members and significantly parents and policy makers feel that being educated means proficiency in English because it (English) is perceived as a prerequisite for upward mobility and global citizenship”. This means that a number of parents will demand their children to be taught in English as early as grade one.

In Namibia for example, as mentioned before, “there is a growing tendency among parents to remove their children from schools offering mother tongue instruction (from grade one to three) and enroll them at schools with English as the sole medium of instruction” (Totemeyer, 2010:55). In 2008 for instance, “there were 243 schools in Namibia that had ministerial approval to offer English as the sole medium of instruction from grade one onwards” (Totemeyer, 2010:55). This clearly shows that parents want their children to be taught in English as early as possible with the hope that their children would have better futures.

“Despite the fact that most of the world is bilingual or multilingual and people with such competencies reap numerous benefits, monolingual ideologies continue to undergird decision-making in much of the world” (King & Benson, 2010:347). In Africa for example, a number of countries have adopted monolingual language policies because

of three misconceptions or myths (Ndhlovu, 2015). The first misconception is that “bilingual or multilingual education is too expensive” (Ndhlovu, 2015:403). This claim is founded on the false assumption that “the fewer the number of languages used as medium of instruction, the cheaper it is to run effective education programs” (Ndhlovu, 2015:403). However, in actual fact, “the cost is more than is usually indicated in essence that there is huge financial investment into the English-only model, which does not deliver what it is intended to achieve” (Ndhlovu, 2015:403).

Furthermore, the second misconception is that “English is the only language which has the capacity to deliver quality education to the majority and African languages do not and cannot” (Ndhlovu, 2015:403). “This fatalistic claim is misleading and evidence free because the false beliefs about the inadequacy of African languages seem to have been advanced to justify the hegemony of English that remains ensconced as the main medium of instruction even in those communities where the majority of people are multilingual” (Ndhlovu, 2015:404). Finally, opting for a monolingual language policy in Africa is sometimes influenced by the claim that “parents want their children to be taught in English and in a democracy it is our duty to give people what they want, without question or need for intervention” (Ndhlovu, 2015:404). This is a typical myth because what makes African parents to enroll their children in English medium schools is not really the fact that it is their democratic right and it is not because children are taught in English. However, they do so because English medium schools offer better learning and teaching resources (Ndhlovu, 2015).

As one can vividly see, reasons to adopt foreign languages or second languages as sole medium of instructions from grade one onward are purely political rather than educational and linguistic (Clegg & Simpson, 2016). Consequently, “the process of teaching and learning through a single medium of instruction which is second language is a difficult, time consuming and stressful one for teachers and students alike” (Probyn, 2001:264) and obviously this has a number of negative effects on teaching and learning.

Using a monolingual language policy usually means learners’ writing ability to write about difficult subject matters is limited and their reading skills in second language are

not good (Clegg & Simpson, 2016). Most importantly, “learners’ ability to understand teachers talking about new subject concepts without code-switching is often very low” (Clegg & Simpson, 2016:362). This implies that “teachers would respond by translating texts into the students’ mother tongue and providing students with simplified notes in English to learn by heart” (Probyn, 2001:251). Certainly, “in context in which English is used as a sole medium of instruction, for instance, the language of the classroom is very often not English but a mixture of English and mother-tongue” (Young 1995, in Probyn, 2001:251) and as a results “learners do not acquire the English language skills that the (monolingual) policy is intended to promote” (Probyn, 2001:251) and this will obviously lead to poor academic performance in schools as a number of studies have revealed.

In conclusion, “it is important for community organizations, parents, educators, politicians and policy makers to be better informed about the evidence-based understanding of the length of time required for learners to achieve levels of advanced second language and literacy for successful achievement in content area classrooms, and the value of long term, ‘strong’ bi/plurilingual education in attaining those ends (Early & Norton, 2014:676). Therefore, a ‘bilingual language policy’, which is discussed in the next section, might be a possible option.

2.3.2.2 Bilingual language policies

A bilingual language policy, broadly defined, “is the language policy which allows the use of two languages as media of instruction” (Brisk, 2005:8). In African countries, these two languages normally consist of an African language and a foreign or a second language (Le Mottee, 2008). Generally, “bilingual education may help limited English proficient students keep up in other subjects while they learn English” (Chin, 20015:1). This is because “it (bilingual education) ensures that limited English proficiency students would not fall behind academically because of poor command of English” (Vermeulen, 2001:135). Besides, bilingual education helps limited English proficiency students develop language skills in their native language and such skills may facilitate

their development of skills in English (Chin, 2005) because “in bilingual education, the learners’ first language is a basic tool for teaching and learning” (Clegg, 2001:217).

Furthermore, research has shown that bilingual education is more beneficial than monolingual education. Thomas and Collier (2002) for example, (as cited in Clegg & Simpson, 2016:365) have found that “in minority education in the USA, forms of bilingual education are more effective in developing second language ability than monolingual education in second language”. “Second language users of English for example, often get low marks in examinations because although they may know the answer, they cannot express it adequately in English” (Clegg, 2001:217). In her study on language of instruction and student performance in Tanzania and South Africa, Brock-Utne (2007) as cited by Mwindi and Van der Walt (2015), found that insufficient competency in the LOLT is the main factor contributing to academic underachievement as well as low education standards. Therefore, there is a need for learners to be taught at least in two languages through their school career so that they do not under perform because of language barrier.

Although bilingual education has proven to be beneficial to learners, there are a number of problems which might hinder its successful implementation in African countries. Firstly, a number of African languages are only in oral forms and therefore cannot be used as media of instruction (Clegg, 2001). However, this does not mean they are not capable of being used as media of instruction. As Alexander (1995:40) recommends, “inadequate orthography, standardization or lexicon should not be used as criteria when language policy decisions are made”. Therefore, “with enough basic linguistic expertise and a little time, African countries can overcome the challenge of having African languages which are under developed” (Clegg, 2001:214). Secondly, in some African countries, there are no materials developed in African languages because normally there are no reasonable financial resources (Clegg, 2001). In the case of Namibia for example, Diescho (2014:7) points out that “Namibia does not have the resources, both financial and human to create enough material ready for use, including materials to cover scientific terminologies in the languages Namibians wish to

develop”. However, I argue that the Namibian oral tradition has very accurate descriptions of scientific phenomena which can be part of school education.

In addition, another problem which might hinder the successful implementation of bilingual education in African countries is that parents and communities do not believe that bilingual education is good for their children (Clegg, 2001) because of the reasons referred to earlier in this chapter. According to the research conducted by Harris on ‘language in schools in Namibia’ in 2011, 100% of parents want their children to be taught in English even though they do not use English at home or in their community. Thus, “for the parents to change their mentality, we need time, effort, public campaigning and above all, good examples of successful bilingual education for all to see” (Clegg, 2001:214).

To conclude this section, it is important to mention that “bilingual education comes in many forms or models, influenced by particular circumstances, students’ needs, and resources” (Brisk, 2005:8). Therefore, for the purpose of this study, I will address three ‘bilingual education models’. These are the maintenance bilingual education model, the early exit bilingual education model, and late the exit bilingual education model.

2.3.2.3 The maintenance bilingual education model

According to the maintenance bilingual education, “children are taught in their home language when they start school but later a gradual change take place to the use of the school language for teaching some subjects and the home language for teaching others” (Richard & Schmidt, 2002:52). Granted, “in bilingual maintenance programs, students remain in bilingual classes for their entire education experience” (Fromkin, Rodman & Hyams, 2014:317). Indeed, “the main objective of maintenance bilingual education is to help students achieve high levels of proficiency in both mother-tongue and the official language” (Le Mottee, 2008:36) and hence reinforce academic performance. “In Africa, the kind of maintenance bilingual education models that are applicable would be either a mother- tongue medium throughout with a foreign language as a subject by a specialist teacher, or dual medium, which refers to mother- tongue (instruction) to at least years four to five followed by the gradual use of a foreign

language for up to but no more than 50% of the subject by the end of the school years” (Ouane & Glanz, 2011:11). However, it should be noted that teaching pupils through the media of both their mother tongue and foreign language or second language throughout their school experience comes with a number of benefits as well as obstacles.

“When limited English proficiency students are still learning English, it may be better to teach other subjects in their primary language so that they (students) will not fall (as far) behind in these other subjects while they are catching up in English” (Chin, 2015:2). Equally important, instruction in the native language might develop general language skills that facilitate learning new languages. As Clegg (2001:223) emphasizes, “if learners use the first language for the purposes of school learning, it is easier for them to use the second language for the same purposes”. For example, “some strategies developed for reading in the native language may be applicable for reading in foreign or second language” (Chin, 2015:3). However, it is important to highlight that using first languages for the purpose of school learning can only improve academic achievement if learners are proficient in their first language (Cummins, 1979). Definitely, “first language fulfils certain pedagogical functions in the second language-medium class room; functions which cannot naturally be fulfilled by the second language, especially when both teacher and learners share the same mother tongue” (Clegg, 2001:223). Additionally, “parents of limited English proficient students, who themselves typically lack proficiency in English, may be better able to assess their children’s school progress, help with schoolwork, and communicate with teachers in a bilingual setting” (Chin, 2015:3). Finally, “the use of mother language as medium of instruction within the maintenance bilingual education model facilitates the integration of African culture into the school curriculum, creating a culturally sensitive curriculum and classroom” (Le Mottee, 2008:36). “Through this process, children get to feel positively about themselves and their self-esteem is enhanced and hence communication between learner and teacher can be more effective, and even more emphatic” (Le Mottee, 2008:36).

On the other hand, “because some instruction is in the native language, students within maintenance bilingual education programs receive less exposure to English at school and this might delay and weaken their acquisition of English language skills which could in turn affect the academic tracks they can pursue later” (Chin, 2015:3). In addition, “maintenance bilingual education may foster social divisions and narrowness of outlook; the children may become ‘trapped’ in their mother tongue, and fail to achieve in the majority language and thus reducing their access to prosperity” (Crystal, 2010:378). Similarly, “maintenance bilingual education requires adequate teacher preparations, time tabling and materials, otherwise students may fail to achieve in both languages; the mother tongue as well as well as the target language” (Crystal, 2010:378).

Despite a number of challenges associated with maintenance bilingual education, research has found that “children enrolled in maintenance bilingual education programs did better than children enrolled in other education programs” (Fromkin et al. 2014:317). Therefore, “maintenance bilingual education programs need to be maintained throughout the whole of a child’s school career” (Crystal, 2010:378). The emphasis here is that the “students’ mother tongue should be used as medium of instruction together with a foreign or second language from lower grades to the end of school” (Le Mottee, 2008:36). This has been recommended for implementation in a number of African countries but it never materialized. “In Tanzania for instance, Kiswahili was adopted as the medium of instruction in primary schools with the aim of extending this gradually to the secondary level” (Le Mottee, 2008:35). “In spite of the successful implementation of the policy at the primary level, the progression never materialized” (Le Mottee, 2008:35). This is a clear indication that despite the fact that the maintenance bilingual education model has proven to be beneficial to learners in terms of academic achievements (Ouane & Glanz, 2011), a number of African countries including Namibia have adopted transitional bilingual education models instead of adopting the maintenance bilingual education model. In the section that follows, a detailed discussion of the transitional bilingual education model is given.

2.3.2.4 Transitional bilingual education

“Transitional bilingual education refers to the partial or total use of the child’s home language when the child enters school, and a later change to the use of the school language only” (Richard & Schmidt, 2002:52). In other words, “transition is widely used to refer to the move from teaching and learning in mother tongue to English-medium education” (Clegg & Simpson, 2016:361). This (transition) can be of two types. According to Le Mottee (2008:36) “early transitional bilingual education model allows learners to exit the mother-tongue in one to three years, whilst the late exit bilingual education model looks for this to happen between grade 5 and grade 6”.

Furthermore, according to the Namibian language policy for schools, in grade 1-3 mother tongues are to be used as media of instruction and English is to be learnt as a subject (Otaala, 2001). “In grades 4-12, English becomes the medium of instruction for all subjects except mother tongue while mother tongues may be taken as subjects” (Otaala, 2001:203). This is a typical example of an early transition bilingual education which has been found to be complicated because “it does not give learners a chance to fully attain in their mother language school-related vocabulary, speech styles and other aspects of language that are specific to a school environment while they are learning English” (Fromkin et al., 2014:317). As Cummins 1989 in Wolfaardt (2002:70) emphasizes, “the development for competence in a second language is partly a function of the type of competence already developed in the first language”. In simpler terms, “acquisition of the second language is influenced by the learner’s level of development in his or her first language” (Wolfaardt, 2002:70). Also, according to Ouane and Glanz (2011:29), “the first language needs to be developed for 12 years in order for successful second language learning and academic success to take place”. Thus, the main problem of the early transition bilingual education program is that “it does not allow learners to fully develop their mother language before they start receiving instructions in the foreign or second language” (Le Mottee, 2008). Obviously, “moving from mother-tongue to foreign language ensures that the learners move from what is familiar (or known) to what is not familiar” (Le Mottee, 2008:36). This is basically why “language

models which result in the removal of mother tongue as a primary medium of instruction before grade five will facilitate little success for the majority of learners” (Le Mottee, 2008:36). One should also remember that “the switch from mother language to foreign language or second language is normally not carefully planned and supported and therefore lead to loss of learning” (Clegg & Simpson, 2016:364). Heugh et al. (2007) in Clegg & Simpson (2016:364) have found that “the abrupt switch (from mother to instruction to foreign or second language instruction) may cause a drop-off in learning where monolingual practices dominate”.

Apart from the findings discussed by Heugh et al. (2007), “research has shown that many learners in Namibian schools fail to attain the set minimum language proficiency standards in English when introduced to fourth grade subjects that are linguistically and cognitively more demanding” (Wolfaardt, 2002:70). “It is often the case that they do not reach the minimum level of English language proficiency required when they enter the junior secondary phase of school, at which they should really be functioning at an intermediate level” (Wolfaardt, 2002:70). “As a result of problems beginning at primary school, learners continue to lag behind their required level of language proficiency and the majority never really reach the language proficiency in English which their age and school demand” (Jones 1996 in Wolfaardt, 2002:70). Here, “one should also note that English is not well spoken or used inside or outside the school environment” (Harris, 2011:20). As Mwindi and Van der Walt (2015:100), lament, “although the language-in-education mandates the use of English as the primary language of learning and teaching in most schools in Namibia, the language is hardly heard or used in rural communities”. Therefore, when the learners are introduced to English as LOLT in grade four, it is always a challenge and this has led to a number of parents complaining about this issue in ‘The Namibia’ newspaper as an anonymous parent writes:

“My son attends Tobias Hainyeko primary school and is in grade 4, but he cannot read, write or speak English. What could be the reason? Is it because of free education? I am very upset and disappointed” (The Namibian newspaper, April 14, 2016:11)

Again, another person complained about the same issue in ‘The Namibian’ newspaper of the 8th August (2016:10) and her/his complaint reads as follows:

“Teachers of Mwafangeyo primary school, stop teaching our sisters and brothers in Oshiwambo. Imagine, a grade 4 pupil who cannot say a word in English. The children are eager to learn. Be aware that their future lies in their education and if they fail, you will be to blame for that. Being in the village does not mean they cannot learn English”

Looking at the two complaints above, one can easily conclude that the early-exit bilingual education model is not working for Namibia. As Ouane and Glanz (2011:29) lament, “language education models which remove the first language as a primary medium of instruction before grade 5 will facilitate little success for the majority of learners”. Hence, possibly, the best option for Namibia might be the late exit bilingual education model.

As it has been mentioned, “the late-exit bilingual education model involves the delay of transition from mother tongue as a medium of instruction to a different target language to year five to six” (Ouane & Glanz, 2011:11). According to Clegg and Simpson (2016:361), “using the late exit education program is said to be confusing for students and if teachers are allowed to use mother- tongues along with English, they will not move to teaching in English”. Some education officials, especially in sub-Saharan Africa also feel that allowing students use their mother- tongue along with English will make them become lazy learning English because they will find it difficult to learn it (English) without resorting to their mother-tongue (Clegg & Simpson, 2016). However, the main strength of the late exit bilingual education program is that learners continue to receive instructions in their mother tongue for a long period of time (Le Mottee, 2008). This is critical because “mother-tongue education should be reinforced and developed for at least six years of formal school for successful official language and academic success to take place” (Le Mottee, 2008:36). In addition, “the international second language acquisition literature indicates that under optimal conditions it takes between six and eight years to learn a second language sufficiently

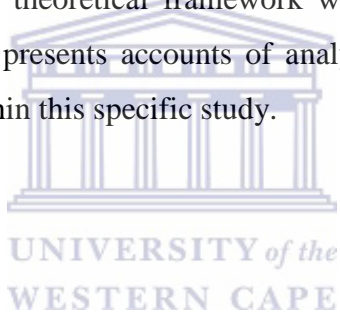
well to use it as a medium of instruction” (Le Mottee, 2008:36). Hence, it would be good that the period during which learners are taught in their mother tongue is prolonged so that they have enough time to develop their second or foreign language.

As Le Mottee (2008:36) claims, “language education models which retain mother tongue as a primary medium of instruction for six years can succeed under well-resourced conditions; in African settings, eight years of mother –tongue instruction may be enough under less well-resourced conditions”. It is therefore not surprising that research findings favour the late exit bilingual education programs. Heugh et al. 2007 in Harris (2011:20) for example, found that learners who have been allowed to use their home language longer and have been encouraged to learn their home language tend to perform better in all subjects, including English. Like Heugh et al. (2007), Thomas and Collier (2004) found that the late-exit education model produced much better academic achievements than the early-exit education model of only one to three years. Perhaps, the late exit education model might be the best option for Namibia especially that Namibian teachers’ attitudes towards late exit education model has been found to be positive. Harlech-Jones (1990) for example, in interviews with 161 Namibian teachers across Namibia established that 78.2% of the interviewees ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that pupils will do better at school if the second language, English or Afrikaans is brought in gradually as a medium of instruction.

2.4 Summary of the chapter

The current study focuses on the teaching of English in a foreign jurisdiction (Namibia) and locates the consequences of language policy in education for second language in the context of secondary schooling. For this reason, this chapter reviewed literature on language ideology in general and in particular literature on the two types of language ideologies which have influenced the choices of English as the LOLT in Namibia. These language ideologies are; language hierarchy ideology and one-nation one-language. Furthermore, apart from language ideologies, this chapter present a discussion on how language attitudes influence and foster the use of English within

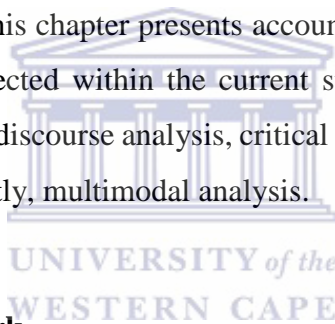
school settings and in the end diminishing the use of Namibian African languages in schools. Literature has clearly indicated that teachers and parents have very positive attitudes towards English whereas learners' attitudes towards English are not positive. Moreover, this chapter reviewed literature on language planning with the aim of demonstrating how a language policy of any country need to be planned in order for it (language policy) to yield anticipated outcomes. Apart from literature on language planning, a huge part of literature in this chapter was centered on language policy and in particular on types of language policies. This was necessary because one of the main aims of the current study is to offer recommendation as to how the current Namibian language in education policy can be adapted. Accordingly, literature on types of language policies can be used as a guide in offering relevant recommendations. The next chapter provides the theoretical framework which governs the current study. Besides, the chapter also presents accounts of analytical tools which were used to analyze data collected within this specific study.



Chapter 3: Theoretical and Analytical Framework

3.0 Introduction

The previous chapter presented literature on language ideology, planning and policy in Namibia. It also provided literature on parents', teachers' and learners' attitudes towards Namibian African language as well as English as a LOLT. This chapter provides the theoretical framework which governs the current study, which is the 'social constructivist paradigm' and the 'contemporary notion of multilingualism as social practice'. In addition, the chapter looks at the importance of applying 'translanguaging' rather than 'code-switching' in the ESL classroom. Apart from the 'theoretical framework', this chapter presents accounts of analytical tools which were used to analyze data collected within the current study. These analytical tools are; thematic content analysis, discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis, error analysis, document analysis and lastly, multimodal analysis.



3.1 Theoretical framework

3.1.1 *The social constructivist paradigm*

Turuk (2008) explains that Russian psychologist (Lev Vygotsky) whose ideas have influenced the field of educational psychology and the field of education as a whole introduced 'the socio-cultural approach' to teaching and learning. According to Vygotsky as cited by Turuk (2008), the knowledge is mediated and therefore "mediation is central to learning" (Shabani, 2016:2). Another tenet of the 'social-cultural approach is that "social interaction is the basis of learning and development" (Shabani, 2016:2). Therefore, because 'mediation' and 'social interaction' are central to learning and teaching, it is important that learners are taught through the application of 'the social constructivist paradigm' (Mukwete, 2014).

'The social constructivist paradigm' is an educational theory and philosophy that is based on the beliefs that knowledge is constructed by learners and not by being received

passively; and that all knowledge is socially constructed (Richard & Schmidt 2002:11; Vygotsky 1978). This theory stipulates that “knowledge is constructed through social interaction with others and reflects the learner’s culture, customs, beliefs as well as the historical, political, social and other dimensions of the learning context” (Richard & Schmidt, 2002:490). It is however, important to note that ‘constructivism’ needs to be addressed cautiously, because of its diverse nature (Mutekwe, Ndofirepi, Maphosa, Wadesango & Machigambi, 2013). According to Mvududu and Thiel-Burgess (2012:109), for some people, “constructivism is a theory of learning, for others it is a theory of knowledge, and for others still it is a pedagogical theory”. Therefore, it is important to mention that in the current study, ‘the social constructivist paradigm’ is addressed from a teaching and learning perspective.

Furthermore, ‘the social constructivist paradigm’ is built on three fundamental philosophies. Firstly, “learners construct new understandings using what they already know” (Mvududu & Thiel-Burgess, 2012:110). “This implies that they come to learning situations with knowledge gained from previous experiences” (Mvududu & Thiel-Burgess, 2012:110). “Prior knowledge influences what new or modified knowledge they will construct from the new learning experiences” (Mvududu & Thiel-Burgess, 2012:110). Secondly, learning is a social process (Amineh & Asl, 2015). This means that “learning does not take place only within an individual, nor is it passively developed by external forces” (Amineh & Asl, 2015:13). As Amineh and Asl (2015:13) note, “social constructivists state that meaningful learning occurs when individuals are engaged in social activities such as interaction and collaboration”. Thirdly, for learners to learn effectively, they need backing from more progressive language users who would help them to use language which they have not yet acquired (Crystal, 2013). This is because, from the ‘social constructivism’ perspective, “learning does not take place only within an individual” (Amineh & Asl, 2015:13). Hence, for meaningful learning to take place, learners need to engage in social activities such as interaction and collaboration (Amineh & Asl, 2015). Apart from the three elementary ideologies mentioned above, the social constructivist paradigm in the current study is addressed

further within three important aspects. That is; the learning environment, the learner's role and the teacher's role.

3.1.1.1 The learning environment

As mentioned earlier, according to the 'social constructivist paradigm', "meaningful learning occurs when individuals are engaged in social activities such as interaction and collaboration" (Amineh & Asl, 2015:13). Thus, the learning environment of the classroom should be conducive to learning, in such a way that it creates and reinforces students' interactions and collaborations. Firstly, in the social constructivist classroom, "the environment is democratic" (Amineh & Asl, 2015:15). This obviously helps learners to be actively involved in the learning process. Secondly, in the 'social constructivist classroom', "communication is not limited to oral and written language as its only system of conveying meaning" (Applefield, Huber & Moaleem, 2001:41). "Objects, gesture, images and architecture also contribute importantly to learners' construction of meaning in the classroom" (Applefield et al., 2001:41). The seating arrangement, for example, should allow learners to work together and talk to one another (Applefield et al., 2001). From the social constructivist perspective, if the physical and social environment is less conducive to learning, "students are discouraged from interacting with one another" (Applefield et al., 2001:41). Therefore, "the learning environment should provide ample opportunities for dialogue and the classroom should be seen as a community of discourse engaged in activity, reflection, and conversation" (Applefield et al., 2001:51).

"One thing which is worth emphasizing in the 'social constructivist classroom' is that everything is centred on students" (Applefield et al., 2001:42). Hence, "if we enter this classroom with the traditional preconceived notions that classrooms of learning should be ordered, systematic and quiet, we will miss the dynamic learning that is occurring in classrooms that are structured from a constructivist philosophy" (Applefield et al., 2001:42). Further, because the 'social constructivist paradigm' requires students to cooperate and work together in order to achieve the learning objectives, it is important that the 'social constructivist classroom' discourages competition among the learners

(Kim, 2005). Thus, rather than primarily working alone, students should work in groups through collaboration and exchange of ideas (Olusegun, 2015) to avoid competition among themselves. Therefore, all activities, tasks and exercises that require students to compete are not necessary in the ‘constructivist classroom’. This is important because “competition among learners structurally discourage cooperation and necessitate students to work in relative isolation on tasks that require low level, rather than high-order thinking” (Kim, 2005:8). Accordingly, the current study draws on the ‘social constructivist paradigm’ in order to analyze the contexts in which learners in Northern Namibia are learning ESL through the “English only” language in education policy. As Brown (2000:288) has attested, “a language classroom should not just be a place where learners of varying abilities and style and back grounds mingle, but a place where the contexts of interaction are carefully designed”. In the next section, an account of the learners’ role in the social constructivist classroom is given.

3.1.1.2 The learners’ role

“Traditionally, learning has been thought to be nothing but a repetitive activity, a process that involves students imitating newly provided information in tests” (Kim, 2005:10). In contrast, from a constructivism perspective, “learning is an active constructive process rather than the process of knowledge acquisition” (Kim, 2005:9). Therefore, in the ‘constructivist classroom’, the learners have an important role because they actively construct knowledge instead of inactively receive knowledge from the teachers (Taber 2006 in Mutekwe et al., 2013). In other words, “learners construct knowledge on their own while teachers are just valuable helpers and propellers of the learning process” (Shi, 2013:64). “For the learners to achieve this (construction of knowledge) they need to interact with the physical world collaboratively in social settings and in cultural and linguistic environment” (Mutekwe et al., 2013:58). Consequently, “learners need to be given classroom activities which require communication and the exchange of ideas” (Shi, 2013:64). The exchange of ideas however should not be only between learner and learner, but it should be also between teacher and learner. As Amineh and Asl (2015:14) explain, “social constructivism

stresses the importance of the learner's social interaction with knowledgeable members of the society".

Moreover, according to the 'social constructivist paradigm', "another important role of learners is asking questions rather than answering questions" (Applefield et al., 2001:41). This is important because if learners are encouraged to answer questions rather than asking questions, students who are not confident that they know the right answer will minimize their participation in class (Applefield et al., 2001). In addition, "if students are encouraged to answer questions rather than asking questions, they tend to comply with the social rules that are set by the teacher, rather than actively participate in establishing social rules and hold themselves accountable for keeping them" (Applefield et al., 2001:41). Thus, the 'social constructivist paradigm' informs the current study because it allows the researcher to look at how the current Namibian language in education policy facilitates or hinders interactions among learners who normally have poor English proficiency and do not have platforms to use English beyond the English classroom (Shaalukeni, 2002). To conclude this section, it is important to mention that because the 'social constructivist paradigm' requires the learners to build and transform knowledge (Applefield et al., 2001), this does not mean the teacher does not have any role to play in the classroom. The next section therefore, discusses the role of the teacher within the 'social constructivist paradigm'.

3.1.1.3 The teacher's role

The 'social constructivist paradigm' does not view teaching as a spread of information from the educated to the uneducated (Mvududu & Thiel-Burgess, 2012). However, "the role of the teacher changes so that the focus is on guiding rather than telling the learner" (Applefield et al., 2001:48). As Adams (2006:250) argues, "social constructivism does not remove the need for the teacher; rather, it redirects teacher activity towards the provision of a safe environment in which student knowledge construction and social mediation are paramount". Certainly, for 'social constructivist classrooms' to yield anticipated results, teachers would need to complement and reinforce their learners'

efforts as they attempt to learn and acquire new knowledge and skills (Applefield et al., 2001).

According to Mvududu and Thiel-Burgess (2012:110), “constructivist teachers do not take the role of the sage on the stage”. On the contrary, “they undertake a facilitative role in acquisition of knowledge by the learners” (Akyol & Fer, 2010:949). As Shi (2012:64) asserts, “while students construct knowledge on their own, teachers are valuable helpers and propellers of the process”. Granted, “teachers are facilitators working to provide students with opportunities and incentives to construct knowledge and understanding” (Adams, 2006:250).

Again, “because constructivism highly values interactions among the learners, it is the teachers’ responsibility to create a classroom environment rich in student-to-student interaction formed around challenging problem-solving projects relevant to students” (Applefield et al., 2001:45). “This allows learning to occur when students struggle to make connections from what they know in relation to the more complex and larger world” (Applefield et al., 2001:45). In a constructivist learning environment, however, “teachers must monitor discussions carefully to see if students get off track or develop misunderstandings about the topic, or if there is need to intervene and redirect the discussion” (Applefield et al., 2001:47). Without a doubt, “it is imperative that the teacher carefully monitors group work and whole-class discussion and intervene as necessary to keep students on track, to stimulate consideration of key issues and perspectives, and to lead students to correct their misunderstandings” (Applefield et al., 2001:47). Equally important, “students should be encouraged to respect and use other people’s ideas through reflection and analysis” (Kim, 2005:10). This would ensure that students are not engaged in a passive learning and thinking role (Applefield et al., 2001).

Moreover, the ‘social constructivist paradigm’ highlights that “learning does not occur in a vacuum and is best mediated through supportive social networks” (Applefield et al., 2001:38). Accordingly, “it is the task of the teacher to ensure that learners are given genuine tasks which will promote reflective learning” (Applefield et al., 2001). These

tasks should be prepared in such a way that they reflect what learners know already and they allow learners to solve authentic problems based on their interests and culture (Applefield et al., 2001). It is therefore not surprising that Amineh and Asl (2015:14) stress that “it is important for teachers to take into account the background and culture of the learners during the learning process”. Knowing the learners’ background, one would argue, will allow the teacher to assist and guide students through what is called scaffolding and the Zone of Proximal Development (Applefield et al., 2001).

3.1.1.3.1 Scaffolding and the zone of proximal development (ZPD)

When children work on tasks that cannot be accomplished alone but can be successfully completed with the assistance of a person competent in the task, they are said to be working within their zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). To put it differently, “the ZPD encompasses tasks that a learner has not yet learned but is capable of learning with appropriate stimuli” (Brown, 2014:13). Brown (2014:13) further emphasizes that “the ZPD is an important fact of social constructivism because it involves tasks that a child cannot yet do alone but could do with the assistance of more competent peers or adults”. As Patrick and Enama (2016:20) recommend, “for optimal results, teachers should scaffold language acquisition within the learners’ ZPD”. Therefore, “in order for students to complete their tasks successfully, they need to be given appropriate support by a more capable mentor” (Kivunja, 2014:83) and this is achieved through ‘scaffolding’ (Brown, 2014).

“Scaffolding implies that the knowledgeable person (adult, teacher, or peer) tutors the less knowledgeable (child, or student) to complete a task he or she would otherwise be unable to do on his or her own” (Swain & Suzuki, 2010:557). In other words, “scaffolding is a teaching and learning strategy where the teacher and learners engage in a collaborative problem-solving activity with the teacher providing demonstrations, support, guidance and input and gradually withdrawing these as the learner becomes increasingly independent” (Richard & Schmidt, 2002:466). Generally, “scaffolding is about advanced language users providing support to enable those less expert than themselves to use language which would otherwise be beyond them” (Crystal,

2010:393). In the classroom however, ‘scaffolding’ will not only occur as a result of collaboration between the teacher and the learner. “Learners also scaffold one another as they participate in collaborative activity and such collaboration results in the co-construction of linguistic knowledge” (Swain & Suzuki, 2010:564). Accordingly, it is the teacher’s responsibility to ensure that he or she has created classroom activities which allow collaborative dialogue between him or her and the learners, as well as among the learners themselves (Brown, 2014). Most importantly, the teacher should ensure that these activities are planned within the learners’ ZPD. As Swain and Suzuki (2010:564) remark, “for scaffolding to facilitate second language learning, it needs to exist within a learner’s ZPD”. Their claim is fully supported by a study done by Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) as cited by Swain & Suzuki (2010:564), which showed that “corrective feedback provided within the learner’s ZPD is more effective than corrective feedback provided irrespective of the learner’s ZPD”.

Bearing this in mind therefore, in the perspective of this study, the ‘social constructivist paradigm’ is important because it allows the researcher to look at how teachers in Northern Namibia reinforce their learners’ acquisition of ESL considering the fact that most of them have been found to have poor English proficiency and not to mention that most of them have not received proper teaching training (Wolfaardt, 2002). Here, one should also consider that “the Namibian LEP is not explicit in providing guidelines on how different mother tongues would be used in schools” (Wolfaardt, 2002:69). As a result, the ‘social constructivist paradigm’ would enable the researcher to identify or establish some of the consequences of using the pro-English language in education policy in some of the secondary schools in Northern Namibia. Apart from the ‘social constructivist paradigm’, part of the theoretical frame work for the current study, the theoretical framework for this study also shaped by literature on using ‘translanguaging’ rather than ‘code-switching’ in ESL classroom. This is explained in details in the next section.

3.1.2 From ‘code-switching’ to ‘translanguaging’

Code-switching is defined by Mkhize et al. (2002:200) as “the alternate use of two languages or more languages or varieties in a single communicative episode or in distinct social or functional domains”. Apart from Mkhize et.al (2002), Park (2014:50) describes code-switching as “a bilingual-mode activity in which more than one language, typically speakers’ native language and second language, are used intrasententially or intersententially”. By looking at the two given definitions, one can conclude that “essentially, code-switching is the use of more than one language in the course of a conversation” (Gass & Selinker, 2008:29).

Generally, code-switching occurs because of a number of reasons. First, “it can be employed to negotiate, challenge, or change different conversational situation” (Mokgwathi & Webb, 2013:109). Second, “it is used to symbolize speakers’ social identity and their perception of the conversational context” (Mokgwathi & Webb, 2013:109). Third, “it may be used strategically to extend our communicative competence when one language is not sufficient to complete the interaction” (Dahl, Steffensen, & Amundsen, 2010:494). From a teaching and learning perspective however, “code switching is used to achieve a wide range of objectives in the classroom; to build rapport, to compensate for a lack of comprehension, to manage the classroom, to transmit content and to express solidarity with the students” (Kamwangamalu, 2013:329).

Moreover, in Namibia, research on code-switching has shown that teachers code-switch in order to ensure that the learners grasp the subject content (Wolfaardt, 2002). According to (Wolfaardt, 2002:75), “if teachers stick to English as the only medium of instruction as the language policy prescribes, the learners will not understand them”. Otherwise, “teachers teach through their native language and then give summaries of the work in English” (Wolfaardt, 2002:75). Apart from Wolfaardt (2002), Ipinge (2013) found that teachers in Northern Namibia resort to code-switching to overcome a number of challenges that are posed by using English as a LOLT. However, because the contemporary world perceives language as a social practice in which languages are

not seen as countable and autonomous systems (Banda, 2018), ESL teachers in northern Namibia need to start using translanguaging in their classrooms in order to achieve academic excellence.

“Translanguaging is a relatively new and developing term that was coined by Cen Williams and his colleague Dafydd Whittal during their in-service training for deputy head teachers in Llandudno, North Wales” (Mwinda & Van der Walt, 2015:102). This refers to ways in which learners and teachers alternate and blend languages, using the repertoires available to them, for learning and meaning making (Baker, 2011). In other words, “translanguaging entails using one language to reinforce the other in order to increase understanding and in order to augment the pupils’ ability in both languages” (Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2014:644). Indeed, “translanguaging is about receiving information through the medium of one language (e.g. English) and using it yourself through the medium of the other language” (e.g. Welsh) (Lewis et al., 2012:643).

Additionally, “translanguaging is similar to code-switching in that it refers to multilingual speakers shuttling between languages in a natural manner” (Park, 2014:50). However, “translanguaging is more than ‘code-switching’ because ‘translanguaging’ is not simply going from one language code to another” (Garcia, 2011:1). “While the notion of code-switching assumes that the two languages of bilinguals are two separate monolingual codes that could be used without reference to each other” (Garcia 2011:1), “translanguaging seeks to assist multilingual speakers in making meaning, shaping experiences, and gaining deeper understandings and knowledge of the languages in use and even of the content that is being taught” (Park, 2014:50). With ‘translanguaging’, two languages are planned and systematically used for teaching and learning within the same lesson (Lewis et al., 2012). For instance, “a teacher can narrate a story in one language, keeping to the story line, and then she or he can explain the story in another language, emphasizing the story’s moral tale” (Mwinda, 2014:103). Another example is that “students can hear or read a lesson, a passage in book, or a section of text in one language and develop their work in another language” (Hornberger & Link, 2012:242). In this way, “input and output are in a

different language and are systematically varied, and hence language and literacy development are fostered” (Hornberger & Link, 2012:242).

“In a traditional bilingual education context, ‘translanguaging’ can be seen as problematic because the original and main emphasis of bilingual education is for learners to demonstrate native-like competency in both languages so as to learn the subject content with comprehension in either of the languages” (Mwinda & Van der Walt, 2015:102). However, “recent research on neurolinguistic studies show that when bilinguals use one of their languages, both of the languages remain active because they (bilinguals) do not use their languages separately” (Mwinda & Van der Walt, 2015:102). Therefore, there is no doubt that ‘translanguaging’ as a pedagogical practice has a number of benefits in terms of teaching and learning.

Firstly, “translanguaging may help students to gain deeper and fuller understanding of the subject matter” (Lewis et al., 2014:645). “Considering the idea that learning is based on stretching pre-existing knowledge and that the interdependence of two languages enables cross-linguistic transfer, it can be argued that translanguaging is an efficient way of enabling this” (Lewis et al., 2014:645). The second potential advantage of translanguaging is that “it may help students to develop competence (oral communication and literacy) in their weaker language, as it may allow them to undertake the main part of their work through the stronger language while attempting less challenging tasks in their weaker language” (Lewis et al., 2014:645). Basically, “this implies that ‘translanguaging’ attempts to develop academic language skills in both languages leading to a fuller bilingualism and biliteracy” (Lewis et al., 2014:645). Thirdly, “translanguaging affords students the opportunity to use home language practices, different as they may be from those of school, to practice the language of school, and thus to eventually also use the appropriate form of language” (Garcia, 2011:2). For bilingual students to develop the language practices used in academic contexts, they need constant practice in the form required in school (Garcia, 2011). Finally, translanguaging is valuable in the principle that the classroom integration of fluent first language speakers and second language learners of various levels of

attainment can be facilitated by translanguaging (Lewis et al., 2014:646). Therefore, using ‘translanguaging’ in the ESL classrooms of Northern Namibian can be beneficial to both learners and teachers.

To conclude this section, it is important to reiterate the fact that “translanguaging is about multilingual shuttling between languages in a natural manner” (Park, 2014:50). In the classroom, ‘translanguaging’ is accomplished through planning two languages systematically and use them for teaching and learning within the same lesson (Lewis et al., 2014). This approach (translanguaging) facilitates, reinforces and promotes learning in the classroom. However, contemporary classrooms require teachers to move beyond ‘translanguaging’ if the learners are to learn effectively and reflectively (Zarobe & Zarobe, 2015). Hence, what needs to be considered and implemented in the contemporary classroom is what Aronin and Singleton (2009) term multilingualism as a social practice.

3.1.3 Multilingualism as a social practice

“Virtually every facet of life in the present era depends on multilingual social arrangements and multilingual individuals, and this new phenomenon is what is now called ‘multilingualism as a social practice’” (Zarobe & Zarobe, 2015:395). As Aronin and Singleton (2009:1) assert, “multilingualism should be treated as a social practice for three main reasons”. First, multilingualism is ubiquitous, on the rise worldwide, and increasingly deep and broad in its effects. Second, multilingualism is developing within the context of a new reality of globalization. Third, multilingualism is now such an inherent element of human society that it is necessary to the functioning of major components of the social structure (in the broad sense, encompassing, technology, finance, politics and culture) and it is a social practice because for society to function well and progress on a world scale, constellations of languages rather than a single language is a prerequisite (Aronin & Bawardi, 2012). Also, multilingualism is seen as a social practice because it treats language as a practice which derives from speakers’ social experiences and linguistic behaviour (Banda, 2009). Therefore, “accounting for how speakers use different languages as resources for agentive and performative

functions in different social intercourse, including education is very important” (Banda, 2009:111).

As mentioned earlier, “language patterns have changed so significantly that sets of language rather than single languages now perform the essential functions of communication, cognition and identity for both individuals and the global community” (Aronin & Bawardi, 2012:16). However, in the educational arena, especially in African schools, a single language (normally a foreign language) is used as a sole medium of instruction rather than using multiple African languages at the disposal of teachers and learners. This practice, according to Van der Walt (2013) is not recommendable because it abuses learners’ social justice and hinders them from effective learning and access to knowledge. This is because for the learners to learn effectively and eventually achieve their educational goals, they need to be taught within multiple languages as well as varieties of these languages (Garcia, 2009 in Van der Walt, 2013). Van der Walt (2013) therefore recommends that the existence of multiple languages within a certain society is a prerequisite for effective learning and teaching. Accordingly, I concur with Van der Walt (2013) who mentions that the contemporary world requires ‘multilingual education’ rather than ‘monolingual education’.

According to Banda (2010:223), “multilingual education is one in which two or more languages are used as LOLT content matter, not where they are merely taught as a subject”. “This is not a problem to children because they do not find learning several languages simultaneously a problem and the multiplicity of languages in a multilingual society is not a headache but an asset” (Agnihotri, 1995:7). In actual fact, as Van der Walt (2013:7) argues, “when students are discouraged from using the languages at their disposal for learning, either actively or merely by pretending that other languages do not exist, they are deprived of practices and tools that they can access and mobilize with relative ease”. Therefore, “in the ESL classroom, diverse languages should not be seen as obstacles and sources of interference in the learning of the target language” (Agnihotri, 1995:3).

In Namibia, the current language in education policy does not reflect multilingualism as a social practice. This is because the language in education policy neglects and stigmatizes the languages children speak at home and in their community (Agnihotri, 1995). Besides, “the Namibian LEP does not reflect the socialization process of the home and neighbourhood” (Totemeyer, 2010:72). This is not good practice because as Banda (2010:232) contends, “without drawing on their multilingual repertoire, most African learners would be unable to generate arguments and sophisticated ideas, which they then transliterate and transform into academic essays”. One should also remember that “in a foreign language-learning context (like Namibia), the language is not spoken in the learners’ immediate environment and although the mass media may provide opportunities for practicing receptive skills of the language, there is little or no opportunity for the learner to use the language in a natural communicative situation” (Brock-Utne, 2009:39). Consequently, in Namibia, like in South Africa, “what is needed is multilingual education that takes into account local linguistic diversity and repertoires” (Banda, 2009:111).

For example, in Northern Namibia, teachers and learners speak seven different dialects of Oshiwambo which are mutually intelligible (Ipinge, 2013). Thus, for the learners to learn reflectively and successfully, teachers should draw on all seven dialects when teaching ESL. This is necessary because as Banda (2018) explains, sticking to English-only as a medium of instruction would mean that learners would hardly get involved in classroom interactions and learning. Consequently, from the perspective of ‘contemporary multilingualism’, “it is important that the education authorities look at learners as language practitioners who use linguistic resources to carry out local, national and international communication needs” (Banda, 2009:111). It is however important to note that “introducing multilingual education would mean that teachers should be able to teach and use two or more languages systematically as LOLT content matter subjects as a way of enhancing multilingual competencies” (Banda, 2009:111). “The idea is to have learners that are able to speak, read, write and synthesize information at high cognitive level in two or more languages” (Banda, 2009:111). The

current Namibian LEP does not allow this to happen because it only develops the academic proficiency of the language that is being used as LOLT-English (Banda, 2009).

3.2 Analytical framework

In this section I review literature relating to the analytical framework, which is literature on thematic content analysis, discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis, errors analysis, document analysis and multimodal analysis. Here, it is important to mention that the analytical tools mentioned above are very broad in nature. As a result, these analytical tools have been only discussed in this chapter in terms of their relevance to the current study.

3.2.1 Thematic content analysis (TCA)

According to Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun (2012), qualitative researchers interpret their data through categorization and TCA. “TCA is a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns of (themes) within data” (Mogashoa, 2014:109). To put it differently, “TCA is used to analyze classifications and present themes that relate to the data” (Ibrahim, 2012:40). TCA allows the researcher to look at the data from different perspectives though identifying the most frequent themes within the data and hence this process assists the researcher to interpret and understand the raw data comprehensively (Maree, 2014).

Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that “TCA allows the researcher to classify written and oral responses of the research population” (Dyers & Abongdia, 2014: 10). However, TCA is not just about counting words and phrases; it provides knowledge and understanding of the issue that is being studied by revealing implicit and explicit ideas within the data (Dyers & Abongdia, 2014). This is fully supported by Ibrahim (2012) who writes:

“Thematic moves beyond counting explicit words or phrases and focuses on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas. Codes developed for ideas or themes

are then applied or linked to raw data as summary markers for later analysis, which may include comparing the relative frequencies of themes or topics within a data set, looking for code co-occurrence, or graphically displayed code relationship” (p.40).

From the above quote, one can clearly see that “TCA allows the researcher to determine precisely the relationships between concepts and compare them with the replicated data” (Ibrahim, 2012:40). By using TCA, there is the possibility to link the various concepts and opinions of the participants and compare these with the data that has been gathered in different situation at different times during the project and hence all possibilities for interpretation are possible. Indeed, “TCA allows the researcher to associate an analysis of the frequency of a theme with one of the whole content” (Ibrahim, 2012:40). All in all, TCA is not only about identifying themes within the data, but it (TCA) goes to the extent of comparing and contrasting themes in order to make meaningful interpretations and conclusions.

Additionally, there are two very important reasons why TCA is adopted in carrying out research. Firstly, according to Guest, MacQueen, and Namey (2012:11), “TCA is the most commonly used method of analysis in qualitative research”. This is because “good qualitative research needs to draw interpretations and be consistent with the data that is collected and TCA is capable of detecting and identifying, example factors or variables that influence the issue generated by the participants” (Ibrahim, 2012 40). Secondly, “TCA is used in research because it provides the opportunity to code and categorise data into themes, for example, how issues influence the perceptions of participants” (Ibrahim, 2012:41). Therefore, this study drew on TCA as an analytical tool because the researcher was dealing with a lot of raw qualitative data which needed to be coded, and grouped into themes before interpretation. TCA was also used because as mentioned before, apart from counting explicit words and phrases, it helps the researcher to describe both implicit and explicit ideas within the data, and this includes interpretations of participants’ behaviour, actions and thought. Granted, TCA was used within the current study to assist the researcher in analyzing and deciding why the participants had acted and thought the way they did.

3.2.2 Discourse Analysis (DA)

A number of authors and scholars have attempted to define the concept 'DA'. According to Whittaker (2017:6) "DA refers to attempts to study the organization of language above the sentence or above the clause, and therefore to study larger linguistic units, such as conversational exchanges or written texts". Apart from Whittaker (2017), Wodak (2009) defines DA as the act of evaluating the reliability and significance of texts, conversations as well as relevant documents. In addition, Denscombe (2007:308) is of the opinion that "DA is an approach to the analysis of qualitative data that focuses on the implicit meaning of the text or image rather than its explicit content". As Rahini and Riasati (2011:107) clarify, this is because "communication is obviously something beyond simply transferring a message from the sender to the receiver".

From the above definitions of DA, one can infer that generally, "DA approaches the analysis of talk, text and images on the basis that they should never be taken 'at face value', but instead, should be investigated to reveal the hidden messages that they can contain and the kind of thinking that needs to be going on in the back ground-implicit and unspoken- in order for them to work" (Denscombe, 2007: 308). As Wellington (2015) suggests, apart from studying spoken and written texts, DA allow one to examine how the environment shapes the type of language or the type of discourse as it is applied in that specific environment. Hence, DA was also used in this study in order to allow the researcher to analyze and understand how the environment or the context in which participants live, influences the data that was obtain from them.

Furthermore, Punch (2011:196) claims that "one of the most important features of DA is that it is social". This means that "words and their meanings depends on where they are used, by whom and to whom and as a result meanings of words can vary according to social and institutional setting" (Punch, 2011:196). In other words, DA is also about how language is used in social settings (Whittaker, 2007).

Apart from DA being 'social', one of its main important tenets is that the words that appear in a text are not determined by the thing they are used to represent. Rather, "words are chosen and they (words) are chosen with the purpose of having some effects

on those who read them” (Denscombe, 2007:308). Accordingly, “the aim of DA is to ‘unpack’ the text or spoken language in order to reveal what people are trying to do through the talk, text or image, as well as to reveal background assumptions needed in order for this to be achieved” (Denscombe, 2007:308). As Punch (2011:196) emphasizes, “people perform actions of different kinds through their talks and their writing, and they accomplish the nature of these actions partly through constructing their discourse out of a range of styles, linguistic resources and rhetoric devices”.

Moreover, according to Denscombe (2007), DA is about scrutinizing text and image in order to create strong conclusion from the data which is being examined. Granted, “DA looks at what is absent from the text or image as well as what is contained and it (DA) also looks at what is implied as much as what is explicit” (Denscombe, 2007:309). For this reason, DA was used in the current study to analyze the data which emerged from teachers’ focus group interviews, from learners’ interviews as well as from classroom observations and from learners’ written samples. Similarly, DA was also used to identify and discuss relevant issues which were missing from the above sources of data. Finally, it is worth mentioning that “DA is premised on the idea that back-ground assumptions are displayed and transmitted through talk, text or images” (Denscombe, 2007:309). Thus, “researchers who undertake DA must use existing knowledge about society, culture, politics and analyze the data with certain necessary preconceptions about the meanings contained in the data” (Denscombe, 2007:309). Hence, in the current study, DA was used because the researcher’s understanding and knowledge about schools in Omusati region, played a major role in analyzing and interpreting data. Apart from DA, the researcher used another branch of DA which is called ‘critical discourse analysis’ (CDA) which according to Rahimi and Riasati (2011) is the combination of ideological critique, cognitive psychology and linguistic analysis.

3.2.3 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

“CDA may be defined as “fundamentally concerned with analyzing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as

manifested in language” (Rahimi & Riasati, 2011:108). In other words, “CDA aims to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, signaled, constituted, and legitimized, and so on by language use” (Rahimi & Riasati, 2011:108). Wellington (2015:218) concurs with this view, and describes CDA as “one branch of DA which examines the way in which language is used to construct a position, exert power and reinforce ideological position.” CDA is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse that “views language as a form of social practice and therefore scholars working in the tradition of CDA argue that (non-linguistic) social practice and linguistic practice constitute one another and focus on investigating how societal power relations are established and reinforced through language use” (Wodak & Meyer, 2001).

It is important to understand that CDA aims to “systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between discursive practices, events and texts, and wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggle over power” (Mogashoa, 2014:105). Another aim of CDA is that of providing motivation and politics used by individuals in arguing for or against a certain research method, statement or value (Wodak 2009; Dijk 2006). For this reason, CDA was used in the current study in order to help the researcher to analyze and understand the intervention strategies which English teachers use to overcome learners’ different problems with English and the rationale for using those strategies. Correspondingly, in this regard, CDA was also used to analyze why English teachers use or do not use Oshiwambo to help their learners with English.

Additionally, CDA is “primarily positioned in the environment of language and its successes can be measured with a measuring rod of the study of languages” (Mogashoa, 2014:105). This implies that “language can be used to represent speakers’ beliefs, positions and ideas in terms of spoken texts like conversations” (Mogashoa, 2014:105). “Given the power of the written and spoken word” (McGregor, 2003:2), written or oral messages convey meanings if we analyze the underlying meaning of words and the

analysis of these underlying meanings can assist one in the interpretation of issues, conditions and events in which educators find themselves (Van Dijk, 2006). That is why CDA was applied in the current study in order to disclose the meaning and the ideology of what is written in the Namibian language in education policy. As Mogashoa (2014:108) reasons, language is a material form of ideology, and language plays a crucial role in the advancement of specific ideologies (Wodak, 2009).

CDA was used in the current study because it had the potential of helping the researcher to figure out and analyze learners' and teachers' views and attitudes towards the Namibian language in education policy in general, and in particular as to whether the language policy should be changed to include the use of indigenous languages in education. For Rahimi and Riasati (2011:107) CDA views language as a powerful means through which specific ideologies, identities, and culture become dominant in society. So, obviously, the choice of language interlocutors of participants reveals their thinking, their understanding and their ideology towards a certain phenomenon (Rahimi & Riasati, 2011).

Finally, according to Morgan (2010:4), using CDA has three main advantages. First, CDA can reveal often unspoken and unacknowledged aspects of human behavior, making salient either hidden or dominant discourses that maintain marginalized positions in society. Second, CDA can provide a positive social psychological critique of any phenomenon under the gaze of the researcher. Third, CDA helps researchers to understand the function of language and then present a critical challenge to traditional theory, policy and practice in many contexts.

3.2.4 Errors analysis (EA)

As mentioned earlier, the current study focuses on the teaching of English in a foreign jurisdiction (Namibia) and locates the consequences of language policy in education for L2 in the context of secondary schooling with a special focus on essay writing. This study looks at the writing problems of learners and the intervention strategies that teachers are using to help learners overcome or reduce these (writing) problems.

Therefore, the data collected in this study include learners' written samples which were examined and interpreted through 'Error Analysis' (EA).

"EA is a method which was firstly established by Corder and his colleagues in the 1970s to study errors committed by learners or students learning foreign or second language" (Daurus & Subramanian, 2009:487). To be specific, according to Heydari and Bagheri (2012:1583), "EA is a procedure used by both researchers and teachers which involves collecting samples of learner language, identifying the errors in the sample, describing these errors, classifying them according to their nature and causes, and evaluating their seriousness". In other words, "EA is the process of observing, analyzing, and classifying the deviations of the rules of the second languages and then to reveal the systems operated by learners" (Brown 2000 in Seitova, 2016:288). Obviously, "the general purpose of EA is to find 'what the learner knows and does not know'" (Heydari & Bagheri, 2012:1583). Besides, EA has a potential of providing teachers and researchers with insight and information on the main problems which learners have in the process of language learning (Hedge, 2014).

Furthermore, according to Kader (2013), it is obvious that learners will make errors when learning foreign language or second language. Apart from errors, learners also tend to make mistakes (Jabeen, Kazemian & Mustafai, 2015). Here, it is necessary to make a distinction between 'errors' and 'mistakes' in foreign or second language learning. According to Krishnamurthy, Kangila, and Tjiramanga (2011:1), "errors are systematic and occur because students do not realize that they are wrong". However, when it comes to mistakes, they are non-systematic and could be because of a slip of the tongue or pen". Likewise, Jabeen et al. (2015:53) perceive 'errors' as "the results of incomplete learning and linguistic incompetency of the learners, while 'mistakes' are the results of poor performance of language due to many factors like fatigue and carelessness on the part of the learners". In summary, 'errors' mirror learners' level of competence in a second or foreign language, while 'mistakes' replicate performance limitations that a learner would be able to correct (Crystal, 2008). Hence, when

handling learners' written work (essay), it is important for one to investigate errors which students have committed (Daurus & Subramanian, 2009).

Daurus and Subramanian (2009:487) further observe that “the investigation of errors can serve two purposes, diagnostic and prognostic”. According to Daurus and Subramanian (2009:487), “the investigation of errors is diagnostic because it can tell us the learner's grasp of language at any given point during the learning process”. On the other hand, the investigation of errors is prognostic because it can tell the teacher or the researcher to modify learning materials, teaching methods and approaches, in order to meet the learners' problems (Daurus & Subramanian, 2009). Accordingly, EA was used in the current study because the researcher wanted to identify the errors made by students and classify them according to their nature, evaluate their seriousness and then recommend necessary remedial interventions and strategies which can be used to help the learners reduce or overcome their writing problems. Here, it is vital to stress that EA was carried out because learners in Northern Namibia are learning through an unfamiliar language (English) and that they do not have decent exposure to English because the community in which the learners are living in cannot reinforce proper English language learning (Adeyemi, 2012). Thus, it is not strange that errors within learners' work are widespread and therefore both learners and ESL teachers cannot be blamed for this predicament.

3.2.5 Document Analysis

“Researchers can use various existing documents as their source of data” (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017:97). In such case, “the researchers are not creating new data from scratch but using existing documents as source of data” (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017:97). These documents can be analyzed through what Bertram and Christiansen (2017) termed ‘document analysis’.

“Document Analysis refers to the strategies and procedures for analysing and interpreting the documents of any kind important to the study of a particular area” (Wellington, 2015:340). In other words, “Document Analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents-both printed and electronic material in order to

elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge” (Bowen 2009:27). Therefore, Document Analysis was used in the current study to review the Namibian LEP, the grade 12 ESL syllabus and the ESL grade 12 question papers in order to supplement data from teachers’ focus group interviews, classroom observations, and so on.

According to Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2011:187), “researchers who base their studies on documents may make considerable use of secondary data, that is, data which has already been collected, and possibly also analysed by somebody else”. Because of this reason, apart from the three documents which were mentioned in the previous paragraph, I also reviewed two relevant studies carried out in Namibia in order to inform the current study accordingly. This was important because “secondary data obtained from Document Analysis is needed because it can complement the primary data” (Blaxter et al., 2011). Also, secondary data has a potential of confirming, modifying or challenging the researcher’s finding (Blaxter et al., 2011). Finally, the review of previous study was necessary because as Blaxter et al. (2011) recommend, it is not good to carry out a study without linking it to what has been already researched.

Moreover, in general, “Document Analysis can serve a variety of purposes as part of research understanding” (Bowen, 2009:29). First, “using Document Analysis allows the researcher to use data drawn from documents to contextualize data collected from other sources” (Bowen, 2009:30). In the current study for example, reviewing the Namibian LEP policy allowed the researcher to understand and contextualize data from other sources such as teachers’ focus group interviews and classroom observations. This is simply because “documents related to what takes place in a setting are important and can round out data provided by observations and interviews” (Boudah, 2011:139). “It may also give the researcher information about why participants’ interview responses do not match their actions during observations” (Boudah, 2011:139).

The second main purpose of Document Analysis is that it provides supplementary research data because information and insight derived from documents, as mentioned earlier, can be valuable additions to a knowledge base (Bowen, 2009). For example, in

reviewing the ESL grade 12 question papers, the researcher discovered more ideas as to why learners are experiencing a number of writing problems. As Best and Kahn (2006:257) emphasize, “Document Analysis serves a useful purpose of adding knowledge to fields of inquiry and in explaining certain social issues”.

Finally, Document Analysis assists in facilitating the verification or corroboration of evidence obtained from other sources (Bowen, 2009). In the current study therefore, Document Analysis was used to evaluate whether the data from other sources was corresponded with the content of the Namibian LEP and the ESL grade 12 question paper. To be specific, for example, Document Analysis helped the researcher to verify whether what teachers said about the use of Oshiwambo in the ESL classroom was corresponding with what the language policy says. As Best and Kahn (2006:257) explain, “Document Analysis should serve a useful purpose in yielding information helpful in evaluating or explaining social or educational practices”. Apart from Document Analysis, data generated by the current study were also analyzed through what is called ‘multimodal analysis’ (MDA)

3.2.6 Multimodal Analysis (MDA)

Multimodality refers to the use of different modes in the construction of meaning (Kress 2010; Kress & Van Leeuwen 2006; Mambwe 2014). Kress (2010) defines modes as a set of socially and culturally shaped resources used to convey meaning such as; written and oral language, gesture, visual, sound and movement. In multimodal teaching and learning, different modes need to complement each other in order for the learners to better grasp the desirable knowledge and skills” (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). Therefore, in any contemporary learning environment, multimodal analysis is a necessity because it allows researchers to assess and evaluate how information exchange is realized in every day’s teaching and learning activities and hence achieve relevant learning objectives (Hong, 2012).

MDA refers to “approaches that seek to explain communication and representation as being more than language which addresses a wide range of communication forms that people engage in during interaction, for example, gaze, posture, sound and their

relatedness” (Mambwe, 2014:45). This implies that multimodality advocates the idea that language is not the only mode of conveying meaning but other sign systems are also important if one want to create meaning effectively and meaningfully (Hong, 2012). This is because “in the interpersonal communication, when one single mode cannot specify the speaker’s meaning, other modes are needed to enhance and add more information to make the speaker’s presentation of the meaning much clear and more detailed, reaching the goal of being understood by the listener. “When one mode cannot fully express its meaning, another mode or other modes are needed” (Hong, 2012:320). In summary, “multimodality goes hand-in-hand with the notion of multisensory perception. That is, “the visual, the written, the auditory, and the haptic are all interrelated and all contribute to meaning making” (Ajayi, 2009:587).

Traditionally, classroom interactions were centred on the teacher and the learners using spoken language and the text books as sole teaching materials (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001). However, “in this rapidly changing and diversified era filled with different semiotic and digital resources, learners construct meaning by orchestrating multiple modes; written and oral language, gesture, visual, sound, and movement” (Choi & Yi, 2016). As Jewitt (2005) contends, image, sound and movement are now integral parts of classroom interactions. Thus, “contemporary teachers and classroom researchers should acknowledge that knowledge is multimodal and literacy and language is not based exclusively on linguistic knowledge” (Choi & Yi, 2016).

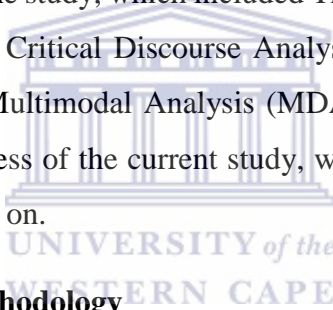
Children’s meaning-making is also multimodal. According to Siegel (2006), children have demonstrated multimodality within themselves through the way they use their social cultural resources such as talk, gesture, drama and drawing to construct meaning, and “these multimodal resources have the potential to enhance language and literacy learning” (Ajayi, 2009:594). Therefore, “teachers need to challenge the use of approved textbooks as the sole method of teaching English or literacy and other school subjects” (Ajayi, 2009:594). Certainly, “teachers should be able to supplement district-approved reading materials with texts from different genres such as graphics, posters, photographs, billboards, and teen magazines” (Ajayi, 2009:594).

“In multimodal texts, knowledge is not made available in English only; rather, it is made available to ESL students in multidimensional ways, that is, through the combination and integration of language, images, graphics, and layouts” (Ajayi, 2009:594). “Such materials from diverse text types have the potential to motivate, excite, and engage all learners because “they create opportunities not only to explore and interpret texts using multimodal resources but also to relate textual experiences to their own social-cultural experiences and perspective” (Ajayi, 2009:594). In this manner, students’ intrinsic motivation for learning English would be promoted and their (students) practical ability to use English would be improved (Hong, 2012).

In summary, ‘multimodality’ requires teachers to ensure that classroom interactions are not merely based on spoken and written language, but on semiotic resources such as image, gesture, and actions as well (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001). However, combining language with other modes such as image and gesture to deliver content in the classroom is not good enough (Choi & Yi, 2016). It is recommended that the content itself and the environment must be multimodal in order to help students to improve their interest in learning, give them comprehensive practical ability of English as well as autonomous learning ability (Hong, 2012). Accordingly, MDA was used in the current study for three important reasons. Firstly, MDA was used for the researcher to assess the extent to which the ESL grade 12 teachers go in terms of using multiple sensory channels to facilitate information exchange and understanding in the classrooms. Secondly, it was used to evaluate and assess how conducive the grade 12 ESL classes were in terms of helping learners grasp the English content presented to them bearing in mind that these learners have poor English proficiency (Harris, 2011) and their mother language (Oshiwambo) is not supposed to be used in the ESL classroom as per the current Namibian language in education policy. Thirdly, MDA was used in the current study because the researcher needed to analyze the multimodal content of the grade 12 ESL question papers in terms of how they facilitated or hindered learners’ understating of the essay questions.

3.3 Summary of the chapter

This chapter presented literature on the theoretical framework underpinning the current study. Because the current study is about the effectiveness of the current Namibian language in education policy, this chapter reviewed literature on ‘social constructivist paradigm to address issues of language policies within multilingual Namibia. According to the ‘social constructivist paradigm’, everything that is done in the classroom is centred on the students and the learning environment should allow students to interact with each other and negotiate meaning. Apart from ‘the social constructivist paradigm’, this chapter provided literature on how contemporary ESL teaching should draw on translanguaging rather than on code-switching, as well as multilingualism as a social process. Finally, this chapter outlined and discussed the analytical framework for the study, which included Thematic Content Analysis (TCA), Discourse Analysis (DA), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Error Analysis (EA), Document Analysis and Multimodal Analysis (MDA). In the chapter that follows, I describe the research process of the current study, which includes research approach, research population and so on.



Chapter 4: Research methodology

4.0 Introduction

“Research methodology refers to both the theoretical and the practical aspects of conducting research” (Iipinge, 2013:40). It encompasses all the technicalities and strategies used in carrying out research (Iipinge, 2013). This chapter therefore, describes the research approach which was used in carrying out the current study, which is the mixed-method research approach. Apart from that, the chapter presents the research population, sample size, as well as sampling techniques used in the current study. Similarly, this chapter explains and outlines data collection methods and instruments used in obtaining data that were used to inform the current study. In addition, this chapter explains how both qualitative and quantitative data which were collected and analyzed. As a final point, this chapter also presents important aspects of

research methodology such as data validation, ethical considerations and the limitations of the study.

4.1 Research approach

This study follows a ‘mixed method research approach’. ‘Mixed method research approach’ is defined as “a procedure for collecting, analyzing and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data at some stage of the research process within a single study to understand a research problem more completely” (Creswell 2008 in Maree, 2014:269.) Apart from Maree (2014: 269), Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen (2014:590) define ‘mixed method research approach’ as “an approach to research which combines quantitative and qualitative research methods in different ways, with each approach adding something to the understanding of the phenomenon”. Again, Plano and Clark (2011) in Creswell (2014a:564) defines mixed method research approach as “procedures for collecting, analyzing and mixing both qualitative and quantitative data to understand a research problem”.

Looking at the three definitions of ‘mixed method research approach’ given above, one would concur with Creswell (2014b:565) who explains that “the basic assumption (of mixed method research) is that the uses of both qualitative and quantitative data, in combination provide a better understanding of the research problem and question than either methods by itself”. In other words, “one conducts a mixed method study when he or she has both quantitative and qualitative data and both types of data, together, provide a better understanding of the research problem than either type by itself” (Creswell, 2014a:565). Indeed, in this approach, “the researcher collects both numerical data and text data to answer the study research questions” (Maree, 2014:269) and combine both types of data (numerical and text) to utilize the strengths of each type of data within a single study and therefore to have a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem. Consequently, this study used qualitative data: data from teachers and HODs’ interviews, classroom observations, learners’ written samples; and quantitative data: data from teachers’ questionnaires, in order to fully investigate “the

effect of the current Namibian language in education policy on the teaching and learning ESL in Northern Namibia”.

Moreover, it is important to mention that I could have opted for either qualitative research or quantitative research approach alone. However, it was anticipated that one of these two approaches alone would not yield comprehensive and detailed findings. As Creswell (2014b) mentions, the combination of qualitative and quantitative approach provides a more complete understanding of a research problem than either approach alone. Because, “when used in a combination within a mixed methods approach, quantitative and qualitative methods complement each other and allow for a more complete analysis of the research situation” (Maree, 2014:15).

4.2 Target research population

Check and Schut (2012: 394) define a population as “the entire set of individuals or other entities to which study findings are to be generalized”. In simpler terms, “the total number of individuals to whom the results of the research are intended to apply constitute the research population” (Iipinge, 2013:41). The target population for this research consists of all the grade 12 ESL teachers in Omusati educational and political region in northern Namibia, including their HODs. According to Iipinge (2013: 41), “the population may be generally homogenous in the sense that the individual units within the population may be similar with respect to the characteristics of interest”. Wary, Trott and Bloomer (1998:49) explain that “in order for responses from a group to be compared, there needs to be some base-line features in common, so that it is clear why a comparison is valid”. Therefore, the teachers at the schools that form the focus of the present study are similar in three most important aspects. Firstly, they all teach English as a second language in homogenous schools. This means that only one mother tongue (Oshiwambo) is used in the schools and in the communities where the school are located (Iipinge, 2013). This also implies that these teachers hardly encounter learners from different cultural groups, with different mother tongues in the same classes. Secondly, these teachers’ English proficiency has been found to be poor and

therefore it might have a negative impact on the way they deliver their lessons. Thirdly, teachers are very similar in their teaching because they are all guided by the same language policy. That is; they are required to use English as a sole medium of instruction.

Additionally, the population for the current study also consists of all grade 12 ESL learners of Omusati educational and political region. Like their teachers, these learners share some common characteristics. To begin with, they have limited exposure to English because a huge majority of people in Northern Namibia speak Oshiwambo (Ipinge, 2013). As a result, many learners in these communities hardly ever hear or use English, apart from occasionally using it the classroom (Ipinge, 2013). Second, learners from Omusati region face a number of problems when it comes to ESL as a school subject and a sole medium of instruction. In particular, they have a problem with writing essays in English. As Nghikembua (2013) emphasizes, learners in Northern Namibia do not only show poor writing skills in examinations but in any other writing tasks given to them. Finally, the last characteristic that is shared by learners from Northern Namibia is that they do not have a reading culture (Ipinge, 2013; Harris, 2011). Therefore, because they do not read, they are unlikely to improve their English language proficiency and eventually their performance in ESL will be negatively affected.

4.3 Sample size and sampling techniques

Sampling refers to “the process of selecting a small number of individuals for a study in such a way that they will be key informants who will contribute to the researcher’s understanding of a given phenomenon” (Airasian et al., 2009:135). In other words, “sampling is the process of selecting a number of individuals (a sample) from a population preferably in such a way that the individuals are represented of the larger group from which they were selected” (Fraenkel et al., 2012). “Sampling is fundamental in conducting research as well in the interpretation of the results because, except when a complete census is taken, research is almost invariably conducted by

means of a sample, on the basis of which generalizations are made which are applicable to the population from which the sample was obtained” (Ipinge, 2013:42).

Gay (1992) identifies two types of sampling techniques. That is, probability and non-probability sampling. “In probability sampling, it is possible to specify the chance that each member of the defined population has a chance of being selected for the sample” (Gay, 1992:126). To put it differently, “this is a sample in which each member of the research population has a known probability of being included in the sample” (Oliver, 2014:128). In addition, “probability random sampling techniques include; simple random sampling, stratified random sampling, cluster sampling, and systematic sampling” (Airasian et al., 2009:125). On the other hand, in non-probability sampling, “it is not possible to specify the chance that each member of the defined population has of being selected for the sample” (Ipinge, 2013:42). “Non-probability sampling techniques include; convenience sampling, purposive sampling and quota sampling” (Airasian, et al., 2009:134). The current study therefore, used both non-probability sampling technique and probability random technique as explained under the teachers’ sample and the learners’ sample respectively.

4.3.1 The teachers’ sample

The teachers’ sample consisted of 32 ESL grade 12 teachers, including their HODs. These ESL teachers and HODs are employed at 6 different government secondary schools in Northern Namibia-Omusati region. Furthermore, it is important to emphasize and reiterate that the teachers’ sample was necessary because I had to interview them so that I can hear their views and experiences about a number of aspects that are related to the Namibian LEP, teaching English in Northern Namibia, and especially on their learners’ writing problems when writing essays in English. Apart from that, the teachers’ sample was needed because I had to observe them teaching so that I could clearly see the actual process of ESL teaching and learning in classes that are heavily dominated by learners from one linguistic background. Lastly, the teachers’ sample was required because they had to complete questionnaires that supplied more

data to supplement data from teachers' focus-group interviews, data from HODs' interviews, as well as data from classroom observations.

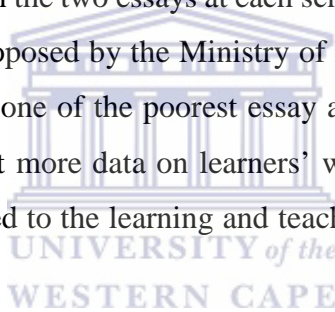
Moreover, the sample of the teachers who were part of the current study was selected using 'purposive sampling'. According to Creswell and Clark (2011:173), "in qualitative research, the inquirer purposefully selects individuals and sites that can provide necessary information". This implies that the researcher deliberately selects people who have experienced the phenomenon that is being experienced (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Consequently, to obtain the teachers' sample, I intentionally targeted the ESL grade 12 teachers and their HODs because I knew that they had the potential of providing necessary and relevant information better than anybody else. As Denscombe (2007:17) claims, "the advantage of purposive sampling is that it allows the research to home in on people or events which there are good grounds for believing will be critical for the research". The next section describes the learners' sample and explains how it was selected.

4.3.2 The learners' sample

The learners' sample consisted of 120 ESL grade 12 learners from 6 different schools in Omusati region. The sample of the learners was necessitated by the fact that I needed to analyze their written work in order to determine the problems that they encounter when writing essays in English. Thus, at each secondary school that was part of the current study, 20 learners had to write two essays. That is; a report on 'an emergency landing', as well as a 'friendly letter'.

Moreover, the sample of 20 learners at each school was accomplished through the 'simple random sampling' method. According to Creswell (2012:143), "in simple random sampling, the researcher selects participants for the sample so that any individual has an equal probability of being selected from the population". Also, Ipinge (2013:44) explains that "using the simple random sampling method increases the chances of the pattern distribution of the phenomenon under investigation in the population being similarly distributed in the participants which are selected for the study sample". Therefore, to get the sample of 20 learners at each school, I chose to

use the ‘simple random method’ because I wanted to give all the grade 12 learners within the population an equal and free chance of being selected to be part of the sample. Besides, I chose the ‘simple random sampling method’ because I wanted learners who would fully represent the research population without bias. Accordingly, in order to get a sample of 20 learners who wrote the two essays at each school, I used a ‘table of random numbers’ as recommended by Creswell (2012). Firstly, I obtained the list of all grade 12 learners from the HOD’s office and then I assigned unique numbers to all the individuals on the list. After that, I started anywhere in the random numbers table, matching the numbers on the list to the numbers in the table. In fact, I started at the upper left of the table and went down the column. I continued down the column until the number of learners (20) needed for the sample was chosen. After the chosen learners had written the two essays at each school, I went through all the essays using the marking grid proposed by the Ministry of Education. I then selected one of the best essays as well as one of the poorest essay and interviewed the learners who wrote them in order to get more data on learners’ writing problems as well as other relevant information related to the learning and teaching of essay writing in Northern Namibia.



Finally, apart from the sample of 20 learners, I also had an informal chat with a group of 4-6 learners at every school that was part of the current study. I identified these learners in the schools playing ground either during lunch break or after the afternoon study session. The main aim of talking to these learners was to hear about the problems that they encounter when writing essays in English as well as to hear more about other relevant issues pertaining to the teaching and learning of ESL in their respective schools. Here it is important to stress that the sample for the learners whom I informally chatted cannot be clearly specified as the number of learners within the groups varied from one school to another. However, the procedures that I followed to obtain the information from these learners are explicitly explained in the next section, which is ‘data collection methods and instruments’.

4.4 Data collection methods and instruments

“Once you have made up your mind about your research strategy and tactics, you will need to describe how you intend to set about collecting the data to answer the research questions” (Maree, 2014:34). This is accomplished through “data collection”. “Data collection involves spending considerable time in the setting under study, immersing oneself in this setting and collecting as relevant information as possible and as unobtrusively as possible” (Airasian, et al., 2009:366). Furthermore, “numerous data collection methods, instruments or sources can be used” (Maree, 2014:34). As Airasian, et al., (2009:366) assert, “many sources of data are acceptable, as long as the collection approach is ethical, feasible and contributes to the understanding of the phenomenon understudy”. Accordingly, in the current study, the researcher used focus group interviews, classroom observations, literature review, learners’ writing samples, questionnaires and learners’ informal chats to collect qualitative and quantitative data. The researcher chose these data collection methods with the anticipation that data obtained through these methods would allow a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being investigated. Below is a description of how each data collection method was used, as well as how specific data collection instruments facilitated the process of collecting data in each and every data collection method.

4.4.1 Document analysis

According to Bertram and Christiansen (2017:97), “researchers do not always have to collect new data for their studies, but can also make use of secondary data”. “Secondary data are data collected by others or even derived from existing data” (Bertram & Christiansen 2017:97). Furthermore, in qualitative research, including document analysis as a data gathering method can be a good source of secondary data (Maree, 2014). Therefore, in collecting data for this specific study, my first data collection strategy was ‘document analysis’. Granted, I analyzed the Namibian LEP, the ESL grade 12 syllabus, three grade 12 ESL question papers and two relevant previous studies conducted in Namibia in the previous years. As Wellington (2015) maintains, ‘document analysis can be used to complement data from other sources such as

interviews and observations in order to enhance and strengthen the trustworthiness, reliability and validity of research.

4.4.2 Teachers' focus groups interviews

In the current study, I used 'focus group interviews' (with open-ended questions) to obtain qualitative data from the ESL grade 12 teachers. "A focus group interview is the process of collecting data through interviews with a group of people typically four to six" (Creswell, 2012:218). In focus group interviews, "participants are able to build on each other's ideas and comments to provide an in-depth view not attainable from individual interviews" (Maree, 2014:90). This was one of the reasons why I opted for focus group interviews rather than one-on-one individual interviews. "The main objective of a focus group interview is to get at what people really think about an issue or issues in social contexts where participants can hear the views of others and consider their own views accordingly" (Fraenkel et al., 2012 :457).

Therefore, in this particular study, I wanted to hear the ESL grade 12 teachers' perspectives on a number of issues pertaining to the teaching of ESL in Northern Namibia-Omusati region. Definitely, "interactions within 'focus group interviews' are productive in widening the range of responses, activating forgotten details of experience and releasing inhibitions that may otherwise discourage participants from disclosing information" (Maree, 2014:90). As Fraenkel et al. (2012:457) reason, "Participants in 'focus group interviews' offer additional comments beyond what they originally had to say once they here the other responses". "They (participants) may agree or disagree on certain issues that are being discussed, however consensus is either necessary or desired" (Fraenkel, et al., 2012:457). Again, Ary et al. (2014:469) recommend that in 'focus group interviews', "the group should be small enough so that everyone can take part in the discussion but large enough to provide in perspective". At all the schools were I conducted the teachers' focus group interviews, the number of teachers within the groups was either five or six, which is in line with what Ary et al. (2014) recommend. Hence, I was convinced that the number of teachers within the teachers' focus group interviews was easy to control and I was also happy that each

one of the participants got a chance to participate and as the result the data that I collected was good enough to answer the research questions, especially that this data was also supplemented by data from the HODs' interviews.

4.4.3 HODs' interviews

The teachers' focus group interviews that I conducted at all the schools that were part of the current study excluded the English HODs. Because the HODs are the immediate supervisors of the ESL teachers, I decided not to include them in the focus group interviews so that the teachers can express themselves freely and comfortably. Here it is important to mention that I asked the HODs the same questions that I asked during the teachers' focus group interviews, although I had an extra question for them which required them to talk about how they manage the teaching and learning of ESL at their respective schools.

4.4.4 Learners' interviews

As mentioned earlier, at all the schools which were part of the current study, a group of 20 learners was selected to write two essays and then from the two essays written by the learners, I selected one of the best as well as one of the poorest essays and interviewed the learners who wrote these specific essays. The main aim of interviewing these learners was generally to hear their opinions about essay writing related issues and their attitudes towards English and their mother language within the educational context. Here, it is important to explain that the procedures used in conducting the learners' interviews were fairly similar to the procedures used in conducting teachers' focus group interviews as well the HODs' interviews.

4.4.5 Procedures used in conducting interviews

Before I conducted all the interviews which I needed to carry out at each school, I explained clearly the purpose of conducting the interviews and how the results from the interviews will be used. Additionally, I explained ethical related issues, whereby I stressed that taking part in the interview was voluntarily and participants' ideas and input were solely going to be used for academic purposes and were (participants' ideas and input) not going to be exposed to a third party.

Moreover, after finishing explaining all important information about the interviews, I encourage the participants to ask questions if there was something which was not clear. Thereafter, I asked them again if they were still willing to be interviewed. Upon indicating that they were still interested in taking part in the interviews, I reassured them of their anonymity and confidentiality regarding any information they will provide during the interviews. I then asked them to complete the bibliographical information sheet and sign the informed consent form.

During the interviews, I used a structured interview schedule and I started with more general questions and as the time went on proceeded to more specific questions about issues that are addressed in the current study. During the teachers' focus group interviews for example, what actually happened is that I asked a question, elicited a response and then passed it off to another participant. I must mention that throughout the teachers' focus group interviews, my main role was to encourage full participation and interaction among participants and to probe the discussions or clarity of different aspects. Nevertheless, as Maree (2014) recommends, I remained in the back ground. Here, I must mention that I used probes such as "I am not sure I understand", "can you tell me more" and "Can you give me an example?" as recommended by Ary et al. (2014).

Finally, apart from asking questions and directing the discussion, my other role during the interviews was to take-notes when necessary. I had to take notes of relevant issues which arose from the discussion; especially the ones that were emphasized several times by the participants. However, I had to strike a good balance between listening and maintaining eye contact with the participants. As Check & Schutt (2012:205) lament, "constant note taking during an interview prevents adequate displays of interest and appreciation by the interviewer and hinders the degree of concentration that results in the best interviews". Of course, I also had to record the interviews as discussed within the next section.

4.4.5.1 Recording the interviews

“Recording data is very useful as it allows for a close analysis thereof as well as enabling analysis to take place at a later stage in the research process” (Iiping, 2014:48). Thus, for the current study, a “digital voice recorder” was used to record data. This device was placed on a table between the researcher and the participants or the participant. As Fraenkel et al. (2012:457) instruct, “a recording device is often considered an indispensable part of any qualitative researcher’s equipment”. Simply because “recording interviews give you an accurate record of the conversation” (Creswell, 2012:221), and “it also allows one to transcribe the conversations later”. Consequently, after recording all the interviews which I was supposed to carry out, I transcribed all the conversations. Here, I must mention that as suggested by Maree (2014), I devised a strategy whereby I identified individual group members with numbers such as teacher 1, or learner 2 and HOD1. This made it easier for me when I was typing transcriptions and it also helped me to do a wealthier data analysis. In conclusion, as suggested by Maree (2014), I must mention that transcripts were written in a question-by- question format to capture what the group had to say regarding each question.

One thing which is also worth mentioning about recording the data is that at each school I went to, I requested the school principal to give me a room which was free and far from disturbances. At some schools I conducted the interviews in the library, while at other school I conducted the interviews in the board room. I did not experience any noise or disturbance since the interviews were conducted during the afternoon study sessions and all learners were busy studying. Also, I typed a notice which said “Do not disturb-interview in progress”. This kept other people who were not part of the interviews away from the interview room and hence no disturbances were experienced. In the next section, I described another data collection method which was used to collect data for this specific study, and that is; ‘classroom observations’.

4.4.6 Classroom observations.

“Observation is one of the key tools for collecting data in qualitative research” (Creswell, 2013:166). This (observation) is “a systematic process of recording the behavioral patterns of participants, objects and occurrences without necessarily questioning or communicating with them” (Maree, 2014:83). “The emphasis during observation is on understanding the natural environment as lived by participants, without altering or manipulating it” (Airasian et al., 2009:366). Certainly, “as a qualitative data gathering technique, observation is used to enable the researcher to gain a deeper insight and understanding of the phenomenon being observed” (Maree, 2014:84).

Furthermore, in this particular study, I interviewed the ESL grade 12 teachers and their HODs to get their perspectives on a number of issues related to the Namibian LEP as well as to the teaching and learning of ESL. However, I still needed to observe them (ESL teachers and HODs) teaching so that I can get the actual picture of what happens in the ESL classes. As Airasian et al. (2009:366) suggest, “after interviewing the teachers, one still need to observe them teaching because they (teachers) may give you biased information-they may not remember everything, or they may tell you only about their most successful strategies”. Therefore, “observing the classes help the researcher to obtain much more objective information that can be compared to the self-reports of the research participants” (Airasian et al., 2009:366). Without a doubt, this was the main rationale for using classroom observations as one of the data collection method in the current study. Finally, it is important to mention that during classroom observations, my role was basically to observe, but not to participate in whatever was happening in the ESL classes when the teachers were teaching. In the section, I explained the procedures that I followed in conducting classroom observation.

4.4.6.1 Procedures for classroom observations

According to Creswell (2014b:194) “one of the main advantages of observations “is that unusual aspects can be noticed during observations”. For instance, during a number of classroom observations that I have carried out in Northern Namibia, I noticed a

number of interesting aspects and characteristics of ESL teaching that I did not know or did not think about. When I included this kind of data (unusual and unexpected aspects), I got a better understanding of the phenomenon that I was investigating. Hence, the classroom observations played a vital role in informing this specific study.

Additionally, before I went on to collect data for the current study, I acquired permission from the ministry of education. Yes, this permission also included the approval for observing grade 12 ESL classes. Before I went on to observe the lessons, I explained to all the ESL teachers who were to be observed why I needed to observe their classes. Similarly, I explained to them that allowing me to observe their classes was voluntary and they had right to say “no” to the observations if they were not comfortable with the observations for one reason or another. Again, I assured the teachers to be observed that the data that would emerge from the lesson observations will only be used for academic purposes and their identity will remain anonymous. After giving the teachers the necessary explanations, I asked the teachers who were willing to be observed to sign a consent form and then I agreed with each and every teacher to be observed as to when I should actually visit his or her class. This was done with the help of the teachers’ time table.

Moreover, to each and every class I went for observation, I was introduced by the teacher (ESL) who was being observed. I was seated at the back of the classroom where I had a proper view of all the learners in the classroom, where I was actually able to see all the teaching and learning activities taking place in the classroom. I had an “observational protocol” where I recorded all the aspects and other important observable issues which I have picked and identified during the ESL teachers’ lesson presentations. To avoid forgetting important details and information, I noted down any thing that I thought was worth noting down immediately after I had observed it.

As Creswell (2012) recommends, during the classroom observations, I remained unobtrusive, passive and friendly. I did this because I never wanted to influence the actual actions of the ESL lessons that I was observing. It is also important to mention that in ESL classes that I observed, I thanked the teacher as well as the learners for the

opportunity granted to me to observe the lesson. Finally, apart from the procedures that were followed, when the lesson observations were done, it is important to briefly discuss the “observational protocol” as a data collection instrument, because it played a major role in gathering data from ESL classrooms. To conclude this section, it is vital to mention that apart from the observation which I have carried out within the ESL classrooms, I also recorded relevant and critical observations which I have noticed around the school premises. These observations were noted in my field notes and then the data from these field notes were solely used in discussing data from other sources such as teachers’ interviews and learners’ interviews.

4.4.6.2 Observational protocol

An ‘observational protocol’ “is a form designed by the researcher before data collection that is used for taking field notes during an observation” (Creswell, 2012:227). In simpler terms, an ‘observational protocol’ “is a tool used to record information during an observation” (Creswell, 2012:227). Indeed, “this is an important tool that provides structure for recording information from observation sessions” (Airasian et al., 2009:367). According to Creswell (2012:227), the ‘observational protocol’ is written in two columns following the header and these columns divide the page for recording into two types of data; a descriptions of activities and a reflection about themes, quotes and personal experiences of the researcher. Consequently, the ‘observational protocol’ that I designed had two columns as well. In one column I recorded and noted the aspects of learning and teaching that I observed as well as other relevant characteristics of ESL classrooms as required by the research questions, and in the other column I recorded my personal thoughts such as assumptions, feelings, difficulties, and impressions. The other thing that was written on the ‘observational protocol’ which I used as proposed by Creswell (2014b) was demographic information about the time, place, and date of the field setting where the observation took place.

4.4.7 The teachers’ Questionnaire

“A questionnaire is a written collection of self-report questions to be answered by a selected group of research participants” (Airasian et al., 2009:605). As an important

research instrument and a tool for data collection, the questionnaire has its main function as measurement and it (questionnaire) is the main data collection methods in survey which yield quantitative data (Denscobe, 2007). Conversely, a questionnaire can be used as a tool for supplementing data collected through qualitative methods such as ‘observations’ and ‘interviews’ (Wellington, 2015). This is exactly how the questionnaire as an instrument and a data collection method was used in the current study.

Moreover, “it is important to mention that the research objectives should be the primary basis for making decisions about what to include and exclude and what to emphasize or treat in cursory fashion” (Check & Schutt, 2012:162). Definitely, “the questionnaire should be viewed as an integral whole, in which each section and every question serve a clear purpose related to the study’s objective and each section complement other sections” (Check & Schutt, 2012:162). Therefore, all the questions that are part of the questionnaire that I used in the current study are related to the objectives of the study as well as to the questions of the study. I must however mention that not all the research questions and research objectives were linked to the questions within the questionnaire that was used to collect data from the ESL teachers.

Additionally, a questionnaire may consist of close-ended, open-ended questions or both (Maree, 2014). In the questionnaire that was used in the current study, I used closed-ended questions. “A closed-ended question provides for a set of responses from which the respondent has to choose one or sometimes more than one response” (Maree, 2014:161). I chose to use these types of questions (closed-ended) because “data obtain from their administration is easier to analyze than data obtain from open-ended questions” (Maree, 2014:161). Because I already had data from classroom observations and data from teachers’ interview, data from learners’ and data from learners’ informal chat, it was not a wise idea to use open-ended questions because analyzing all these types of data could have been a daunting task. Again, I chose to use closed-ended questions because “they are more popular with respondents” (Fraenkel et al., 2012:400) and that they are easy and quick to answer (Maree, 2014). When I gave the

questionnaires to the teachers and their HODs, I noticed that it was not something new to them. I also realized that they took reasonable time to finish answering the questions; because of the nature of the questions (closed-ended questions).

Moreover, the questionnaire which I used in the current study consist of three important aspects. The first aspect was the 'background information'. "This (the background information) is a brief statement at the top of the questionnaire describing the study and its purpose" (Airasian et al., 2009:180). The background information was then followed by the "direction". "This is actually the information about how the participants should respond to different items on the questionnaire" (Airasian et al., 2009:180). Apart from the "background information" and the "direction" or "instruction", the questionnaire consisted of the questions that the participants had to answer. Here, I must mention that as Airasian et al., (2009) recommend, the questions which are part of the questionnaire were related to the objectives of the study and each question was focused on a single concept. Also, the questions on the questionnaire were arranged vertically rather than horizontally. "A vertical arrangement makes the questionnaire appear less crowded and eliminates the common error of checking the space on the wrong side of the answer" (Ary et al., 2014:428).

Finally, the questionnaire used in the current study was administered to all the ESL grade 12 teachers and their HODs at six schools that were part of this study. Here, I must clarify that these are the same teachers that I have interviewed, and these are the same teachers that I have observed as explained earlier in this chapter. So, first I observed their ESL lessons, interviewed them and then gave them the questionnaires. As was my usual procedure, I explained the aim of the questionnaire as well as the ethical issues involved. As Creswell (2014b:166) mentions, "it is important to protect the privacy and the individuals who participate in the study". After they had agreed to complete the questionnaire, I gave them a consent form to sign. "The consent form stated that the researcher guaranteed them certain rights, and that when they signed the form (consent form) they were agreeing to be involved in the study and were assured of the protection of their rights" (Creswell, 2014b:167). Lastly, after the participants

had signed the consent forms, we agreed as to when they should complete the questionnaire because I did not want to put them any under unnecessary pressure which in the end might lead them to completing the questionnaires in a rush, hence providing unreliable data. Therefore, because the questionnaire was reasonably short, all respondents agreed to finish it within two days; and then I collected the questionnaires back from them accordingly.

4.4.8 Learners' written samples

As mentioned earlier, the other source of data used to find answers to the questions of the current study was the written essays of 240 ESL grade 12 learners from six different secondary schools in Northern Namibia-Omusati region. As alluded to already, these learners wrote two essays each; a letter to a friend and a report on 'an emergency landing'. I marked these essays, identified the errors that the learners have made and classified them through 'error analysis'. It was anticipated that the 'writing errors' identified from learners' written samples would reflect 'writing problems' which the learners encounter when writing essays.

In addition, it is important to mention that the two essays which the learners wrote were written after classes in the school halls with the help of the HODs for English at each school. This was necessary because I did not want to disturb any lesson or any school activity as I promised in the letter that I wrote to the DEC when I was seeking permission to conduct this particular research. To conclude this section, it is vital to mention that apart from the learners' interviews and their written work which I analyzed, at each school which was part of the current study, I engaged a group of grade 12 learners in an informal conversation. The aim of these informal conversations was simply to reinforce and validate the data which were obtained from the other sources.

4.4.8 Learners' informal conversations with the researcher

As mentioned in the previous section, at each secondary school that I went to, I identified six or five grade 12 learners playing in the school playground or hanging around somewhere in the school premises. It was easy to identify the grade 12 learners because they play next to the grade 12 classes otherwise at schools where it was

difficult to identify them, I asked other learners as well as their teachers for directions. I told them I wanted to talk to a few grade 12 learners and they always showed me where to find them.

Moreover, as I was chatting to the grade 12 learners, I wanted to hear how they were coping with English as a medium of instruction and as a school subject. In addition, I wanted to hear how their ESL teachers used Oshiwambo to facilitate the teaching of ESL. I also wanted to hear about the problems that they encountered when they wrote essays in English and how their teachers helped them to overcome such problems.

To make learners more comfortable and free to talk, I decided to chat to them in the mother-tongue (Oshiwambo). I did not carry any recording device because as I said I did not want anything to hinder receiving adequate information from the learners. Therefore, I also decided not to write anything and not even to carry any paper or any writing pad. However, to make sure that I did not forget any information that emerged from the informal chats with the learners, immediately after leaving the playground or wherever I was talking to the learners, I went straight to the car and then jotted down all the information as provided by the learners in my 'field notes'. The data from these 'field notes' together with data from other sources as explained earlier was then analyzed accordingly. The following section therefore explains the data analysis procedures.

4.5 Data analysis

“During or immediately after data collection, the researcher needs to make sense of the information supplied by individuals in the study” (Creswell, 2012:10). “This is realized through ‘data analysis’. Data analysis consists of ‘taking the data apart’ to determine individual responses and then ‘putting it together’ to summarize it (Creswell, 2012:10). Phrased differently, “data analysis involves breaking up the data into manageable themes, patterns, trends and relationships” (Mouton, 2015:108). “The aim of ‘data analysis’ is to understand the various constituent elements of one’s data through an inspection of the relation between concepts, constructs, or variables, and to see whether there are any patterns or trends that can be identified or isolated or trends that can be

identified or isolated or to establish themes in the data” (Mouton, 2015:108). As a result, ‘data analysis’ allows the researcher to test the research hypothesis or to answer the research questions. In the current study, I collected both ‘qualitative’ and ‘quantitative’ data in order to answer the research questions.

4.5.1 Qualitative data analysis

“Qualitative data analysis is an iterative and continuously comparative process that involves reducing and retrieving larger amounts of written information” (Fraenkel et al., 2009:436). Simply put, “qualitative data analysis involves breaking up data into meaningful, understandable and manageable themes, trends and relationships” (Iiping, 2013:49). Furthermore, because there are different approaches to qualitative research leading to various types of research designs, “there are also different approaches to qualitative data analysis” (Maree, 2014:99). Thus, in the current study, as mentioned earlier, qualitative data were analyzed through a number of data analysis strategies: Thematic Content Analysis (TCA), Discourse Analysis (DA), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Error Analysis (EA), Multimodal Analysis (MDA) and Document Analysis. The next sections provide detailed explanations of how the data from different sources were analyzed.

4.5.1.1 Data from the reviewed documents

As a reminder, the current study reviewed four different documents. To be specific, I analyzed the Namibian LEP, the ESL grade 12 syllabus, ESL grade 12 question papers as well as two previous studies carried out in Namibia in the previous years. Furthermore, the analysis of the LEP and the ESL grade 12 syllabus was achieved through DA and CDA. According to Denscombe (2007:309) “DA allows the researcher to analyze data by taking them apart to reveal how they create meaning and how they contain hidden messages”. Correspondingly, DA looks at what is present and absent in a specific text. Consequently, I needed to use DA and CDA in order to identify the weakness of the two documents mentioned above and hence determine how such weaknesses affect the teaching and learning of ESL in Northern Namibia.

Moreover, the ESL question papers were analyzed using CDA in order to disclose the meaning of what is written within them. Also, apart from CDA, I used MDA to analyze the multimodal content of these question papers and hence to determine how their multimodal levels hindered or facilitated the understanding of the essay questions. Finally, the two previous studies reviewed in the current study were analyzed through TCA because I had to identify the main findings in these studies and then add these findings to the findings of the current study. Here, it is important to stress that all data from the document analysis process were used in the current study to help me understand the phenomenon under investigation better as well as to supplement data from other sources such as classroom observations and interviews in order to enhance and strengthen the trustworthiness, reliability and validity of research.

4.5.1.2 Data from interviews

As a reminder, the current study collected data from three different sets of interviews: teachers' focus group interviews, HODs' interviews and learners' interviews. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, "qualitative data analysis is an iterative approach aimed at understanding how participants make meaning of the phenomenon under study" (Maree, 2014:103). To do this, "the researcher will approach the data analysis using a specific data analysis strategy" (Maree, 2014:103). Therefore, in the current study I approached and analyzed data from interviews using TCA, DA and CDA data analysis strategies.

As Ibrahim (2012) recommends, through TCA, raw data can be coded and categorized into different themes. Hence, I needed to use TCA in order to be able to identify, categorize and interpret critical themes from all the interviews' transcripts. This process however, needed to be supported by another analytical tool, which was DA. According to Maree (2014:102), "DA focuses on the meaning of the spoken and written word, and the reasons why it is the way it is". "In DA, language is understood as more than just a transparent description of reality" (Ary et al., 2014:505). That is why in the process of analyzing data from interviews, I used DA because I was targeting what was said and how it was said in order for me to have a better interpretation of data. Apart

from DA, I also used CDA because I wanted to establish why the participants reasoned the way they did. This is because one of the main aims of CDA is to provide motivation and political strategies used by individuals in arguing for or against a certain statement (Wodak 2009; van Dijk 2006).

Furthermore, Airasian et al. (2009:450) are of the opinion that “there is no single correct way to organize and analyze data”. “Different researchers produce different categories from the same data for many reasons, including researcher biases, personal interests, style and interpretative focus” (Iiping, 2013:49). Consequently, to analyze data from interviews, I adopted my own personal approach through following a number of steps.

Firstly, I tried to familiarize myself with the data. This means that I had to read and re-read the interview transcripts several times. As Ary et al. (2014) remark, the researcher must become engaged with the data through reading and reflecting. As I read and re-read the transcripts, I noted down some important points which would serve as the foundation for the analysis. After familiarizing myself with the data, I coded the data. “Coding is the process of categorically marking or referencing units of texts with codes and labels as a way to indicate patterns and meaning in qualitative data” (Airasian et al., 2009:600). From the coding process, I then created themes for each question asked during interviews. The themes created from each question were then summarized and then these summaries were used as the basis for the interpretation and discussion of the study’s findings and conclusion.

4.5.1.3 Data from classroom observations

Like the data from the interviews, data from classroom observations were also analyzed through TCA. This is because I needed to identify the most frequent themes from the observational protocol which I used during the classroom observations. Besides, I also needed to code and categorize data into different themes. Additionally, Ibrahim (2012:40) is of the opinion that “TCA as an analytical tool helps to detect and identify, for example factors and variables that influence any issue generated by the participants”. Consequently, TCA was used in the analysis of data from classroom

observations in order to help in providing answers as to why a number of undesirable things happens in ESL classrooms. Apart from TCA, another analytical tool which was used in the analysis of data from classroom observation was the MDA. The MDA was used to assess and evaluate how conducive were the grade 12 ESL classrooms in order to determine whether they hinder or facilitate the learning of ESL.

Moreover, the data from classroom observations were analyzed through a number of steps. First, I gathered all the observation protocols that I have completed in all the lessons that I observed at all the six secondary schools. After collecting all observation protocols, I went through all of them several times to make sure that I still understand all the points and concepts that I jotted down when I was observing the lessons. Here, I must mention that to understand the points and ideas that I jotted down during the observation better, I had to read the descriptions of what happened in the classes and then I compared them with the reflections which I noted next to those descriptions. I also had to look at the similarities and differences of my descriptions of different observations. This required me to read the observational protocols several times. I then identified the main issues and outcomes of all observations, and then divided these into different categories, from which I created themes. These themes were then summarized for the discussion of the findings as well as for the conclusion of the study.

4.5.1.4 Data from learners' written samples

As mentioned earlier, the current study was also informed by data from 240 essays written by grade 12 ESL learners at six different school in Northern Namibia-Omusati region. These essays were analyzed through EA. "EA is a technique for identifying, classifying and systematically interpreting the unacceptable forms produced by someone learning a foreign language, using any of the principles and procedures provided by linguistics" (Crystal, 2008:173). "It comprises of the comparison made between the errors a learner makes in producing the target language (TL) and the target language (TL) form itself" (Gas & Selinker, 2008:102). Therefore, EA can be a useful tool if one wants to identify errors made by learners and classify them according to

their nature. Additionally, in this particular study, the learners' written samples were analyzed through the procedures proposed by Gas and Selinker (2008).

Firstly, all the written samples were marked and during the marking the focus was on both 'content' and 'language'. This means that the essays were assessed and evaluated on the basis of covering the 'required content' and on the basis of using the 'correct language'. Here, I must emphasize and point out that because the essays were so many, and for the sake of achieving validity, some essays were marked by the researcher himself whereas others were marked by a qualified ESL grade 12 teacher teaching at secondary school that was not part of the current study. Additionally, after the essays were marked, the errors committed by the learners were identified. These errors were subsequently classified in different categories, such as capitalization, poor organization, spelling, verb tenses and so on. After the errors were classified in different categories, I went on to evaluate the seriousness of these errors and then decided on which errors to include in the study for interpretation. Here, it is important to mention that the interpretation and discussion of data from the learners' written samples was done with an understanding that these learners have inadequate exposure to English and hence this predicament has in one way or another influenced and contributed to the number of errors that they made.

To conclude this section, it is important to mention that apart from using EA to identify errors from learners' written sample and hence determine their main weaknesses when it comes to essay writing, TCA was used to identify the main strengths from the learners' written work. Therefore, the interpretation of data from learners' written samples was not only based on the negative aspects of the analysis, but on the positive aspects as well. In the next section, I discussed how I analyzed another type of data, and that is data from the informal conversations that I had with a group of grade 12 learners at each school which was part of this study.

4.5.1.5 Data from learners' informal chats with the researcher

The data from the informal conversations that I had with the learners were analyzed through TCA. As Richard & Schmidt (2002:114) clarify, "TCA has to do with

analyzing and tabulating the frequency of occurrence of topics, ideas, opinions, and other aspects of the content of written or spoken communication.” Therefore, the main idea behind using TCA to analyze the data from my informal conversations with the learners was to summarize what the learners said by identifying common ideas and opinions which have emerged from these conversations.

In addition, as mentioned earlier, the data from each conversation that I had with the learners at each school was recorded on a blank sheet prepared prior to the data collection period, which I termed ‘informal conversation datasheet’. Thus, when it was time to analyze the data from learners’ informal conversations’ I gathered all the ‘informal conversation datasheets.’ After that I went on to read the datasheets several times in order to reflect and make sense of what I have written on them during the data collection period. From there, I went on to identify key ideas, comments and other important aspect which arose from all the ‘datasheets’. Here, I should emphasize that the key ideas that I identified were the ones which featured in all the ‘datasheets’. Therefore, after identifying the keys ideas and aspects, I then turned them into different themes which were later summarized and discussed for general research findings and conclusion. To sum up, it is important to mention that the data from my informal conversation with the learners was the last type of qualitative data that I have analyzed. Hence, after I finished analyzing this data, I proceeded with the analysis of quantitative data.

4.5.2 Quantitative data analysis

“In quantitative data analysis, the raw data to be analyzed are numbers rather than words” (Check & Schutt, 2012:229). This is because “quantitative data are usually in the form of numbers that researchers analyze using various statistical procedures” (Ary et al. 2014:36). “The analysis of numerical data in quantitative research provides evidence that support or fails to support the hypothesis of the study” (Ary et al., 2014:36). Otherwise, one can say the analysis of quantitative data can be used to answer the research questions. In the current study therefore, I analyzed and interpreted

quantitative data from the ESL teachers' questionnaires in order to have complete and decent answers to the research questions.

4.5.2.1 Data from the teachers' questionnaires

The questionnaire that I administered to the ESL grade 12 teachers including their HODs, consisted of 20 close-ended questions. During the analysis of this questionnaire, these 20 questions were classified under three main headings: teachers' training and language policy issues; issues related to ESL as school subject and medium of instruction; and issues related to the use of Oshiwambo in the classroom.

Furthermore, after I collected all the questionnaires from the participants, I went on to analyze the data. As Creswell (2012:200) argues, "the first step in the process of quantitative data analysis and interpretation involve first preparing your numeric data for analysis using statistical programs". Therefore, I needed to tally and organize the collected data into tables. To do this, I chose 'Microsoft office excel program', which I know and understand very well. I used this program to organize tables from which percentages for each item in the questionnaire were calculated.

Moreover, I must mention that data from the teachers' questionnaires were directly entered into Microsoft Excel by hand. After entering the data, I had to go through it again for the second time to ensure that all the data were entered correctly. This is because "whatever data entry method is used, the data must be checked carefully for errors- a process called data cleaning" (Check and Schutt, 2012:279). Additionally, after the data were entered, the computer generated the results in the forms of tables and figures. From these computer-generated results, I then chose the most exceptional and striking statistics for interpretation and discussion in order to supplement data collected through qualitative methods such as classroom observations, interviews and so on. Supplementing qualitative data with quantitative data was deemed important in this particular study because I wanted to have data that are validated.

4.6 Data validation

“When conducting research, one can facilitate the trustworthiness and understanding of one’s research findings by using a number of strategies” (Airasian et al., 2009:376). This process is referred to as ‘data validation’ (Maree, 2014). The validation of data within the current study was attained through ‘triangulation’. “This is the process of using multiple methods, data collection strategies, and data sources to obtain a more complete picture of what is being studied” (Airasian et al., 2009:377). Therefore, as Airasian et al. (2009:377) mention, to ensure that the current study was trustworthy, robust and contributed to an understanding of the phenomenon being investigated, I collected data from different individuals: learners, ESL teachers and English HODs. Additionally, I collected both qualitative and quantitative data. I also used different data collection methods, e.g. observations, interviews and document analysis. “Using different data collection methods rather than relying solely on one is beneficial because the strength of one method compensates for the weakness of another method” (Airasian et al., 2009:377). Finally, to ensure validity of data within the current study, I used a qualified grade 12 ESL teacher at a school which was not part of this study to mark some of the learners’ written samples in order to avoid possible biases. Similarly, to ensure that the data from classroom observations were reliable, I observed a very good number of lessons and therefore made correct and acceptable conclusions.

4.7 Ethical considerations

According to Maree (2014:306), “research cannot simply be conducted by anyone and anywhere”. Hence, “according to the Helsinki Declaration of 1972, it is imperative to obtain clearance from an ethics committee when human (or animal) subjects are involved in any kind of research of an empirical nature” (Maree, 2014:306). Accordingly, my first task before I went on to carry out the current research project was to obtain approval from the Senate Research Committee’ at the University of the Western Cape. I then went on to obtain permission to carry out the research in six secondary schools in Omusati region, from the directorate of education. Further, as

Strydom (2002 in Maree, 2014:306) underscores, “anyone involved in a research needs to be aware of the general agreements about what is proper and improper in scientific research”. “This implies that throughout the research process, the researcher follows and abides by ethical guidelines” (Maree, 2014:306). Consequently, as I engaged participants to obtain data for the current study, I adhered and paid attention to the following ethical values:

4.7.1 Informed consent and voluntary participation

Before I engaged the respondents in the current study, I introduced myself and informed the participants of the general purpose of the study. After talking about the general purpose of the study, I asked the participants to ask for clarity if there was something which was not clear. From there, the respondents who agreed to take part in the study were given a consent form to sign. The consent form outlined the purpose of the study and the terms on which the respondents participate in the study. Here, it is important to mention that I ensured that the language within the consent form was simple and straightforward so that everything was clear and understandable to the respondents. As Check and Schutt (2012:52) contend, “the language of the consent form must be clear and understandable to the research participants and sufficiently long and detailed enough to explain what will actually happen in the research”. Additionally, participation in the current study was voluntary as no person was forced to take part. Participants were also reminded that they had right to withdraw at any time during the process of the current study if they wished to do so. As Fraenkel et al. (2012:64) acknowledge, “All participants in a study should always have the right to withdraw from the study or to request that data collected about them not be used”.

4.7.2 Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity

The privacy, confidentiality and anonymity guarantee is important not only to retain validity of the research, but also to protect respondents (Nashilundo, 2007:38). According to Burns (2000 in Maree 2014:307), “both the researcher and participant must have a clear understanding regarding the confidentiality of the results and findings of the study”. As a result, in the current study, all respondents’ information and

responses shared during the study were kept private and the results were presented in an anonymous manner in order to protect the identities of the participants as recommended by Maree (2014). This implies that no names of any participants were mentioned, participants were given participant numbers that were utilized in the thesis for easy reference, and only the researcher was able to identify the participants. Equally important, the recordings obtained in the process of carrying out the current study were only used for thesis purpose and only the researcher and his supervisor had access to these recordings. However, participants were given the right to review the recordings. Finally, after the study is published, the recordings will be erased in order for unauthorized people not to have access to them.

4.7.3 Potential risks and discomfort

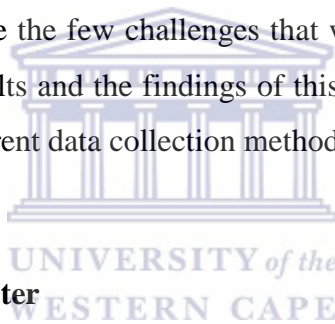
Leedy and Ormrod (200) in Maree (2014:306) believe that “the researcher should ensure that participants are not exposed to any undue physical or psychological harm”. “It is a fundamental responsibility of every researcher to do all in his or her power to ensure that participants in a research study are protected from physical or psychological harm, discomfort or danger that may arise due to research procedures” (Fraenkel, et al., 2012:63). In the current study, I guaranteed the participants that they would not experience or be exposed to any potential risk or discomfort by taking part in this study. Indeed, taking part in the current study did not pose any harm or risk to the participants because all research ethics protocols were observed and adhered to.

4.8 Limitations of the study

“Limitations are potential weaknesses or problems with the study identified by the researcher” (Creswell, 2012:199). In conducting the current study, I encountered a few minor challenges. Firstly, when I was observing ESL lessons, some teachers were a little bit uncomfortable with my presence. Possibly, my presence made them present their lessons in an unnatural manner. However, I still strongly believe that the data that I obtained from the classroom observations were valid because I observed as many lessons as I could. I also emphasized to the teachers that the main reason for observing

them was not to find weaknesses in the ways they delivered their lessons and that I was not interested in judging their English proficiency. Also, to make sure that the teachers were comfortable with my presence, I decided not to videotape them. This meant that they could teach and deliver their lessons in a more natural way.

Another shortcoming was that during my informal conversations with the learners, I could not record the discourse and I could not note down anything. This was because I wanted the learners to be more comfortable in our discussions. However, writing down the data from these conversations later was a little bit challenging because I could not really remember all the things that were mentioned by the learners. However, the data from these informal conversations were still useful and valid because they were supplemented by data from learners' interviews as well as data from learners' written samples. All in all, despite the few challenges that were encountered in carrying out the current study, the results and the findings of this study are still valid and reliable because a number of different data collection methods were used.



4.9 Summary of the chapter

The main aim of this chapter was to give and explain all technicalities and strategies used in carrying out the current study. Thus, it is important to emphasize that the current study followed a “mixed method research approach” because it collected both quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a better understanding of the phenomenon that was being investigated. These two types of data bases (quantitative and qualitative) were collected at the same time and analyzed separately. Furthermore, this chapter presented and discussed the data collection methods that were used to collect data from a number of sources. Among others, these include classroom observations, interviews and questionnaires. Apart from the data collection methods, this chapter also gave detailed descriptions of instruments that were used to collect data. Lastly, this chapter presented and clarified crucial aspects of ‘research methodology’ such as data validation, ethical consideration and the limitations of the study. Here, in regard to the limitations of the current study, what is worth mentioning

is that very few challenges were encountered but the validity and the reliability of the research findings and results were not negatively affected because the study used different data collection methods. The next chapter entails ‘document analysis’.



Chapter 5: Document Analysis

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented a detailed characterization of the present study's research methodology. The current chapter presents the analysis of documents. As it has been mentioned already, "document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents-both printed and electronic" (Bowen, 2009:27). Bowen (2009) further enlightens that 'document analysis' can be used as primary method of obtaining data for a certain study or can be used as supplementary data. Therefore, in this chapter, I analyze the following documents:

- The Namibian LEP document
- The ESL grade 12 Syllabus
- Three grade 12 ESL question papers from three consecutive years; and
- Two relevant studies conducted in Namibia in the previous years to supplement data from 'classroom observation', 'teachers' focus group interviews' and so on.

With the exception of the last category (which I used to support the validity and reliability of my findings), the analysis of the above-mentioned documents was needed to gain insight into how these documents were constructed and the particular ideological framework that underpin their contents. Everything starts of course with the Namibian policy in Education (LEP), which in turn emanates from the National language policy of Namibia.

5.2 The language policy for schools

"After independence in 1990, the ministry of education and culture in Namibia realized that a new language policy for schools was urgently needed" (Wolfaardt, 2002:69). After a lengthy consultative process, the first language policy document was published in November 1991 (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993b). The policy document is

titled *The language policy for schools: 1992-1996 and beyond* (Wolfaardt 2002:69) and its main aim was to make the Namibian LEP clear, and to explain some of its details more fully (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993b:1). In this chapter, I have analyzed this language policy document in order to see how it affects the teaching and learning of ESL in Northern Namibia. Further, the analysis of the policy document was done in relation to four main criteria for assessing the quality of documents suggested by Wellington (2015). That is; authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning. However, before I looked at the above mentioned criteria, I considered it important to look at the implementation strategy which was used by the ministry of education to introduce the new Namibian LEP, as indicated in the language policy document on page 6-9.

5.2.1 The implementation strategy

Prior to Namibia's independence, English was never effectively used as the medium of instructions in Namibian schools (Wolfaardt, 2002). Hence, after it was chosen as Namibia's official language and medium of instruction (Ipinge, 2013), a strategy was adopted to introduce it in schools between 1992 and 1996 and this was realized on two phases (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993b). That is; the introduction of English as medium of instruction in primary phase (grades 1-7) and then in secondary phase (grades 8-12) (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993b). According to the Ministry of Education & Culture (1993a:65), "the phasing in of English medium of instruction between 1992 and 1996 was necessitated by the fact that the Namibian government and the ministry of education in particular had to prepare new materials and upgrade teachers' qualifications and competencies".

5.2.1.1 Primary phase (Grades 1-7)

As mentioned earlier, 1992 was a year of initial preparation for the phasing in of English as a medium of instruction in Namibian schools (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993b). Therefore, in 1992, all primary grades (grades 1-7) were taught in the mother language because new materials (teaching and learning) and teacher upgrading needed to be in place first, and on the other hand English was introduced and taught as

a compulsory subject from grade one and continued throughout the school system (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993b). Further, “in 1993, all the lower primary grades (1-3) were taught in the vernacular as it was done in 1992 and this situation was to continue until such a time when there will be a need for language policy amendment” (Ministry of Education, 1993b:6). See figure 5.1 below

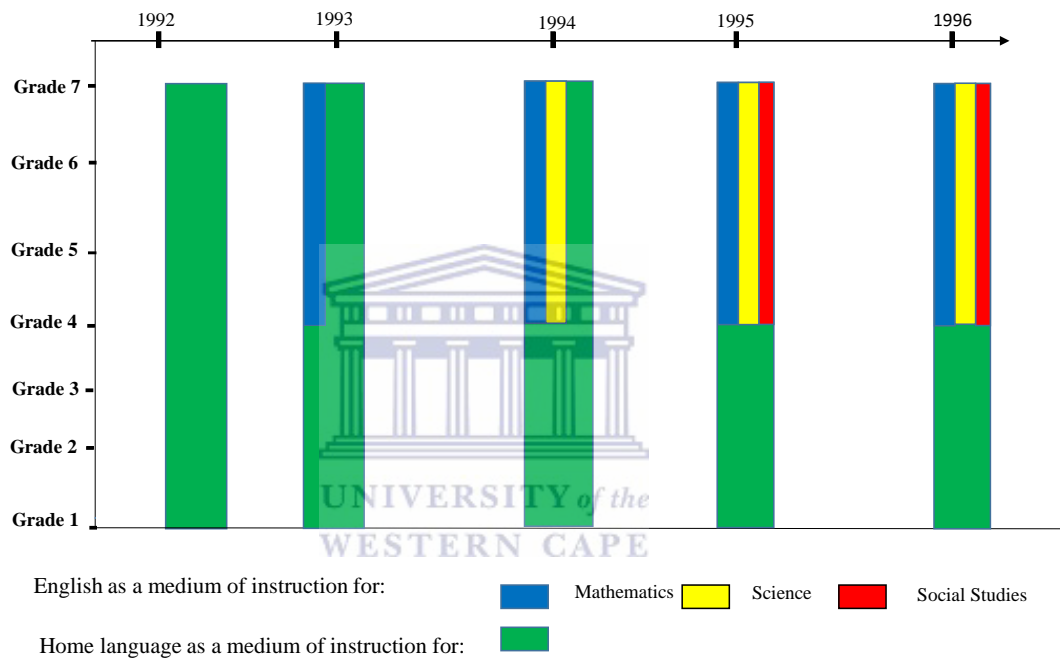


Figure 5.1. Implementation of English medium grade 1-7.

Moreover, as it can be seen in figure 5.1 above, “the phasing in of English as the medium of instruction was effected in the following way in each of grade 4 to 7 for promotional subjects other than languages” (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993b:6): Firstly, in 1993, only mathematics was taught through English and then in 1994, mathematics and science were both taught in English (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993b). From there, in 1995, three subjects were taught in English. That is Mathematics, science and social study (History & Geography) (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993b). Finally, from 1996 onwards, all promotional subjects as can be seen in figure 5.1 were to be taught in English unless there was permission to teach in a

language other than English that was given by the regional education offices around the country (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993b).

Additionally, in 1992, the decision to teach all primary learners (grades 1-7) in their vernaculars was commendable. As Swarts (2000:40) explains, “it is ideal for children to study through their own language during the early years of schooling when the basic skills of reading writing and concept formation are being developed”. Besides, learners who are not taught in their mother tongue at lower grade levels might have more difficulties to master reading skills and to performing well in school (Cummins, 2000). However, teaching lower primary grades in their vernacular in Namibia during the introduction of the new language in education policy in 1992 was not effective because the country lacked professionally qualified teachers to teach in African languages as medium of instructions (Swarts, 1996). This lack of human resources forced some grade 1-3 learners to be in another language which is not their mother tongue (Chamberlain & West, 1993). Another problem was that “there was a serious need of written materials for both instructional and leisure purposes in African languages” (Swarts, 1996:18). Therefore, I argue that the Namibian government needed to ensure that teachers were trained to teach using vernacular languages as medium of instructions and that schools were supplied with relevant teaching and learning materials before the introduction and the implementation of the new LEP in 1992.

As shown in figure 5.1, in 1993, the first subject was taught in English in the upper primary grades (4-7) and gradually in 1996, all the subjects were taught in English. Again, one can argue that this decision was not realistic because the majority of learners and teachers at that time had very low English proficiency and therefore were not ready to learn and teach through English as medium of instruction (Wolfaardt, 2002). It is also important to note that during the introduction and the implementation of the new Namibian language in education policy, both teachers and learners had very limited exposure to English. Hence, I argue that the teachers needed to receive decent support to improve their English language proficiency in order for them to be able to use it effectively as medium of instruction. Similarly, I argue that African languages were

supposed to be used along English as medium of instructions in the primary phase (grades 1-7) because using English only meant that learners were being disadvantaged and hence their academic performance would be poor. Possibly, it was better to use English only as a medium of instruction in the secondary phase (grades 8-12). The next section therefore analyzes how English was phased in as a medium of instruction in the secondary phase from 1992 to 1996.

5.2.1.2 Secondary phase (grades 8-12)

As mentioned earlier, the phasing in of English as medium of instruction in grades 8-12 started in 1992 (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993b). That is; “in 1992, both grade 8 and 9 were taught through the medium of English and then in 1993, grade 8, 9, and 10 were all taught through the medium of English” (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993b:7). After that, “in 1994, grades 8-11 were taught through the medium of English and eventually in 1995, all grades (8-12) were taught through the medium of English” (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993b:7). See figure 5.2 below

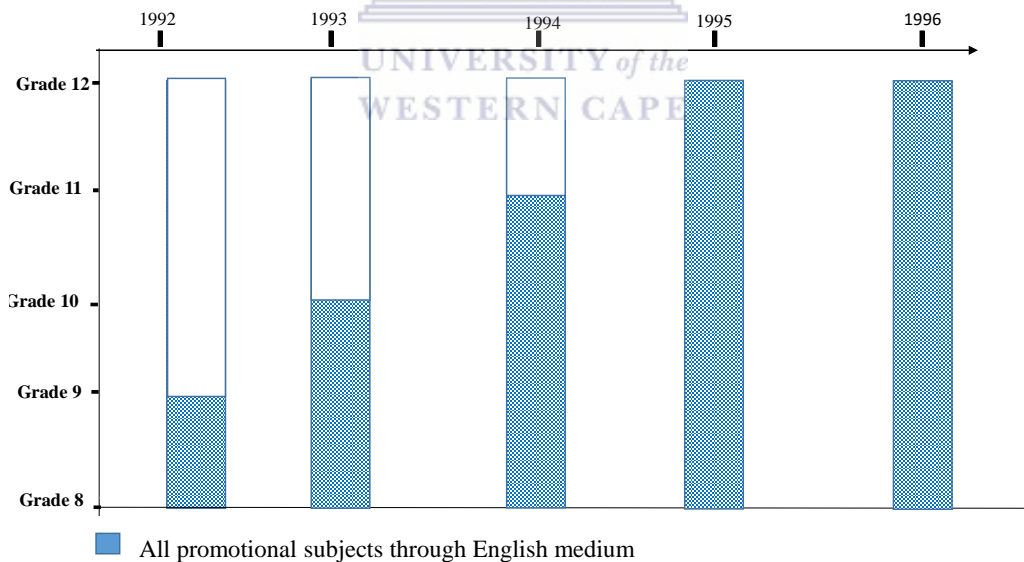


Figure 5.2. Implementation of English medium grade 8-12.

Even though the implementation of English as the medium of instruction in the secondary phase (grades 8-12) was gradually effected as shown by figure 5.2, its effectiveness was questionable because of two main reasons. Firstly, like primary

teachers, secondary phase teachers had poor English language proficiency (Iiping 2013; Harris 2011). Here, it is important to explain that “most teachers in Namibia went through the old system in the pre-independence when the medium of instruction was Afrikaans” (Wolfaardt, 2002:70). Also, “many teachers especially those teaching in the rural areas had poor teaching qualifications and hardly ever hear or use English in their communities” (Wolfaardt, 2002:70). For this reason, I concur with Lumbu, Smit and Hamunyela (2015) who argue that the decision to make English the medium of instruction in Namibia was contradictory because teachers were expected to teach in English despite the fact that they were not fully proficient in English. This had a negative impact on teaching and learning because as Wolfaardt (2002:10) clarifies, “learners who are not taught by teachers proficient in English will not have necessary foundation on which to build their English language skills”. Certainly, language needs role models who are proficient in that language and teachers who are well trained to understand how to teach an additional language and who can inspire the learners to speak the language. Thus, before the sudden switch to English medium of instruction, the Namibian government needed to implement a nation-wide programme so that teachers can upgrade their English (Bradley, 2006).

Furthermore, in order to encourage and support the implementation of the new Namibian LEP in 1992, the Namibian government and the Ministry of education in particular was busy preparing new teaching and learning materials (Ministry of Education of Culture, 1993b). A great number of these materials was acquired through donations from British and American based organizations and companies (Hopson, 2005) which was not really helpful because a lot of these teaching and learning materials were quite socially and culturally irrelevant (Legere, 1996) and therefore not supportive as such. Hence, I once again argue that before the implementation of the new language LEP in 1992, the Namibian government in general and the ministry of education in particular was supposed to ensure that schools are supplied with relevant learning and teaching materials, especially that the phasing in of English as medium of instruction in the secondary phase took place at the same time as the introduction of a

new curriculum and syllabuses leading to the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and Higher International General Certificate of Secondary Education (HIGCSE) examinations (Ministry of Education Culture, 1993a). All in all, the analysis of the strategy used to implement the new Namibian LEP (1992-1996 and beyond) has proven that it was not effective because learners were not ready to be taught in English. Similarly, teachers' English language proficiency was not up to standard because a big number of them were trained to teach in Afrikaans and had limited exposure to English. It is also worth mentioning that schools were not equipped with relevant teaching and learning materials to support the implementation of the new Namibian LEP. In the next section, the Namibian LEP document is analyzed further through its legitimacy.

5.2.2 Authenticity

According to Wellington (2015:214), 'authenticity' refers to "the origin and the authorship of a document". In other words, an authentic document is a document which is not a fake or forgery, but is the document that purports what it is to be (Denscombe, 2007). Looking at the Namibian LEP document, one can tell that is authentic and from a credible origin. First, the document has a hard cover with a coloured 'Namibian coat of arms'. This feature makes this document looks official and professional. Second, the document is signed by the then minister of education and culture in 1993 on behalf of the Namibian government. The signature of the minister of education signify that the LEP document is indeed a genuine document. In summary, the cover page of the Namibian language in education policy document and the signature of the minister of education which appears on this document implies that this document is genuine and is from an unquestionable source. Accordingly, a further analysis of the document in question was carried out in order determine its 'credibility'.

5.2.3 Credibility

Credibility refers to "the extent to which a document is sincere and undistorted (Wellington, 2015:214). To put it differently, examining the 'credibility' of a document entails "deciding whether the document is accurate as well as whether the document is

free from bias and errors” (Denscombe, 2007:232). Generally speaking, “can a document be taken as a credible, worthwhile piece of evidence?” (Wellington, 2015:214). Further, as Denscombe (2007) advises, the credibility of any given document will depend among others, on the purpose of that specific document and on the ‘producer’ of that specific document and his status. This has been supported by Bowen (2009:33) who emphasizes that “when analyzing documents, the researcher should consider the original purpose of the document as well as information about the author of the document”. Besides, the other question which is quite important when it comes to examining the ‘credibility’ of a document is ‘when was the document produced?’ (Denscombe, 2007).

The ‘credibility’ of the Namibian LEP document is positive because the purpose of the document is clear. On the first page of this document, it is stipulated that the purpose of this document is to make the Namibian LEP clear and to explain some of its details more fully (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993b). To make the purpose of the document clearer, the author provided the content of the policy document. That is; background to the policy, the policy itself and its implementation strategy (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993b). Despite the fact that the purpose of this policy document is provided, one can still say the credibility of this document is questionable because it does not provide any information about the authorship. According to Hopson (2005:101), “the foundational Namibian language planning and policy document was heavily influenced by British and American interests from the document writing to its financing”. The policy document, however, does not give any detail or any information about its author. Therefore, one cannot tell whether the document was written by language experts, by politicians or by whoever. Finally, another issue which makes the ‘credibility’ of this policy document questionable is the date of production. According to the document, on page one, “the language policy for schools was first published in November 1991” (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993b:1). However, the then Minister of education only signed the policy document in June 1993 (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993b). Consequently, I argue that in order for the policy

document to be more ‘credible’ the policy document was supposed to include clarity as to why the document was first published in 1991 but was only signed by the minister of education in 1993. Otherwise the above mentioned paradox to a certain extent implies that the ‘representativeness’ of the Namibian LEP document is questionable. The next section discusses the representativeness of the Namibian LEP document.

5.2.4 Representativeness

The idea of ‘representativeness’ refers to the assessment of the typicality of a document (Wellington, 2015). As Denscombe (2007:232) affirms, “in examining the ‘representativeness’ of a document, one is looking at whether the document is typical of its type”. In other words, “does the document represent a typical instance of the thing it portrays?” (Denscombe, 2007:232). My argument is that the Namibian language LEP document is a typical language policy document because it contains important aspects which are likely to be in any document of its kind. That is; the introduction, the background to the policy, goals of the policy and what the policy means (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993b). Accordingly, in terms of its ‘representativeness’, one can argue that the Namibian LEP document is encouraging.

Apart from assessing the ‘typicality’ of a document, another aspect that a researcher can look at in order to determine the ‘representativeness of the document is its completeness (Denscombe, 2007). As Bowen (2009:33) recommends, “it is important that the document be assessed for completeness, in the sense of being comprehensive (covering a topic completely) or selective (covering only some aspects of the topic)”. After examining the Namibian LEP document, I concluded that the policy document is not comprehensive. To begin with, on page one, the policy document defined the word ‘learners’ which is fine because this word has been used in the policy document several times. However, the policy document did not define crucial and key terms such as mother language, local language, national language, medium of instruction and so on. Also, the policy document did not explain the relationships between these key terms. Consequently, I contend that the policy document was supposed to include a glossary of key terms and explanations on how these key terms are related to each other. This

glossary (of key terms) would help the readers to interpret and understand the LEP better. On page nine for example, the language policy document says “grade 1-3 will be taught either through the home language, a local language, or English” (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993b). However, here, one cannot really make a clear or correct interpretation because these terms (local language and home language) are not defined in the context of Namibia. To make matters worse, the language policy document does not include what criteria to be used when deciding whether to use English or mother language as medium of instruction in grades 1-3. It is also important noting that the language policy document reflects the monolingual orientation rather than multilingualism as a social practice as discussed earlier.

Additionally, the Namibian LEP document indicates that the language policy will be continuously evaluated at all levels of implementation (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993b). Yet, further information as to how the evaluation will be done is not provided. Obviously, this is another aspect which was supposed to be addressed by the policy document. Again, although the Namibian LEP says grade 1-3 should be taught either in home language, local language or English (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993b), - the policy document does not provide information as to what language will be used in case a certain class would have learners who speak different mother languages. This situation is likely to exist because Namibia is a multilingual country. Finally, the policy document spells out how the phasing in of English as medium of instruction between 1992 and 1996 would be achieved (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993b). On the contrary, “the policy document is not clear in providing guidelines on how different mother tongues would be used in schools” (Wolfaardt, 2002:69). This is a serious weakness because the learners’ mother language plays an important role in their learning. As Trudell (2016:3) acknowledges, “using the mother tongue in the classroom enhances student participation, decreases attrition, and increases the likelihood of family and community engagement in the child’s learning”. Thus, I argue that the policy document was supposed to mention something about the role of different mother tongues in the teaching of different subjects (including English)

offered in Namibia schools. This situation (of excluding how mother tongue will be used) is somehow reinforcing the monolingual ideology among teachers that children's mother language does not have any positive impact when it comes to teaching and learning in the classroom. That is why I argue that the policy document was supposed to guide the teachers, for instance on what to do when they find themselves teaching learners with poor English proficiency in general, or when they are giving explanations but learners are not getting them because of language (English) related problems. Thus, one expected the LEP document to cover important ESL teaching and learning concepts such as translanguaging. This concept (translanguaging) could have made the policy document more 'representative' and more meaningful.

5.2.5 Meaning

"Examining the 'meaning' of any given document is probably the most important and contentious aspect of document analysis" (Wellington, 2015:214). When one is examining the meaning of any given document, the focus is normally on establishing whether the document is clear and comprehensible (Wellington, 2015). This (establishing whether the document is clear and comprehensible) includes looking at whether words used within a document are clear and unambiguous (Denscombe, 2007). Further, Punch (2009) is of the opinion that analyzing the 'meaning' of a document can also include looking at the literal and deeper meanings of the words, phrases and explanations within the document. For this reason, when analyzing the 'meaning' of a document, "one should also consider whether there are meanings which involve what is left unsaid or reading between the lines" (Denscombe, 2007:233).

Generally, the Namibian LEP document is written in clear, plain English which makes its meaning very clear to the reader. However, there are some aspects of the policy document which are not conveying explicit meaning to the readers. For example, on page nine, the policy document says "grade 1-3 will be taught either through the home language or local language, or English" (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993b:9). This clause is implicit in the sense that it is not clear as to what is regarded as 'local language and home language' in the context of Namibia. Therefore, according to

Totemeyer (2010) the wording in the clause left the door open for schools to use English only medium instruction from grade one on-ward. This is because the clause says 'local language 'or home language' or English' rather than 'home language or local language only'. Accordingly, as Wolfaardt (2002:73) laments, "this clause has created a general misconception that schools have the right to make decisions whether they wanted mother tongue or English as a medium of instruction from grade one onwards". Indeed, "a number of schools teach in English from grade one upwards, that is, the indigenous, also called local languages or African languages were not offered at all at some schools" (Totemeyer, 2010:12). Further, the language policy document stipulates (on page 4) that "one of the main goals of the policy is that "education should promote the language and cultural identity of learners through the use of home language medium at least in grade 1-3, and the teaching of home language through formal education, provided the necessary resources are available" (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993b:4). Again, this clause is not clear because it does not specify what kind of resources need to be in place for home languages to be taught throughout formal education. The same clause is also not clear because it lacks a discussion of the role of education in promoting language and cultural identity through the learners' mother tongue (Wolfaardt, 2002).

Furthermore, the other main goal of the Namibian LEP is that "ideally, schools should offer at least two languages as subjects" (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1993b:4). Once more, this clause seems to be unclear because it does not stipulate what kind of languages should be offered by schools. I argue that, here, the policy document was supposed to at least specify that the two languages should be the children's mother language and a foreign language or second language. Finally, it is important to reiterate that Namibian teachers' English language proficiency is not up to standard (Iiping 2013; Harris 2011; Wolfaardt 2002). Therefore, it is not good that the language policy document is not translated into different indigenous African languages because this implies that teachers are likely to misinterpret its meaning. To make matters worse, the language policy document is not available in Afrikaans. Afrikaans was Namibia's

lingua franca before independence and a big number of Namibian teachers was trained to teach in Afrikaans (Wolfaardt, 2002). Evidently, the policy document was supposed to be translated in Afrikaans to allow teachers with poor English proficiency to have inclusive understanding of its meaning. To conclude this section, it is important to reiterate that the analysis of the Namibian LEP document provided in this section was done concurrently with the analysis of three grade 12 ESL external question papers. The next section therefore provides a detailed discussion of data emerging from this analysis.

5.3 ESL grade 12 question papers (2014-2016)

As mentioned earlier, one of the main objectives of this study is to look at the writing problems of learners and the intervention strategies that teachers are using to help them overcome or reduce writing problems because a lot of learners in Northern Namibia struggle with writing essays in ESL. Furthermore, essay questions call for learners to show that they understand a certain topic and can demonstrate their ability to think critically and organize their thought in a creative and original manner (Barry, 2013). This implies that learners need to be tested with essay questions which are well prepared in order for them to write positively and effectively. Therefore, because the current study has special focus on essay writing, I deemed it necessary to analyze essay questions from three grade 12 ESL external question papers of three consecutive years (2014-2016) in order to establish how these essay questions contribute to the writing problems that learners in Northern Namibia are experiencing and perhaps to suggest some remedial actions to be taken in order for the learners to reduce or overcome writing problems. The analysis was based on the relevancy of questions to the grade 12 ESL syllabus, on the clarity and difficulty level of questions (essays), on their (questions) relevancy to the Namibian socio-cultural context and finally on their 'multimodal' level.

5.3.1 The relevancy of essay questions

Essay questions should be set in line with the objectives stipulated in a syllabus of a given subject (CITL, 2017). To put it differently, when setting questions (including essay questions), one should ensure that they (questions) are relevant to the objectives of a given subject's syllabus or curriculum. Thus, in analyzing ESL grade 12 question papers from three consecutive years, my first task was to examine and assess whether the essay questions within these question papers are in line with what has been stipulated within the grade 12 ESL syllabus for 'ordinal level'.

According to the ESL grade 12 syllabus, the main objective when it comes to continuous writing or creative writing is that generally, learners should be able to write different types of letters (formal and informal), write articles to local newspapers and school magazines, write different types of reports and speeches and they should also be able to write narrative, descriptive and argumentative essays (Ministry of Education, 2010a:10). Ideally, all these types of writings should be written in style and register appropriate to the audience (Ministry of Education, 2010a). Thus, learners should be able to demonstrate that they can write appropriately for specific purposes (Ministry of Education, 2010a).

Looking at the three question papers, I discovered that (as mentioned earlier), each question paper consists of three essay questions. The 2014 question papers require learners to write a letter to the parents, an editorial letter and an article to the school magazine. On the other hand, the 2015 question paper requires the learners to write a letter of complaint, a report about the independence celebration and an article to the school magazine about matric fare well parties. Finally, the 2016 question paper requires the learners to write a letter of complaint, a speech about preparing for examination and an article to the school magazine. Therefore, here, one can infer that the essay questions within the three ESL grade 12 question papers are in line with the objectives of the ESL grade 12 syllabus. Evidently, if ESL grade 12 teachers follow the syllabus closely and teach how to write different types of writing stipulated within the syllabus, learners would not have any problem answering different essay questions

and hence would be expected to score high marks on essay questions. This (scoring high marks) requires essay questions to be set with high degree of clarity and reasonable level of difficulty.

5.3.2 Clarity and level of difficulty

After reading an essay question, “students should have a clear idea of how they should tailor their responses” (Reiner, Bothell & Wood, & 2003:22). This is achieved through ensuring that each question is set in such a way that the student task is clearly indicated and hence the level of questions’ difficulty is realistic (CITL, 2017). According to Reiner et al. (2003), essay questions need to be written in fair, easy and comprehensible English in order for the learners to follow the instructions effectively. In short, effective essay questions provide reasonable and well-defined tasks for learners (Reiner et al., 2003).

Moreover, after assessing the clarity and the level of difficulty of the essay questions within the three question papers in question, one would conclude that the questions are fair and reasonable in this regard (clarity and level of difficulty). These essay questions are straight forward. As a result, it is possibly difficult for the learners to have numerous interpretations of them (essay questions). What make these questions clearer is that the setters have used simple English with realistic vocabulary. At grade 12 level, generally, learners would not have problems understating these questions. Apart from that, the questions are supported by ‘rubric prompts’. These ‘rubric prompts’ allow the learners to address the questions fully. For example, within the question paper of 2016, one of the essay questions require learners to write a speech on how to be a ‘top achiever’ at school. To make this question clearer and straight forward, the examination setters have provided four ‘rubric prompts’ which students have to include within the speech which they are required to write. See table 5.1 below:

Table 5.1: An essay question showing prompts to be addressed by learners

Exercise 2: Question 36

You are the top achiever at your school. Your school principal has asked you to give a speech to the other learners just before the examinations on how they can be the next top achiever.

Your speech should include the following points:

- Time-management-how to plan their studies
- Challenges they might come across and how to overcome them
- How teachers and parents may be able to help
- Why they should try to become a high achiever

Your speech should be about **150** words long.

These ‘rubric prompts’ give learners useful guidance in answering essay questions. It is also important to mention that each essay question specified the number of words that learners are expected to write. Therefore, generally, one would expect learners not to write very few words and not to write too many words.

To conclude this section, I must mention that the level of difficulty of essay questions within the three question papers is satisfactory because in all three question papers, learners are presented with reasonable tasks. I argue that generally, learners should not for instance find it difficult to write a letter of complaint especially that they are given ‘rubric prompts’ which they have to include in that specific letter. Similarly, one would not expect learners to find it difficult to write a letter of complaint, complaining about the attitudes of taxi drivers. Additionally, what makes the essay questions not difficult is that the required length of the essay is also reasonable and manageable. Learners are required to write the minimum of 100 words and the maximum of 200 words. At grade 12 level, learners should be able to write essay of between 100 and 200 words. Possibly, they (learners) may only fail to write according to the required number of words if they are given unfamiliar topics. In the following section, I addressed the relevancy of essay questions to the Namibian social-cultural context.

5.3.3 Essay questions and the Namibian socio-cultural context

According to Barfield and Uzarski (2009), integrating local indigenous culture and aspects of learners' social life into English learning and testing is a necessity because it educates learners about indigenous people in their own countries and makes learning English more relevant for indigenous learners and thus helps them to understand assessment tasks well. Supporting Barfield and Uzarski (2009)'s idea, Naukushu (2009) underscores that teaching and assessment in Namibia should be contextualized to ensure that it does not disadvantage learners from any part of the country. Therefore, when setting ESL test and examination questions, including essay questions, one should ensure that the questions reflect learners' social life and culture. Understandably, it was then necessary that the current study examine and evaluate the essay questions within the three ESL examination papers of three consecutive years to establish whether they (questions) reflect learners' social life and culture.

The analysis of the essay questions in interrogation revealed that these questions clearly reflect learners' social life and culture and hence learners are not really expected to have difficulties answering these questions. For instance, one of the essay questions within the question paper of 2014 required learners to write an argumentative essay on whether learners' representative council (LRC) is helpful or it is just a hindrance. In Namibia, all schools have a LRC and learners know the work of this council because some of the learners themselves are part of this council or otherwise they are led by this council in their respective schools. Accordingly, I argue that learners should not have problems answering this question because this topic is something that is relevant to them. Additionally, from the 2015 question paper, one of the questions requires learners to write an article to the school magazine about 'matric farewell parties'. This topic is also relevant to learners because matric farewell parties are very common in Namibian schools and in deed in many Namibian schools, grade 12 learners have these farewell parties before they write their final examinations. So, learners are expected to have lots of ideas when answering this question because this is something which is part of their schools' culture and it is something that they have experienced. Finally, in the

question paper of 2016, one of the questions require learners to write an argumentative essay about young people not receiving money from their parents or guardians. Like the other questions which have been discussed in this paragraph, this question is also socially and culturally relevant because obviously in Namibia learners or young people get money from their parents or guardians and they know how it feels when you are given money or when you are not given money when you need it. Therefore, once again, learners are not really expected to struggle when answering these questions. In summary, all the essay questions in the question papers in interrogation have been found to be replicating learners' social life and culture. If learners would still struggle answering them, then perhaps one needs to consider other aspects of analyzing essay questions such as their 'multimodality' level.

5.3.4 The multimodality level of questions

As it has been mentioned in chapter three, 'multimodality' advocate that language is not the only mode of conveying meaning but other sign systems are also important if one wants to create and convey meaning effectively and meaningfully (Kress, 2010). Written texts for instance, can only create meaning fruitfully when they are accompanied by pictures and images (Choi & Yi, 2016). This is because there is a complementary relationship between text and images, and obviously this complementary relationship reinforces and enhances the creation of meaning (Hong, 2012). As Ajayi (2009:587) affirms, "the visual, the written, auditory, and the haptic are all interrelated and all contribute to meaning making". Accordingly, it was deemed necessary to analyse the essay questions within the three ESL grade 12 question papers in order to determine how the ESL grade 12 examination setters integrate pictures and images within essay questions in order to ensure that learners understand the essay questions well. In other words, the analysis was focused on whether images and pictures are used to support the text and hence reinforce effective creation of meaning.

In analyzing the essay questions within the three ESL grade 12 English question papers, I have realized that none of the essay questions is multimodal. In other words, none of the questions is a combination and integration of text, images, graphics and so on. For

example, in the question paper of the year 2014, one of the essay questions required learners to write about the indigenous tribes in Namibia such as the Himba and the San (see table 5.2 below).

Table 5.2: An essay question lacking multimodality

Exercise 1: Question 36

You have joined a tour group that explores the indigenous tribes in Namibia. You travel through the country, meeting people from different cultures and getting to know their traditions better. Write a letter to your parents telling them about the tour and your experiences so far. You may wish to include-

- Places you have seen so far
- A description of one culture that you found particularly interesting, for instance, the Himba culture, the san culture or any culture of your choice
- Why you enjoy/ do not enjoy the tour

Your letter should be about **150** words in length.

From a general perspective, one can expect learners to know the Himba and the San because they are from Namibia. However, perhaps there are learners who have not seen them (Himba and the San) and know little about them. As a result, I argue that this question was supposed to be supported by the pictures of the two tribes in question in order to support learners' understanding and hence allow them to write positively about the two tribes. All in all, because all the essay questions within the three question papers in question lack 'multimodality', one can conclude that learners would find it difficult to interpret and understand these questions and will not answer them fully and then this implies that they would not score high marks on these questions. Indeed, the fact that ESL grade 12 examination setters do not consider 'multimodality' when setting essay questions is a serious concern. Another issue that might be affecting learners writing performance is the nature and relevancy of the ESL grade 12 syllabus.

5.4 The analysis of grade 12 ESL Syllabus

A syllabus is a course description for a subject within the curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2009). To put it differently, “a syllabus is a document which says what will (or at least what should) be learnt” (Hutchinson & Waters, 2005:80). “It states what the successful learner will know by the end of the course and in effect, it puts on record the basis on which success will be evaluated” (Hutchinson & Waters, 2005 :80). In agreement with Hutchinson and Waters (2005), Rahimpour (2010) remarks that a syllabus of any given school subject is focused more on the selection and the grading of the content of that specific subject. For this reason, “a syllabus is an important document in the teaching and learning process” (Hutchinson & Waters, 2005:84). Further, the Namibian ESL grade 12 syllabus is focused on four main language skills; reading, writing, speaking and listening (Ministry of Education, 2010a). However, the analysis of the ESL grade 12 syllabus provided in this chapter only concerns one language skill; writing. This is because, as mentioned in the previous chapters, the current study focuses on the teaching of English in a foreign jurisdiction (Namibia) and locates the consequences of language policy in Education in the context of secondary schooling with a special focus on essay writing.

According to Mwanza (2016:157), “the syllabus of any school subject needs to be simple, clear and coherent”. However, critically looking at the Namibian ESL grade 12 syllabus, one can infer that the syllabus has a number of aspects which are not clear. For instance, on page 2, the aim of teaching writing as one of the four main language skills is given. That is; “to develop the ability to use English effectively, accurately and appropriately for the purpose of practical communication in writing” (Ministry of Education, 2010a:2). This aim is simple and straight forward but it does not tell the teachers why the learners need to develop competency in writing for different purposes. As Hutchinson and Waters (2005:84) explain, “a syllabus tells the teacher and the students not only what is to be learnt, but implicitly why it is to be learnt”. Accordingly, I argue that the syllabus in question needs to be clear on why the learners need to achieve different writing capabilities. This would give teachers better ideas on how to

teach different aspects of writing because they know why they are teaching these specific aspects. Likewise, learners would learn better because they know they are not just learning for the sake of learning.

Another aspect of the syllabus which is not clear is about how learners are to achieve different writing competencies. Here, it is worth mentioning that the syllabus clearly spells out the objectives and the competencies to be achieved by learners. However, the syllabus does not have any suggestion as to how the teachers would help their learners achieve specific competencies. For instance, on page 11, the syllabus says “learners should be able to use appropriate vocabulary when they write for personal, social and academic purposes” (Ministry of Education, 2010a:11). Nevertheless, how the learners are to achieve this capability remains in the hand of the teachers and some teachers especially novice teachers and underqualified teachers might not have any idea on how to assist their learners achieve the above mentioned capability. Consequently, the implication of this situation is that effective learning is unlikely to take place and as a result learners’ performance in ESL might be affected negatively.

Moreover, the syllabus in question provides a clear, well explained marking grid for all written work. This is encouraging because this marking grid helps the teachers to grade learners’ essays effectively and it also helps them to teach writing better because it (the marking grade) indicates how the learners should write their essays in order for them to score high marks (Ministry of Education, 2010a). On the other hand, I have noted that the syllabus lacks crucial details and information.

Firstly, the syllabus does not provide any implementation guide lines. This is not encouraging because I have indicated in my field notes that the teachers have indicated that they do not get any training on how to implement the syllabus. Therefore, it is clear that the ESL teachers would follow and implement the syllabus in any manner that they feel is convenient to them, irrespective of whether it is correct or not. As Van der Walt (1990:77) points out, “the teacher requires from the syllabus that it should provide him or her with a sense of direction, and it be argued that teaching will be most effective when the syllabus follows a well-worked out plan which directs and organizes what he

does”. Hence, the omission of the implementation plan in the ESL syllabus being analyzed here is a serious concern because the implication of this situation is that learning and teaching would be negatively affected. As Hutchinson and Waters (2005:84) confirm, “a syllabus can be seen as a statement of projected routes, so that teacher and learner not only have an idea of where they are going, but how they might get there”.

Further, Hutchinson and Waters (2005:84) are of the opinion that, “apart from listing what should be learnt, a syllabus can also state the order in which it is to be learnt. In other words, designing a syllabus means what to teach in what order” (Krahnke, 1987). This is in contrast with the Namibian ESL grade 12 syllabus because it does not offer the order in which the writing content should be taught. For example, on page 10-11, the syllabus lists the writing content such as paragraph writing, spelling and punctuation, writing different types of essays and so on. However, there is no indication as to what topic needs to be taught first before the other. This has a negative implication on learning because teachers might start with any topic of their choice without considering whether their learners are ready to learn that specific topic. This is because as Brown (2000) advocates, for effective learning to take place, teaching should start with simple contents before it proceeds to more complex contents.

Apart from the syllabus in question lacking the order in which the content will be taught, it does not provide any list of materials, textbooks or resources to be used in its implementation. What can be seen in the syllabus about the material to be used is only a statement on page 3 which says “teachers may wish to use viable sources such as newspapers, magazines, listening cassettes, dictionaries, encyclopedia and the internet”. This is not encouraging because as Nuna (1988:37) observes, “the first question to confront the syllabus designer is where the content is to come from in the first place”. Indeed, a syllabus should provide a set of criteria for materials selection and writing. Therefore, I concur with Mwanza (2016:160) who emphasizes that “the implication of the syllabus being silent on teaching materials is that some teachers and

school authorities may take advantage of the silence in the syllabus to use or not to use certain materials even when doing so is or is not pedagogically correct”.

5.5 The analysis of relevant studies conducted in Namibia

Apart from a number of documents that were investigated in the previous sections, two studies conducted in Namibia which are fairly similar to the current study were analyzed and summarized accordingly. That is; Harris’s (2011) study on language in schools in Namibia and Iiping’e’s (2013) study on English lingua franca as a language of learning and teaching in Northern Namibia. As mentioned earlier, the analysis of these studies were needed in order to reinforce and enhance the reliability and validity of the current study.

5.5.1 Harris’s (2011) study on language in schools in Namibia

Harris’s (2011) study is one of the most recent comprehensive studies on LOLT conducted in Namibia. This study was aimed at providing understanding of how people in education view their home language, a reflection on how policy makers view the challenges of mother-tongue education and to investigate how to encourage the use of home languages. Furthermore, this study included 167 learners from 19 schools, 138 teachers from 20 primary schools, 40 parents and 38 educationalists (e.g. regional educational directors, inspectors of education and language policy makers).

This study revealed that 61% of teachers reported that their students experience difficulty with English. Therefore, it is not surprising that this study has further shown that a high proportion of learners are confused by the second language (English) in which they are taught. They want to succeed at school generally and in English in particular but do not understand their subjects well because of the problems of language. Here, it is important to emphasize that the learners have made it very clear that they do not understand their teachers or the subject matter. It is not surprising therefore that they come across unmotivated and uninterested (Harris 2011:58). Moreover, Harris’s (2011) study established that 83% of learners preferred to use their home language as medium of instruction and that 87% of learners want to talk to their

teachers in their home language. Finally, the study has indicated that where home language is more consistently used, there are better results. For this reason, the study concluded that a major review of the language policy is needed to stop continuing failure among learners and reflects on how policy makers might see the challenge of mother tongue learning and encourage its stronger use to achieve better educational results (Harris 2011:7).

5.5.2 Ipinge's (2013) study on English lingua franca as a language of teaching and learning

Ipinge's (2013) study had two main objectives. Firstly, the study investigated the challenges faced by content subject teachers in Northern Namibia when using ELF as a LOLT. Secondly, the study was aimed at establishing how these teachers overcome the challenges which they encounter when using English lingua franca as a LOLT. Hence, Ipinge (2013) conducted one-on-one structured interviews with six Oshiwambo speaking teachers teaching content subjects at a specific homogenous secondary school in the Omusati region of Northern Namibia.

Furthermore, the findings of this study indicated that teachers encounter a number of challenges when using English lingua franca as a LOLT. These include difficulty on the part of learners to follow lessons delivered in English, learners not being able to understand instructions in tests and examinations, as well as both teachers and learners being unable to express themselves well in English. Additionally, the findings of this study show that teachers use code-switching to overcome a number of challenges that they face when using English as a LOLT. Finally, the results of this study have also indicated that using English as medium of instruction has a negative influence on the academic performance of learners. Consequently, according to the teachers who were part of Ipinge's (2013) study, using Oshiwambo as medium of instruction would make a positive difference in terms of academic or learning performances because the learners would understand the subject material better than when the subject material is in English (Ipinge 2013). Clearly, this is another indication that the Namibian language

in education policy needs to be reviewed in order for the Namibian education system to yield desirable outcomes.

5.6 Summary of chapter

This chapter entailed document analysis. The document analysis was done in order to supplement data from other sources such as classroom observations and teachers' focus group interviews. As a result, three documents were examined and analyzed accordingly. That is; the Namibian LEP document, three grade 12 ESL examination question papers from three consecutive years (2014-2016) and the ESL grade 12 syllabus. The analysis of the language policy for schools revealed that the document is authentic, to a certain extent credible and has clear meaning. However, the main weakness of the language policy document is that it does not provide guidelines on how different mother languages would be used in schools. This weakness, one can argue, is creating an ideology among teachers that mother language does not play any role in the teaching and learning of school subjects including English. Furthermore, the analysis of the three grade 12 ESL question papers revealed that the essay questions within these questions are relevant to the ESL grade 12 syllabus objectives. Apart from that, the essay questions have high degree of clarity and the level of difficulty is reasonable and not to mention that the essay questions reflect Namibia's social context. Yet, the main weakness of these questions is that they are not multimodal. In other words, the essay questions are not supported by images, pictures, graphics and so on. Therefore, in order for the learners to answer the questions effectively and successfully, ESL grade 12 examination setters need to ensure that essay questions are multimodal. Besides, the analysis of the ESL grade 12 syllabus revealed that it is not clear and lacks important information and this negatively affects its implementation in the classroom.

Finally, this chapter reviewed two studies conducted in Namibia which are fairly familiar to the current study. These are; Harris's (2011) study on 'language in schools in Namibia' and Ipinge's (2013) on 'English lingua franca as a LOLT in Northern Namibia'. The analysis of Harris's study revealed that a high proportion of Namibian

learners are confused by the second language (English) in which they are taught. Correspondingly, the review of Ipinge's study showed that teachers in Northern Namibia encounter a number of challenges when using English as LOLT and therefore recourse to code-switching in order to overcome these challenges. The following chapter will focus on the learners and their struggles with writing English.



Chapter 6: Research findings I: The learners and their struggles with writing English

6.0 Introduction

The preceding chapter presented the analysis of documents. The current chapter presents and discusses the findings on learners and their struggles with writing English. In actual fact, the main focus of this chapter is on the types of problems that learners encounter when writing essays in English and on their attitudes towards English and their mother tongue (Oshiwambo) within the educational context. Accordingly, the findings presented and discussed in this chapter were drawn from the informal conversations which I had with the learners. Apart from the informal conversations, I also interviewed the learners who are proficient in English essay writing as well the ones who are struggling with writing essays in English. Finally, the findings of the current chapter were also informed by the analysis of learners' written samples through Error Analysis (EA), to determine major weaknesses and strengths. Therefore, before presenting the findings from the learners' written samples, it is important to explain why the learners are committing a number of errors when writing essays in English and hence the need for EA.

6.1 Sources of errors within learners' written work

The issue of learners in Northern Namibia struggling with writing has a lot to do with the current LEP. According to the Namibian LEP, learners are taught in English as early as grade four (Iiping, 2013). According to Wolfaardt (2002:70), many learners in Namibian schools fail to attain the set minimum language proficiency standards in English when introduced to fourth grade subjects that are more demanding linguistically and cognitively. A question one could ask here, of course, pertains to which standards Wolfaardt is referring to: those of standard English or standard Namibian English? Wolfaardt (2002) further notes that the learners often do not reach

the minimum level of English language proficiency required when they enter the Junior Secondary phase of school, by which time they should really be functioning at an intermediate level. “As a result of problems beginning at primary school, learners continue to lag behind their required level of language proficiency and the majority never really reach the language proficiency in English which their age and school level demand” (Jones 1996 in Wolfaardt, 2002:70). This corresponds with the argument by Totemeyer (2018:11) that “a period of three years of mainly mother tongue-based learning is simply too short and results in pupils being unable to read and write properly in both the mother tongue and English” (Totemeyer, 2018:11).

Moreover, it is important to stress that, contrary to actual classroom practice, the Namibian LEP (MEC, 1993b) does not allow for the use of the learners’ mother tongue in the classroom (Iipinge, 2013). Obviously, this is another cause of learners’ writing problems. According to Clegg and Simpson (2016), using a monolingual language policy, like the one used by Namibia, usually means learners’ ability to write about difficult subjects is limited. Therefore, because learners in Northern Namibia are not allowed to use Oshiwambo to learn English, they are likely to experience a number of problems when they are writing essays in English.

To conclude this section, it is important to explain that apart from the LEP, learners in Northern Namibia experience writing problems because they are not exposed to adequate English in their communities because they hardly use or hear English being spoken in their communities (Iipinge, 2013). Indeed, their communities do not play any role in reinforcing English language learning (Adeyemi, 2012). As a result, learners would hardly develop their writing skills and hence would find writing, especially essay writing challenging. The next section therefore presents learners’ writing problems as well as their strengths in English essay writing.

6.2 Findings from learners’ written sample

Learners’ written samples provided data for the current study in such a way that at all the six secondary schools that were under study, a group of twenty learners was

selected to write two essays. The first essay question required the learners to write a friendly letter, while the second question required them to write an eye witness report. Further, these two essays were analyzed through ‘thematic content analysis’ and ‘error analysis’ in order to establish the major strengths and major weakness of students’ writing. These strengths and weakness were then used to determine the writing problems of learners and to identify possible causes of these writing problems.

6.2.1 Major weaknesses

6.2.1.1 Misinterpretation of the question

The first weakness which was established from the two tasks (friendly letter and the eye witness report) written by the learners is that the majority of them failed to interpret the question correctly. That is, the students did not keep to the point of the question. They drifted away and began writing irrelevant things. For example, instead of writing about how they collected money to help to keep the orphanage open, they wrote about how the orphans collected money for the orphanage. Figure 1.6 below, shows how one of the learners misinterpreted the first question:

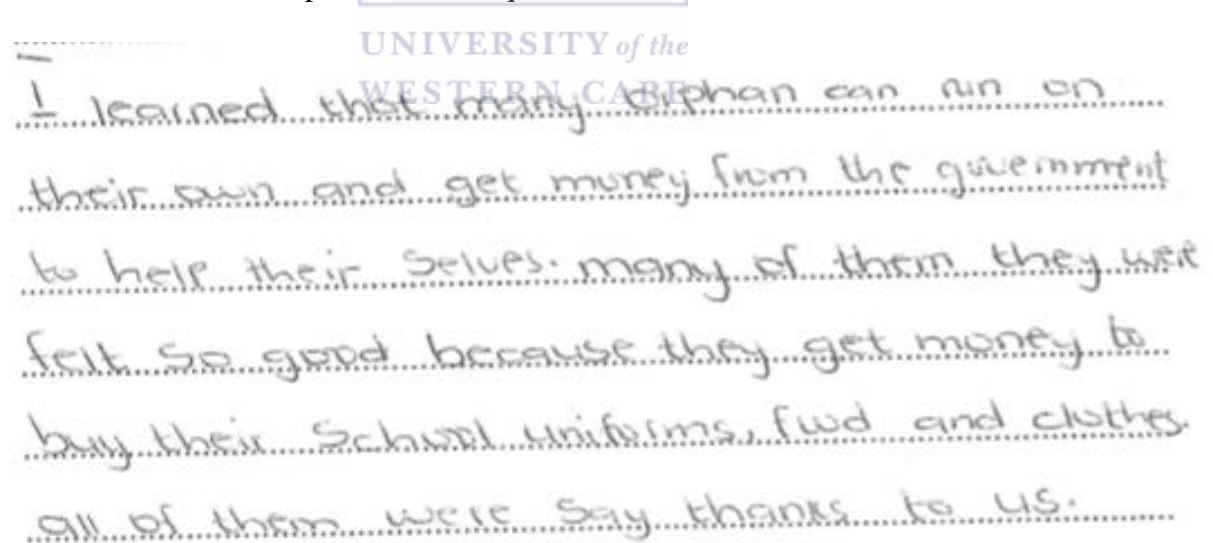


Fig. 1.6: A Paragraph showing how learners misinterpret questions

Furthermore, a number of learners also showed that they do not understand key words which appeared within the instructions of the two writing tasks. That is; the learners did not understand the meaning of the words ‘orphanage’ and the meaning of the phrase

‘emergency landing’. Consequently, it was difficult for the learners to keep to the points of the questions.

As can be seen in figure 1.6 above, it appears that the students under study misinterpreted the two essay questions because of ‘poor English proficiency’. Yes, it was impossible for these learners to address the essay questions directly and efficiently because they were not sure of what they were expected to write. Besides, one can also conclude that there is also a possibility that the learners in question are not taught how to analyse essay questions before they start writing. Consequently, it is important that learners are equipped with relevant skills which would allow them to answer essay questions successfully. Obviously, these skills should include the identification of key words within the essay questions. This is of great importance because students score zero marks if what they have written is completely irrelevant and does not show any understanding of the question set (Barry, 2013).

Furthermore, I would argue that the students under study misinterpreted the two essay questions because they were not familiar with the topics of the two essays. First, in northern Namibia, there are no orphanages. Second, students do not travel by planes and therefore do not know much about plane related things. Here, one should also remember that, as I have indicated in my field notes, the students in question, according to their teachers, do not have a culture of reading. Therefore, because the essay topics were socially and culturally irrelevant and because students do not really read much, they did not have a lot of knowledge on the two essay topics and hence went out of topic. As Jalaluddin (2011) suggests, learners’ writing is both a social and a cultural activity in the essence that it cannot be looked at in isolation but it must reflect their social and cultural context. It is therefore important that the examination setters always consider the social and cultural background of the learners when setting ESL examinations in general and in particular the essay questions. Otherwise learners will score very low marks on essay questions and as a result perform poorly in English as a second language.

6.2.1.2 The use of incorrect word choices

Apart from misinterpreting questions, the analysis of the two writing tasks revealed that the learners used wrong word choices which I think can be attributed to lack of exposure to the language through lack of resources as well as the absence of English at home, lack of suitable reading materials and so on. For example, in a friendly letter, a number of learners used the word 'grate' instead of using the word 'great'. Also, they used the word 'fare' instead of using the word 'fair' and vice-versa. Similarly, in the eye witness report, the majority of learners used the word 'seen' instead of using the word 'scene'. They also used the word 'confusing' instead of using the word 'confused'.

It appears that a significant number of students was unable to use correct word choices because one can argue, these typical errors of language acquisition may have become fossilized because the ESL teachers did not address this problem in earlier years. Similarly, it also appears that a significant number of students was unable to use correct word choices because they lack knowledge of English 'homophones'. According to Krishnamurthy et al. (2011:5), "the English language has a large amount of homophones". These (homophones) are words which have exactly the same pronunciation, but whose spelling and meaning are completely different (Krishnamurthy et al., 2011). Thus, because the words have similar pronunciations, learners under study failed to write the correct words. That is; for example, instead of writing "greet my friends" the majority of learners wrote "grate my friends". This is not good because using a wrong word evidently changes the meaning of the message that is being communicated. Therefore, I argue that the ESL teachers in Northern Namibia need to teach the English homophones comprehensively.

6.2.1.3 Inappropriate use of tenses

One of the main weaknesses that have been established from the analysis of learners' sample work is that the majority of them cannot use tenses effectively, especially the 'present simple tense' and the 'past simple tense'. According to Heydari and Bagheri (2012), this is a common problem for learners of English across the world which occurs

as a result of mother tongue influence, lack of exposure to English, and so on. Therefore, the EA conducted in this study revealed that a number of students used the 'present simple tense' instead of using the 'past simple tense'. Bearing in mind that the learners were writing about a walk or a run and an emergency landing which took place in the past, it is evident that they were supposed to use the 'past simple tense'. However, instead of using the 'past simple tense' the majority of them used the 'present simple tense'. For example, in the friendly letter, a number of students wrote; "I learn a lot from this experience" instead of writing "I learnt a lot from this experience". Similarly, in the eye witness report, a number of students wrote "during the last holiday we fly to Europe" instead of writing "during the last holiday we flew to Europe".

Furthermore, in my field notes, I indicated that ESL teachers teach grammar (including tenses) traditionally. In actual fact, the teachers spend a lot of time teaching how to form different tenses instead of teaching how to use the tenses. This practice is not encouraging and therefore not recommended because as Farooq, Uzair-ul-Hassan and Wahid (2012) lament, teaching tenses traditionally is not good in the sense that students would know how to build different tenses but would not know how to use them in written expressions. Accordingly, ESL teachers in Northern Namibia should teach tenses in a manner that would help their learners learn how to use language in a way that emulates realistic communicative scenarios.

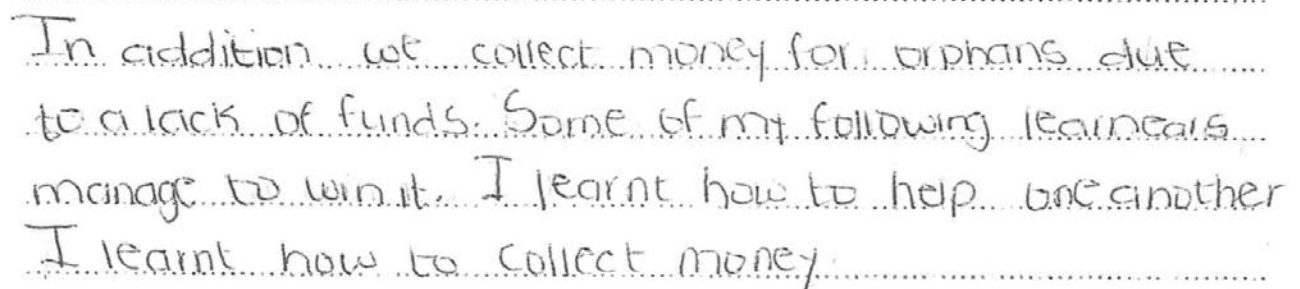
6.2.1.4 Subject-verb agreement

According to Farooq et al. (2012), the rules of English grammar dictate that when a writer uses a singular noun, he or she must use the verb that is conjugated to match singular nouns. Correspondingly, when a writer uses a plural noun, he or she must use a verb that is conjugated to match plural nouns. However, a lot of learners who wrote the friendly letter and the eye witness report failed to match the subject with the correct form of the verb. In the friendly letter for example, a number of learners wrote "we was taking part in the walk" instead of writing "we were taking part in the walk". In the same way, in the eye witness report, a lot of learners wrote "we was scared" instead of writing "we were scared".

Furthermore, Farooq et al. (2012) are of the opinion that the basis of all grammar related problems which learners encounter when writing is the traditional style of teaching grammar on the part of the teachers and lack of practice on the part of the learners. Correspondingly, Msanjila (2005:22) argues that “grammar errors seem to results from inadequate learning and teaching”. Hence, I argue that for the learners to overcome subject-verb agreement related problems in their writings, teachers should teach this aspect communicatively. Apart from that, teachers should ensure that learners are given a lot of exercises and practice on subject-verb agreement in order for them (learners) to master what verb to use when referring to singular nouns and plural nouns respectively. All in all, subject-verb agreement related problems can be addressed by better teaching from the side of the teacher and more practice from the side of the learners.

6.2.1.5 Poor cohesion and coherence

Generally, all the learners divided their letters as well as their eye witness reports into at least three to four paragraphs. However, the problem is that their paragraphs are not effectively or accurately linked together to make a coherent whole. In addition, the paragraphs lack ‘unity’. This implies that the sentences within the paragraphs are not successfully linked together with different connectors or linking words. Fig. 6.2 below shows a paragraph which is incoherent.



In addition... we collect money for orphans due to a lack of funds. Some of my following learners manage to win it. I learnt how to help one another I learnt how to collect money.

Fig. 6.2 : An incoherent paragraph

According to Hall (1988) in Fareed (2016:81), “a text of an effective ESL writer must be cohesive, logical, clearly structured and properly organized”. However, as it can be

seen in the above paragraph, lack of cohesion and coherence constitute a serious problem to learners under study and this is not good because the information which is disorganized is not easy to read and understand. It is however reasonable that learners' work lack coherence and cohesion because writing a coherent piece of writing in one's second language is a massive challenge (Ahmed, 2010) because the complexity of the English logical connectors adds to this.

Additionally, as Msanjila (2005:21) laments, "poor cohesion and coherence originate from poor teaching in schools and therefore this problem can be reduced by effective teaching, the creation of a wider reading and writing habit". Accordingly, I argue that ESL teachers under study should teach their learners how to write texts which make sense to the readers through the organization of their contents even though this was not part of their training (Nandago & Kambonde, 2017). Equally important, learners should be taught how to link different sentences within the paragraphs together, as well as how to link paragraphs within the same piece of writing together. Finally, it is important that the learners are encouraged to read as often as possible. I argue that reading would allow learners to see how different writers organize their texts and in return this might help them (learners) improve their own writings in terms of cohesion and coherence.

6.2.1.6 Incorrect use of prompts

The two writing tasks (the friendly letter and the eye witness report) required the learners to address three prompts. However, the majority of learners never addressed all the three prompts. This means that for each question, the majority of learners have only addressed one or two prompts and then started writing irrelevant things. Furthermore, apart from failing to address all the prompts, the majority of students has also failed to develop the prompts positively. For example, for the friendly letter, one of the prompts provided to the learners required them to talk about the 'reaction of the orphans after they were given the money collected during the walk or the run' but a number of them (learners) only mentioned that the orphans were happy without giving further explanations. Similarly, in the eye witness report, one of the prompts required the learners to talk about 'how they were rescued'. The majority of the learners only

wrote that they were rescued by the police or by another plane without giving further details or explanations. See figure 6.3 below.

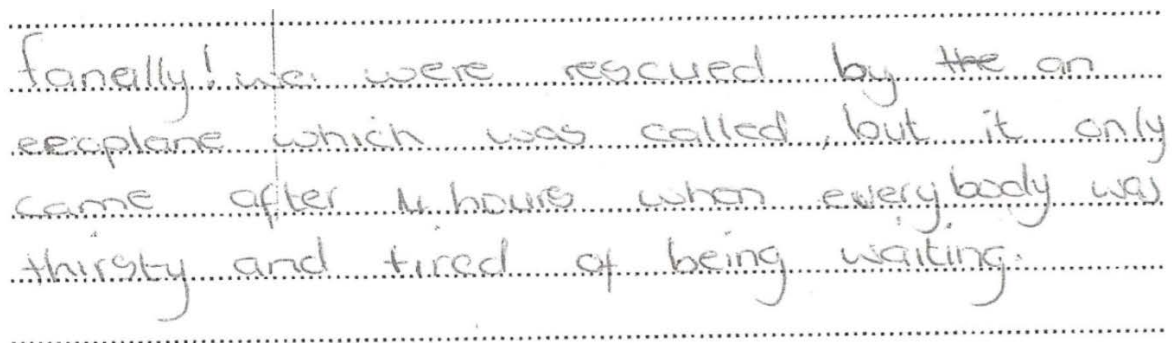


Figure 6.3: A paragraph showing how learners failed to develop prompts

Moreover, according to Huy (2015) one of the main important aspects in the writing process is the writing topic. Basically, this means that students need good knowledge of the writing topic in order for them to write positively. As Fareed (2016:87) explains, “When students do not possess the actual knowledge of the topic, they cannot write well”. Therefore, I argue that students under study were unable to develop the prompts given to them positively because they lacked ideas to develop these prompts. Obviously, these learners need to read a lot in order to improve their general knowledge. However, as has been mentioned already, it is also important that learners are given topics which are socially and culturally relevant in order for them to have enough ideas to write about these specific topics. Possibly, this will help students to develop the prompts given to them successfully. Finally, to make sure that learners address all the prompts given to them, as it has been already alluded to, it is important that learners are taught how to analyze essay questions before answering them. This exercise will ensure that learners will address all prompts given to them whenever answering essay questions.

6.2.1.7 Inappropriate use of tone and register

The ESL essay writing tasks require learners to use appropriate tone and register (Barry et al., 2014). This implies that the learners need to consider the audience of a specific piece of writing and therefore should write using suitable language and style. Learners,

for example, “should ensure that a friendly letter sounds friendly and informal” (Barry et al., 2014:12). However, the analysis of the two writing tasks in the current study has shown that a number of students have failed to use the appropriate tone and register. For instance, in the friendly letters, learners use phrases such as “the purpose of writing this letter”, “it is with great hour and “I am looking forward”. All these formal phrases are not needed in friendly letters because the learners are writing to people (friends) who are close to them and hence supposed to use informal phrases such as “guess what?” and “you cannot believe what I am about to tell you.” As Brown (2000:260) recommends, “when you converse informally with a friend, you use language differently from the language which you use in an interview for a job with a prospective employer for example”.

Moreover, according to Burger and Garddyne (2011), an eye witness report should be written in a formal register. Besides, it should also be written from a first person point of view rather than from the second and third point of view respectively. It is however worrying that the eye witness reports analyzed in this study were written from the second and third point of view respectively. A number of learners used sentences and phrases such as “we heard” and “the pilot thought” instead of using “I heard” and “I thought”. Besides, it is also important to mention that a number of the eye witness reports which were analyzed sounded quite informal rather than formal. All in all, the friendly letters and the eye witness reports written by the learners who took part in the current study were not written in a proper tone and register. Consequently, I argue that the learners in question need to be taught how to use language which is suitable to the audience and the purpose of communication. Otherwise if learners’ work lacks sense of audience, then they would not score high marks on essay writing questions and consequently would not perform well in English as a second language (Ministry of Education, 2010a). However, the main concern here is that teachers are not trained on how to teach this important aspect of writing (Nandago & Kambonde 2017).

6.2.2 Major strengths

6.2.2.1 Effective paragraphing

One of the positive characteristics which has emerged from the analysis of learners' written work is that many of them were able to organize their essays into different paragraphs. According to Reid (2000), paragraphs are the most important building blocks of any written essay. This is exactly why according to the Namibia ESL marking grid for written work, "learners score low marks if they produce essay which are poor in paragraphing" (Ministry of Education, 2010a). Therefore, it is quite commendable that the majority of the students in my study managed to have distinct paragraphs within their written work. However, although these learners managed to organize their essays into different distinct paragraphs, I argue that they need to be taught how to systematically and logically arrange their paragraphs in order for their essays to visibly read as one piece of writing. Granted, "Paragraphs in any written essay should be in the right sequence and accurately linked together so that the writing makes a coherent whole" (Barry et al., 2014:12).

6.2.2.2 Limited spelling and punctuation mistakes

It is quite surprising that many of students wrote essays with limited spelling mistakes. The learners in question failed to spell a few difficult words such as 'orphanage', 'terrible', 'permission' and 'emergency' properly but managed to spell common words such as 'money', 'plane' and 'organize' correctly. This is encouraging because according to Barry et al., (2014), it is not compulsory that learners spell all the words in their essays correctly. However, what is important is that they should not commit too many spelling mistakes. Likewise, they should ensure that they spell common words correctly. This is important because according to the Namibian ESL marking grid for written work, learners can only score low marks on the spelling aspect if they have written essays with a lot of spelling mistakes (Ministry of Education, 2010a).

Additionally, apart from limited spelling mistakes, it is also encouraging to note that the majority of learners who took part in the current study made very few punctuation errors. Most started their sentences with capital letters, ended them with full stops and

wrote proper nouns with capital letters. According to Farooq et al. (2012:186), “to convey a message properly, it is necessary that learners correctly use punctuation marks”. It is clear then that learners’ ability to use punctuation marks accurately is something creditable because it allows them to communicate ideas vividly. Another aspects of students’ writing which is worth praising is the ‘effective use of vocabulary’.

6.2.2.3 Effective use of vocabulary

The last encouraging characteristic which emerged from the analysis of the two written assignments is that the students demonstrated some mastery over the vocabulary appropriate for this task. For instance, in the friendly letter, students used words such as ‘pretty’, ‘excited’, ‘marvelously’ etc. Similarly, in the eye- witness report, students successfully used words such as ‘graciously’, ‘awful’, ‘realizing’ and so on. According to the Ministry of Education (2010a), students score high marks on essay questions if they are able to show competence in using appropriate vocabulary in different context and situations. It is therefore a good thing that students who took part in the current study have acquired a number of English words and can use them successfully. This implies that provided that they are taught effectively, these students can also successfully acquire other important language skills such as those discussed in 6.2.1

Furthermore, although the students could use a number of words successfully, it is important to reiterate that the majority of these students failed to answer the two essay questions successfully because of the vocabulary used within the two questions. As a result, I would argue that these students’ active vocabulary is stronger than their ‘passive vocabulary’. According to Farooq et al. (2012:186), “active vocabulary is learned for production while passive vocabulary is only used for production”. Therefore, I suggest that ESL teachers in northern Namibian need to give their learners more exercises and activities which will help them improve their ‘passive vocabulary’.

6.3 Findings from informal conversations with ESL learners

At all the schools that were part of the current study, I had an informal conversation with a group of six grade 12 students. The aim of this informal conversation was to elicit learners' perspectives on writing problems which they encounter when they write essays in English and the causes of these problems. Also, the researcher wanted to establish learners' opinion on strategies which ESL teachers use to help them (learners) overcome writing problems. Finally, the informal conversations were meant to establish learners' attitudes towards English and their home languages within the educational context and other relevant issues.

6.3.1 Writing problems and their causes

As has been already mentioned, the researcher wanted to establish problems which grade 12 learners' experience when writing essays in ESL and their opinions on the causes of these writing problems. According to the learners, their main problem when it comes to writing essays in English is 'misinterpretation of essay questions'. This is not surprising because as I have indicated in my field notes, learners' English proficiency is not good enough and to make matters worse English is not spoken frequently at their schools. This is what one learner had to say about this issue:

“When I write essays, I go out of topic because I do not understand the question...we never experience such a thing.”

Misinterpreting essay questions and consequently going off topic implies that students would score very low marks on these questions. Indeed, according to the marking grid for written work, if the topic is totally misinterpreted, no marks will be awarded (Ministry of Education, 2010a). Furthermore, in the opinions of these learners, the issue of misinterpreting questions is a result of their poor background in English. The learners are also of the opinion that they misinterpret essay questions because they are not taught how to approach essay questions. Therefore, I argue that the issue of learners misinterpreting essay questions deserves to be given serious attention. Possibly, teachers can help their learners to overcome this problem (misinterpretation of

questions) through writing essay questions on the board and asking students to come forward and underline the key words (Barry, 2013). This strategy would help “learners to keep to the point of the question and cover all parts of the question” (Barry et al., 2014:16).

Another issue is that of using tenses correctly. According to the learners, it is difficult for them to use tenses correctly when they write essays and hence their pieces of writing tend to have unclear meanings. This is not good because learners’ essays are expected to be clear, straight forward and easy to read (Barry et al., 2014). This problem, according to the learners, like the problem of misinterpreting questions is also the result of poor English background. Accordingly, one would argue that these learners need more exposure to English. Besides, they need to be taught tenses communicatively in order for them to be able to use tenses effectively when they write essays. As I have indicated in my field notes, teachers teach grammar (including tenses) traditionally and out of context, which does not really help learners positively in terms of using language in context.

In addition, the learners that were talked to at all six secondary schools revealed that it is difficult for them to write introductions, body paragraphs and conclusions because the teachers do not teach this aspect of writing essays. This is not good because good essays should have definite beginnings and endings (Barry et al., 2014:11). In general, the learners suggested that the teachers do not teach them how to write essays. Therefore, it is difficult for them to master the formats of different pieces of writing such as reports, speeches, etc. This is what one of the learners had to say about this concern:

“We only write essays during exams. In a term we can only write one article for example. Our teacher did not teach us how to write a ‘review’ but in the exam we were asked to write a review. They tell you write an essay but they do not teach how”

Moreover, according to the marking grid for written work, for learners to score high marks on the language aspect of the essay, one of the criteria is that they should be able

to write interesting paragraphs (Ministry of Education, 2010a). Thus, learners need to be taught how to structure their essays accordingly. As Msanjila (2005) has argued, the issue of not knowing how to organize the essay well can be addressed by effective teaching. Accordingly, I argue that teachers should always ensure that they have taught their learners how to write the introductions, body paragraphs and the conclusion of different types of pieces of writing which are taught in grade 12.

Another difficulty or problem which was brought forward by the learners is that of ‘misspelling’ words and the use of ‘punctuation’. According to the learners, they struggle to write a number of words correctly and they also fail to punctuate their sentences correctly when they have to write essays in ESL. They (learners) do not really know the cause of this problem and they hesitatingly mentioned that perhaps it is just generally caused by their poor English proficiency. When commenting on this topic one learner said:

“The problem of spelling and this thing of using punctuation...Uunkundi welaka ike (just language problems)”

Writing words correctly and punctuating sentences appropriately, one can argue, is very important when it comes to essay writing because if a piece of writing has a lot of spelling mistakes and the sentences are not well punctuated, then this piece of writing would not have clear meaning. As Barry et al., (2014) have recommended, the learners’ spelling does not need to be accurate throughout the essay. However, simple and common words should be spelled correctly. Consequently, for the learners to score high marks on essay writing questions, they need to write essays with less spelling mistakes and they also need to make sure that their sentences are well punctuated.

6.3.2 Teachers’ intervention strategies

After listening to learners’ writing problems and their causes, I wanted to hear learners’ perspectives on what their ESL teachers are doing to help learners reduce or overcome their writing problems. Surprisingly, according to the learners, teachers are not really doing much to help them (learners) reduce or overcome writing problems. The learners

have mentioned that the teachers give them old or past examinations question papers, to read and familiarize themselves with essay questions. This is quite good because the learners need to know what kind of questions are expected in the examination. However, this exercise cannot really help learners overcome writing problems. Perhaps the best option will be to give them these questions, ask them to answer them and afterward address the errors which they have made. Possibly, this exercise would gradually help learners improve their essay writing skills.

Apart from using past examination question papers, the learners stated that their ESL teachers also try to help them overcome writing problems by providing examples of different pieces of writing. For instance, after realizing that learners are finding it difficult to write an article to the school magazine, the teacher would give them an example of an article to the school magazine in a summarized format. Again, this approach is necessary but one can doubt if it is really effective when it comes to helping learners reduce or overcome their writing problems. For example, this approach may not be supportive in terms of helping learners interpret essay questions successfully.

Finally, learners have said that their ESL teachers tell them and make them read a lot so that they can improve their writing skills. Commenting on this matter, one of the learners said:

“Ohaye tulombwele ike tuleshe (they just tell us to read)...they tell us to read more. They tell us to read newspapers and magazines. It helps just a little bit...2%”.

According to Adeyemi (2012:59), “reading and writing support, complement and contribute to each other’s development”. Definitely, “learners need to do some good reading in order to develop better writing and to enrich vocabulary” (Fareed, 2016:87). Therefore, ESL teachers should be commended for promoting a reading culture among their learners. However, I still argue that they (ESL teachers) would still need to come up with specific strategies that are aimed at addressing specific writing problems. For instance, they need to come up with the strategy which can directly help their students

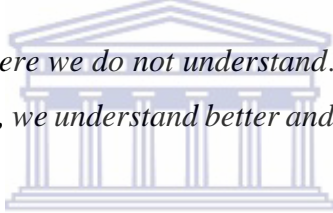
use tenses correctly when writing essays and hence score high marks on essay questions.

6.3.3 Content subject teachers, ESL teachers and the use of Oshiwambo

At all schools I went to, the learners that I chatted to indicated that their content subject teachers use Oshiwambo very often when teaching their respective subjects. Apart from that, the learners have also pointed out that their content subject teachers tend to code-switch when they are teaching because sticking to English throughout would mean that they (learners) will not have comprehensive understanding of what is being taught:

Learner 1: *“Our content subject teachers use Oshiwambo when teaching. They mention a concept in English but learners do not understand then they change to Oshiwambo”.*

Learner 2: *“They use it where we do not understand...when something is too difficult. When they use Oshiwambo, we understand better and we do not forget that explanation easily.*



What the learners are emphasizing here is a clear indication that for them to understand their content subjects well and consequently learn effectively, these teachers need to use their mother tongue (Oshiwambo) because it is not easy for them to get all explanations given in English. This finding is in line with Harris (2011) who revealed that a high proportion of learners in Namibia are confused by the second language (English) in which they are taught. Thus, there is no doubt in concluding that code-switching to Oshiwambo when teaching content subjects ensures that learners' understanding of these content subjects is reinforced. Certainly, this is why one of the learners suggested that using Oshiwambo in the 'physical science' classroom strengthen learning:

“Our physical science teacher... ohagandja iiholelwa mbitushi (he gives examples from our back ground) we understand physical science better when the teacher explain in Oshiwambo”

Learners also revealed that their ESL teachers occasionally use Oshiwambo in their lessons. This is quite interesting because the learners have clearly indicated that their content subjects' teachers use Oshiwambo when teaching and they (learners) like it because they understand better when teachers explain things in Oshiwambo. When asked to comment on this issue, some of the learners said:

Learner 1: *“Kashona ike (just a little bit)...they want us to improve. Translation will not help, there will be no one to translate in exam”*.

Learner 2: *“Our English teachers use Oshiwambo sometimes when he see that we do not understand. For example, he tells us what an adjective is in English... then he change to Oshiwambo, telling us that ‘Oshityahololi’ (adjective). To me it is better because some learners do not understand English”*.

Possibly, the English teachers fully understand the benefit of using Oshiwambo when teaching English. But perhaps they are not willing to use Oshiwambo in their English classes because the language policy does not allow it. Similarly, they (English teachers) are perhaps unwilling to use Oshiwambo when teaching English because of the ideology that using Oshiwambo compromises the acquisition of English. Hence, despite knowing that using Oshiwambo can help their learners to understand English better, ESL teachers feel that they have to use English-only as per the LEP.

Furthermore, after establishing whether ESL teachers use Oshiwambo in their lessons, I asked the learners whether it would be better for ESL teachers to use Oshiwambo in their lessons. On this aspect, learners had mixed feelings. At some schools, learners are not supporting the idea of using Oshiwambo when teaching English. Yet, at some schools, learners felt that ESL teachers should always use Oshiwambo when teaching so that they (learners) can understand better:

Learner 1: *“Yes...I think the English teachers need to use Oshiwambo in teaching English. When teachers use English only, we will not understand. At least they must change to Oshiwambo a little bit”*.

Learner 2: *“Yes, learners will understand better. Some teachers’ English proficiency is not good...they cannot give good explanations”.*

Learner 3: *“Yes, they must use Oshiwambo. It is better... okukala topopi Oshiingilisa maara aantu kayuuviteko (than speaking English but learners do not understand). Sometimes teachers use vocabulary and we do not have dictionaries”.*

What the learners are emphasizing here is that for them to understand English better, their ESL teachers should at least use Oshiwambo in their English lessons. This does not mean the ESL teachers should explain or teach their whole lessons in Oshiwambo. However, what is implied is that they should use Oshiwambo in their classes in order for them to facilitate teaching and learning English. This is important because as the learners have lamented, if the teachers are to stick to English only as per the language policy, obviously they (learners) are not likely to learn English successfully.

In contrast, learners who do not support the use of Oshiwambo in class are of the opinion that it is not good for the teachers to use Oshiwambo when teaching ESL language because they will not write the English examination in Oshiwambo. Besides, learners also feel that they will not improve their English if their English teachers are to use Oshiwambo during the English lessons:

Learner 1: *“No...teachers should not use Oshiwambo because we will not improve. It is also difficult to translate from Oshiwambo to English...some words in English are not the same as in English”.*

Learner 2: *“To use Oshiwambo? No! Sometimes maybe...during the examination you will not use Oshiwambo”.*

Here, it is important to mention that the learners have given valid and sensible reasons as to why they do not want their ESL teachers to use Oshiwambo in their lessons. Possibly, using Oshiwambo will compromise learning English but this would depend on how it is used. Besides, it is a fact that the examination will be written in English and learners will not have any chance of using Oshiwambo when writing the English examination. However, one can still contend that it would be better for the ESL teachers

in the Omusati region to use Oshiwambo in their teaching especially in school communities where English is not spoken often and consequently learners have poor exposure to the language (English). Ideally, during the ESL lessons, learners should always have freedom to express themselves in Oshiwambo if they cannot express themselves well in English. Thus, I deemed it necessary to ask the learners to talk about whether their ESL teachers allow them to express themselves in Oshiwambo during the ESL lessons.

6.3.4 Allowing learners to use Oshiwambo during the ESL lessons

During the informal conversations with grade 12 learners, I also wanted to find out if learners are allowed to speak Oshiwambo during the English lessons. For example; are they allowed to ask questions in Oshiwambo? Are they allowed to comment or to give suggestions in Oshiwambo especially when they are unable to express themselves well or meaningfully? As second language learners, one might expect them to have difficulty in expressing themselves well in English, bearing in mind that English is not widely spoken in their school communities and in their home environment (Harris, 2011). According to the learners, their ESL teachers do not allow them to speak Oshiwambo during the English lessons:

Learner 1: *“If a teacher ask a question and then you answer in Oshiwambo, the answer is not accepted”.*

Learner 2: *“If you speak Oshiwambo in our English lesson, the teacher tells you to put it in English, he tells you he does not understand Oshiwambo. Moklasa Oshiwambo kandishishi (when I am in class, I do not know Oshiwambo)”.*

Learner 3: *“One day I asked my English teacher (in Oshiwambo) to explain something in Oshiwambo to us, and then he was angry with me because he just said...I hate such stupidity! Who will explain in the exam for you in Oshiwambo?”*

The Namibian LEP does not allow the use of the mother language in the ESL classroom (Wolfaardt, 2002). This might be one reason why the ESL teachers in question here are not allowing their learners to express themselves in Oshiwambo during the English

lessons. Also, one can infer that ESL teachers are not allowing their learners to express themselves in Oshiwambo during the English lessons because they really want them (learners) to improve their English and hence pass it when they finish grade 12 because English is a compulsory subject in school. However, one might also conclude that if learners are not allowed to use Oshiwambo during English lessons, they are unlikely to learn reflectively and critically. This is because they might find it difficult to participate in class discussions including commenting and asking questions because of language barriers. Accordingly, I argue that for effective teaching and learning of English to take place, learners should be allowed to use Oshiwambo, as long as they use it effectively; for the sake of understating English better. As Pica (1994) argues, depending on psychological, linguistic and cultural factors, learners' first language can powerfully influence second language development.

6.4 Findings from interviews with learners who wrote poor essays

As already mentioned, at all the schools which were part of the current study, a group of twenty grade 12 students was selected to write two essays. From the two essays written by the learners at each school, I selected the poorly written essay and then I interviewed the learner who wrote that specific essay. The main aim of these interviews, generally, was to hear the opinion of the learners who are not proficient in writing English essays in regard to writing problems that they experience when they have to write essays. Also, these interviews were aimed at establishing learners' attitudes towards English and their home languages within the educational context.

6.4.1 Problems experienced when writing essays and their causes

The first question that I asked the learners who wrote poor essays required them to talk about the problems which they experience when they have to write essays in English and then the subsequent question asked them to point out causes of the problems experienced when writing essays. According to the learners, the main problem is that they find it difficult to understand essay questions or instruction given to them when they have to write essays in English. This seems to be a common problem among ESL

learners in Namibia because even the ESL examiners' report for the year 2013 recommended that "learners must be taught how to analyze essay questions before answering them" (Ministry of Education, 2013:126). Commenting on the issue of misinterpreting questions, some of the learners said:

Learner 1: *"Sometimes questions are complicated...when you are in exam you are somehow confused. Sometimes there is a vocabulary in a question which you do not understand"*.

Learner 2: *"Sometimes the question, I tend not to understand...the instruction...reading the question, some words are difficult. O esayi yandje aishe ohaikala (my whole essay is always) out of topic"*.

According to the learners, the issue of misinterpreting questions is not caused by the fact that they are not taught how to write essays. However, they believe that interpreting essay questions is a challenge because generally, their English proficiency is poor. They also went further to claim that their English proficiency is poor because they do not read and speak English very often:

Learner 1: *"The main cause is lack of understanding of English...I just do not understand. Sometimes there is just one word in the question which is difficult...then that means you are lost completely"*.

Learner 2: *"We have problem with understanding questions. Our English is not good because we do not practice speaking English in class. People are laughed at when you speak broken English. That is why people are not willing to speak English"*.

If learners fail to understand the instructions, then obviously they are likely to stray off the topic and subsequently they would not score high marks on essay questions. That is why the ESL examiners report for the year 2013 recommended that "learners should not rush through the reading of questions because that results in them misunderstanding what is expected of them" (Ministry of Education, 2013:126). Therefore, one can argue that good essay writing skills should include interpreting essay questions well, which may require learners to have better English proficiency as they have suggested.

Apart from the issue of misinterpreting questions, the learners have also pointed out that they find it difficult to write introductions, body paragraphs and conclusions of different types of essays although they are taught to do this for essays in their mother tongue (Oshiwambo). According to the learners, writing introductions, body paragraphs and conclusions is a challenge because they have not been taught this very important skill. This is what one of the learners had to say about this issue:

“My main problem is that I do not know how ...how I should start, what I should write first and then what should I write in the next paragraph. Again ending the essay is a problem. All these things, we are not taught”.

If learners are to write productive essays, they need to be taught how to organize their ideas within the essays. This requires them to know how to introduce the subject or the topic to be discussed within a specific essay, how to develop the introduction further into the body paragraphs and then eventually how to conclude the essay. As has been mentioned earlier, the organization of the essay is important because if the essay is not well organized, then that specific essay will not have a clear meaning and as a result it will not score high marks. Accordingly, one may argue that teaching learners how to write introductions, body paragraphs and conclusion should be one of the intervention strategies which teachers may use to help learners overcome or reduce writing problems. Other intervention strategies, as identified by the learners who wrote poor essays, are discussed in the next section.

6.4.2 English teachers' intervention strategies

After the learners had talked about the problems which they experience when they have to write essays in English and their causes, they were required to talk about what their English teachers do to help them overcome writing problems which they have identified and discussed at the beginning of the interviews. On this issue, learners believe and claimed that their English teachers do not do much to help them reduce or overcome their writing problems:

Learner 1: *“When it comes to the problems of misinterpreting questions...she tells us to read the instruction twice. Sometimes we are told to use dictionaries...she tells us to get a dictionary from her and then take it back”*.

Learner 2: *“She tries to write for us on the board...this is how you write introduction, this is how you write conclusion”*.

The learners in question seem to misinterpret questions incorrectly because of poor English proficiency. Thus, telling them to read the instruction twice, for example will not really help them to understand essay questions. Similarly, writing on the board, how to write an introduction for example, one can argue, would not also help learners to write well organized and meaningful essays. Possibly, more effective and positive intervention strategies need to be used in order for these learners to overcome or reduce their writing problems and consequently score high marks on essay questions. For instance, when it comes to misinterpretation of questions, “learners may be taught how to avoid drifting away from the essay topic and how to ensure that they do not ignore any part of the question” (Barry et al., 2014:16). As mentioned earlier, this may include practicing how to identify key words within different essay questions. In the following section, other possible intervention strategies, as suggested by the learners who wrote poor essays have been discussed.

6.4.3 Intervention strategies required by the learners

After talking about the intervention strategies which their teachers use to help them reduce or overcome writing problems, the learners who wrote poor essays were asked to suggest other possible measures which they think their English teachers can follow or implement in order to help them (learners) improve their essay writing skills in English. On this issue, the learners said that they need to be given samples of different types of essays and they also need to do more practice on how to write different types of essays:

“He must give us examples or samples of different types of essays. We also need more essay exercises so that we can practice. We do not really write essays...we only write three essays in a year sometimes we just get copies or handouts...without exercises”.

“The teacher must give us more examples...more examples plus more practice... Tukale atu plaktisa tukale tushishi (so that we practice and then we learn). She must give us writing exercises every day...articles, letters etc.”

From what the learners have said on this matter, one can infer that they seriously need practice on how to write different types of essays. More practice as the learners have suggested, must be preceded by samples of different types of essays. This is important because writing a witness report for example, might not be the same as writing an article to the school magazine. Therefore, if teachers give learners samples of different types of essays, they (learners) are likely to write accordingly. It is therefore worth noting that giving learners samples of different types of essays alone will not be adequate in terms of helping the learners acquire necessary essay writing skills. Therefore, after the learners are taught how to write different types of essays, of course through giving different types of essays, they need to be given practice on writing different types of essays so that they can gradually master necessary skills required to write effective essays. Teachers should however, make sure that they mark learners' work on time and give their feedback on time. As the learners who wrote poor essays have stressed, sometimes they write essays but never get their books or their corrected work on time:

“We write one essay in a term...for example a letter... and we take the books to the teacher. The teacher does not mark on time. We would like to ask the teacher to give us feedback at least after two days”.

The issue of English teachers not marking learners' written work on time is not in accordance with the Namibian national subject policy guide for English second language (grade 5-12). According to this policy, the ESL teacher should mark at least 70-80% of all written assignments, exercises, tasks and worksheet (Ministry of

Education, 2009). The policy further stipulates that feedback from the teacher should be immediate, positive and informative (Ministry of Education, 2009). However, it seems ESL teachers do not adhere to this policy because as I have observed, their classes are overcrowded and it may be difficult for them to give feedback to the learners on time. It is therefore important that teachers are encouraged to make sure that they have at least corrected all learners' written work otherwise they (learners) will not improve their essay writing skills. As Huy (2015) advises, ensuring that all learners' work is corrected helps them to avoid making the same mistakes again and again.

6.4.4 Using Oshiwambo to teach essay writing skills

The final question during my interviews with the learners who wrote poor essays was whether their English teachers use Oshiwambo to help them improve their essay writing skills in English. Again, the same question required learners to explain how, if it is used at all, Oshiwambo is used to teach essay writing skills in English. According to the learners, the English teachers use Oshiwambo to teach essay writing skills in English but this is not done very often. The learners in question further revealed that their English teachers mostly used Oshiwambo to check if they (learners) understand whatever is being explained. In addition, their English teachers use Oshiwambo when they realize that their learners are not really grasping what is being taught because of the language problems. This is what some of the learners had to say when they were commenting on this issue:

Learner 1: *“Our English teacher can use Oshiwambo when teaching essays to see if we are following. He will say...Omuudako ngoo? (Did you understand?)”*.

Learner 2: *“Yes, when she give us essay questions, she read them in English. If she can see that we do not understand, she read them in Oshiwambo. This is nice because it makes us understand the questions better”*.

As has been mentioned earlier, the learners who wrote poor essays admitted that generally, their English is poor. This implies that if teachers use English exclusively when teaching English as the NLEP dictates, the learners would not really grasp what

is being taught successfully. As a result, one would suggest that teachers should not only code-switch when they are checking understanding and when they have noticed that the learners are not following comprehensively. Instead, they should make the use of Oshiwambo an integral part of teaching essay writing skills in English. I argue that this will help learners acquire essay writing skills in English because as the learners have acknowledged, their understanding will be enhanced:

Learner 1: *“Using Oshiwambo when teaching essay writing skills in English? It is needed. The teacher should change to Oshiwambo a little bit. It is nice because sometimes we do not understand key words. If these key words are given in Oshiwambo, it will be better”.*

Learner 2: *“Using Oshiwambo is helpful...Ngeno ovalongi itavaimo ngaa unene (not to say teachers should use a lot of Oshiwambo in class) Naakale ngaa tavaimo apa vewete kusha oshinima katushuudite (let them use Oshiwambo when they see that we do not understand something). If we write an essay and many people are out of topic, the teacher should explain to us in Oshiwambo...what we were supposed to write. Ohashikwafele (it is helpful)”.*

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6.5 Findings from interviews with learners who are proficient in English essay writing

Apart from the interviews that I had with learners who experience difficulties in writing essays in English, I also interviewed the learners who were quite proficient at it in order to gain insight into their perspectives on their writing problems as well as their attitudes towards English and their home languages within the educational context.

6.5.1 Acquiring good essay writing skills in English.

The first question was about what they had done to acquire good essay writing skills in English. These learners revealed that they read a lot. That is, they read plenty of newspapers, magazines and novels. Apart from reading, they regularly practiced their essay writing skills.

Learner 1: *“At my previous school, we were given more practice. We can write a lot of essays. We also used to read a lot...magazines, newspapers and novels”*.

Learner 2: *“I went to a private school...so we had a club where we were doing debating, nokushanga ee esayi (and writing essays). We used to have essay writing competition every Friday”*.

Generally, reading a lot can help learners improve their English because it serves as deepening learners' exposure to English. This is something clearly lacking in those for whom essay writing is such a problem. Such learners should be assisted to develop a reading culture. Poorer learners should be given plenty of opportunity to do practice essay writing. However, apart from giving learners more practice on essay writing, English teachers can also use other alternatives which they think can help their learners improve their essay writing skills in English. In the next section, some of the ideas on what teachers can do to help their learners write better English essays, as suggested by the learners who are proficient in English essay writing, are discussed.

6.5.2 Strategies used to help learners who struggle with writing English essays

Basically, learners who are proficient in writing essays in English have suggested that teachers are not really doing much to help learners who struggle with writing essays in English. According to the learners, the main strategy which teachers use is that of giving samples of different types of essays to the learners. This is what some of the learners said when they commented on this matter:

Learner 1: *“He give them as an example written on the board, teyape edhewo (then he give them an exercise). Thimbo limwe oheya nee kopi...thimbo limwe ohashanga koshipelende (sometimes these samples are on the handouts that are given to the learners and sometimes he writes on the chalk board)”*.

Learner 2: *“She gives us a homework. After marking, she makes copies of the best essay in class. This example is given to the learners who have a problem with writing essays”*.

Providing samples of different types of essays to learners who struggle with writing essays in English is a commendable idea. However, one can argue that this approach should not be used as sole intervention strategy because it is not likely to help learners improve their writing skills in English. Therefore, I argue that this intervention strategy should be accompanied by other intervention strategies which can help learners improve their writing skills in English better. Possibly, these intervention strategies may include the use of learners' mother tongue (Oshiwambo) to teach writing skills in English. Thus, during the interviews with learners who are proficient in English essay writing, the researcher demanded the learners to give their views on English teachers using Oshiwambo to teach writing skills in English.

6.5.3 Learners' attitudes towards the use of Oshiwambo

As mentioned already, I asked the learners to give their views on English teachers using Oshiwambo when teaching writing skills in English. Interestingly, all the learners who were interviewed are of the opinion that ESL teachers should never use Oshiwambo to teach writing skills in English. Here is what some of the learners said:

Learner 1: *"I really do not think is applicable. Because oto longwa moshiwambo (you are taught in Oshiwambo) that teacher might try to explain in Oshiwambo but then when you go write the examination there will be no one to explain for you...so it is better for you to learn on your own how to write it in English rather than being explained in Oshiwambo"*.

Learner 2: *"Molesona hoshiingilisa omulongi inapumbwa okulongitha Oshiwambo (The teacher does not need to use Oshiwambo during the English lesson), okwapumbwa ngaa okulongitha Oshiiingilisa, sho Oshiwambo tashipopiwa ngaa mo lesona yoShiwambo (He/she needs to use English. Oshiwambo should be used during Oshiwambo lesson). We also understand when the teacher use English"*.

Learner 3: *"No! We must be taught in English. For us to improve our English...learners must be taught in English whenever...excluding the Oshiwambo lesson. Maybe some*

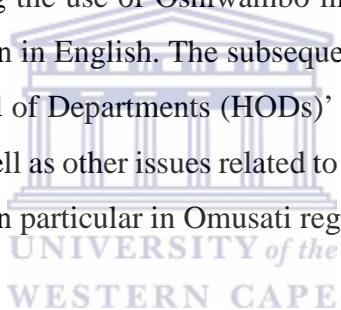
learners will understand better when they are taught in Oshiwambo. But I do not think it is right...to really teach in Oshiwambo. You will not improve.”

Learners who are proficient in writing essays in English are probably against the idea of English teachers using Oshiwambo to teach writing skills in English because their English is quite good and therefore do not see any necessity of teachers using Oshiwambo when teaching English. Besides, the learners feel that using Oshiwambo to teach writing skills in English will not help because the examination is written in English. However, what the learners do not understand is that using Oshiwambo to teach English writing skills would facilitate better understanding and hence, if it is possible, ESL teachers should use Oshiwambo to teach writing skills in English. This is because sticking to English only as the language policy dictates means that successful learning is unlikely to occur. Finally, one point which is worth mentioning here is that the learners also feel that using Oshiwambo to teach writing skills in English would hinder learning English and therefore teachers should not use Oshiwambo when teaching ESL. This is recommendable but the problem is that these learners do not have adequate exposure to English and therefore their English is quite poor. Consequently, I argue that avoiding using Oshiwambo when teaching essay writing skills in English would mean that learners would hardly improve their essay writing skills in English.

6.6 Summary of the chapter

With the support of relevant literature, this chapter presented an in-depth discussion of the research findings on learners in Northern Namibia and their struggle with writing English. As a reminder, these research findings were informed by data from the informal conversation which I had with the learners. Besides, the findings were also drawn from the interviews which I had with learners who are proficient in English essay writing as well as the ones who are struggling with writing essays in English. Lastly, the findings presented and discussed in this chapter were drawn from the learners written samples through EA.

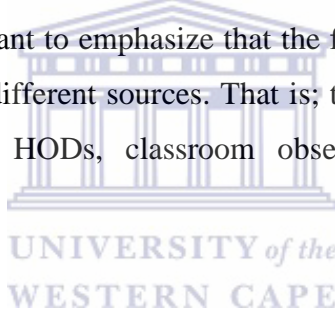
Additionally, it is important to reiterate that the main focus of this chapter was on the types of problems that learners encounter when writing essays in English and on their attitudes towards English and their mother tongue (Oshiwambo) within the educational contexts. Therefore, the findings revealed in this chapter indicate that learners in Northern Namibia experience a lot of problems when writing essays in English. Among others, these include; misinterpretation of essay questions, incorrect use of prompts, incorrect use of tenses, and the use of wrong word choices. On the issue of using Oshiwambo within the educational context, it has been revealed that learners who are struggling with writing essays in English would want their ESL teachers to use Oshiwambo in their classes because they feel that it will help them to understand the English lessons better. On the contrary, learners who are proficient in writing essays in English are not advocating the use of Oshiwambo in the ESL classroom because the examination will be written in English. The subsequent chapter will focus on the ESL teachers and English Head of Departments (HODs)' perspectives on the issue related to the Namibian LEP as well as other issues related to the teaching and learning of ESL in Northern Namibia and in particular in Omusati region.



Chapter 7: Research Findings II: The teachers and Heads of Departments

7.0 Introduction

The previous chapter presented research findings on the learners and their struggle with writing English. This chapter includes an in-depth discussion of findings obtained from the ESL teachers, including their Head of Departments (HODs). It (the current chapter) relates these findings to the current literature in order to critique the results by supporting or contradicting the findings based thereon. Apart from the relevant literature, these findings were also analyzed in consideration with data from my field notes. Finally, it is important to emphasize that the findings presented in this chapter were obtained from four different sources. That is, teachers' focus-group interviews, interviews with English HODs, classroom observations, as well as teachers' questionnaires.



7.1 Findings from teachers and HODs' interviews

As mentioned in the methodology chapter, I conducted teachers' focus group interviews at all six secondary schools that were part of the current study. Apart from teachers' focus group interviews, I interviewed the English HOD at each school. The main aim of these interviews, as mentioned earlier was to get ESL teachers and HODs' perspectives on the Namibian LEP, as well as on issues related to the teaching and learning of ESL in Northern Namibia-Omusati region. Additionally, it is important to mention that the teachers' focus group interviews and the HODs' interviews were conducted and analysed separately. However, because the teachers and the HODs were asked similar questions and that the findings were extremely similar and overlapping, I deemed it necessary to present and discuss these findings within the same section. To sum up, it is important to reiterate that these interviews were structured in nature, and hence I had to use an interview schedule. Consequently, the discussion of the results

from these teachers' focus group and HODs' interviews will be laid out according to the order of the questions which were asked of the participants.

7.1.1 Problems students experience when writing essays in English

The first question asked of the teachers as well as the HODs required them to talk about the writing problems their students experience when they have to write essays in English. According to the teachers and the HODs their students experience six major problems. Firstly, they have a problem with spelling. That is, they usually fail to spell a number of words correctly. Secondly, students are unable to use different tenses correctly. Apart from that, students have a problem of misinterpreting essay questions and do not address prompts given to them. Finally, the respondents have also lamented that their students cannot or do not punctuate their sentences correctly. Commenting on their students' writing problems, some of the respondents said:

Teacher 1: *"In addition to what she has just said.... I almost forgot that one...you know...lack of correct interpretation of the instruction is also leading learners, you know to coming up with things that are not expected. So, when they are given the question, they do not really read and understand it for them to know what to write"*

Teacher 2: *"I want to add about using prompts...like for our grade 11 and 12 they are given prompts that they have to address. And most of the times you find that they simply cannot develop these prompts into paragraphs. Also...sometimes they only focus on some prompts and leaving out others leaving the question partly answered".*

Teacher 3: *"Sometimes when you are marking...the use of tenses. These learners cannot really use their tenses the right way. They pick whatever tense they get and then they write. Because if the question will come like what will you do if you were given money to do this and this...the person will tell you what the person have done with the money... which means they lose marks when it comes to that"*

HOD1: *"With our learners, the first problem I may say...these kids they are finding it difficult to understand the questions. Now, for example, if they are given a certain question, they might interpret it in a wrong way. Then whatever they are to write...they*

will write something out of content. So, the misinterpretation of questions, that is one of the main problems. The other thing is...tense usage. These learners are finding it so difficult, to use the correct tense. For example, if they are asked to write...let say for example a report, something they have to report on. Instead of using the correct tense...that is past tense, they bring in things of...probably things that they assume are likely to happen. So, they are using...they also have a problem with tense usage. Errr...the third problem is...the spelling. These learners are not spelling the words correctly. You give them a piece of writing, the whole...all those words...they will misspell the words”.

The findings of this study explicitly show that learners in Northern Namibia encounter a number of problems when writing essays in English. This is not strange because English is a second language to these learners and obviously these learners have poor English proficiency (Harris 2011; Ipinge 2013; Wolfaardt 2002). Apart from learners' poor English proficiency, it is important to note that 'writing' is not an easy skill to acquire. As Hedge (2014:302) argues, “writing is a process which is neither easy nor spontaneous for many second language writers.” This is because “a text of an effective ESL writer must be cohesive, logical, clearly structured, interesting and properly organized with a wide range of vocabulary and mastery of conventions in mechanics”. Further, apart from the difficult nature of writing and learners' poor English proficiency, it appears that the learners in question are experiencing a lot of problems when writing essays in English because of the Namibian pro-English policy. Here, it is important to reiterate that “the Namibian LEP does not allow the use of indigenous languages in education” (Wolfaardt, 2002). This implies that a lot of ESL teachers are heavily relying on English to teach essay writing skills in English. Consequently, the learning outcomes are likely to be poor because using a language that is not well known to the learner results in weakened learning, compared to the use of a language that is well known to the learner (Trudell, 2016). All in all, I argue that the writing problems that are discussed in this section are not peculiar because writing is not a skill that can be acquired easily and that the learners in question have poor English language

proficiency. More importantly, the Namibian pro-English policy is seen as the main cause of these writing problems. I therefore further argue that the ESL teachers need to know the causes of these writing problems in order for them to find proper remedial strategies and hence help the learners improve their essay writing skills.

7.1.2 The causes of students' writing problems

After listening to the number of problems that students experience when writing essays in English, I wanted to hear teachers and HODs' perspectives on the causes of these problems. Therefore, the subsequent question demands them to talk about the causes of their students' writing problems. According to the respondents, students experience a number of problems when they write essay in English because of their poor English back ground and poor exposure to English:

Teacher 1: *"The way how I see it...because you find that...maybe is from the beginning these learners they do not have a background of writing these things. Because most especially now in grade 11, you find you have try to teach like you are teaching in grade 8 or grade seven learners. So, where by the time now will not allow you to do that. They should be taught in English from grade one"*.

Teacher 2: *"The learners' background...there from...at the beginning. Their foundation was not strong enough. Very poor back ground. That is why up to here they have problems with sentence construction and tenses and so on"*.

HOD2: *"The background...we are teaching these learners in grade 12, and some of these learners have been taught from all those grades, but the background is the problem that these learners are not exposed to...errr structural learning of writing skills and rules, staring from sentences, paragraphing and then it fall of to all these other longer pieces of writing. Staring from the letter, essays and the others"*.

These findings indicate that the main cause of learners' writing problem in English is their poor English background. In other words, teachers and their HODs have suggested that their learners were not taught English well during their primary school years. This observation might be true because according to Hanse-Himarwa (2016), in

2012 for example, Namibia had about 24 660 teachers, of whom 1208 are without teacher training and about 3000 are under qualified. Hanse-Himarwa (2016) further explains that the majority of the underqualified and unqualified teachers are deployed at the junior primary phase. For this reason, Hanse-Himarwa (2015:1) laments that, “there is no way else we can expect results at the top if we do not put emphasis on early childhood development and primary education”. I therefore conclude that poor learners’ English background is likely to be one of the major cause of learners writing problems in English, as the ESL teachers have suggested during the interviews. On the other hand, however, I still content that ESL teachers including their head of departments have very positive attitudes towards English and therefore are not willing to blame the sole use of it as medium of instruction for the writing problems that their learners are experiencing. Also, I argue that learners would not have a good English background because the Namibian LEP allows them to switch to English before they have fully acquired their mother-tongue (Totemeyer, 2010).

Apart from the learners’ English poor background, as mentioned earlier, respondents are also of the opinion that their learners experience problems when writing essays in English because of ‘lack of exposure to English’. This observation is also likely to be true because English is not spoken widely in Northern Namibia (Harris 2011; Ipinge 2013). Indeed, as I have indicated in my field notes, the learners in question hardly use English at their schools because the overwhelming majority of them as well as their teachers speak the same mother language (Oshiwambo) and therefore it is difficult for them to communicate to each other in the language that they do not know very well (English). I have also indicated (in my field notes) that the libraries at the schools which were part of the current study lack reading materials and some of them are not functional at all. Therefore, considering the fact that learners hardly speak English in their communities and at their schools, and that they (learners) do not have relevant reading materials, I argue that lack of exposure to English is one of the main cause of writing problems in English.

Moreover, apart from the two major causes of students' writing problem discussed above, the ESL teachers who were part of teachers' focus group interviews are of the opinion that the content subject teachers are also to be blame for the writing problems experienced by the students because they are ignorant of the mistakes made by learners and hence do not pay any attention to the way the students write:

Teacher 1: *"I have a problem with content subject teachers...when they go to classes, you know...they consider themselves as not the English teachers. You see...therefore, if learners are writing whatever they are writing, they are not minding about the grammatical correctness of sentences constructed by the learners. You can even hear someone say...no, we do not mind that one in our subject. Now we have so many contributing factors, even if we are doing what we are doing, somebody is going to go there and destroy what we are trying to build"*

As it is seen in the above quotation, the ESL teachers strongly feel that the content subject teachers should also play a role in the development of learners' writing knowledge and skills. Here, I argue that the ESL teachers' demand is a genuine one because according to the national curriculum for basic education in Namibia, "all teachers have the responsibility to improve the learners' oral skills in discussion, reflection and reporting; their perceptual skills in using different types of reading techniques and materials; and their written skills especially in summaries, note taking, writing papers and reports" (Ministry of Education, 2010b:27). Correspondingly, the national curriculum for basic education in Namibia stipulates that "teachers must be aware of where the learners have limited English skills and must provide opportunities for the learners to exercise them" (Ministry of Education, 2010b:27). Consequently, it is important to reiterate that the content subject teachers are also expected to help their learners improve their writing skills. However, given the fact that the majority of Namibian teachers have poor English language proficiency and that they were not trained to teach language related contents (Ipinge; 2013 Harris; 2011), one can argue that this is an unrealistic expectation. In summary, content subject teachers are expected to help their learners improve their writing skills and other relevant language skills.

However, this seems to be a daunting task to them because their English proficiency is poor and they are not trained to teach language related contents. For these reasons one cannot really blame them for failing to help their learners with English when necessary.

To conclude this section, it is important to acknowledge the fact that the ESL teachers and their HODs have identified and pointed out potential causes of learners' writing problems. However, what is interesting is that they did not blame the Namibian pro-English policy for causing some of the problems that their learners are experiencing when writing essays in English. Perhaps the teachers and the HODs are not aware that the language policy has a potential of causing some of the writing problems, but one can argue that their attitudes towards the language policy are tremendously positive and hence they do not want to blame the language policy for causing writing problems among their learners. Given the fact that the Namibian language in education policy does not allow the use of mother languages in education (Wolfaardt, 2002) as mentioned earlier, it is clear that learning outcomes will be always poor. Therefore, ESL teachers and HODs need to understand that "improved students learning outcomes come about when pro-mother language policy, well implemented accompanies a range of other educational and developmental initiatives" (Trudell, 2016:95).

7.1.3 Strategies used by teachers to help learners write better in English and reasons for using them.

The respondents were asked to talk about the strategies that they use in order to help their learners write better, and to give reasons as to why they use those specific strategies. Surprisingly, the majority of them were not able to talk about the strategies which they use to help their learners write better, despite the fact that I probed them several times. It seems that they have no strategies in place which they use to help their learners write better. However, a few teachers and some HODs mentioned that in order to help their learners write better, they give them a lot of writing activities because they believe that learners would improve their writing if they are practicing more and more. In addition, they mentioned that they ask their learners to read very often because reading very often will help them to see how others write and eventually they (learners)

will improve their writing skills. Besides, the respondents said that they mark the learners' essays in their presence because this strategy gives them a chance to hear from learners as to why they write the way they write and it is also good because the learners have a chance of asking about whatever they do not understand. Finally, the respondents also mentioned that they use 'spider diagrams' when teaching writing essays because they believe that this strategy would help learners to write well organized essays and that it helps them to address all the prompts given to them. Thus, commenting on the strategies which they use to help their learners write better, some of the respondents said:

Teacher 1: *"One of the strategy is just to give them a lot of writing activities....to practice because they say practice make it perfect, so we believe... they should write a lot so that they can improve. So, I have to give them a lot of writing"*.

Teacher 2: *"I expose them to many reading materials such as essays, reports and stories...so that they can learn how an idea is introduced and developed". So, encouraging them to visit the Library and read...is important"*.

Teacher 3: *"When it comes to writing a letter, an article and so forth...I make use of a spider diagram. It is important especially when it comes to making sure that they have answered the question fully"*.

Teacher 4: *"Okey what I use...I give them an activity. Let us say to write an essay and when I am marking that essay, the learner is also there. So, I ask the learner now...how do you understand the question and the learner will tell me and then I ask now...why you wrote it like this...we discuss all the other things"*.

HOD3: *" I give them examples, and I give them activities for them...for me to assess whether they are following what I am giving them or not. But I like giving them a lot of activities...just for them to master"*.

HOD6: *"For these types of essays, I give them model answers for letters, essays...but still, these guys they do not know the difference...the structure itself. We also do dictation...at least we are seeing some improvements, not like back in the days"*

As mentioned earlier, it is encouraging that the ESL and teachers and the HODs are aware of the problems that their learners are experiencing when writing essays in English. However, on the other hand, what is discouraging is that the majority of teachers do not have ideas on how to help their learners write better essays in English. What is even more worrying, is that some of the HODs also lack ideas on how to help students write better. Therefore, I argue that even though students experience a number of writing problems, nothing is done to address these problems, and as a result, learners would hardly improve their writing skills.

Furthermore, apart from the fact that the majority of teachers and some HODs do not use any intervention strategies to help their learners write better essays, the strategies that are used by their fellow teachers and HODs who at least do something to address learners' writing problems are quite unrealistic and therefore questionable. For instance, the teachers and HODs mentioned that they give their learners a lot of writing activities. This strategy is questionable because I have indicated in my field notes that a number of classes are overcrowded and teachers themselves have lamented that they do not give a lot of writing activities because the learners are just too many. Therefore, one doubts if giving a lot of writing activities is a realistic strategy. Again, the teachers have suggested that they work one-to-one with students marking their essays. As Gerhard (2014:229) recommends, "conferencing with the student over his or her writing helps a student to improve his or her writing skills". However, in the case of ESL teachers in question, I argue that this strategy cannot also work because their classes are just too full. Similarly, I also argue that asking or telling the learners to read very often, as the ESL teachers have indicated is also not a realistic intervention strategy because as I have indicated in my field notes, some schools do not have enough reading materials while others do not have reading materials at all.

To conclude this section, it is important to note that it would be good if ESL teachers and their HODs can use specific strategies to address specific writing problems. I argue that this is necessary because giving a lot of writing activities for example, cannot really help learners to overcome the problem of 'misinterpreting questions'. In the case of

misinterpreting questions for instance, as Barry (2013:5) proposes, “the teacher can write a question on the board and ask students to come forward and underline key words. This can lead to a useful discussion as to whether these are, in fact, the ‘key’ words, and, if not, why”. Possibly, another strategy that can be used to help learners interpret questions correctly would be using Oshiwambo when interpreting such questions to the learners.

7.1.4 Using Oshiwambo to help learners understand English lessons

During the interviews, the teachers and the HODs were also asked to talk about how they use Oshiwambo to help their learners understand English lessons. Here, the respondents had mixed opinions. The majority of them said that they do not use Oshiwambo at all, while a few teachers said they use it quite often. The respondents who do not use Oshiwambo in class said they do not use it because it is not allowed by the language policy. Also, they feel that it would be of no use using Oshiwambo in the English class because the examination would be exclusively in English and therefore using Oshiwambo in class would imply that learners would not learn English effectively. Furthermore, on the contrary, respondents who use Oshiwambo in their English lessons mentioned that they do so because they believe that using Oshiwambo would facilitate learning English better. Commenting on the issue of using Oshiwambo to help learners understand the English lessons, some of the respondents said:

Teacher 1: *“Like in my case...I do not use Oshiwambo. I decided I better not talk to them in Oshiwambo so often. Because they get used to Oshiwambo too much, and they will not have that chance during the examination. It is better for me to force them down for them to use English.”*

Teacher 2: *“Oshiwambo...I avoid doing that because I believe that the moment I start explaining in the Oshiwambo, then they understand better... then they will get used and they will never understand in English. So, what I do...I try to explain in English and that is it. If they do not understand they can ask the others. I do not really try to explain in Oshiwambo”*

Teacher 3: *“Yes I do. Because I find it very helpful. Especially when you are defining something, you can even translate it to Oshiwambo. Not that much, but I have to do it only when they do not understand something. I have to shift to Oshiwambo”*

Teacher 4: *“Like when you are teaching active and passive...there I can use Oshiwambo, just to identify this one is a ...Oshiningwa (object), this one is Omuningi (Subject), this one is what...There they can get you”.*

HOD4: *“Sometimes when you stick completely to English and you explain to these learners...I just realize that sometimes you talk to these learners, they pretend to understand but they only hear. That is why we just code-switch a bit although me...I do not encourage that...whether you teach kids in Oshiwambo, the question will come and require the answer in English.”*

HOD5: *“Not at all...especially in the teaching of English you do not use Oshiwambo. But...errr what is really discouraging is that...yes we have a language policy at school that says all the subjects should be taught in English...the medium of instruction must be English. Only those Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga where they can use their mother tongue. But in some of the subjects for instance Biology and other teachers, they do not have a problem...Agriculture! You find them teaching in Oshiwambo. So, sometimes that will not help. Even if you now try to be strict with English, in our English lessons, other teachers they use Oshiwambo”.*

These findings indicate that the majority of the respondents do not believe that Oshiwambo can be used to reinforce the teaching and learning of English. This is because most of them have indicated that using Oshiwambo in the English classroom would make learners fail English. Indeed, the ESL teachers believe that using English only medium of instruction is a necessity for effective teaching and learning of English. This is a clear indication that the ESL teachers hold a monolingual ideology which entails that the teaching of English should be solely done through English medium and that the use of mother language in the English classroom would negatively affect the learning of English (Phillipson, 1992). Also, these findings reveal that the ESL teachers

stick to English-only medium of instruction without considering the pedagogical implications of doing so. Consequently, I argue that the ESL teachers need to be taught the educational or academic benefits of using one language to teach knowledge and skills of another language (Clegg & Simpson, 2016). Certainly, using the mother tongue when teaching the second language would imply positive learning outcomes (Ouane & Glanz, 2011; Early & Norton 2014; Prah & Brock-Utne, 2009). That is why in South Africa for instance, Taylor and Coetzee (2013) as cited by Trudell (2016:101) found that “mother -tongue instruction in early grade significantly improves English acquisition as measured in grades 4-6”.

7.1.5 Content subject teachers and the use of Oshiwambo

After listening to how respondents use Oshiwambo to help their learners understand English lessons, I deemed it necessary to get their opinions on whether the content subject teachers use Oshiwambo to explain their subjects. I also wanted to know their opinion as to why the content subject teachers use or do not use Oshiwambo in their lessons. Unsurprisingly, the principal finding here was that ESL teachers believe that content subject teachers regularly use Oshiwambo in their lessons. Some ESL teachers felt that the content subject teachers use Oshiwambo in their lesson because they want learners to understand their subjects better. Others felt that the content subject teachers use Oshiwambo in their classes because their English language proficiency is poor and therefore it is difficult for them to stick to English during their lessons. On the other hand, the HODs felt that content subject teachers use Oshiwambo in their lessons because the learners’ English background is not good and hence using Oshiwambo would help the learners understand the content better. These were some of the respondents’ key comments:

Teacher 1: *“From my experience...some they used to explain in Oshiwambo to make the learners understand better...the way I see it. Because that is what they say...because sometimes you try to say something...you know, in the briefing why others are teaching in Oshiwambo. They say...No! We also want our learners also to understand better...the content.”*

Teacher 2: *“The content subject teachers are mostly teaching in Oshiwambo and as per their says, they are doing it to help their learners understand better...the subject. They say it makes it easier for learners who have a problem understanding English to understand the topic being taught”*

Teacher 3: *“Yes they do! Content subject teachers also experience difficulties in using English and that situation forces them to use Oshiwambo during their lessons”*

Teacher 4: *“The content subject teachers always teach in Oshiwambo...Sometimes is just ignorance, the person cannot just cope teaching the whole lesson in English. The person is used.”*

HOD6: *“I think they use Oshiwambo...errr because they can see the background of the learners is very poor. For learners to understand very well. But you know those content subject teachers sometimes they do not really look at grammar. They only look at the content. But in English here we have to make sure that everything is correct”.*

These findings are not new in Namibia, because Wolfaardt (2002) has also found that teachers code-switch from English to mother-tongue to make the subject matter clear so that all learners can understand them. Apart from Wolfaardt (2002), Iiping (2013) found that content subject teachers encounter a lot of problems when teaching through the medium of English and therefore resort to code-switching to ensure that their students understand the concepts that are being taught.

Moreover, some ESL teachers feel that the content subject teachers use Oshiwambo in their classes simply because their English language proficiency is poor. Again, these findings are not peculiar in Namibia because Wolfaardt (2002) has also found that teachers who code-switch to mother language when teaching has been described by other teachers as weak and lacking decent English language proficiency. This means that some teachers in Namibia, especially English teachers, have very positive attitudes to English and therefore would always be against the use of Oshiwambo as a LOLT alongside English irrespective of whether it will be beneficial to use it (Oshiwambo) or not (Harris, 2011). Accordingly, I argue that ESL teachers need to change their

attitudes towards the use of Oshiwambo in teaching English and content subjects because teaching learners in an unfamiliar language implies that learning outcomes will be poor. That is why in Tanzania for example, “the use of English as the LOLT serves as a barrier for learning of subject matter for millions of youngsters” (Brock-Utne, 2004:81). Again, Bamgbose (2005:253) maintains that “Educational failure largely arises from a mismatch between subject matter and the language of instruction”. I therefore argue that the content subject teachers revert to using Oshiwambo in their classes because they believe that the Namibian pro-English policy is not working well for their learners and perhaps needs to be amended.

7.1.6 Changing Namibia’s Pro-English policy

After discussing how content subject teachers use Oshiwambo in their classes, the discussion was shifted to the issue of changing the Namibian pro-English policy. Consequently, I asked the ESL teachers as well as their HODs to give their opinions on whether the Namibian pro-English policy should be changed to include the use of indigenous languages in education. According to most of the teachers, the Namibian pro-English policy does not need to be changed because there are no teaching materials written in Oshiwambo and that the use of Namibian indigenous languages in education would mean that learners will not have enough time to learn English. These teachers actually believe that the learners are coping well with the language policy even though they are failing English. However, there were exceptions with very few teachers arguing that the policy needs to be revised. Additionally, apart from the teachers, all the HODs said that the Namibian pro-English policy should not be changed to allow the use of indigenous languages in education because the examination will never be written in indigenous languages. These were some of the teachers as well as head of departments’ key comments:

Teacher 1: *“I think the teaching should be just in English. Strictly in English, because as far as I am concerned, I have not come across any other content subject materials that are written in Oshiwambo. So for long as subjects are written in English, it should be just taught throughout in English”*

Teacher 2: *“Yes, the policy need to be changed... because learners prefer their mother language than English. They also need to be taught in the way they will understand and learn better”.*

Teacher 3: *“Oshiwambo is their language and they like it very much. So, having a policy that allows them to do that and they know it is a policy, they will have no time for English. Most of their time is for Oshiwambo. They still like it, it is their local language, they understand each other very much in their local language. It will be worse...look at this time now that we have...the policy that allows them to speak English only, but we do not really do that, most of the time they are speaking their language. Only in the English period...that is when they speak English”.*

HOD2: *“Practically if we are to change the policy, I think it will not be beneficial to our learners because now if we trying to teach our learners...when we have an English lesson and then we choose to explain things in another language, vernacular language. I see it as spoiling learners. Because these learners they will never be asked to write an examination and explain in Oshiwambo. That part will never be there. So, I think the policy is so fine. It’s just us teachers at least to adjust ourselves and at least keep up the policy”.*

HOD4: *“But now the fact remain that whether you translate or not...are those learners going to code-switch also when they are going to write English? Or when you are going to write examination? So, because to me code switching...I do not think it will really help. It only help in some cases but we cannot really say it should be a solution to a problem. So, the problem is only the foundation. So, if we can try to lay the foundation very well, I do not think most learners are going to have a problem with English. So, you can code-switch but if learners already have a problem...they were not taught tenses, they were not taught anything from lower grades, whenever you code-switch or translate, I do not think it will make a difference. That is my opinion.”*

As it can be seen in the above quotations, the findings of this study show that the majority of the ESL teachers I interviewed do not support the idea that the Namibian

pro-English policy should be changed to allow for the use of indigenous languages in education. The teachers are concerned about changing the policy because they think that there are no printed materials to support the new policy and that using indigenous languages in education will minimize the time for learning English. Similarly, these findings show that the head of departments have negative attitudes towards the use of Oshiwambo in the classroom because of its low status in the Namibian education system. Hence, I argue that the reasons provided by the teachers as well as the HODs are not genuine, but ideologically influenced, and that their negative attitudes incline them to oppose the use of indigenous languages in education.

This reflection is not new in Namibia because Ipinge (2013) found that the majority of teachers were against the amendment of the Namibian pro-English policy because they felt that examinations are not written in Oshiwambo and that some learners might want to study abroad after completing their secondary schools. Accordingly, I argue that keeping the Namibian pro-English policy as it is would mean poor education outcomes because as Naukushu (2009) laments, the Namibian pro-English policy has negative impact on grade 12 learners' performance in Namibian schools. Thus, if Namibians are serious about improving the performance of the grade 12 learners, especially in ESL, changing the current language policy should be one of the strategies to be considered.

7.1.7 Strategies for improving the performance of grade 12 learners in ESL

The respondents were also asked to give suggestion on how to improve the performance of grade 12 learners in ESL. According to the teachers, grade 12 learners should be given a lot of activities especially writing and listening activities. Also, the teachers suggested that the grade 12 learners need to be motivated to take English seriously because it is an important subject in the school curriculum. Apart from that, the teachers also felt that for the grade 12 learners to perform well in ESL, their content subject teachers should ensure that they teach in English at all times and they should also take part in helping learners to develop and acquire necessary ESL knowledge and competencies. Besides, the majority of the ESL teachers are of the opinion that, in order

for the grade 12 learners to improve their performance in ESL, the current language in education policy should be changed to allow learners to be taught in English as from grade one. Finally, the HODs have only suggested one strategy. According to them, the grade 12 learners can only improve their performance in ESL if all the content subject teachers are also teaching language related skills. Commenting on this issue, some of the respondents said:

Teacher 1: *“I think the very first thing, the basic thing that must be done, is to encourage learners and to motivate them and also to sensitize them to the importance of education. Because otherwise they have a vision of what...? So probably the importance of English as a subject itself is the one that needs to be sensitized to the learners to realize that if they fail English, they cannot go anywhere”.*

Teacher 2: *“We have colleagues teaching other subjects as well, and you find them teaching in the vernacular or in this mother tongue. They are not helping us that much that we are not really meeting somewhere with these English problems. So, I think they can also help us and just correct these spelling mistakes in their subjects and speak English whenever they are delivering their subjects...then at least we will get somewhere.”*

Teacher 3: *“They need to be given lots of activities. They need to write more than speaking. I want to indicate that most of the problems are caused by lack of practice. One has to practice, to improve the language in general and spelling to be specific”.*

Teacher 4: *“The third problem is within the language policy. From grade 1-12, I think kids they have to be taught in English... from grade one or pre-primary in order to be exposed to many things in English. Now these kids only start with English in grade 4.”*

HOD3: *“The content subject teachers...they must also help our learners improve their performance in English. In most cases I observed some classes there...that they always try to explain some of the item in Oshiwambo. To that extent is not a big damage, but the problem, the language rules...the tenses, the proper sentence construction, these items...on the side of content based subject teachers, they tend to ignore that and...it’s*

a wide trend in the whole country. They only focus on the content of the subject and the damage...that is why you find that a kid could have an A in Physics, or Biology but it's a U in English. But all the subjects were taught in English”*

In general, giving a lot of activities will help grade 12 learners improve their performance in ESL. However, in the case of the schools that were part of this study, I doubt that giving a lot of activities to the learners is possible because as mentioned earlier, the classes are overcrowded and the ESL teachers and their HODs agreed that they do not give a lot of activities because their learners are too many. Similarly, I think in general, content subjects' teachers can help their grade 12 learners improve their performance in ESL through teaching relevant English knowledge and skills. As Wolfaardt (2002:80) explains “every teacher should be a language teacher in the sense that all content subject teachers must also have some knowledge of English in their subjects”. However, I doubt if content subject teachers at the school that were part of the current study are able to help their grade 12 learners improve their performance in ESL because it is believed that content subject teachers themselves do not have sufficient English language proficiency (Iiping 2013; Shaalukeni 2002). Furthermore, it is important to reiterate that the findings of this study indicate that the majority of ESL teachers feel that the best way to improve the performance of grade 12 learners in ESL would be to effect English medium instruction as early as grade one, thereby demonstrating their positive ideological stance towards English medium instruction. However, I argue that introducing English medium as early as grade one will not really improve grade 12 learners' performance in ESL. As Phillipson (1992:203) recommends, “pupils should begin their schooling through the medium of the mother tongue, because they understand it best and because to begin their school life in the mother tongue will make the break between home and school as small as possible”.

7.1.8 The HODs and the effective teaching and learning of English

The English HODs are responsible for the effective teaching and learning of English at their respective schools. Therefore, during my interviews with the HODs, I asked them a question which I did not ask during the teachers' focus group interviews. This

question required them to talk about what they do to ensure effective teaching and learning in the department of English at their respective schools. On this issue, the heads of departments have revealed that they make sure that their teachers have the relevant documents, such as the latest syllabus and the prescribed textbooks. They also monitor learners' work and teachers' preparation files. Finally, the heads of departments do classroom observations or class visit in order to ensure that their teachers are teaching accordingly. Thus, commenting on the issue of ensuring effective teaching and learning in the English department, some of the heads of departments said:

HOD1: *“Through monitoring. I used to monitor my teachers. I make sure that we have all the necessary documents, so that we do not have reasons to say I do not have A or B, and I have also to monitor the lesson preparation files, whether colleagues are really preparing for lessons, I have to do the class observation, just to make sure that teaching is taking place. I also monitor their learners' book. Even their summary books and their exercises, just for me to familiarize myself with the content which the colleagues are busy with at the class”.*

HOD2: *“ So, now one have...you know, as a head of department, one have monitoring tools that we use to ensure that the teaching of English is taking place. You know...we have class visit. Where by you have to go to class...it can be a surprise class visit. You do not inform a teacher that you are going to visit...just pop up and find a teacher teaching, to see if what the teacher doing is right. So, after that you can also go through the learners work to see the volume of work that teachers give, look at the tests...”.*

HOD6: *“First of all we make sure that the teachers have relevant documents. Like the latest syllabus, prescribed textbooks and stationary for learners like exercise books and other materials. Then also we do the monitoring of learners' work and the teachers' preparations etc.”*

The findings of the current study have revealed that the English heads of departments are doing their level best to ensure that there is sufficient teaching and learning taking place at their schools. According to the National subject policy guide for English

second language (grade 5-12), “the English head of department should continuously monitor teaching and learning by motivating teachers and learners, monitoring learners’ progress by analyzing written work, assignments and assessment results” (Ministry of Education, 2009 :5). This seems to be what the heads of departments are doing and according to them, sometimes they go beyond what the ‘national subject guide for English second language’ requires them to do. For this reason, the heads of departments deserve to be commended for their hard work. However, I argue that as long as the learners are learning through an unfamiliar language (English) as mentioned before, what the English heads of departments are doing at their respective schools will not really make a difference in terms of improving learners’ academic performance in ESL. It seems there are a lot of policy and pedagogical related issues that are hindering effective learning and teaching in ESL classrooms as examined and addressed in the next section.



7.2 Findings from classroom observations

As mentioned earlier, the classroom observations were meant to give the actual picture of what happens in the ESL classrooms. As a result, I used an unstructured observation protocol to record relevant observations as they occurred in the ESL classrooms. Afterwards, about six themes were created from the unstructured observation protocols. Among others, these include; learners’ inadequate English proficiency, how ESL teachers use Oshiwambo in their classes, the dominance of explicit grammar instructions, and so on.

7.2.1 Learners’ inadequate English language proficiency

After observing a number of English lessons, I concluded that the majority of learners at the schools which were part of this study lack sufficient English language proficiency. Indeed, there are a number of things that indicate that the learners in question are not good at English. Firstly, these learners try to speak to their teachers in Oshiwambo during the English lessons. For example, in one of the lessons, a learner stood up trying to leave the class and then the teacher asked; “*where are you going?*”

Unhesitatingly, the learner answered in Oshiwambo; “*Kwathelandje miss, otandi kiipemba (May I please go and clean my nose?)*”. Secondly, the learners themselves have clearly indicated that they can express themselves better in the vernacular (Oshiwambo). For instance, in one of the classes, the teachers asked the learners to explain the use of the present perfect tense and none of the learners could do this. Later, one learner said; “*Sir, I can only explain it in Oshiwambo, not in English*”. In another instance, I observed a teacher chasing out two learners from her lesson because they refused to perform a role play. Possibly, these learners were willing to perform the role play as requested by the teacher but their poor English proficiency did not allow them to do so. Finally, I also observed that a number of learners are reluctant to ask questions during their English lessons because they are not confident enough to express themselves in English. Therefore, even though there is something that they do not understand, they just keep quiet.

These findings clearly indicate that learners in Northern Namibia do not participate fully during the ESL lessons because their English language proficiency does not allow them to do so. It is important however, to note that these findings are not new in Northern Namibia because Shaalukeni (2002:96) also found that “learners in Northern Namibia had serious problems expressing themselves in the target language (English)”. Therefore, one can easily infer that learners in Northern Namibia do not learn ESL effectively because their English language proficiency is not up to standard. As Simasiku, Kasanda and Smit (2015:322) argue, “English only medium of instruction restrain learners from participating in ESL classrooms” and hence poor performance in ESL can be anticipated (Ipinge, 2013).

7.2.2 How ESL teachers use Oshiwambo during their lessons

One of the main observations which emerged from the classroom observation is that the ESL teachers use Oshiwambo when trying to maintain order in their lessons. In one instance for example, one learner asked the teacher; “*What is the meaning of the word ‘several’?*” The rest of the class started giggling and immediately the teacher said in Oshiwambo; “*Omuntu nge okwapula itashiti okwapuka (It is not wrong to ask a*

question)". In another scenario, a teacher saw two learners at the back of the class who were not paying attention while he was teaching and immediately said to them in Oshiwambo; "*Hey uumentu nee...andimudhenge nena! (Hey you boys...I will beat you!)*". Furthermore, although the ESL teachers use Oshiwambo to maintain order in their classes, they hardly use it to facilitate the learning of English. For example, one of the teachers was teaching the 'active voice and passive voice'. After giving a number of explanations, he realized that the students did not understand. Instead of using Oshiwambo to explain the topic better, the teacher said to the students; "*Do you have passive voice in Oshiwambo? Yes! You can connect to Oshiwambo*".

These findings suggest that teachers are aware of the fact that their learners understand them better when they talk to them in the vernacular language (Oshiwambo). However, it appears that the teachers are reluctant to use Oshiwambo when teaching ESL because the language policy does not allow it. This is worrying because sticking to English only as the language policy dictates imply that the learners would not learn effectively. As Brock-Utne (2004:60) laments, "teachers who are faithful to the policy of using English only as medium of instruction in secondary schools are just concerned with teaching, not with learning".

7.2.3 The dominance of explicit grammar instructions

Another important reflection that was obtained from the classroom observations is that the ESL lessons are overwhelmingly dominated by explicit grammar instructions. For instance, in one of the lessons, the teacher spent one hour and thirty minutes (double periods) teaching the class how to form singular and plural nouns. In another class, the teacher was teaching the rules of forming the 'perfect tenses'. Lastly, in a different lesson, the teacher was teaching how to form the passive and the active voice, and gave the learners an exercise that required them (learners) to rewrite active voice sentences into the passive voice. One thing which is worth mentioning about the three lessons that have been just described is that a number of learners was seen sleeping and the teachers kept on telling them not to sleep. It seems that the learners find it very difficult

to understand explicit grammar instructions and therefore lose interest in the lessons and start sleeping.

According to Pica (1994), for ESL students to learn effectively, teachers should strike a balance between explicit instruction and more inductive, communicative instructions. However, these findings reveal that teachers in Northern Namibia hardly pay attention to communicative language instructions. From my experience of teaching ESL in Northern Namibia, I can confidently conclude that ESL teachers revert to explicit grammar instructions because their students cannot cope with communicative instructions because their (learners) English proficiency is not up to standard. The ESL teachers might be also reverting to explicit grammar instructions because their teachers' training did not prepare them well in order to be able to use communicative and interactive teaching approaches. This situation may have a negative impact on learning, because what the learners learn in class does not reflect everyday language use. For instance, paying more attention on how to form different tenses will not really help students to successfully use them (tenses) in context. Possibly, the reason why a lot of students in Northern Namibia cannot use tenses correctly as indicated before, is because the tenses are not taught in a communicative manner.

7.2.4 ESL English proficiency and knowledge of English as a subject

One of the positive observations that I made during classroom observation is that ESL teachers have very good proficiency in English. As a matter of fact, I did not observe any ESL teacher who is not capable enough in terms of expressing him/herself in English. On the other hand, I have observed that the majority of the ESL teachers, despite this proficiency, still makes a number of errors when teaching the language. In one of the lessons, for instance, a teacher who was teaching singular forms and plural forms of nouns told the learners that the plural form of 'fireproof' is 'fireprooves', whilst the word 'fireproof' itself is not even a noun. In another case, one of the ESL teachers did not know what the 'past perfect tense' was and hence failed to explain it to the learners. Similarly, another ESL teacher explained to the learners that they can use the article 'a' instead of the 'an' before the word 'European' because the word

'European' is a proper noun. In all these three situations, I saw learners confidently writing their teachers' explanations in their notebooks.

These findings suggest that possibly, the ESL teachers contribute to the learners' English language problems because of their teachers' providing them with the wrong information. Although teachers have indicated that they are not given relevant workshops, as specified in my field notes, it is important that they prepare very well for their lessons to avoid giving wrong information to the learners. Likewise, they should avoid giving answers to their learners if they are not sure about them. As Brown and Lee (2015) have recommended, if teachers do not know how to explain something, they should not take the risk of giving false information. Rather, they should tell students that they will do research and bring the answer the following day.

7.2.5 How multimodal is the teaching of ESL?

After observing a number of ESL lessons, I established that the teaching of ESL in Northern Namibia is not multimodal. To begin with, the classrooms in which ESL is taught have no supporting English posters or any English materials on their walls. This is how one teacher commented on this issue:

Teacher: *"We cannot put posters in classes that are for every teacher. If we could have had the mobile system...English with its own class that is fixed for English...we could have these things. Even if you put, no protection, you put it today, tomorrow it is torn. Doors are even not locked and so on."*

As seen from the above quotation, the teachers are reluctant to hang English teaching and learning materials in the classes which are used for teaching other subjects as well. Besides, the teachers feel that the learners will always destroy the posters because the classes are not lockable. However, I really do not agree with this argument because I have been to a number of classes that are not lockable but have a number of things on the notice board, such as lists of class rules, syllabus of different subjects, posters of musicians and pictures of soccer players.

Moreover, apart from the classrooms, I think the teachers themselves are not multimodal in their teaching of ESL because the majority of them do not use hand gestures and other relevant body language in order to facilitate learning. Also, the majority of teachers rely heavily on the use of the chalk board. In the world of modern technology, one expects the ESL teachers to use teaching aids such as videos, radios, and other technological related teaching aids. To make matters worse, some teachers do not even use the chalk board. They just stand in front the classroom, talk and then the learners write their summaries or notes accordingly.

It is easy to conclude that these findings indicate that learners in Northern Namibian are not learning ESL as successfully as they could because their English lessons, teachers and their classrooms are not multimodal. As Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) stress, 'multimodality' requires teachers to ensure that classroom interactions are not merely based on spoken and written language, but on semiotic resources such as images, gestures and actions as well. This is important because if ESL teachers solely rely on spoken and written language to convey meaning in the classrooms, their learners will find their lessons boring. Furthermore, it is important to reiterate that, as indicated in my field notes, a number of learners sleep during the ESL lessons. Probably, this predicament occurs because the lessons are not sufficiently stimulating, which a multimodal approach could definitely improve. As a result, like Mwanza (2016), I am of the opinion that teachers need to combine spoken and written language with other communication forms in order to make the learning experience interesting and motivating for the learners, as well as to ensure that the meaning that is being conveyed in the classroom is effectively and meaningfully received.

7.2.6 ESL teachers and the learner-centred approach

Shaalukeni (2002) suggests that the Namibian ESL syllabi and the ESL subject policy necessitate ESL teachers to use the learner-centred approach in their teaching. Accordingly, during the classroom observations, I had to look at whether the teachers were using this approach. Surprisingly, I observed that virtually all the ESL teachers were using a teacher-centred approach instead. In fact, the ESL lessons I observed were

dominated by teacher-talks. The teachers kept on talking and asking a number of questions while the learners gave answers to the questions individually. For example, in one of the lessons, the teacher was teaching learners how to skim-read, and this is how the lesson proceeded:

Teacher: *When do we read?*

Learners: *Gave individual responses*

Teacher: *Why do we read?*

Learners: *Gave individual responses*

Teacher: *How do we read?*

Learners: *Gave individual responses*

Teacher: *What is to Skim?*

Learners: *Gave individual responses*



Furthermore, I also observed that the sitting arrangements in their classes did not support the learner-centred approach. In almost all the classes, the learners were not sitting in groups. Besides this, I also observed that the learners were hardly given group work because even in the few classes in which learners were sitting in groups, no group work was given. This observation was quite interesting and therefore I asked some of the teachers to talk about it:

Teacher: *“When you are speaking about examination writing...exams are not written in groups. So, learners must be trained to be able to operate independently. Because that is what the really examination room is going to demand from them. Ok? Some of them are going to develop a dependence syndrome”.*

These findings clearly indicate that ESL teachers in Northern Namibia do not employ the learner-centred approach, which supports the findings of Shaalukeni (2002), who found that teachers have limited understanding of the learner-centred approach and that teacher talk dominated over learner talk. Possibly, it is not easy for ESL teachers to use

the learner-centred approach because the learners' English language proficiency is not up to standard. Therefore, when teachers stick to the teacher-centred approach, it is obvious that learners will have limited chances of participating in the classroom and this implies that they would not learn reflectively and effectively because they are just passive recipient of knowledge and information. I therefore concur with Prah and Brock-Utne (2009:43) who lament that "using the foreign language as medium of instruction prevents learner-centred and interactive teaching methods, thus becoming a barrier to critical thinking and understanding of academic subject matter".

Moreover, these findings suggest that teachers in Northern Namibia do not believe in group work. Possibly, teachers do not like group work because their learners cannot successfully converse in English as mentioned earlier. However, these ESL teachers need to understand that group work has been found to be beneficial in the ESL classroom. Castanos (1976) for instance, as cited by Pica (1994:61), found that group work enables students to use language across a broader range of social and interpersonal functions than lock-step, teacher-led classroom interaction". Correspondingly, Doughty and Pica (1986) as cited by Pica (1994:63) found that "group work provided second language learning opportunities as long as groups worked on information-gap tasks, which required a two-way exchange of information and participation among all group members". Hence, I argue that despite the fact that learners in Northern Namibia do not possess decent English language proficiency, it is important that they are given group work at all times in order for them to get a chance to use English, and then improve their English language competence. For the group work to function efficiently, it is important that learners are allowed to use their mother tongue (Oshiwambo) whenever it is necessary.

7.2.7 ESL classrooms and the social constructivist paradigm

The final observation which was recorded in the ESL classrooms is that they (ESL classrooms) do not reflect the 'social constructivist paradigm', which is a contemporary teaching and learning philosophy. It seems the ESL teachers do not approach teaching and learning from a 'constructivist perspective'. According to Mutekwe et al.

(2013:57), “constructivist classrooms require students to actively construct their own knowledge”. However, I have observed that in a number of ESL classrooms, students passively receive knowledge from their teachers. In one of the lessons for example, the teacher was teaching the class how to identify main points from a written text. Therefore, the teacher identified the main points for the learners while the learners wrote the main points in the note books as given by the teacher. This practice is not good because it makes the learners depend so much on the teachers and eventually their English competence would hardly improve because they are not responsible for their own learning.

Moreover, Applefield et al. (2001) remark that in the ‘constructivist classroom’, everything is centred on the students. Indeed, the focus of the teacher is on guiding rather than telling the students (Applefield et al., 2001). However, the overwhelming majority of ESL lessons that I observed were dominated by teacher talk. Possibly, the teachers dominate the classroom discourse because the learners are not willing to participate due to their poor English proficiency. Therefore, I argue that the constructivist classrooms would only be a reality in Northern Namibia if learners are allowed to use their mother language (Oshiwambo) during the ESL lessons. Otherwise confining them to English only would mean that they would hardly participate during the ESL lessons and hence their teachers would not have a choice but to dominate the classroom discourses.

Additionally, in the ‘constructivist classroom’ students are expected to ask questions instead of answering questions (Applefield et al., 2001). This however, did not happen in the ESL lessons that I have observed. It appears that students hardly ask questions because their English proficiency is not good. In one of the lessons for example, the teacher was teaching ‘direct and indirect speech’. After giving a number of explanations, she wanted to establish if the learners understood:

Teacher: *Do you have questions?*

Learners: *Did not respond (the whole class was just quiet)*

Teacher: *Can we proceed?*

Learners: *Did not respond (the whole class was quiet)*

Teacher: *Can we just proceed?*

Learners: *Did not respond (everybody looked puzzled)*

Looking at what happened in that particular lesson, one can easily infer that learners can hardly ask questions during the ESL lessons because their English proficiency is not up to standard. Therefore, even though there is something which is not clear to them, they would not ask the teacher to explain it further. There is no doubt that for the learners to be able to ask questions freely, they need to be allowed to use their mother language (Oshiwambo) whenever there is a necessity. This will eventually allow the ESL teachers to approach teaching and learning from a 'constructivist perspective'.

Another important aspect of the 'constructivist classroom' is that students are given ample opportunity to negotiate and collaborate meaning with their peers as well as their teachers (Applefield et al., 2001). However, I observed that this was not happening in ESL classrooms in Northern Namibia because of the language barrier. In one of the lessons observed for instance, the teacher gave his students some pair work. The students started discussing the topic very loudly in Oshiwambo and then the teacher said; "*Is that English?*" As a result, some learners stopped their discussion altogether, while others continued whispering, in Oshiwambo. As I have argued before, this clearly shows that the 'social constructivist classroom' is likely not to be a reality if teachers and learners are not allowed to use Oshiwambo. Without a doubt, learners will not interact freely and productively as required by the 'social constructivist paradigm'.

7.3 Findings from the ESL teachers' questionnaires

After collecting qualitative data from both teachers and learners, I needed to supplement it with quantitative data. Accordingly, I administered a structured questionnaire to all the ESL teachers that were part of the current study, including the

English heads of departments. This questionnaire consisted of twenty statements which were classified into three tables and then these three tables were analyzed accordingly.

Table 7.3.1: Teachers’ training and language policy issues

Statement	Responses				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
As part of your teacher training, you learned about the Namibian language in education policy	29%	42%	13%	6%	10%
Your teacher training prepared you very well for teaching English	35%	42%	3%	13%	6%
You regularly attend workshops and seminars to help you improve your English teaching skills	16%	52%	0%	26%	6%

As can be seen in table 7.5.2 above, the majority of the respondents (42%) indicated that they learned about the Namibian language in education policy. Also, 42% of the respondents indicated that they are well prepared for teaching English. Finally, 52% of the respondents said that they attend workshops and seminars to improve their English teaching skills. Thus, these findings show that the teachers report that they are familiar with the Namibian language in education policy and that they have confidence in teaching English. However, one can doubt if the teachers are prepared very well for teaching English. As mentioned earlier, teachers seem to lack sufficient knowledge of English as a school subject. Besides, I have indicated in my field notes that the teachers only use one teaching method. That is; the ‘question and answer method’. Therefore, even though the teachers might be using only one teaching method because the learners are not proficient enough in English, there are no clear indications that they have received proper training in terms of teaching English. Besides, it is also not clear whether the workshops and seminars that teachers attend are relevant and helpful. Consequently, I argue that the teachers’ workshops and seminars need to directly

address issues related to teaching ESL as a school subject, as well as to the use of English as medium of instruction.

Table 7.3.2: Issues related to ESL as school subject and medium of instruction

Statement	Responses				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Your school has enough teaching and learning materials	0%	32%	10%	52%	5%
You find it easy to teach English	16%	45%	13%	23%	3%
Students come from grade 10 with good English language skills	0%	6%	0%	77%	16%
Your grade 12 learners do well in English tasks like writing essays	0%	10%	6%	68%	16%
The pass-rate for ESL in grade 12 is very good for your school	0%	0%	0%	39%	61%
Content subject teachers at your school are comfortable teaching their subject in English	0%	32%	23%	35%	10%
Your learners do well in all the content subject examinations which they write in English	3%	32%	23%	35%	6%

Your learners would do better if they could start earlier with English, even at pre-school	77%	23%	0%	0%	0%
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The most outstanding statistics in table 7.5.2 is that 61% of respondents strongly disagreed with the statement that the pass-rate for ESL in grade 12 is very good at their schools, while 39% of the respondents disagreed with the same statement. Granted, all the respondents are of the opinion that the pass-rate for ESL in grade 12 is not very good at their respective schools. However, this predicament is realistic because 52% of respondents indicated that their schools do not have enough teaching and learning materials. Apart from a lack of sufficient learning and teaching materials, 77% of respondents have shown that their students come from grade 10 with a lack of sufficient English language skills. Thus, with poor English language skills and a lack of sufficient teaching materials, I argue that the performance of grade 12 learners in ESL is likely to be undesirable. However, apart from factors such as a lack of instructional materials, I still contend that the learners are not performing well in ESL because they are taught in an unfamiliar language (English). Teaching learners in an unfamiliar language has been proven to be a challenge elsewhere. Hornberger (2009) as cited by Ndhlovu (2015:404) for example, has found that “students learn better and can have their potential unlocked to the fullest if they are taught in languages that they understand best”. Consequently, I argue that grade 12 learners in Northern Namibia will perform better in ESL if their teachers are given a chance to translanguage across the seven dialects of Oshiwambo.

Moreover, another notable statistic in table 7.5.2 is that 77% of respondents strongly agreed that their learners would do better if they could start earlier with English, even at the pre-school. Once again, the teachers have indicated that they believe in the ideology that the best way to improve the learners’ competency in ESL is by using English as medium of instruction as early as pre-primary school. It seems the teachers have very positive attitudes towards English and therefore do not think about the flaws

associated with introducing English as a medium of instruction too early. In Zambia for example, the learners who were exposed to English at an early age could not fully and coherently express what they learnt in school to their parents at home who could only communicate to them in the local language (Ipinge, 2013). Apart from the Zambian situation, in Kenya, the use of English as medium of instruction in all primary schools makes it very difficult for children from a poorer background to succeed in school. The next table presents results on the issues related to the use of Oshiwambo in the classroom in general and in the ESL classroom in particular.

Table 7.3.3 Issues related to the use of Oshiwambo in the classroom

Statement	Responses				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
You are allowed to use Oshiwambo in the teaching of English and other subjects at your school	0%	19%	6%	32%	42%
Your learners prefer to chat to each other in Oshiwambo	74%	13%	0%	6%	6%
Your learners are punished if they use Oshiwambo in class	0%	19%	3%	55%	23%
You sometimes use Oshiwambo to explain something in class	10%	45%	0%	13%	32%

You regularly use Oshiwambo to explain something in class	3%	10%	0%	39%	48%
Your learners understand better when you use some of Oshiwambo in class	16%	39%	26%	6%	13%
The use of Oshiwambo in the ESL class will harm the students' ability to learn proper English	45%	19%	10%	23%	3%
The language policy should be amended to allow the use of indigenous languages in the grade 12 classroom	23%	19%	10%	16%	32%
The National language policy should allow for the equal status of English and the indigenous languages like Oshiwambo especially in education	23%	29%	10%	10%	29%

As it is seen in table 7.5.3 above, 42% of respondents strongly disagreed with the statement that they are allowed to use Oshiwambo in the teaching of English and other subjects at their schools. In addition, 48% of respondents strongly disagreed with the statement that they regularly use Oshiwambo to explain something in class. These findings are logical because the Namibian language in education policy does not allow for the use of mother-tongue in the teaching of school subjects including English. Therefore, although sometimes teachers code-switch to the mother-tongue to simplify and clarify their explanations, they are not really free to do so because they have to

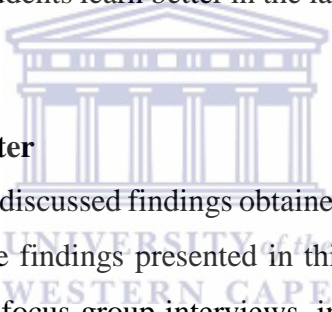
adhere to the principles of the language policy. As mentioned several times in this study, sticking to English- only as medium of instruction is likely to result in undesirable learning outcomes.

Additionally, 39% of respondents agreed that their students understood better when they used some Oshiwambo in class. These findings clearly suggest that Oshiwambo should be used in the ESL classroom if learners in Northern Namibia are to improve their competence in ESL. As mentioned earlier, sticking to English only when teaching ESL would be just a barrier to adequate language learning because research suggests that the majority of learners in Northern Namibia find it difficult to follow explanations or lessons delivered in English (Ipinge, 2013). Therefore, it can be argued that Oshiwambo should be used to facilitate and reinforce the learning of ESL.

Again, as shown in the above table, a notable statistic is that 74% of respondents strongly agreed that their learners chat to each other in Oshiwambo. As I have indicated in my field notes, an overwhelming majority of learners in Northern Namibia speak the same mother -tongue (Oshiwambo). Hence, it is difficult for them to communicate to each other in a language they do not understand well (English) while they can actually communicate in the language they all know very well. Here, it is worth noting that as I have indicated in my field notes, teachers always try to stop learners from using Oshiwambo during the ESL lessons, which is not good because if learners are not allowed to use their mother language, their participation will be always minimal, or they will be effectively silenced. That is why learners who are allowed to use their mother tongue in the classroom have the confidence to express themselves and are not afraid to ask and answer questions. (Ipinge, 2013). In addition, Trudell (2005) found that mother-tongue instruction enhances students' participation in the classroom. Accordingly, I argue that learners need to be allowed to use Oshiwambo freely during the ESL lessons if they are to participate fully in classroom interactions and hence improve their English language competence.

Finally, another striking statistic is that the majority of the respondents (45%), strongly agreed with the statement that the use of Oshiwambo in the ESL classroom will harm

the students' ability to learn proper English. Correspondingly, the majority of the participants (32%) strongly disagreed with the statement that the language policy should be amended to allow for the use of indigenous languages in the grade 12 classroom. These findings clearly indicate that ESL teachers in Northern Namibia have negative attitudes towards the use of Oshiwambo in the language classroom and that they are not aware of the educational benefits that are associated with using the mother-tongue in the second language classroom. In Nigeria for example, research has revealed that learners who were educated in a mother-tongue (Yoruba) were more proficient in school subjects, including English, than learners who were educated solely in English (Ipinge, 2013). In addition, according to Elugbe (1996), the main educational argument that one can use to support the use of the mother-tongue in the classroom is simply that students learn better in the language that they understand best.



7.4 Summary of the chapter

This chapter presented and discussed findings obtained from the ESL teachers and their HODs'. As a reminder, the findings presented in this chapter were drawn from four sources. That is; teachers' focus group interviews, interviews with HODs, classroom observations, as well as from teachers' questionnaires. Furthermore, it is worth repeating that the findings drawn from the above mentioned sources were discussed through relating them to relevant literature and in consideration with data from my field notes. Besides, it is also important to stress that the main focus of this chapter was to get ESL teachers' and HODs' perspectives on the Namibian LEP as well as on issues related to the teaching and learning of ESL in Northern Namibia-Omusati region.

According to the ESL teachers and HODs, their learners experience a number of problems they have to write essays in English. Among others, these include; failing to use different tenses correctly, misinterpreting essay questions, and failing to address 'prompts' given to them fully. According to the ESL teachers and HODs, learners experience these problems because their English back ground is poor and that they (learners) lack decent exposure to the English language.

Although the ESL teachers and HODs are aware of the numerous problems that their learners encounter when writing essays in English, it is discouraging that they do not have realistic, practical strategies that they can use to help their learners overcome or reduce writing problems. For example, the respondents said that they give lots of work in order to help their learners improve their writing skills. As argued before, this strategy cannot help learners improve their writing skills. Thus, because ESL teachers and HODs do not use relevant, practical strategies, the learners' writing problems would always be persistent.

Moreover, the findings presented in this chapter revealed that both teachers and HODs have negative attitudes towards the use of Oshiwambo in the ESL classroom and in education in general because it (Oshiwambo) has low status within the Namibian education system and as a result the ESL teachers and HODs are not supporting the idea that the Namibian pro-English policy should be changed to allow for the use of indigenous languages in education.

Finally, the findings from the classroom observations revealed a number of critical points. Firstly, the teaching of ESL in Northern Namibia is not 'multimodal'. Secondly, it has been revealed that learners are not allowed to use Oshiwambo in the ESL classroom despite the fact that their English language proficiency is not up to standard. As a result, ESL teachers rely heavily on the teacher-centred approach rather than on learner-centred approach as required by the Namibian ESL syllabi. Besides, another outcome of this predicament is that the ESL teachers are not able to use communicative teaching strategies and that they are not able to approach teaching and learning from a 'constructivist perspective'. All in all, the fact that the Learners have poor English language proficiency and that they are not allowed to use their mother-tongue in the ESL classroom has a number of negative implications on the teaching and learning of ESL in Northern Namibia. The next chapter presents a summary of the main findings, as well as conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter 8: Conclusions and Recommendations

8.0 Introduction

The previous three chapters presented and discussed the findings for this study. This chapter draws conclusions from the findings of this study and makes appropriate recommendations. As a reminder, this study posed a number of critical questions regarding the effect of the current Namibian LEP on the teaching and learning of ESL in Northern Namibia, with a special focus on one of the most demanding skills in second language - essay writing. To put it differently, this study focuses on the teaching of English in Namibia and locates the consequences of language policy in education for L2 in the context of secondary schooling with a specific focus on essay writing. Furthermore, apart from the writing problems of learners, the intervention strategies that teachers are using to help learners overcome or reduce writing problems in English were also investigated. As mentioned in Chapter One, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What have been the main consequences for Oshiwambo-speaking students of Namibia's pro-English language policy?
2. Given the differences between Oshiwambo and English, what intervention strategies do teachers use to help learners overcome or reduce writing problems in English? What are their rationales for using these intervention strategies?
3. To what extent do teachers use Oshiwambo to help students understand English?
4. Based on our current understanding of the importance of indigenous languages in education, what adaptations could be recommended for both training of teachers of English as well as the current language policy?

8.1 Summary of the main findings

The main findings are presented according to the research questions. However, it is important to mention that only the first three research questions are addressed in this section. The last research question is only addressed within the ‘recommendations’ section.

8.1.1 What have been the main consequences for Oshiwambo-speaking students of Namibia’s pro-English language policy?

This question was aimed at identifying some of the problems caused for secondary school learners of English by the current language policy of Namibia. After engaging learners and teachers and after analyzing a number of documents, this study has revealed that learners in Northern Namibia are experiencing a lot of problems as a result of this policy. To begin with, the learners are experiencing a lot of writing problems, which are well known to the learners themselves as well as their ESL teachers. These include:

- Spelling problems;
- Failing to use different tenses correctly;
- Misinterpreting essay questions, leading to a failure to develop and address all prompts given to them;
- Problems with punctuation; and
- Structuring an essay correctly.

Moreover, apart from contributing to learners’ writing problems, the current language policy of Namibia has additional consequences for the teaching and learning of English and the general school performance of learners. As a result of this language policy, students do not succeed at school in general and in English in particular because they

struggle to understand their subjects taught in English adequately. Indeed, this study has revealed that students in Northern Namibia find it difficult to follow lessons delivered in English and that they are unable to understand instructions given to them in tests and examinations.

Additionally, it is important to emphasize that the current Namibian language in education policy does not allow for the use of mother-tongue in the teaching of school subjects. As a matter of fact, the language policy document itself does not provide any guidelines on how different mother-tongues could be used in schools (Wolfaardt, 2002). Also, it is worth repeating that this study has revealed that learners in Northern Namibia have poor English proficiency. Therefore, given the fact that learners are not allowed to use their mother-tongue in the ESL classroom despite the fact that their English language proficiency is not up to standard, the teaching and learning of ESL is negatively affected.

Firstly, many learners are reluctant to ask questions during their English lessons because they are not confident enough to express themselves in English. Hence, even though there is something that they do not understand, they just keep quiet. In other words, students' participation is decreased by the language obstacle created by the enforced use of English only. Obviously, this is not good for learning because for learners to learn reflectively and rationally, they need to participate fully in the classroom discourses and this includes asking questions.

Furthermore, it appears that learners' poor English proficiency leads to teachers reverting to the teacher-centred approach instead of using the learner-centred approach as required by the ESL syllabus and the ESL subject policy. Correspondingly, students cannot work successfully and effectively in groups because of their insufficient English proficiency. In summary, the Namibian pro-English language policy hinders the successful implementation of learner-centred approaches and group works in the ESL classroom. Once again this is not encouraging because learners need to be active constructors of their own knowledge if they are to learn successfully and hence improve their English language competence.

Finally, it has been established that the Namibian pro-English policy does not allow teachers to approach teaching and learning from a 'constructivist perspective'. This is once again because the students' English proficiency is not up to standard and that the ESL classrooms confine them to English. Consequently, students are not able to ask questions freely as the 'social constructivist' classroom requires and they cannot negotiate meaning with their peers as well as their teachers because of the language barrier. Without a doubt, the constructivist classroom in Northern Namibia ESL classrooms is only practical if both teachers and learners are allowed to use their mother-tongue (Oshiwambo).

8.1.2 Given the differences between Oshiwambo and English, what intervention strategies do teachers use to help learners overcome or reduce writing problems in English? What are their rationales for using these intervention strategies?

The main aim of this question was to establish the intervention strategies or remedies used by teachers in order to overcome their learners' different writing problems in English, as well as their rationale for using these strategies. Here, it is important to mention that despite the fact that ESL teachers are aware of a number of writing problems which their students are experiencing when writing essays in English, it is worrying that some of them do not have intervention strategies in place that they can use to help learners overcome or reduce these problems.

Furthermore, this study has revealed that some ESL teachers report that they give a lot of writing activities as a way of minimizing learners' writing problems. The teachers believe that 'practice make perfect'. Therefore, giving a lot of writing activities means that learners are practicing more and more and at the end of the day, they are likely to improve their essay writing skills. This strategy is somehow questionable because the ESL teachers have indicated that they do not give a lot of writing activities because their classes are overcrowded, as I also observed.

In addition, the other strategy that ESL teachers use is that of giving learners examples or samples of different types of essays. The rationale for doing this is that it helps learners to familiarize themselves with how different types of essays are written and

therefore eventually learners would be able to write different types of essays accordingly. In the same line, learners are given old or past examination question papers to familiarize themselves with essay questions. This strategy, according to the teachers, is rationalized by the idea that the learners need to know the kind of essay questions which they will encounter in the ESL examination.

Apart from giving essay samples and essay question samples, the ESL teachers make or ask their learners to read a lot. The teachers believe that reading very often will help students see how other people write and eventually they (students) will improve their own writing skills. Even though reading a lot can be beneficial to the learners, this study has questioned the practicality of using this strategy because the study has revealed that some schools do not have any reading materials for the learners, while others have limited reading materials. Hence, there is a high possibility that the learners in question do not read a lot as their ESL teachers have suggested.

Another strategy ESL teachers in Northern Namibia report using to help their learners overcome writing problems is that of marking the learners' work in their presence. The ESL teachers believe that this strategy is helpful because it gives them (teachers) a chance to hear from learners as to why they write the way they do. Apart from that, the ESL teachers felt that this strategy gives the learners confidence to ask about whatever they do not understand unlike when they are in the classroom. Again, this study has revealed that this strategy is questionable because as mentioned already, the ESL teachers have too many learners to attend to. Therefore, giving attention to individual learners is certainly a daunting task.

Finally, to tackle learners' writing problems, the ESL teachers also report using 'spider diagrams' when teaching essay writing. This study has revealed that, according to the ESL teachers, this strategy can help learners write well organized essays and helps them address all prompts given to them. As revealed in Chapter Six and Seven, learners fail to include all the prompts in their essays and they also fail to develop them. Hence, it is important that ESL teachers have a solution to this perpetual problem.

In summary, as was mentioned in section 8.1.1, learners in Northern Namibia experience a lot of problems when writing essays in English. Their teachers are aware of these problems and report using a number of strategies to reduce or overcome these writing problems. However, virtually all these strategies are not addressing specific writing problems. For example, one of the problems that learners experience when writing essays in English is that of ‘misinterpreting questions’. To help learners overcome this problem, the ESL teachers need to have a specific strategy for this problem. Again, apart from not having specific strategies to address specific problems, some of the strategies which ESL teachers have proposed are not realistic, such as, giving a lot of activities to overcrowded classes.

8.1.3 To what extent do teachers use Oshiwambo to help students understand English?

This question was aimed at examining whether teachers use Oshiwambo to help their learners with English. To answer this question, I used data from informal chats with the learners, classroom observations, interviews with ESL teachers including the HODs, and data from ESL teachers’ questionnaire responses. This study has revealed that very few teachers use Oshiwambo to help their learners understand English better. These teachers (the minority who use Oshiwambo) do so because they feel that sticking to English only as the language policy dictates means that learners will not learn English successfully.

Despite the above finding, this study has discovered that the overwhelming majority of ESL teachers in Northern Namibia use Oshiwambo in their classes to maintain order and to check understanding. However, they do not use Oshiwambo to help learners understand their English lessons better. The teachers avoid using Oshiwambo in their classes because they embrace the ideology that the teaching of English should be done exclusively in English medium and that using the mother-tongue in the English classroom would negatively affect the learning of English. As a matter of fact, the findings from the teachers’ questionnaires have indicated that 45% of participants strongly agreed and 19% agreed that the use of Oshiwambo in the ESL classroom

would harm the students' ability to learn proper English. Furthermore, it is important to mention that this study has also shown that ESL teachers embrace the ideology that the earlier English is taught, the better the ESL grade 12 results would be. Consequently, ESL teachers hardly use Oshiwambo to help their learners understand the English lessons better even though they are aware of the fact that learners understand them better when they speak to them in Oshiwambo. However, there is a growing body of research that indicates that translanguaging is a highly effective means of teaching learners and even university students, and that using the non-standard varieties the learners actually speak, are even more effective than using standard varieties (Antia and Dyers, 2016; 2017).

The second reason why the majority of ESL teachers do not use Oshiwambo to help learners understand English lessons better can be linked to the 'language hierarchy ideology', in which "some languages are assigned a higher status than others" (Weber and Horner, 2012, cited in Abongdia & Foncha, 2014). In Namibia, the language policy has given English a very high status compared to the status of indigenous languages, including Oshiwambo. To be specific, English is the official and national language of Namibia, and in the education arena, English is used as medium of instruction from grade four to tertiary levels (Harris, 2011). On the other hand, "Namibian languages including Oshiwambo have been given the status of medium of instruction in functional literacy and in the three lower primary grades" (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2001:296). It appears therefore, that this predicament has created an impression among the ESL teachers that Oshiwambo has very little value. As expected, the current study has established that ESL teachers are not willing to use Oshiwambo when teaching, because English is the official medium of instruction and the examinations are not written in Oshiwambo.

In summary, even though learners in Northern Namibia do not possess sufficient English language proficiency, this study has revealed that Oshiwambo is not used as bridge towards mastery of English. This is basically because ESL teachers embrace the ideology that using Oshiwambo in the ESL classroom would compromise the effective

mastery of English. In the same way, ESL teachers do not use Oshiwambo when teaching ESL because Oshiwambo has a lower status in the Namibian education system.

8.2 Unexpected additional and other relevant findings

Apart from the findings which were revealed through the research questions, this study has revealed some unexpected additional findings as well as other relevant findings. These findings are presented in this section:

8.2.1 ESL teachers' attitudes towards Namibia's pro-English policy

This study has found that ESL teachers in Northern Namibia, including their head of departments, have very positive attitudes towards the current Namibian pro-English policy. Certainly, the teachers have strongly indicated that they do not support the idea that the policy should be changed to allow for the use of indigenous languages in education. The teachers feel that the policy should not be changed because examinations are not written in indigenous languages and there are no teaching materials written in indigenous languages. They believe that the policy should not be changed because the learners are doing well despite the fact that they fail English. Accordingly, one can conclude that the ESL teachers' thinking is ideologically influenced and that their negative attitudes towards indigenous languages would not allow them to support the adaptation of the current Namibian pro-English policy to allow for the use of indigenous languages in education. As a result, if a pro-mother tongue language policy is to be introduced in Namibian schools, teachers' attitudes towards the indigenous languages would need to be addressed. Indeed, "government as whole, supported by the media, education institutions and private sector need to work together in order to inform parents and schools of the importance of mother tongue instruction" (Swarts, 1995:49).

8.2.2 The dominance of explicit grammar instructions

This study has established that ESL lessons in Northern Namibia are overwhelmingly dominated by explicit grammar instruction. In other words, the learners in Northern Namibia are not taught ESL in a communicative and interactive manner. Possibly, this is one of the reasons why learners in Northern Namibia encounter a lot of language related problems, including writing problems. As Brown (2000) argues, teaching grammar traditionally may prevent second language learners from using the target language positively in situations which require real life communicative competencies.

8.2.3 Content subject teachers and the use of Oshiwambo

According to the respondents of the current study, content subject teachers, unlike the ESL teachers, use Oshiwambo when teaching different content subjects because sticking to English only as the current LEP dictates would mean that learners will not be able to understand their lessons well and as a result their academic performance will be negatively affected. Here, it is important to stress that the learners who were part of the current study openly indicated that they appreciated the fact that their content subject teachers are willing to use Oshiwambo when teaching different content subjects because they follow instructions given in Oshiwambo better than instruction given solely in English. Certainly, this is one of the indications that the Namibian pro-English policy needs to be adapted.

8.2.4 The ESL classrooms

Through classroom observations, this study has documented that ESL classrooms in Northern Namibia are overcrowded. This situation is worrying because some classes have up to more than fifty learners. Accordingly, the ESL teachers have admitted that because of the unrealistic numbers of learners in their classes, they are not able to give adequate writing activities and especially essay writing exercises. Apart from the ESL teachers, the learners themselves have also admitted that they are rarely given essay writing exercises, which is not encouraging given their problems with writing in English.

Moreover, apart from the high number of learners in the ESL classrooms, the current study has also indicated that the ESL classrooms are not 'multimodal'. In other words, no English posters or any other relevant English teaching and learning materials can be seen on the walls of these classrooms. ESL teachers also do not use additional teaching and learning materials apart from the chalk board. A multimodal approach is recommended, because as mentioned earlier, if spoken and written language is not integrated with other forms of communication, the learning experience will be neither interesting nor motivating (Mwanza, 2016).

8.2.5 The language policy document

The Namibian language in education policy document was one of the documents reviewed and evaluated in order to inform the current study. This analysis has revealed that the policy document is neither complete nor comprehensive. To be specific, this study has discovered that the main weakness of the policy document is that "it does not provide guide lines on how different mother- tongues will be used in schools" (Wolfaardt, 2002:69). This is a serious weakness because the learners' mother-tongue plays an important role in their learning (Trudell, 2016). An equally significant weakness is that the policy document is not translated into different indigenous Namibian languages. As mentioned several times in this study, Namibian teachers have poor English proficiency (Ipinge 2013; Harris 2011; Wolfaardt 2002). Thus, it is worrying that the policy document is not translated into different indigenous Namibian languages. In addition, this study has shown that the policy document lacks a glossary of key words such as mother-tongue, local language, and medium of instruction. Understandably, this glossary could have helped the readers interpret and understand the policy document better.

Finally, apart from the analysis of the language policy document itself, this study reviewed the implementation strategy that was used by the Ministry of Education to introduce this particular policy. Hence, this study has disclosed that the implementation of the current LEP was not effective because both teachers and learners were not proficient in English language. Also, the teachers were not trained accordingly and

schools were not equipped with relevant teaching and learning materials to support the implementation of the new LEP. Obviously, this had a negative impact on teaching different school subjects, including ESL.

8.2.6 *ESL grade 12 essay questions*

Apart from the language policy document, as mentioned in Chapter One and Five, the current study has also reviewed and analyzed ESL essay questions from question papers of three consecutive years. This analysis has shown that the ESL essay questions are relevant to the objectives of the grade 12 ESL syllabus and that they are clearly written, with a reasonable level of difficulty. Also, the questions reflect the Namibian socio-cultural context. On the other hand, this study has indicated that the ESL essay questions are not multimodal. To put it differently, the texts within the essay questions are not supported by pictures, images and graphics in order to reinforce effective creation of meaning (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001). Because of this situation, it is argued that learners find it difficult to interpret and understand essay questions and are unable to write positively about topics given to them.

8.2.7 *The ESL grade 12 syllabus*

Another crucial document that was reviewed and analyzed within the current study was the 'ESL grade 12 syllabus'. This analysis has proven that the syllabus in question has a number of shortcomings. Firstly, the syllabus does not give any details on how learners are to achieve different writing competencies. In the same line, it does not provide the ESL teachers with any implementation guidelines. In simpler terms, in using this particular syllabus, the ESL teachers do not have any sense of direction. While it is encouraging that the syllabus outlines the content to be taught, it does not provide the order in which the content should be taught. Lastly, the syllabus also lacks any list of materials, textbooks or resources to be used in its implementation. This is not good because as has been argued before, teachers and especially the novice teachers might use any teaching materials at their disposal, irrespective of whether such materials are valuable and relevant. To sum up, the ESL grade 12 syllabus has a number of weaknesses and it is likely that these weaknesses are contributing to the language

related problems, including the writing problems that learners in Northern Namibia experience when writing essays in English.

8.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, I would like to make the following recommendations:

8.3.1 The language policy

According to Otaala (2001) the current Namibian language in education policy stipulates that children are taught in their mother-tongue in grades 1-3 while English is used as medium of instruction from grade four upwards. This abrupt switch from mother-tongue medium instruction to English has however caused a lot of problems for Namibian learners (Wolfaardt 2002; Iiping 2013; Harris 2011). For instance, it appears that “learners do not reach the minimum level of English language proficiency required when they enter the junior secondary phase of school and as a result of problems beginning at primary schools, learners continue to lag behind their required level of language proficiency and the majority never really reach the language proficiency in English which their age and school level demand” (Jones 1996 in Wolfaardt, 2002:70). Therefore, because of this reason and because of a number of negative consequences revealed by the current study, the Namibian language policy in education needs to be adapted accordingly.

It is recommended that the Namibian language in education policy is adapted in such a way that learners are taught in their mother-tongue alongside English from grade 1 up to the end of secondary school. This is important because as Harris (2011) argues, if learners have fully acquired their home languages, better learning outcomes in general and better mastery of English in particular can be anticipated. Therefore, extending mother tongue instruction beyond merely the first three years of schooling as is the current practice, is not an option but a must.

In the light of ‘multilingualism as social practice’ which was part of the theoretical framework for this study, it is recommended that English should be used as medium of instruction alongside Namibia’s indigenous languages. In Northern Namibia for example, it (English) should be used alongside all seven dialects of Oshiwambo. Without any reservations, I argue that because English-only medium of instruction has proven to be a barrier to learning in ESL classrooms, there is a great need to use ‘translanguaging’ as strategic means to facilitate teaching and learning. I further argue that ‘translanguaging’ will be a reliable strategy because the overwhelming number of ESL teachers in Northern Namibia and their learners speak seven dialects of Oshiwambo that are mutually intelligible. Accordingly, the ESL teachers can use these seven dialects to ensure that their learners are learning effectively. As Trudell (2016:120) opines, “using a language of instruction that learners understand should become a standard practice”.

Moreover, it is important to repeat that the findings of this study show that the majority of ESL teachers I interviewed do not support the idea that the Namibian pro-English policy should be changed to allow for the use of indigenous languages in education. It is of great importance then, that all parties involved in Namibian education understand the following points. Firstly, the Namibian pro-English policy has failed to reinforce quality education in schools (Totemeyer, 2010). Secondly, “education through a second language cannot function well unless learners and teachers can use their mother language” (Clegg, 2001:223). Thus, based on the above points, I argue that the Namibian pro-English policy needs to be changed so that it allows for the use of indigenous languages in education. However, it is recommended that Namibian people’s ideology and attitudes towards the indigenous languages should be addressed before the new policy is effected otherwise the policy will not yield the anticipated outcomes. Also, because the current Namibian LEP was not implemented appropriately, it is important that the proposed LEP is introduced and implemented systematically in such a way that teachers are trained accordingly, and that schools are equipped with relevant teaching and learning materials before the policy can be

implemented. To conclude this section, it is important to highlight that because adaptations to the current Namibian language policy has been recommended, the language policy document itself would also need to be changed.

8.3.2 The language policy document

The new LEP proposed in section 8.3.1 would imply that a new language policy document is required. Here, it is important to reiterate that the main weakness of the current language in education policy document is that it is not clear in providing guidelines on how different mother-tongues could be used in schools (Wolfaardt, 2002). Accordingly, because the mother-tongues play an important role in education, it is recommended that the new language policy document should clearly and comprehensively indicate how different mother-tongues will be used in schools. Also, this policy document needs to be translated into different indigenous Namibian languages because this is not the case with the current language policy.

Besides, because some teachers might not be able to read the language policy document well owing to education in English only, it is vital that the new suggested language policy document is supported by a video to ensure that its content is clear enough. Lastly, it is recommended that for the teachers and other relevant stakeholders to understand the policy document better and interpret it correctly, a glossary of key words should be part of this document. These key words should be defined in the context of Namibia and there should be also explanations as to how these key words are related to each other.

8.3.3 Teacher training

As recommended earlier, mother-tongue instruction needs to be extended beyond grade 3, so that learners receive instruction in both the mother-tongue and English until the end of secondary school. This change would need the Namibian teachers in general, and the English teachers in particular, to be trained in order for them to facilitate teaching and learning effectively. Furthermore, it is important to note that currently, only teachers teaching grades 0-3 have been trained to teach in the mother-tongue. Therefore, this study recommends that all teachers teaching grades 4-12 should be

trained on how to teach in the mother-tongue. This is important because if teachers are not given this kind of training, they are likely to continue teaching in English and then obviously the suggested new language policy will not yield the anticipated educational outcomes.

Obviously, teachers need to understand what ‘multilingual education’ is. Consequently, it is recommended that all tertiary institutions training teachers in Namibia should offer a module on ‘multilingual education’. As Agnihotri (1995) suggests, this module should successfully help teachers to understand how ‘multilingualism’ in the classroom is a resource for teaching and learning rather than an interference to teaching and learning. Finally, the current study has also revealed that the ESL teachers, despite their good English proficiency, lack proper knowledge of English as a school subject. Possibly, their training was not good enough. Hence, it is recommended that the teacher training is reviewed to ensure that teachers are given proper English content. I strongly argue that ESL teachers should serve as learners’ source of language learning and hence need to possess sufficient English subject knowledge in order for learners to improve their English competence and eventually perform better in ESL.

8.3.4 Teachers’ intervention strategies

One of the objectives of this study was to establish the intervention strategies that teachers use in order to help their learners overcome writing problems in English. As a result, as mentioned earlier, it was found that learners are experiencing a lot of problems when writing essays in English. One good thing about this predicament is that the teachers are aware of the writing problems which their learners encounter. However, as was alluded to earlier, the teachers do not have specific strategies that they use to address specific writing problems. It is therefore recommended that the ESL teachers find relevant intervention strategies which they can use to help their learners reduce or overcome writing problems in English.

For example, to reduce the problem of misinterpreting essay questions, ESL teachers can help learners practice interpreting questions (essay) by writing essay questions on

the board and asking learners to come forward and underline the key words (Barry, 2013). “This strategy would help learners to keep to the point of the question and cover all parts of the question” (Barry et al., 2014:16). Furthermore, because this study has revealed that learners fail to address all prompts given to them when writing essays, it is important that they are taught how to use spider diagrams and mind maps when planning their essays. Possibly, this will help them address all prompts given to them, and as a result score better marks.

Moreover, for the learners who experience spelling problems, it is recommended that teachers use spelling dictation exercises, especially the ones that focus on similar sounding words so that learners practice spelling words in English. Finally, because this study has revealed that the majority of learners fail to use different tenses correctly, it is suggested that the ESL teachers avoid teaching grammar traditionally. This is because according to Farooq et al. (2012), all grammar related problems that ESL learners experience stem from grammar being taught traditionally and from lack of practice on the part of the learners. Hence, ESL teachers in Northern Namibia should pay more attention to helping students learn how to use language in a way that emulates realistic communicative scenarios.

8.3.5 ESL teachers and communicative language instructions

The current study has established that the ESL teachers in Northern Namibia hardly use communicative language instructions. On the contrary, they spend a lot of time on explicit grammar instruction. Hence, it appears that learners in Northern Namibia are not learning English effectively because what they learn in the classroom does not mirror everyday language use. It is therefore recommended that even though grammatical competence is integral to language use (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010), ESL teachers need to pay more attention to communicative language instructions in order for students to be able to communicate in the target language (English) and hence improve their English language competence.

8.3.6 Using Oshiwambo to teach writing skills in English

The current study has also revealed that learners in Northern Namibia do not possess adequate English language proficiency, leading to a lot of problems when writing essays in English. Despite this, their teachers are not willing to use Oshiwambo when teaching essay writing skills. This study therefore recommends that ESL teachers in Northern Namibia should always use Oshiwambo when teaching writing skills in English so that their learners can overcome and reduce some of the writing problems they encounter when writing essays in English. This is very important because the learners who were part of the current study have clearly indicated that they do not learn effectively when their teachers stick exclusively to English when teaching ESL. As Elugbe (1996) underscores, students learn better when they are taught in the language that they understand better. This is exactly why the current study recommends that the use of Oshiwambo should be always an integral part of essay writing skills in English.

8.3.7 The ESL syllabus

This study has revealed that the current ESL syllabus is neither clear nor inclusive. The analysis of the syllabus has shown that it does not indicate how learners are to achieve different writing competencies. Similarly, the syllabus does not include any implementation guidelines for teachers. In addition, while the syllabus has listed the content that is to be learnt by the learners, the order in which the content is to be learnt is not given. Finally, it should also be noted that the syllabus is silent on the materials to be used in teaching the outlined content. As a result, for the effective teaching of ESL and especially writing skills to take place, the current ESL grade 12 syllabus needs to be reviewed. It is therefore recommended that the current ESL syllabus is reviewed in order to make it more explicit and comprehensive. This will allow the teaching of ESL and in particular the teaching of writing skills to be easier and more rewarding.

8.3.8 The ESL classrooms

This study has shown that the ESL classes in Northern Namibia are overcrowded. This is not encouraging because teachers are unlikely to give enough writing exercises given that marking learners' work becomes a very serious challenge. Consequently, it is

recommended that the Namibian government and in particular the Ministry of Education should consider reducing the number of learners in the ESL classes. This will ensure that teachers are able give adequate writing exercises and indeed pay attention to individual learners, thereby ensuring better writing competencies. Additionally, apart from the overcrowded classes, the study has found that the ESL classrooms are not ‘multimodal’. This means that the ESL teachers exclusively rely on spoken and written language to convey meaning in the classroom. Accordingly, it is recommended that ESL teachers should ensure that classroom interactions are not merely based on spoken and written language, but on semiotic resources such as images, gestures and actions as well (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001).

8.3.9 The multimodality level of essay questions

Through document analysis, this study has established that grade 12 ESL essay questions are not ‘multimodal’. It is therefore not surprising that a substantial number of learners in Northern Namibian find it difficult understanding essay questions. Accordingly, it is recommended that the ESL grade 12 examination coordinators should always consider ‘multimodality’ when setting essay questions. To be specific, these coordinators who prepare the papers should always ensure that texts within the essay questions are integrated with pictures and illustrations. This would help learners to understand essay questions better and hence write positively about whatever topic is given to them. As Kress (2010) opines, written texts can only be comprehended fully if they are reinforced by pictures and other related art work.

8.4 The contribution of this study to the body of knowledge

A number of studies have already been done on the current Namibian language policy and on the teaching of ESL in Namibia. However, no study has ever been done to investigate the consequences of ideology and policy in the ESL classroom in Namibia. It is in this regard that the current study contributes significantly to the body of knowledge. To begin with, this study has revealed how ESL teachers’ ideology negatively affect teaching and learning in the classroom. The study has also uncovered

a number of problems caused for secondary school learners of English by the current language policy of Namibia. This revelation is important because Harris (2011) for example, found that teachers, parents and educationalists do not fully understand the problems learners face with language and often attribute poor learners' performance to lack of interest and commitment. Therefore, this study provides insight as to how the current Namibian pro-English policy affects learners' performance in schools and indeed the teaching and learning of ESL in the classroom.

Furthermore, respondents in the current study indicated that the learners will learn English better if they start with English as medium of instruction as early as grade one. Totemeyer (2010), for example, mentions that despite the fact that learners in Namibian schools have encountered a lot of problems for the last twenty years because of the current language policy, most parents still want their children to be taught through the medium of English as early as possible. Based on its findings, this study rejects the notion of using English as medium of instruction from as early as pre-primary or grade one levels. Rather, the study recommends that the current Namibian language in education policy should be adapted in such a way that the learners are taught in their mother-tongue alongside English from grade one up to grade twelve. This will allow learners to master their mother tongues fully, which can serve as the foundation for a more secure acquisition of English. The study further recommends that English should be used as a medium of instruction alongside African languages in order to reinforce learners' multilingual competence and hence maximize their academic performance.

In addition, Ausiku (2010), Ipinge (2013) and Harlech-Jones (1996) have found that Namibian teachers, including English teachers, have negative attitudes towards the use of mother-tongue in the classroom. These studies however, did not explore further as to why the teachers have negative attitudes towards the use of the mother-tongue in teaching different subjects including English. The current study therefore, contributes to the body of knowledge because it has clearly established why ESL teachers are not willing to use the mother-tongue in teaching English. To be specific, as mentioned already, the teachers are not willing to use Oshiwambo when teaching ESL because

they embrace the ideology that this practice would negatively affect the proper acquisition of English. Besides this, teachers are also not willing to use Oshiwambo when teaching English because Oshiwambo has a low status within the Namibian education system.

Moreover, this study contributes to the body of knowledge as it has revealed that learners in Northern Namibia continue to experience a lot of writing problems because of a number of reasons. Firstly, the learners are experiencing writing problems because Namibia has adopted an irrelevant LEP. Besides, the ESL teachers are not willing to use Oshiwambo when teaching essay writing skills in English and they hardly use communicative instructions. Also, the ESL syllabus is not clear, nor inclusive. Finally, learners in Northern Namibia experience a lot of writing problems because their ESL teachers do not use specific, realistic and practical intervention strategies to help them reduce or overcome writing problems. Without a doubt, this revelation should help teachers, educationalists and other academics to understand why learners' writing problems in Northern Namibia are so pervasive and wide-spread.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the body of knowledge because it suggests some of the intervention strategies that ESL teachers in Northern Namibia can use in order to help their learners reduce or overcome writing problems in English. This includes giving learners spelling dictation exercises for them to practice spelling words in English, and helping learners to use language in a way that emulates realistic communicative scenarios, in order to avoid grammar related writing problems.

8.5 Implications for further research

This study and its theoretical framework points to a number of implications for further research. To begin with, this study has established that according to the teachers as well as learners, the main cause of learners' writing problems in English is learners' poor English background, which stem from poor English teaching at the lower grades. Accordingly, it is suggested that comprehensive research be conducted to assess how

ESL is taught at lower grades in order to determine whether this is the actual root of the problem, or whether there are other causes that need further investigation.

Furthermore, this study has shown that ESL teachers do not use proper intervention strategies to help their learners overcome writing problems. Also, the ESL teachers seem to have poor knowledge of English as a school subject and their teaching strategies and approaches are more teacher-centred than learner-centred. Hence, it appears that there is a high possibility that the training that ESL teachers acquire from the University of Namibia (UNAM) is not up to standard. It is therefore suggested that comprehensive research be carried out to investigate how UNAM prepares teachers to teach ESL at secondary school level. The proposed research should be able to establish whether teachers are adequately prepared to teach ESL in Namibian secondary schools and should also give relevant recommendations in order to improve the teaching of English in Namibian secondary schools, including schools in Northern Namibia.

Apart from teacher training, the current study has proven that ESL teachers believe that the best way to improve their learners' competence in English is by using English as medium of instruction from as early as pre-primary or grade one. In line with this, the study has indicated that ESL teachers embrace an ideology that using Oshiwambo in the ESL classroom will negatively affect the proper acquisition of ESL. Accordingly, it is my suggestion that research be carried out to compare the progress of learners who were taught English purely in English from grade one to twelve with that of learners who were taught English in both English and Oshiwambo from grade one to twelve. The proposed research should focus on the learners' English competence, as well as on their general academic performance.

Finally, this study has disclosed that a number of the writing problems experienced are the result of the current Namibian pro-English language policy. In addition, the study has also disclosed possible causes of these writing problems. However, it appears that these writing problems are pervasive and wide-spread. For this reason, it is suggested that research be conducted to investigate and establish other causes of learners' writing problems in English. This particular research should also look at the teaching

approaches and techniques that ESL teachers use when teaching essay writing skills in English.



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Appendices

Appendix 1: Ethical Clearance



DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

UNIVERSITY of the
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11 December 2015

To Whom It May Concern

I hereby certify that the Senate Research Committee of the University of the Western Cape approved the methodology and ethics of the following research project by:
Mr K Ipinge (Linguistics)


Research Project: The teaching of English in Namibia:
Consequences of the language policy in
education for Oshiwambo speaking secondary
school students in the Omusati region.

Registration no: 15/7/75

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Any amendments, extension or other modifications to the protocol must be submitted to the Ethics Committee for approval.

The Committee must be informed of any serious adverse event and/or termination of the study.



Ms/Patricia Jozias
Research Ethics Committee Officer
University of the Western Cape

Private Bag X17, Bellville 7535, South Africa
T: +27 21 959 2088/2048 . F: +27 21 959 3170
E: pjozias@uwc.ac.za
www.uwc.ac.za

A place of quality,
a place to grow, from hope
to action through knowledge



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Email: fbanda@uwc.ac.za

7 October 2016

To Whom it May Concern

This letter serves to confirm that Mr. Kristof lipinge (student no. 3510878) is a registered PhD (Applied Linguistics) student in the Linguistics Department at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa. His PhD thesis is titled: *The teaching of English in Namibia: Consequences of the language policy in education for Oshiwambo speaking secondary school students in the Omusati region*. His study focuses on the effects of the current Namibia language in education policy on the teaching and learning of English second language in Northern Namibia, with particular emphasis on learners' writing problems in English and teachers' strategies to address these problem areas.

To carry out this research, Mr. lipinge needs to interview teachers, observe some lessons, informally interview some learners and collect a few sample essays (compositions) in English from learners to determine the kinds of problems and the strategies used to mitigate them.

I therefore request your indulgence to allow him to conduct this research in your jurisdiction. I also humbly request that you provide Mr. lipinge with a letter giving him permission to carry out the research.

Please note that conditions of the Arts Faculty Higher Degrees Ethics Committee that scrutinizes research proposals demand no research can be carried out without the consent of all parties involved. Second, every possible measure must be taken to ensure confidentiality, anonymity and respect for the privacy and integrity of individual participants as well as the schools involved. Mr. lipinge is bound by these conditions.

Should you require further clarification please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. Banda'.

Professor Felix Banda (PhD)

Co-Supervisor and Postgraduate Coordinator

Linguistics Department

Appendix 3: Permission to conduct Research



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



OMUSATI REGIONAL COUNCIL

DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE *Team Work and Dedication for Quality Education*

Tel: +264 65 251700

Private Bag 529

Fax: +264 65 251722

OUTAPI

Enq: Apollonia Hango

15 November 2016

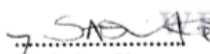
Mr. Kristof Ipinge
Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7535
South Africa

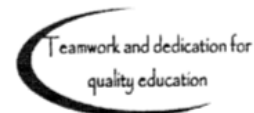
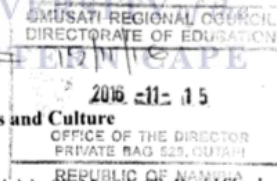
Subject: Permission to conduct research in Omusati Education Directorate.

This letter serves to notify you (**Mr. Kristof Ipinge**) that permission has been granted to conduct a research in Omusati Region to collect data at Etalaleko SS, Mwaala SS, David Sheehama SS, Haudano SS, Ashipala SS and Pendukeni Iivula Ithana SS respectively. Please be informed that the research to be conducted at school should by no means whatsoever disrupt teaching and learning.

We hope and trust this exercise will enhance quality education in the Region.

Yours faithfully


Mr. Laban Shapange
Director of Education Arts and Culture



Cc: The Principals for Etalaleko SS, Mwaala SS, David Sheehama SS, Haudano SS, Ashipala SS and Pendukeni Iivula Ithana SS
Inspectors of Education for Okahao, Tsandi, Outapi, Okalongo, Elim and Etayi Circuits

All official correspondence must be addressed to the Chief Regional Officer.

Appendix 4: Consent form



Consent Form

University of the Western Cape

Title: Consequences of policy and ideology in the English second language classroom: The case of Oshiwambo speaking secondary school learners in Northern Namibia.

Researcher: Mr. Kristof lipinge, Ph. Candidate, Linguistic department, University of the Western Cape

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.
3. I understand my responses and personal data will be kept strictly confidential. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses.
4. I agree to take part in the above research project.
5. I agree that the data collected from me can be used in the research project.

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Name of Participant Date Signature

Name of researcher Date Signature

Copies: All participants will receive a copy of the signed and dated version of the consent form and information sheet for themselves. A copy of this will be filed and kept in a secure location for research purposes only.

Researcher:
Mr. Kristof lipinge

Mobile: 0812997304
Telephone: 066 6000

Email: ikristof2000@yahoo.com

Supervisor:
Professor Felix Banda

Mobile: 0823621100
Tel: 021 959 2380/2978
Email: fbanda@uwc.ac.za

Head of department
Professor Bassey Antia

Tel: 021 959 2380
Mobile: 082 8154293
Email: bantia@uwc.ac.za

Appendix 5: Biographical information form for teachers



University of the Western Cape

Biographical information form for teachers

Consequences of ideology and policy in the English second language classroom

School no

Participant no

Biographical information

1. Gender (*please mark the appropriate box*)

Male

Female

2. For how many years you have been teaching? (*please mark the appropriate box*)

1 to 2 years

3 to 5 years

6 to 10 years

11 years or more

3. What is your position in the school?

Principal

Head of department (HOD)

Teacher

4. How old are you?

19-24

25-29

30-34

35-39

40-44

45-49

50-54

55+

5. What is your highest qualification?

Grade 12

Certificate in teaching

Diploma in teaching

Bachelor degree in teaching

Higher degree in teaching

Master degree

Other

6. In which language(s) were you trained to teach?

Appendix 6: Questionnaire for teachers



University of the Western Cape

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

Title of Research Project: Consequences of ideology and policy in the English second language classroom: The case of Oshiwambo-speaking secondary school learners in Namibia.

Researcher: Mr. Kristof Iiping

Supervisor: Prof C Dyers; **Co-Supervisor:** Prof F Banda

Dept. Linguistics, University Western Cape

INSTRUCTIONS: circle the correct answer

1. As part of your teacher training, you learned about the Namibian Language Policy.
 - A. Strongly agree
 - B. Agree
 - C. Unsure
 - D. Disagree
 - E. Strongly disagree
2. Your teacher training period prepared you very well for teaching English.
 - A. Strongly agree
 - B. Agree
 - C. Unsure
 - D. Disagree
 - E. Strongly disagree
3. You regularly attend workshops and seminars to help you improve your English teaching skills.
 - A. Strongly agree

- B. Agree
 - C. Unsure
 - D. Disagree
 - E. Strongly disagree
4. Your school has enough teaching and learning materials in English.
- A. Strongly agree
 - B. Agree
 - C. Unsure
 - D. Disagree
 - E. Strongly disagree
5. You find it easy to teach English.
- A. Strongly agree
 - B. Agree
 - C. Unsure
 - D. Disagree
 - E. Strongly disagree
6. Students come from grade 10 with good English language skills.
- A. Strongly agree
 - B. Agree
 - C. Unsure
 - D. Disagree
 - E. Strongly disagree
7. Your grade 12 learners do well in English tasks like writing essays.
- A. Strongly agree
 - B. Agree
 - C. Unsure
 - D. Disagree
 - E. Strongly disagree
8. The pass-rate for English second language in grade 12 is very good for your school.



- A. Strongly agree
- B. Agree
- C. Unsure
- D. Disagree
- E. Strongly disagree

9. Content subject teachers at your school are comfortable teaching their subjects in English.

- A. Strongly agree
- B. Agree
- C. Unsure
- D. Disagree
- E. Strongly disagree

10. Your learners do well in all the content subject examinations which they write in English.

- A. Strongly agree
- B. Agree
- C. Unsure
- D. Disagree
- E. Strongly disagree



11. Your learners would do better if they could start earlier with English, even at pre-school.

- A. Strongly agree
- B. Agree
- C. Unsure
- D. Disagree
- E. Strongly disagree

12. You are allowed to use Oshiwambo in the teaching English and other subjects at your school.

- A. Strongly agree
- B. Agree

- C. Unsure
- D. Disagree
- E. Strongly disagree

13. Your learners prefer to chat to each other in Oshiwambo.

- A. Strongly agree
- B. Agree
- C. Unsure
- D. Disagree
- E. Strongly disagree

14. Your learners are punished if they use Oshiwambo in class.

- A. Strongly agree
- B. Agree
- C. Unsure
- D. Disagree
- E. Strongly disagree

15. You sometimes use Oshiwambo to explain something in class.

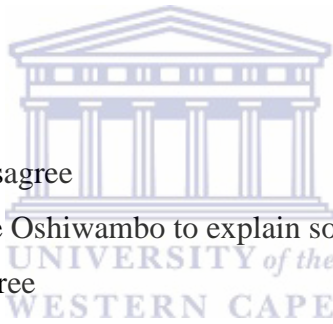
- A. Strongly agree
- B. Agree
- C. Unsure
- D. Disagree
- E. Strongly disagree

16. You regularly use Oshiwambo to explain something in class.

- A. Strongly agree
- B. Agree
- C. Unsure
- D. Disagree
- E. Strongly disagree

17. The learners understand better when you use some Oshiwambo in class.

- A. Strongly agree
- B. Agree



- C. Unsure
- D. Disagree
- E. Strongly disagree

18. The use of Oshiwambo in the English second language class will harm the students' ability to learn proper English.

- A. Strongly agree
- B. Agree
- C. Unsure
- D. Disagree
- E. Strongly disagree

19. The language policy should be amended to allow for the use of indigenous languages in the grade 12 classroom.

- A. Strongly agree
- B. Agree
- C. Unsure
- D. Disagree
- E. Strongly disagree



20. The national language policy should allow for the equal status of English and the indigenous languages like Oshiwambo especially in Education.

- A. Strongly agree
- B. Agree
- C. Unsure
- D. Disagree
- E. Strongly disagree

Appendix 7: Observational Protocol



University of the Western Cape

Observational Protocol


Consequences of ideology and policy in the English second language classroom

School no

Observation no

Participant no

Duration of Observation: _____

Descriptive notes	Reflective notes
	
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Appendix 8: Question prompts for the focus group interviews



University of the Western Cape

Consequences of ideology and policy in the second language classroom

Question prompts for the focus group interviews

1. Tell me about some of the problems your students experience when they have to write essays in English.
2. What do you think are the causes of the problems that you have just mentioned?
3. Given the differences between Oshiwambo and English, do you use any strategies to help your learners write better in English? Why do you use these strategies?
4. To what extent do you use Oshiwambo to help your learners understand your English lessons?
5. Do colleagues teaching content subjects also explain in Oshiwambo when it is needed? Why?
6. Do you think that Namibia's pro-English language policy should be changed to include the use of the indigenous languages in education?

Appendix 9: Question prompts for HODs



University of the Western Cape

Consequences of ideology and policy in the English second language classroom

Question prompts for the Head of Departments

1. Tell me about some of the problems your students experience when they have to write essays in English.
2. What do you think are the causes of the problems that you have just mentioned?
3. Given the differences between Oshiwambo and English, do you use any strategies to help your learners write better in English? Why do you use these strategies?
4. To what extent do you use Oshiwambo to help your learners understand your English lessons?
5. Do colleagues teaching content subjects also explain in Oshiwambo when it is needed? Why?
6. Do you think that Namibia's pro-English language policy should be changed to include the use of the indigenous languages in education?
7. As Head of Department, what do you do to ensure effective teaching and learning in the department?

Appendix 10: Question prompts for learners who wrote poor essays



University of the Western Cape

Consequences of ideology and policy in the English second language classroom

Question prompts for learners who wrote poor essays

1. Tell me about some of the problems you experience when you have to write essays in English.
2. What do you think are the causes of the problems that you have just mentioned?
3. What does your English teacher do to help you reduce or overcome these problems?
4. Apart from what you mentioned in number 3, what else do you want your English teacher to do in order to help you improve your essay writing skills?
5. Does your English teacher use Oshiwambo to help you improve your essay writing skills in English? Explain

Appendix 11: Question prompts for the learners who are proficient in English essay writing



University of the Western Cape

Consequences of ideology and policy in the English second language classroom

Question prompts for the learners who are proficient in English essay writing

1. What have you done to acquire good essay writing skills in English?
2. What do you think your English teacher can do to help you write better English essays?
3. What does your English teacher do to help learners in your class who struggle with writing English essays?
4. Does your English teacher use Oshiwambo in your class to teach essay-writing skills in English? Explain.
5. What is your view on English teachers using Oshiwambo to teach writing skills in English?