

**FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED IN DESIGNING A COMPREHENSIVE
SYLLUBUS FOR ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ESL), WITH
REFERENCE TO LEARNERS IN KWAZULU-NATAL, NORTH COAST.**

by

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my father, M.A. Gazu, whose initials are hereby given new meaning. He never studied beyond Std 6 of his day but he is a formidable student in his own respect.

I do not forget my late grandfather who named me Doctor. What a challenge... .

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ABSTRACT

The post 1994 era in South Africa has been characterized by rampant change. During this age of transition, almost every aspect of social life has seen new institutions and structures being put in place to redress the injustices and imbalances of the apartheid system. Education has not been an exception. The English Second Language (ESL) syllabus was changed in 1996 and replaced by the 'Interim Core Syllabus'. Since 1996, this interim syllabus has been in effect until 2006 in Grades 11 and 12. Practically, the Education Department of South Africa has relied on the ESL syllabus which was meant to be a temporary measure for eleven years. In the classes lower than Grades 11 and 12, Curriculum 2005 was put in place and was subsequently replaced by the Revised National Curriculum Statement. Again, the Revised National Curriculum Statement was replaced by the National Curriculum Statement. In short, until 2006 high schools, that is, Further Education and Training band, have relied on the interim syllabus and Grade 12 will continue doing so up to 2007.

Prompted by the fact that the ESL syllabus had been interim for quite some time and the learners' performance was not satisfactory, the researcher engaged in this study. In 1999 and 2000, learners' performance in ESL in the Empangeni Region was not of the required standard. Eshowe district, which is the focus of this study, was no exception. Learners' poor performance in ESL during these years meant that the aims and objectives of the ESL Interim Core Syllabus for Standard 8,9 and 10 that was used by schools were not entirely realized.

This research aimed at finding factors that were responsible for learners' not performing up to the required standard during the years referred to above and possibly in subsequent years. The point of departure for this study was syllabus design – specifically the Interim Core Syllabus of 1996. Admittedly, there may have been other factors that are social, political, affective, etc in nature. However, this study was concerned with factors more directly linked to the education system since syllabi used in schools to facilitate learner assessment are an education factor.

The study came up with some findings after getting the views of the Department of Education as represented by the ESL Subject Advisor, ESL Educators from selected schools as well as Learners from those selected schools. After the analyses of the responses from these groups who are role players in education, the following recommendations were made:

1. The involvement of educators in the syllabus design;
2. The establishment of categorical learner needs;
3. The provision of standard learner support material;
4. The establishment of a working relationship between ESL Subject Advisors and ESL syllabus designers;
5. The constant development and attendance as well as participating of workshops by all educators, both in primary and secondary schools;
6. The improvement in the provision of reading material by the Department of Education;
7. The building of libraries or resource centres in schools;
8. Proper and timeous communication between education authorities and educators on policy matters;
9. A crucial and realistic review of teacher training programs in colleges and universities;
10. The need for formulation of education policies- not a rapidly changing policy making and
11. Canvassing the services of syllabus designers when setting matric exam papers.

If the recommendations outlined above are taken into consideration and implemented by relevant role players in the Education Department, it is hoped, better results in ESL would come about. Not only would these recommendations, if effected, hopefully improve ESL results for matric learners but they would also boost the morale of many educators who, according to their responses in this study, feel neglected in decision making in the Department of Education.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Definition of Terms

Learner-refers to any person, whether a child or an adult, who receives education in a formal or informal learning environment.

Educator- refers to any person who teaches, educates or trains other persons at an education institution.

Syllabus-is an outline of a course of study.

Curriculum-refers to the graded content of what has to be taught in a course of study as well as attitudes and values embedded in it.

Design-refers to the crafting or putting together of all that has to be taught in a course in a systematic way.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

It is noteworthy that during the 1999, 2000 academic years, the matric results in KwaZulu-Natal were not of the required standard. The Empangeni Region (now referred to as Empangeni district) had five sub-districts, namely Eshowe, Umthunzini, Lower Umfolozi, Hlabisa and Lower Tugela. During 1999, 2000 and 2001 the number of high schools in Eshowe district ranged from 35 to 39. Matric results statistics point out that the school that attained the tenth position in 1999 obtained a 40, 4% aggregate rating. The results at the above-referred school in terms of aggregate rating were 17,9% in 1998 and 26,3% in 1997, respectively. This is the evidence that schools are not performing well in different subjects. English as a second Language (ESL) is one of these central subjects. Moreover, ESL (henceforth ESL will be used for English as a Second Language) is the medium of instruction in most South African schools from Grade 8 up to matric level, as well as in other Anglophone-speaking countries that were colonized by Britain, where English was the official language of communication and instruction in schools.

Regarding ESL it would also be worthwhile to cite statistical evidence that would be reflective of the average performance of matric learners in 1999, 2000 and 2001. This case study focuses on Eshowe district. Specific schools will not be mentioned for purposes of confidentiality. The statistics were availed by the erstwhile Subject Advisor for ESL at Empangeni Regional Offices of Education and are still available on request. In 1999, three out of thirty-five schools scored an average mark (in ESL) between 20% and 25% respectively. Meanwhile, five schools scored between 26% and 30%. A further thirteen out of thirty-five schools obtained an average between 31% and 35%. In the same year three schools scored between 41% and 45% respectively, on average. Notably, only two out of thirty-five schools scored an average mark for ESL above 50% in 1999 (The Statistics).

In the year 2000 five out of thirty-four schools obtained an average mark between 26% and 30%. Twelve schools obtained an average mark between 31% and 35%. A further eleven schools scored between 36% and 40%. Only three schools scored an average

between 41% and 45%, while another two scored 46% and 50%. Again, it is noteworthy that only one school scored an average mark above fifty percent in ESL. It is also important to observe that the school that scored above 50% in ESL is not among schools traditionally classified as Black schools.

In 2001 the number of schools offering ESL up to matric level in Eshowe district (now referred to as a circuit) was thirty-nine in total. During this year two out of thirty nine schools obtained an average mark between 26% and 30%. Twelve schools obtained an average mark between 31% and 35%. Eleven schools obtained an average mark between 36% and 40%. Five schools obtained an average mark between 41% and 45% while another two scored between 46% and 50% an average. Worthy of linguistic and pedagogical concern is the fact that in 2001 only two out of thirty-nine high schools scored above 50% in ESL in Eshowe district (The Statistics). It is to be noted that 50% is not an ideal mark. The main reason why it is used as a yardstick for measuring one's linguistic and general academic capability is that it is a pass mark for post matric studies. Moreover, in most tertiary institutions in the Republic of South Africa, English is the medium of instruction. That English is the medium of instruction has far-reaching implications for different subjects or disciplines. It implies that being competent in English equips one to better understand the content of other subjects, especially in higher education institutions. Michael Cosser and Jacques du Toit (2002) conducted a survey which had 12, 204 pupils from 288 schools. The object of the survey was to find out whether Grade 12 learners planned to study after school; where they wanted to study, and the field in which they wanted to qualify. The researchers, working for the Human Sciences Research Council, found that 73% of pupils wanted to enter higher education (Sunday Times, 4 August 2002:p07). This survey makes it clear that matriculants should not only pass but they must also be proficient in English. For them English should not only be perceived as a subject but also as a vehicle to take them through tertiary education.

The statistical evidence given in the previous paragraphs are not only pertinent to Eshowe district. The ESL average mark for Empangeni Region (N.B. now called Empangeni

district) in the year 1999 was 36,5%. In 2000 the average mark for ESL was 36,81%. The average mark increased from 36,81% to 38,85% in 2001. These statistics concur with the opening remark mentioned earlier that the matric results in the period pointed out (1999, 2000 and 2001) were not of the required standard.

The scope of the research undertaken here encompasses the way the ESL syllabus is designed. This includes the methodology as well as its implementation (how the syllabus is actually translated into practice in the classroom situation). It has already been stated that there is a problem pertaining to the performance of learners for whom the ESL syllabus has been designed. As the cited statistical evidence of this research states, an attempt will be made to unveil some factors that require urgent attention both in the design and the implementation of the ESL syllabus as it relates to the group of learners targeted. The researcher assumes that the two factors, that is, syllabus design and its implementation, are essentially responsible for learners not passing the course well. However, such an assumption does not exclude other possible factors which will be unearthed in the course of this research. Emphasis on the two factors at the initial stages of the research will serve as a basis for further consideration. The problem at hand may be presented in the form of a continuum. Initially, there is a course designer, and at the other end there is the learner for whom the course is designed. The evaluative aspect of the syllabus manifests itself on the learner's end. This means when the output (results) are not of a required standard, it becomes necessary to review and evaluate the process that has undergone before such an undesired output.

Particularly intriguing was the report that was made by ESL Advisory team and was made available to high schools in Empangeni region. The 2002 report was based on learners' performance in the March and June 2002 departmental tests set by Subject Advisors in the KwaZulu Natal province. The tests are set for schools that obtain an average pass percentage below 50% in the Senior Certificate examination the previous year. These reports go as follows:

‘There is ... evidence that some educators do not teach summary writing properly. Some learners had a problem with the interpretation of questions. It would appear that there is a lack of practice in language aspects. Educators

should ensure that language structures are taught to learners and practice should follow the style used in setting examination papers. ... learners do not understand the setworks ...some educators, evidently, do not understand setworks themselves'(A Report from Exam Section, Empangeni Region, 4 April 2002).

Regarding the comments cited in the above report, it would be proper to mention the concerns perspectively. The object of this research, as pointed out earlier, was to identify the factors responsible for learners' poor performance in English. Some questions are worth asking pertaining to the above report. For example: 'What does the syllabus say about the teaching of grammar – in particular practice of language aspects?' Another question would be to fully comprehend what the report means by 'language structures' having to be 'taught'? Furthermore, the report recommends that practice should follow the style used and in setting examination papers. The question that remains to be asked and answered is whether a language examination paper currently is a genuine reflection of learners' competence in English. Another perspective that deserves attention is the extent to which examination papers are informed by the syllabus. Yet another angle worthy of consideration would be whether or not the syllabus itself is stipulative in terms of assessment strategies for it to account for reliability and validity of tests. Kilfoil and Van der Walt (1989:177) refer to content validity. This is about whether a test accurately reflects the content of the syllabus. Content validity questions whether a test involves the pupils in a representative sample of the language behaviour that is being measured. These authors further point out that test objectives should reflect teaching objectives.

The above report still needs to shed light on factors that might be responsible for learners not to fully understanding the setworks. Educators, according to the above-mentioned report, evidently do not understand setworks themselves. One begins to question the quality of education received by educators themselves. It needs to be brought to light whether the nature and content of education received by educators prepared them to grasp quality knowledge and impart it to learners, and whether education received by educators prepared them for policy issues, including syllabus matters. This research has explored all such pertinent issues.

Another report written by the ESL Subject Advisors of Empangeni District (dated 22 July 2002) states that learners still have a problem with the language section. It seems, it is reported, they lack practice in this aspect. Regarding the literature section of the paper it states that 'our concern is that most of our learners do not read the prescribed books. They lack insight in the details and interpretation of the books.' The concluding remark of the report is: 'It is with regret that our teaching is still very low' (2002). The report seems inconclusive without addressing the following questions: Are the prescribed books culturally relevant to the learners' lives? Are they sufficiently contemporary texts? (Could learners identify with the authors of these books)? Is the language used in texts appropriate for ESL learners' needs and with the commensurate comprehension scope of the targeted learners? Do authorities conduct surveys that could inform and give them insight when prescribing the relevant books?

Admittedly, it is apparent from the cited reports that the level of learners' proficiency and competence in ESL is rather low for their required level. This has necessitated this research which would ideally consider ways to improve the learners' performance levels at matric level. It is assumed that the low level of performance at matric level examinations in ESL and in content subjects is associated, *inter alia*, with low and weak communicative language skills. This seems to be the case because appropriate syllabi to meet the learners' needs, such as the one to be proposed here, either do not exist, or are not fully implemented by language trained teachers in the teaching of English language and literature.

1.2 Aims and Objectives of the Study

1.2.1 Aims

The proposed study is aimed at informed pedagogical practice with regard to syllabus design in the English language. This will be achieved through making accessible the data gathered in the course of this research to relevant parties in the academic circles. The actual language practitioners (educators) are not directly involved in policy making and decision making in the department of education. This may be partly due to bureaucratic structures or hierarchical establishments in the department. Or the main factors could be

that they are not fully empowered in terms of skills and expertise to engage in discussions of policy nature. Very little is being done to get feedback from them regarding problems that pertain to ESL teaching and learning. This research, therefore, sought to unearth problems relating to policy with regard to appropriate design and pedagogy of such relevant language aspects that attempt to address students' language proficiency needs. In fact the researcher, being an educator, is of the idea that the department of education should take an initiative to encourage educators to engage in research projects. This would not only enhance the professional status of educators but it would also inform, on the basis of research studies carried out, and thus ensure that the education is offered in schools. The data collected by educators themselves would be first hand information and valid. In brief, this research is aimed at opening doors for educators and to make them writers of articles and not of grievances alone.

1.2.2 Objectives

1. The study will specifically attempt to address the problems stated in the reports in the section 'statement of the Problem'.
2. A secondary objective of this study is to outline pertinent aspects about a syllabus and explain them. These aspects include theoretical frameworks in the design of a syllabus, activities that specify the required linguistic exponents, as well as the mode of language assessment.

1.3 Significance of the Study

The study is significant in that it is hoped it would be informative to education authorities as well as language teachers. It would address some of the problems stated at the beginning of this paper. The outcomes of this study would challenge the way language teachers conduct their language practice since they would actually be involved in the interviews and questionnaires.

The researcher involved in the study, as pointed out earlier, is an educator. The actual experiences in language teaching practice sometimes do not tally with the theory

propounded by second language acquisition theorists. Being involved in both theory and practice of second language teaching, the researcher felt it necessary to engage in the study that would, as envisaged, raise positive new questions about second language acquisition / learning and teaching. The learners in the survey come from disadvantaged linguistic background and general education acquisition, which largely characterized the former Bantu education system, which was fraught with retrogressive motives.

1.4 Conclusion

It is clear from the foregoing discussion that there is really a problem with English second language at matric level. The reports (from ESL Subject Advisors) that are cited in this chapter pose questions that may not be answered if there is no engagement in empirical research. This chapter has also clearly outlined the aims and objectives of this study and its relevance to English second language pedagogy.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature that is related to the subject of the study. As indicated in the previous chapter under 'Statement of the Problem', this study seeks to offer some factors that contribute the failure of the sampled group of ESL learners. This necessitates that we review literature that would encompass a wider scope. Such a coverage would shed more light on different perspectives that have a bearing on the teaching and learning of English and on the ultimate examination that those learners take at matric level. The study specifies the current language syllabus design as a point of departure. However, syllabus design is also informed by different theoretical premises on how we learn languages. The study will examine whether these theoretical considerations are taken into account and whether they are practised or not in the implementation of the present syllabus. In this way the themes or perspectives that will be reviewed in literature include theories on second language acquisition.

The reason for the inclusion of these theories is that the sampled group consists of what is generally described as second language speakers of English. Under this theme the following theories will be reviewed: The Monitor Model, the Cognitive Theory, Interlanguage theory, Pidginization theory as well as Chomsky's Universal Grammar which fall under Linguistic Universals. The second perspective on literature review will be 'Theories on Language syllabus Design' and the third will be 'Theories on Second – language teaching'. In a nutshell, it is the question of how human beings acquire second languages that ought to be understood. Such information should inform the design of a syllabus for second-language learners; ensure that the syllabus is informative to language teachers as the designer has an understanding of theory behind language teaching, in the given context of second language learners.

2.1 Theories of Second Language Learning /Acquisition

It is proper for this study to give a theoretical background of second language learning / acquisition. A theoretical premise on second language learning will enhance our understanding of the problem stated at the beginning of this research. The process of second language learning is a complex one. It is from this background that the past decades have seen different researchers and theorists propound different theoretical frameworks to account for this phenomenon.

2.1.1 The Monitor model

Among the early proponents of theories of second language learning /acquisition was Stephen Krashen. (Henceforth the term learning and acquisition will be used synonymously to avoid controversy arising from different theorists who responded to Krashen's work with regard to the distinction between the two terms). McLaughlin (1987:20-58) discusses the hypotheses presented by Krashen to account for second language learning. The 'Monitor theory', as it is referred to, consists of five interrelated hypotheses. Each of these hypotheses presents a particular perspective on the processes of second language learning. "In the early years the 'Monitor model' and the Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis' were more popular terms; in recent years the input Hypothesis has been the common term to refer to what are really a set of interrelated hypotheses"(Brown, 1994:279).

The hypotheses that will be discussed in this section of the paper are: The Acquisition – Learning Hypothesis, The Monitor Hypothesis, The Natural Order Hypothesis, The Input Hypothesis and The Affective Filter Hypothesis.

It should be noted that each of these hypotheses is accompanied by criticism, especially from McLaughlin (1987) whose object was to point out the shortcomings of the theory presented by Krashen. Notwithstanding the criticism by McLaughlin, the theories by Krashen did open doors for further research into second language learning. The forthcoming discussion is a detailed exploration of each of the five hypotheses.

2.1.1.1 Acquisition – Learning Hypothesis

The foundation of this theory is the distinction between acquiring a second language and learning it. McLaughlin (1987:20) has cited Krashen (1985:1) making this distinction. On one hand, acquisition is a subconscious process identical in all important ways to the process children utilize in acquiring their first language. It is worthwhile to summarily state how linguists believe first language acquisition takes place in children. Among the proponents in this field is Noam Chomsky (1965) who came up with the concept of Language Acquisition Device (LAD) which enables a child to acquire a language. His position is that humans, unlike animals, are innately predisposed to acquire language. In other words the process of learning a language for human beings is genetically programmed. For Chomsky (1965) the ability to acquire a language is innate. According to Horman (1979:236) Chomsky believed that the Language Acquisition Device enables the child to abstract from the utterances surrounding him /her as a child those rules according to which the utterances were constructed.

On the other hand, according to Krashen (1985:1) as cited by McLaughlin (1987:20) learning is a conscious process that results in knowing about language. The distinction lies in that the former emphasizes meaning while the latter emphasizes form. It is improbable, though, one may suggest, that this conscious process may be applicable to young children between zero and five years.

For purposes of this study the focus will mainly be on learning. This does not, in any way, rule out the question of language acquisition. Lightbown (1985:176-180) as cited by Brown (1994:278) conducted research on second language acquisition. She claims that adults and adolescents can acquire a second language. This has relevance to the research undertaken in this study as the learners who are the centre of focus are adolescents and adults who range from Grade 10 to Grade 12. Another author who makes it proper not to discard acquisition is Yalden (1983:8) who points out that today, there are two distinct areas of research in second-language acquisition and learning, one comprising studies in language acquisition in children, the other in adolescents and adults.

It is worth bringing to attention that the distinction offered by Krashen between learning and acquisition is severely criticized by McLaughlin (1987:21) who challenges him to make clear what he means by conscious and subconscious. McLaughlin (1987) claims that 'Krashen has not provided a definition of these terms, although he did operationally identify conscious learning with judgments of grammaticality based on 'rule' and conscious acquisition with judgments based on 'feel' (Krashen et al. 1978).

The above argument has a question to be asked. This is whether learning does become acquisition. Krashen (1982:83-87) claims that what is consciously learned – through the presentation of rules and explanations of grammar – does not become the basis of acquisition of the target language. Krashen bases his argument on three claims:

- (1) Sometimes there is 'acquisition' without 'learning' – that is, some individuals have considerable competence in a second language but do not know very many rules consciously;
- (2) There are cases where 'learning' never becomes 'acquisition' that is, a person can know the rule and continue breaking it or violating, and
- (3) No one knows anywhere near all the rules.

The second claim is also shared by Lightbown (1985:176-80) who is cited by McLaughlin (1987:279). She states that knowing a language rule does not mean one will necessarily be able to use it in a communicative interaction.

A contrary view is held by Kevin Gregg (1984), cited by McLaughlin (1987:21), who points out that the claims by Krashen run counter to the intuitive belief of many second language learners, for whom it seems obvious that at least some rules can be acquired through learning. Gregg (1984) claims that he was able to learn the rules for forming the past tense and gerundive forms of Japanese verbs by memorizing the conjunction chart in his textbook. He goes on to mention that in a few days time, his use of these forms was error-free, with no input but a little drill. The implication of the experience shared by Gregg is that what he learnt eventually became acquired. McLaughlin (1987) would

support neither Krashen nor Gregg on this issue until it became clear what is actually meant by acquisition and learning.

2.1.1.2 The Monitor Hypothesis

The second hypothesis is the Monitor. For Krashen (1982) the monitor is like a mental editor. It edits or corrects what one says or writes largely, perhaps, as a result of slips of the tongue or indeed in written form. The monitor comes into play before and after speech production. According to Krashen (1982:15) 'learning comes into play only to make changes in the form of our utterances, after they have been produced by the acquired system. Acquisition initiates the speaker's utterances and is responsible for fluency' (McLaughlin, 1987:24).

What is worth noting about the monitor, for Krashen, is that a learner acquires a language through communication. This implies that what one learns through formal instruction is of secondary significance in that it 'polishes' up what has already been acquired. The above-mentioned author adds that the focus of language teaching, for Krashen, should not be rule-learning but communication.

Krashen (1982:16) as cited by McLaughlin (1987:25) has specified three conditions for the use of the monitor: time, focus on form and knowing the rule. The three conditions will be discussed hereunder, each in turn.

In regard to the condition of the time, Krashen (1982) points out that in order for the speaker to use rules effectively, he needs enough time. This is often observable for learners who use the monitor excessively. He points out that they become hesitant when they talk and do not pay full attention to what the partner says. Personally I feel that if all people consciously overused the monitor no one would be fluent in a second language. Another condition for the use of the monitor is the speaker's focus on form. This summarily means the speaker may focus on the correctness of what he /she says and not how he/she says it.

The last condition is knowing the rule. This appears to be extremely difficult as most second language learners do not know all the rules of a language. This sentiment is shared by Krashen (1982:87) where he says 'no one knows anywhere near all the rules.' One's knowledge of the rules would be imperative for the use of the monitor as, for Krashen, it (monitor) corrects any contravention of the rule.

However, the three conditions could not go unchallenged. McLaughlin (1987:26-27) feels that Krashen has not been able to demonstrate that the putative conditions for the monitor use do in fact lead to its application. He further states that all that has been demonstrated by the researcher is either that the monitor is rarely employed under the normal conditions of second language acquisition and use, or that the monitor is a theoretically useless concept.

Whatever criticism is leveled against the theory, it does shed light on some trends in second language acquisition. For purposes of this research study, Krashen's distinction between monitor users provides useful clues on second language performance. Krashen distinguishes and divides speakers into monitor over-users, monitor under-users and optimal monitor users. In terms of linguistic performance over-users tend to be hesitant and correct their utterances quite often. Monitor under-users do not rely heavily on conscious knowledge of rules. They are not usually influenced by error correction. The third group use the monitor when it is appropriate and when it does not interfere with communication (McLaughlin, 1987:27).

Krashen's monitor is further employed in the explanation of the differences between children's and adults' language learning. Krashen believes that children have some meta-awareness of language. He believes they are superior language learners because they do not use the monitor and are not as inhibited as older learners (McLaughlin, 1987:29).

Krashen (19789) as cited by McLaughlin (1987:29) argues that the research evidence is that adolescents and adults are faster language learners in initial stages, but that young children do better in terms of their eventual attainment. In short, he distinguishes rate

from ultimate attainment. On the other hand, McLaughlin (1987:29) is sceptical of Krashen's stance that children are superior in language-learning ability. He points out that what research shows is that early adolescence is the best age for language learning – both in terms of learning and ultimate attainment.

Related to the children-adult differences in language learning is the critical period hypothesis. 'The critical period hypothesis claims that there is a biological timetable... beyond which language is increasingly difficult to acquire' (Brown, 1945:52). Initially the concept had applied to first language acquisition. With the recent emergence and interest in second language learning /acquisition research, it has come to be applied in second language learning circles. Most researchers have associated the hypothesis with the concept of lateralization. In short, lateralization refers to the process during which the brain assigns certain functions to the left and right hemispheres.

What poses a challenge is the time of inception of this process of lateralization. 'The 'classic' argument is that a critical point for second language acquisition occurs around puberty, beyond which people seem to be relatively incapable of acquiring a native-like accent of the second language' (Brown, 1994:53). The author feels that this has resulted in an incorrect assumption that by the age of 12 or 13 one cannot successfully learn a second language.

It is also worth taking into account that the term 'native-like accent' in relation to lateralization is subject to question. This question is addressed by Brown (1994:57) who points out that 'research' on the acquisition of authentic control of the phonology of a foreign language supports the notion of a critical period. Evidence thus far indicates that persons beyond the age of puberty do not generally acquire authentic pronunciation of the second language. Such a critical period may have little to do with lateralization of the brain, though, and much to do with the child's neuromuscular plasticity.

The question of native-like accent may also be related to the affective or emotional aspects of a second language learner. These factors may result in a learner not desiring to attain a native-like accent. Brown (1994:61) mentions that following affective factors that may come into play on the question of accent: empathy, self-esteem, extroversion,

inhibition, imitation, anxiety and attitudes. He points out that children are egocentric. They see the world as revolving around them. It is apparent that self-identity may lead to the non-attainment of native-like accent.

2.1.1.3 The Natural Order Hypothesis

This third hypothesis is premised on the supposition that we acquire the rules of language in a predictable order, some rules tending to come early and others late. Krashen (1985) believes that the order is not determined solely by formal simplicity and there is evidence that it is independent of the order in which rules are taught in language classes (Krashen, 1985:1) as cited by McLaughlin (1987:30). For Krashen, this order is not determined by conscious grammar or the monitor. The hypothesis implies that the way we learn a second language follows its own course – it does not take account of the order in which language items were presented in class by the teacher. The hypothesis is based on the Morpheme rank order published by Dulay and Burt (1974).

McLaughlin (1987:32) feels that Dulay and Burt's study was not a longitudinal study, and, they did not measure acquisition sequence but rather accuracy of use in obligatory contexts.

The Natural Order Hypothesis falls short in that it 'says little or nothing about the process of acquiring a second language' (McLaughlin 1987:35). Most of the theories propounded by Krashen were criticized by scholars who came after him. 'Research by Wode et al. (1978) has indicated that individual second language learners take different routes. They decompose complex structural patterns and rebuild them step by step, attaining varying degrees of target-like proficiency. This process cannot be captured by research that focuses on the accuracy of specific morphemes in large cross-sectional samples of second language learners' (McLaughlin, 1987:35). In short the criticism of Krashen's hypothesis stems from its focus largely on morpheme case studies. This focus cannot be used to arrive at conclusive evidence of the existence of the natural order of acquisition of a second language. The critics feel that his treatment of the subject is, to a large extent, superficial as it focuses on the final form (morpheme acquisition).

2.1.1.4 Krashen's Input Hypothesis

The Input hypothesis is premised on the natural order hypothesis that has previously been discussed. The word 'input' refers to the new data or piece of information /knowledge that is presented to the second language learner. The data presented will contain some linguistic /grammar elements. According to Brown (1994:280) an important condition for language acquisition to occur is that the acquirer understands (via hearing or reading) language input that contains structure 'a bit beyond his or her current level of competence. The implication of this is that the acquirer may be said to have acquired what he previously did not know. In other words, the new input should not be familiar to the learner.

'If an acquirer is at stage or level i , the input he or she understands should contain $i+1$ The corollary to this is that the input should neither be so far beyond their reach that they are overwhelmed (this might be, say, $i+2$), nor so close to their current stage that they are not challenged at all ($i+0$)' (Brown, 1994:281).

Krashen's (1986) tenets of Input hypothesis contend that it attempts to provide an answer to how a language is acquired. For Krashen, as cited by McLaughlin (1987:36) there are two key issues central to second language acquisition that are addressed by the input hypothesis:

- (1) Speaking is a result of acquisition and not its cause. Speech cannot be taught directly but 'emerges' on its own as a result of building competence via comprehensible input.
- (2) If input is understood, and there is enough of it, the necessary grammar is automatically provided. The language teacher need not attempt deliberately to teach the next structure along the natural order – it will be provided in just the right quantities and automatically reviewed if the student receives a sufficient amount of comprehensible input (1985:2).

What the first assertion implies is that there can be no speech production if there is no input / information presented to the learner. What is implicit about this assertion is the

‘emergence’ of speech from comprehensible input. Worth noting is that Krashen does not account for how a second language learner comes to understand (comprehend) the input. The argument is not that the input is incomprehensible, but is where does the learner get the metalinguage to understand the new input. I feel that the concept of ‘emergence’ falls short in explaining how the process takes place. I particularly question this aspect because the focal point of the research undertaken here is on factors that should inform a design of a syllabus for second language learners. I am also skeptical of the claim that the teacher should not teach structure as it is claimed that it will ‘automatically be reviewed’ from comprehensible input. The question is whether the volume of the input renders it comprehensible, and whether ESL learners can totally ignore the learning of structural patterns of a target language that is, in fact, the instructional medium through which they are eventually assessed. The term ‘input’ is sometimes misconstrued as it relates to its counterpart ‘intake’. A distinction between ‘input’ and ‘intake’ is made by Brown (1994:281) who states that ‘Input is the subset of all the input that actually gets assigned to our long term memory. ... intake is what you take with you over a period of time and later remember.’ In short, that there is an input presented does not necessarily guarantee that it will become an intake.

Smith (1994:8) states that ‘the input ‘data’ may be registered on the researcher’s tape recorder as having been available to the learner at a given time. The utterances or written text, and the structures they contain, may be registered very clearly in the teacher’s memory, where formal learning is concerned. However, whether they have been registered consciously or subconsciously by the learner is another matter.’

Krashen has been criticized by Brown (1994:281) in his claim that ‘comprehensible input is the causative variable in second language acquisition (Krashen, 1986:62).’ What this means, according to Brown (1994:281) is that success in a foreign language can be attributed to input alone. Such a theory ascribes very little credit to learners and their own active engagement in the pursuit of language competence. In short, my argument is that the availability or non-availability of enough comprehensible input does not entirely account for language acquisition. Some learners are naturally outgoing and inquisitive

while others are withdrawn and passive. The implication of this is that it is not only input that determines language acquisition, but also the personality of the learner. This is with regard to whether the learner is an extrovert and thus practises language acquisition with his/her peers or is an introvert and is thus withdrawn. Krashen has offered evidence of the existence of the input hypothesis. The first evidence is the existence of the silent period'. Krashen is cited by McLaughlin (1987:37) stating that the 'silent period' has been observed to occur in some children who come to a new country where they are exposed to a new language, and are silent for a considerably long time. Krashen argues that during this silence they are building up their competence in the new language by listening. In other words, by listening they are receiving and using comprehensible input. He claims that once competence has been built up, speech emerges.

My contention is that the claim by Krashen, above, leaves much to be desired. If one were to believe this claim, one would find it unnecessary to send children to school in order for them to learn a second language. One would simply ensure that the child received 'enough' input. Eventually the child would have acquired the second language after being silent for some time – though no-one knows how long this silence might take in order for the learner to receive comprehensible input in the target language.

McLaughlin (1987:37) argues that the silent period may be due to anxiety, personality differences, etc. He further questions how an individual comes to understand language that contains structures that have not yet been acquired. He further asks an interesting question – how a speech becomes comprehensible to a person who initially knows nothing of the language. Krashen's explanation is that 'the acquirers use context, knowledge of the world, and extra-linguistic information to understand the language directed at them' (McLaughlin , 1987:37). My reading of McLaughlin's argument is that the 'silent period' fails to the development of the learner's grammatical system. He feels that understanding messages is not adequate. The hypothesis fails to explain how the learner progresses from understanding to acquisition.

The second evidence posited for the input hypothesis is based on age differences. Krashen (1985) as cited by McLaughlin (1987), on one hand, claims that older acquirers progress more quickly than younger ones because they obtain more comprehensible input. He further points out that since older learners have more knowledge of the world and participate earlier in conversations as they are able to use first-language syntactic rules – this counts to their advantage.

McLaughlin (1987:38), on the other hand, argues that ‘young children should have a great advantage over older children and adults, because speech addressed to them is tied to the ‘here and now’, is less complex grammatically, contains more repetitions and more frequent vocabulary items, etc.’

My summary of these arguments is that age differences as an evidence for the input hypothesis is not convincing. The fact that older learners are better off, does not necessarily make the input hypothesis plausible. In fact, older speakers, in my opinion, should be inhibited by affective factors like introversion, pride, etc.

The third evidence posited to account for the existence of the input hypothesis is the effect of exposure. McLaughlin (1987:39) has cited Krashen pointing out that according to studies done, it is apparent that people who live in a country longer become more proficient in their language. What he means, I suppose, is that these people are constantly exposed to comprehensible input which in turn improves their language acquisition. The question that is raised by McLaughlin (1987:39) is what exactly comprehensible input is. The answer to this question lies in Krashen’s early writings where he used the term ‘intake’. ‘Intake is, simply, that subset of linguistic input that helps the acquirer learn language (1981:10)’ as cited by McLaughlin (1987:39).

In short, a language may be used in the presence of the learner but what counts most is what the learner absorbs. It has already been mentioned in the previous paragraphs of this topic that the input, for Krashen, should contain structures that are a little beyond the learner’s current competence. However, Ioup (1984) as cited by McLaughlin (1987:39) argues that such a claim ‘presumes that it is possible to define a set of levels and determine which structures constitute the $i + 1$ level. At the present stage of second

language study, both tasks are impossible for researchers, and, above all, for teachers dealing with many students at different levels of ability.'

2.1.1.5 The Affective Filter Hypothesis

The last hypothesis encompassed within the Monitor model is the Affective Filter hypothesis. Krashen (1985) is cited by McLaughlin (1987:51-52) as asserting that comprehensible input may not be utilized by second-language acquirers if there is a 'mental block.' This 'mental block' is what he calls an affective filter. If the filter is 'down' the input reaches the Language Acquisition Device and becomes acquired competence. However, if the filter is 'up' the input is blocked and does not reach the LAD. In this way the input does not become acquired competence. Krashen mentions certain conditions as responsible for the filter being up. Factors like the lack of motivation, lack of confidence or concern with failure may lead to input not reaching the LAD. On the other hand, the filter is down when the acquirer is not anxious and is intent on becoming a member of the group speaking the target language.

The argument posed by Krashen implies that the Input hypothesis on its own is not sufficient to account for second language acquisition. It can be inferred from the Affective Filter Hypothesis that there are differences between individuals even if they are exposed to an equal amount of comprehensible input. In fact, it is irrelevant to talk about comprehensible input if a language learner's filter is up.

According to McLaughlin (1987:53) the filter is thought to limit what it is that the learner attends to, what will be learned, and how quickly the language will be acquired. He, however, feels that this restrictive role of the affective filter is left vague in the writings of Krashen and his colleagues. He further points out that the hypothesis provides little information as to why learners stop where they fossilize.

Krashen (1982:44) has been cited by McLaughlin (1987:34) as saying children ultimately reach higher levels of attainment in language development than are achieved by individuals who begin the language in adulthood. He ascribes this to the strengthening of

the affective filter at about puberty. What this means is that adolescence is the worst period for language learning. However, McLaughlin (1985, ch. 7) cited in McLaughlin (1987:55) strongly maintains that ‘there is considerable evidence that early adolescence is the best time to learn a second language.’

I particularly find a discrepancy between the Input hypothesis and the Affective Filter hypothesis. The claim made by Krashen that children are ‘better’ language acquirers seems to contradict what is discussed in the input hypothesis according to which adults are better off since they are exposed to a lot of comprehensible input and are able to rely on first-language structures and vocabulary.

Conclusion and Evaluation

In conclusion the Monitor model posited by Krashen did shed some light on our understanding of the process of second language acquisition. Even though the model falls short, as McLaughlin and I have pointed out, it has provided a spring-board for the scholars who came after Krashen. In short, Krashen pioneered research into second language acquisition which can further offer theoretical exploratory ideas on how learners acquire and learn other languages other than their first language such as is the case with bulk of learners in this study. What follows consists of other theories worth taking into account in the study of second language acquisition or learning.

2.1.2 McLaughlin’s Attention-Processing Model

As was seen in his critique of Krashen’s Acquisition – Learning hypothesis, McLaughlin is critical of the empirical application of the term conscious and subconscious processes. ‘...McLaughlin (1990 a) and Schmidt (1990) agree that awareness and consciousness’ are tricky terms; therefore, in order to form a sound theory of second language acquisition, we are better off not appealing to the conscious or unconscious continuum’ (Brown, 1994:283).

In an attempt to avoid the terms ‘conscious’ and ‘subconscious’, McLaughlin and his colleagues came up with a model of their own explain the process of second language

acquisition. Brown (1994:283) names the colleagues of McLaughlin and includes: Rossman and McLeod (1983); McLeod and McLaughlin (1986) McLaughlin (1987, 1990b). These authors came up with a model that 'juxtaposes processing mechanisms (controlled and automatic) and categories of attention to form four cells' (Brown, 1994:283).

'Controlled and automatic processing' can be both classified under routinization of skills, that is, automaticity. Brown (1994:283) points out that the automatization of this multiplicity of data is accomplished by a process of restructuring (this will be discussed in detail later in this section). He further points that both ends of this automaticity – restructuring continuum of processing can occur with either focal or peripheral attention to the task at hand; that is, focusing attention either centrally or simply on the periphery (1994:284). An example is when one's peripheral attention is given to language forms in an advanced language class, where the focal attention is given to meaning, function or purpose.

Let us now put the notion of automaticity and restructuring into clearer perspective. First, the focus will be on the general definition of the two concepts. The second part of the discussion will be more concerned with the relevance of these two concepts in the process of second language learning or acquisition. This part of the discussion will mainly be focused on automaticity as observed in the retrieval of lexicon, processing of syntactic information as well as the role of automaticity in reading. Restructuring will be discussed in terms of its role in the development of the second language, in the strategies adopted by the learner, as well as its role in reading a second language.

Automaticity can be defined in the context of processing of information (linguistic or otherwise) in the mind. The way the mind encodes information has three stages: first there is sensory encoding where one receives data with one's senses (auditory, visual, etc.). Such data is available for a short time and has to be passed on to the short-term memory. If such data is successfully passed on into the long-term memory, it remains there – even permanently. Automaticity comes into play when the subject is presented

with data that needs to be processed into the long-term memory and retrieved afterwards. The processing of data is presented in a dichotomous form. In order for automaticity to set in, there has to be a routine first. This routine is referred to as a controlled processing. Controlled processing of data requires time and conscious effort. The skill needs to be practised on a regular basis so that every time appropriate input is presented such a skill is displayed with relative ease. Controlled processing requires attention on the part of the subject. Once there has been enough practice through routinization, the process of data retrieval becomes automatic. This means that the data is now processed without conscious effort. It is now easy to access data in the long-term memory and once automaticity has set in it is usually difficult to unlearn that particular skill.

Restructuring, on the other hand, takes place when the learner works out new ways of interpreting the data that has been processed and stored in the long-term memory. Learning is an ongoing process. Controlled processes take place and eventually become automatized routines. However, when new data is encountered, the automatized routines may need to be restructured or reorganized in a new system. In short, restructuring results in an improved processing of information as new procedures of processing prove to be more efficient than the previous ones. The learner may have successfully mastered the first skill and wants to advance. In this process of advancements the learner comes into contact with new input. The learner will want to integrate this input into his existing system. There will probably be discrepancies between the previously stored input and the new input. The resulting situation will be an adjustment of the old input into newly required data.

The focus of the discussion now shifts to the relevance of automaticity and restructuring to second-language learning or acquisition.

First, let us focus on the way automaticity can be observed in second language learning. 'In a study of judgements of acceptability of deviant and non-deviant English sentences, Lehtonen and Sajavaara (1983) found that non-native speakers required more time in

making such judgements than did native speakers. Presumably, speech recognition and interpretation skills in a second language are less automatic' (McLaughlin, 1987:141).

The fact that non-native speakers needed more time is a reaffirmation of the point stated earlier that for automaticity to take place the learner of the second language must apply conscious effort. One could argue that before automaticity is attained, the functioning of the 'monitor' in the processing of linguistic data takes place. Some second- language learners normally take short pauses when they speak. This could be accounted for by the fact that their degree of lexical retrieval is not yet automatized.

Herriot (1970:22) argues that 'Pausal phenomenon give indications when planning is taking place..., production is sometimes smooth and relatively continuous within phrase or sentence units, while between them pauses may occur.'

Second, automaticity can be observed in syntactic processing. McLaughlin (1987:141) has cited an experiment conducted by Hatch et al. (1970). In this experiment it was found that native speakers focus mainly on meaning, while non-native speakers seemed to focus on both syntax and meaning. This may be indicative of the fact that for native speakers processing has become automatic while non-native speakers still put a conscious effort (controlled processing) in semantic and syntactic processing.

The last aspect pertains to automaticity and reading in a second language. McLaughlin (1987:143) reports that in experiments conducted by Cziko (1980) it is clear that less proficient second-language learners when reading make many substitution errors that graphically resembled the text. This is evidence that many sub-skills (like prediction) involved in reading are not yet automatized in these learners. The reader who has automatized the reading skill will show evidence of reduced discrimination time and focusing attention to higher order features.

Regarding restructuring, Brown (1994:284) has cited McLeod and McLaughlin (1986) as saying 'the components of a task are co-ordinated, integrated, or reorganized into new units, thereby allowing the ... old components to be replaced by a more proficient procedure.'

Restructuring is observable in the development of the second language. In second language learning, restructuring takes place where a learner masters a particular sub-skill. In English, for example, the learner may have mastered the regular verbs -that they add -ed when they are changed into the past. However, when that learner is later presented with input containing irregular verbs which do not take -ed when changed into past tense he/she has to realize that not all verbs take -ed and thus processing of the past tense formation has to be restructured in his/her mind. 'Restructuring occurs because language is a complex hierarchical system whose components interact in non-linear ways' (McLaughlin 1987:143-144). It would appear, therefore, that as a second-language learner still strives to attain native-like competence, restructuring will be pertinent.

Restructuring, again, is observable in reading a second language. According to McLaughlin (1987:147) a good reader interacts actively with the text. Such a reader adds, deletes and substitutes words where appropriate. Such a learner heavily relies on prior conceptual and linguistic competence to predict what might come next. Where does restructuring feature then? It features in the sense that the learner applies what he knows about the language, that is, the data he/she has routinized and internalized, and tunes it until it fits into the data he/she is encountering.

Conclusion and Evaluation

In brief, automaticity and restructuring are complementary processes. It is apparent that without restructuring the automatized skill would end up redundant. It should be noted, however, that the application of these terms is formed by the view that language is a cognitive process. Carroll (1994:57) has pointed out that certain automatic tasks appear to be biologically built into our cognitive equipment. Restructuring could thus be related to the concept of schema. Schema refers to the existing knowledge that one possesses and uses in the interpretation of every new piece of information. In other words, the reader locates what he or she needs into a particular perspective that exists in his or her mind.

2.1.3 Interlanguage theory

Interlanguage theory is yet another theory that accounts for second language acquisition. The general premise of this theory for a learner who has already acquired the first language and wants to learn a new one, is that this learner already has knowledge of how a language operates. This 'knowledge' comes from his or her first language which he or she uses to communicate meaning through sentences. Selinker (1969, 1972), cited by McLaughlin, 1987: 60, coined the term 'interlanguage' to refer to the interim grammars constructed by second-language learners on their way to the target language. The above-mentioned author uses the term to describe the learner's system at a single point in time; and the range of interlocking systems that characterize the development of learners over time. My reading of the assertion is that interlanguage is a process which develops over time. The passage through such a process cannot be attained over a short period of time. It is elastic and thus permeable.

Selinker (1972) points out that the 'learner still begins with no knowledge of the target language, and thus has to progress gradually towards native-speaker ability. The learner's newly acquired knowledge and performance are part of an ability that changes constantly as his or her knowledge of the target language increases.' The points made by this author about interlanguage include the importance of studying learner errors as they reveal the hypotheses a learner may be testing and the generalization a learner may be making about certain linguistic structures or rules. The author points out that the learners' errors are reduced as a result of feedback and input from his or her target-language environment. He also points out that an interlanguage is a combination of the mother-tongue and the target language. Most importantly he points out that students who all begin learning a new language at the same time will progress at different rates, depending on factors such as age, motivation, exposure, etc.

2.1.4 Pidginization theory

Another theory that is reflective of second language acquisition or learning is the theory of pidginization. This theory is generally described as an unsuccessful effort to learn a second language. Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000:101) point out that ‘a pidgin evolves when people need some means of verbal communication, perhaps for trade purposes, but no group learns the native language of any other group, for social reasons that may include lack of trust or motivation.’ To illustrate what this quotation means, one can make an example of migrant workers who come to a new place. They need to communicate with local language speakers only for the job to be carried out. There is no constant contact between them and as a result the new language does not develop beyond bare communication.

Second-language learning researchers are of the opinion that the study of pidgins is of significance to our understanding of second language acquisition. In this regard Mühlhäusler (1986:24) points out that ‘since pidgins illustrate how adults learn and create new languages, their study has become a major research area in second-language teaching and learning.’ He further points out that the development of pidgins takes place without formal tuition. Unlike pidgins, formal second language learning, he continues, introduces elements that are not learnt ‘naturally’ i.e. without instruction, their study may result in more efficient second-language teaching. Pointing out the difference between pidgins and a second language, Hymes (1971:104-5) highlights that several pidgins contain linguistic items or structures which are not immediately assignable to the native or the target language. A series of linguists, he continues, argue, however, that they are attributable to internal linguistic factors.

2.1.5 Chomskyan Universal Grammar and Second-language Acquisition

The Universal Grammar was posited by Chomsky (1980), a generative grammarian. The concept was advocated in response to the behaviorists principles on language learning. According to behaviorists language acquisition comes about, in the case of children, as a

result of imitation of utterances heard in the surrounding environment. Chomsky is cited by Akmajian et al (1995:453) as saying 'the linguistic data available to the children are themselves impoverished and not sufficient for a child to inductively arrive at a grammar capable of producing well-formed expressions.' In short, the argument is that it is unlikely that a child may acquire a language from an environment that does not provide enough and well-formed linguistic information to enable the child to acquire a language.

He, therefore, claims that a child is born with language acquisition device that enables him or her to acquire a language. The knowledge that in principle all languages are related is referred to Universal Grammar. He claims:

Universal grammar is taken to be the set of properties, conditions, or whatever, that constitute the 'initial' state of the language learner, hence the basis on which knowledge of language develops (Chomsky 1980: 69) as cited by McLaughlin (1987:91).

It should be noted that when the concept of universal grammar came about it was exclusively applied in first language acquisition in children between the ages of two and puberty. This period is referred to as the Critical Period for language acquisition. However, second language acquisition researchers feel that universal grammar is still applicable to adult language learners, beyond the puberty stage.

According to White (1985b) as cited in McLaughlin (1987:91-92) there are four considerations that motivated second language researchers to adopt the Chomskyan position:

First, they felt that Universal Grammar is believed to provide a sophisticated and detailed linguistic theory to account for second-language phenomena. They feel that the interlanguage theory is vague.

Second, the researchers admit that both first and second language learners have to work out a complex grammar on the basis of deficient data and therefore their grammatical knowledge cannot be explained by input data alone.

Third, researchers believe that Universal Grammar would allow for more specific investigation of how languages vary. It is believed that the language properties inherent in the human mind consist of a set of general principles that apply to all grammars.

Lastly, the researchers are of the idea that the critical age hypothesis is unnecessarily rigid. They argue that adult second language learners use certain structural properties of the language they are acquiring, to which they are sensitive, and use these sensitivities to construct the grammar of the language they are learning.

Conclusion and Evaluation

Whether applied to first or second languages, following the general principles among various language, Universal Grammar, does shed light on how a language is acquired. That the environment sometimes provides impoverished stimuli and yet there is successful first and second language acquisition has implications for language teaching. It implies that both acquisition processes can take place without instruction from the teacher who at times does not have an exemplary competence in the language that is targeted. McLaughlin (1987:101), furthermore, observes that Universal Grammar (UG) has a potential for clarifying our understanding of interlanguage development as well as transfer.

2.2 Theories On Syllabus Design

Value System underlying Curriculum

According to White (1988:24-25) ‘the views on the nature and purpose of education include those which emphasize the transmission of an esteemed cultural heritage; which stress the growth and self-realization of the individual, and those which regard education as an instrument of social change.’

He aligns these orientations with classical humanism, progressivism and reconstruction, respectively. These orientations are associated with different viewpoints in language pedagogy. For example, the classical humanism is expressed through grammar translation method. Reconstruction is expressed through audio-lingualism and notional-functional syllabuses. Progressivism is expressed through process syllabus and procedural syllabus which (syllabi) were proposed Breen and Candlin (1980). The above mentioned authors, cited by White (1988), point out that the orientations mentioned above give rise to different views on purposes and methods of language teaching as well as the most effective ways of implementing curriculum innovation.

Curriculum Development Model

a. Taba-Tyler curriculum

This model to curriculum development is associated with Taylor and Richards, 1979: 64) who believe that a framework for a language curriculum should have objectives as a starting point. They consider it rational to specify the ends of an activity before engaging in it.

Taba (1962) as cited by White (1988:27) makes a distinction between goals, aims and objectives. He points out that goals are long- term while objectives are the short – to medium term goals.

This model, in short, is informed by the view that in order for curriculum designers to achieve the aims of the curriculum, they should set realistic goals. These goals will guide designers and language practitioners practice.

Widdowson (1983:7) as cited in White (1988:27) defines objectives as ‘the pedagogical intentions of a particular course of study to be achieved within the period of that course and in principle measurable by some assessment device at the end of the course. He further defines aims as ‘the purposes to which learning will be put after the end of the course.’

The model under discussion starts with statement of general goals. In other words, the language curriculum designer, as pointed out above, should establish a general orientation of the syllabus. Secondly, there has to be a diagnosis of needs. These are needs of the learner for whom the curriculum is intended. In other words what will the learners be able to do with language after matric? It may be for instrumental or integrative reasons. These needs may also be limited in the sense that they may have their surrender value, (see Pit Corder, 1971), where learners may not proceed to tertiary education but may only be able to use English in the work place.

Thirdly the designer has to formulate objectives and thereafter select the content to be taught. The selected content needs to be organized. The selection of learning experiences has to take place. These learning experiences also need to be organized. Evaluation has to take place to ensure or assess whether the needs that were diagnosed earlier on have been satisfied. When the needs have been satisfied, detailed procedures need to be formulated and thereafter implemented.

b. The Process Approach

Having discussed Taba’s (1962) curriculum model, whose entry point is aims and objectives, we now turn to the process approach to curriculum design. This approach takes account of how teachers, in their real classroom situation, approach curriculum

design. White (1988:33) points out that teachers begin with the context in which they are working. He refers to this context as a practical concern. The next consideration is pupils' interests and the selection of the subject-matter. It is only after these considerations have been that teachers attend to aims and purposes.

The justification of how teachers approach curriculum design comes from Kelly (1977:34) cited by White (1988:33-34) who points out that: 'It may be that they have thus come to realize, long before the curriculum theorists that to state one's objectives in advance, in terms of intended behavioral changes and to stick rigidly to such a plan or program, would fail to take account of the complexities of the curriculum and the importance of the individual context in which every act of teaching occurs.'

White (1988:34) highlights the fact that a process-based curriculum is viewed in terms of procedures and not content, behavioral outcomes or measurable product. He further points out that it is concerned with the process and not the product of learning. It does, however, have general principles and looser aims which provide direction.

c. Situational Model

This model, as the name reflects, takes account of the situation or context as its point of departure. According to White (1988:36) it does not assume that curriculum proposals are to be written on a blank slate. The model was proposed by Skilbeck (1984) and it has its basis in cultural analysis; it analyzes and appraises the school situation itself. His main concern is with school-based curriculum development and he defines it as 'the planning, designing, implementation and evaluation of a program of students' learning by educational institutions of which these students are members'(Skilbeck, 1984:2).

The bottom line, therefore, is that a syllabus should not be imposed upon an institution by higher authorities who are not in touch with what is obtaining inside that institution. However, he points out that at the same time 'the curriculum should not be parochially conceived' because the institution is part of a network of relationships which include stake-holders other than members of the school itself. What the author means by the

curriculum being ‘parochially conceived’ is that it should not be narrow in its scope as the learner for whom such a curriculum is designed in that institution will eventually have to go out into the wider society. Learners, for example, have to study in any international institution without falling short in their orientation linguistically. He further points out that the students should participate in decision-making on curriculum matters as this would help them in determining the pattern of experiences they are to undergo.

Skilbeck (1984) acknowledges the effect of control outside the school. He reaffirms, however, that neither the independent initiatives of the school nor those larger external forces in the curriculum are by themselves sufficient for achieving the system-wide kinds of change that are needed. Imposed change from without does not work, because it is not adequately thought out, or it is not understood, or resources are not available to carry them through, or because it is actively resisted. Within-institution change is, by its nature, situationally specific. Each process requires to have a well worked out philosophy and programme of development (Skilbeck 1984:5) in White (1988:37).

What should be done by a language curriculum designer in terms of the situation model can summarily be presented as follows: The first step is for a designer to analyze the specific situation within a specific institution – this is what we referred to as an appraisal of the school itself. Secondly, one has to define the objectives one purports to attain through the curriculum. Thirdly, one has to design the teaching-learning programme. The next step is the interpretation and implementation of the programme as set out. The last step is to assess and evaluate the programme.

Skilbeck (1984) as cited in White (1985b:37-38) highlights the usefulness of the sequence of actions that are mentioned in this model:

First, we may use it to provide a resume, a kind of prospectus of tasks to be accomplished. Second, it can be the basis of agreed action and hence help in reducing arbitrary or authoritarian decisions. Third, it would be useful if it encompasses a simplification of its aims and objectives.

The discussion on the situational model highlights the appraisal of the school context. This necessitates that the discussion that follows address the needs analysis and syllabus design.

Needs Analysis and Syllabus Design

The model for the analysis of language needs for learners was introduced by Munby (1978:154-189) and is referred to as the Communication Needs Processor. The model addresses a lot of questions about the participant (learner) in the communication activity. Below is a summary of questions to consider in this model:

Firstly, the course designer has to gather relevant information about the learner: the age, sex, nationality, first language as well as the target language. In other words, for the course to be effective it must be informed about the nature of the participants. The first parameter is what Munby (1978) refers to as purposive domain. In short this parameter establishes the purpose for which English will be used. It establishes whether it will be used for occupational or educational purposes. Once this has been established the specific occupation and duties need to be established and whether the language training program will come before or after the beginning of the job or studies in question.

The second parameter has to do with the setting – both physically and psycho-socially. Under the physical setting the concern is with time and place. That is, the place of work and study. The psychosocial concern has to do with different environments in which the target language will be used. For example, it could be a noisy, demanding or culturally different environment.

The next variable is interaction, that is, with who will the participant be communicating and the kind of relationship that exists between them. He describes the social relationships like superior to subordinate, learner to instructor, colleague to colleague, etc.

The fourth parameter is instrumentality. The concern here has to do with the medium, mode and channel of communication for which learners need to be trained. By medium reference is being made to whether the language will be spoken, written or both. By mode of communication he means monologue, for example, reading books or a dialogue. The channel of communication could be face-to-face, telephonically, etc.

The fifth parameter in the model is the dialect. Given the fact English has different dialects depending on where it is spoken, it is appropriate that the participants are taught the dialect used in the setting where they will communicate. Dialects could differ in terms of British or American, African, Indian, regional or non-regional.

The sixth one is the target level. According to Hawkey (1979:85) this part of the profile attempts to assign values to various characteristics (e.g., size, range, delicacy, speed, flexibility) of the communication in English that learners have to cope with, both receptively and productively.

He further points out that the values are put on a scale that ranges from 1 (very low/short) to 7 (very high /long) and they provide a general idea of the dimensions of the learners' target communication.

The seventh parameter in the model is the communicative event. For Munby (1978) the concern here for the designer is what the participant has to do with the language, either productively or receptively. This is described in terms of communicative events and these (communicative events) are subdivided into communicative activities. He further points out that the results from analyzing an event into component parts that facilitate socio-semantic or skill selection (1978:37).

The last parameter is what Munby (1978) terms as the communicative key. This is 'concerned with how (in the sense of manner) one does the activities comprising an event (what one does) (Munby, 1978:38). The fact that at this stage the participant's identity and settings have been identified makes the designer able to specify the likely attitudes or keys that need to be produced or understood in connection with an event.

Once the course designer has ‘processed’ his learner after consideration of the eight parameters, he has arrived at the communicative needs profile.

Hawkey (1979:81) points out that ‘the Munby needs analysis... enables the course designer to achieve two things: produce a detailed profile of what the learner needs to be able to do in English in the occupation or studies for which he is being trained; produce a specification of the language skills, functions and forms required to carry out the communication described in the needs profile,’

Types of Syllabus Design

This discussion will centre on broad theoretical foundations of syllabus design. It is noteworthy that through the evolution process of syllabus design, different theoretical premises have come into being. This discussion will consider how different authors have viewed a syllabus (and its design).

First, White (1988:91) makes a distinction between what he refers to as Type A and Type B syllabuses. What Type A syllabuses have in common is a basis in content. He points out that all these syllabuses are based on principles of selection and grading. These principles vary, however, according to the content of the syllabus. He then mentions that syllabi which prioritize grammatical form, that is, structural syllabuses, are normally based on criteria such as frequency, simplicity, learnability and teachability.

On the other hand, Type B syllabuses, for White (1988:94), are methods- based. We have already discussed how the concept of methodology has evolved and how it relates to approach, design and procedure, according to Richards and Rodgers (1982). White (1988:94) points out that Type B syllabuses are divided into two: there are those that are based on the process of learning and those that are based on the procedure of learning, that is, on methodology. What is worth noting is that almost all syllabuses that give priority to meaning are based on the needs of the learner and these needs differ in terms of being short, medium and long term.

Second, Yalden (1983) has proposed different stages that should be followed in designing a communicative syllabus. These stages outline, in a broad sense, the different types of syllabuses that are informed by a communicative approach. By way of introduction, the first stage in the design of a communicative syllabus is the needs survey. The survey 'includes communication requirement, personal needs and motivations and relevant characteristics of learners, as well as their 'partners for learning' (Yalden, 1983:101). The second stage is the description of the purpose of the language program. The reason why I do not discuss these two stages in detail is because we have already discussed Munby's communication needs processor.

The third stage is to choose a syllabus type. Yalden (1983) correctly points out that there is no single model of syllabus design which is universally agreed upon. Different suggestions have been proposed on the right type of syllabus. As Yalden (1983:108) puts it:

Solutions that have been proposed range from a modification of existing structural syllabuses to a completely learner-centred approach in which there would be no 'prospective' or syllabus at all, but only one which would grow out of the situation as the course progressed. Methodological implications permeate these discussions: they also range widely from a focus on structural and functional analytical exercises, to functional and structural 'activities'; to strictly communicative activities based on authentic materials rather than specially written ESL texts.

The following discussion addresses a range of syllabus designs which are all considered to be forms of the communicative syllabus. Any of the following may be chosen, depending on the objectives of the learner or the objectives set on behalf of the learner.

(i) **Structural-Functional Syllabus**

This approach is favoured by Wilkins (1974) as he regards it as the solution to communicative syllabus design. He is cited by Yalden (1983:110) advocating a separation of the two components of form and communicative function. The model presupposes that the learner has been thoroughly taught the linguistic form before

language functions are introduced. In other words an introduction of language function is seen as adding a further component to an already existing syllabus. It does not integrate communicative teaching with teaching linguistic form.

(ii) Structures and Functions

This type of syllabus is advocated by Brumfit (1980) cited by Yalden (1983:110-111) who believes that Wilkins falls short in explaining how a language is learnt. He proposes that grammar and pronunciation be retained as organizing principles since we can successfully generalize about, but not what people should do and mean. He goes on to describe his model as follows:

The simplest proposal is to use the grammatical system as the core of the syllabus in a ladder-like series of stages and to be prepared to relate all other essential material to this series. Thus notional, functional and situational specifications can be conceived of as a spiral around a basically grammatical core (Brumfit, 1980:5 as cited in Yalden, 1983:11).

Furthermore he believes that a syllabus should cater for both accuracy and fluency and therefore advocates a development of communicative methodology. Unlike Wilkins' model, this one includes all components of meaning from the start.

(iii) Variable focus

This third type of communicative syllabus has its basis on the levels of communicative competence which progress from elementary to advanced level. Yalden (1983:113) points out that 'structural progression as well as structural exercises and activities would dominate at the first level, and the emphasis would then change to communicative function and finally to situation or subject-matter.' I suppose the reason for commencing with structural exercises is to enable learners to acquire the metalanguage they will employ later to perform communicative functions. Allen (1980) came up with a three-level variable focus on ESL syllabus and this model attained its name from such a focus. Allen's model is comprised of the first level which is concerned with structure of language. At this stage of language learning the focus is on formal features of language

and the material is simplified to fit into the structural pattern. The activities for practice are also centred around language structure.

At the second level the focus is on function or discourse features of language. The material used is simplified to fit into functions of language. The practice or activities are based on the functions of language. For example: greeting, offering condolences, accepting an apology, etc.

The third level is the instrumental level where the focus is on the use of language. Communication is determined by a real-life situation and authentic or original language is used.

Allen (1980) cited in Yalden (1983:114) argues that by making use of a variable focus technique we give recognition to the fact that there are three types of practice (structural, functional and instrumental) which interrelate, which are interdependent and which co-exist at all levels of language learning. At the same time, the notion of 'primary focus' ensures that at all times the lesson content remains under control and adaptable to the needs of the student at any given level of proficiency.

(iv) **Functional Syllabus**

As the word denotes, the functional syllabus is primarily concerned with communicative functions of a language.

According to Yalden (1983:114-115) elements like linguistic items and content are often included and sometimes they obscure the purpose of the syllabus design. She goes on to mention that in terms of this approach the objectives determine the functions needed, and the functions determine the selection and sequencing of grammatical materials.

(v) A Fully Notional Syllabus

Yalden (1983:115) points out that the fully notional syllabus remains the strongest possible approach to the input syllabus. Such a syllabus is suitable for learners whose proficiency in the second language has to be specified for very particular and essentially narrow purposes. Wilkins (1976) favours the notional syllabus 'for in it all three categories of meaning (ideational, modal and communicative) were woven. All are expressed through knowledge of the grammatical, lexical and phonological systems, and how to make appropriate choices from items available in each' (Yalden, 1983:108).

Wilkins (1976) is of the opinion that a notional syllabus is appropriate because it incorporates all three types of meaning. This renders such a syllabus high in surrender value. What he means by surrender value is that since the learner does not have to wait until he has absorbed a considerable amount of structure (usage) before he can attempt to use the language for effective communication, he/she would be in a position to communicate effectively to a particular extent even if he does not finish the course. It should be borne in mind, though, that in practical terms the functions are eventually achieved. Second language learners need the form in order to communicate. For them, therefore, form comes first.

(vi) A Fully Communicative Syllabus

The point of departure of this syllabus is that communication needs to be taught and it should be the primary concern or objective. Yalden (1983:118) points out that the communicative syllabus came about because of a concern with methodological problems and their solutions. She goes on to argue that those who subscribe to this approach generally show a strong preoccupation with methodology, teacher preparation and learner autonomy, considering these to be the cornerstones of language teaching, rather than the input syllabus.

Allwright (1979:167) argues that 'if communication is the aim, then it should be the major element in the [language teaching] process' cited in Yalden (1983:117).

This author implies that linguistic competence is a part of communicative competence. He feels that if we focus on communicative skills, we shall inevitably develop most areas of linguistic competence. He adds that the focus on linguistic skills only is risking to fail to deal with a large part of communicative competence. He feels that teachers should involve learners in solving communication problems. In this process, he feels, linguistic skills will be acquired without teaching them explicitly.

Conclusion and Evaluation

What is deducible from the foregoing discussion is that, first, White's (1988) Type A and Type B syllabuses are mainly concerned with content and methodology for imparting the content. Such an approach to syllabus design does not adequately address communicative competency. Even though a learner may eventually attain a particular degree of communicative competence, these syllabi would have a low surrender value should a learner not finish the course.

Regarding Yalden's (1983) stages to be followed in designing a communicative syllabus, what appears particularly useful is the needs survey. If this stage were followed to the letter, learners would become competent in a language at a much faster pace as the syllabus would be designed specifically for them.

The point posited by Allwright (1979) that communication should be the major element in the process of language teaching, however, is not comprehensive enough. It is implicit in explaining how a learner may have acquired the language to communicate with.

2.3 On the Theories on Second Language Teaching

A question that is asked by Smith (1994:21) is whether instruction helps or not in bringing about second language acquisition. The question sheds light on the pedagogical framework aiming at the most effective method of teaching a second language. The author goes on to point out that “unbiased research to date has not revealed a golden language-teaching technique that absolutely guarantees successful acquisition” (Smith, 1994:21). He is of the opinion that people do learn without instruction. He feels that the course designer should be armed with second language research before they can engage in the design of language courses.

It is out of the consideration of the role of instruction in second-language teaching that the emphasis of the discussion focuses on language teaching techniques. This section will trace the history of second language pedagogy until the recently adopted approaches. The discussion will highlight and evaluate the tradition in language pedagogy. The aim of each teaching method in language is to yield a terminal behaviour on the part of learners manifested in their language competence.

Before we discuss the teaching techniques, it is important to make a distinction between a method and an approach to language teaching. Generally, one would argue that a method is more prescriptive in the sense that it outlines how language is to be taught. On the other hand, an approach, as Kilfoil and Van der Walt (1989:6) put it, constitutes a more open-minded attitude to language learning or teaching. They further point out that an approach changes with circumstances surrounding the teaching process. Different authors have contributed to our understanding of an approach to language teaching. Anthony (1963) as cited by Brown (1994:158) defines an approach as a set of assumptions dealing with the nature of language, learning and teaching.

After Anthony (1963) came authors like Richards and Rodgers (1982) who proposed new concepts and replaced method by design, and technique by procedure, respectively. Approach was not changed and ‘it defines assumptions, beliefs and theories about the nature of language and language learning’ (cited in Brown, 1994:158).

White (1988:2-3) points out that when Richards and Rodgers (1982) use the word 'design' they refer to 'the definition of linguistic content and a description of the role of teacher, learner and teaching material while by procedure they mean the description of techniques and practices in the instructional system.'

According to Baker (1996:281) there are three major approaches to language teaching. These approaches include structural, functional as well as interactional approaches. Included under structural approaches are Grammar translation method, Audio-lingual method and the Direct Method. The functional approach was concerned with competency to effectively communicate meaning. The last approach is exemplified by the communicative approach which shifted the focus from the teacher to the learner. The following discussion focuses on the different methods found under the three broad approaches.

a.The Grammar- Translation Method

The Grammar-Translation method is perhaps the oldest method to have evolved in the pedagogical circles. It is regarded as the most traditional and classical method. It derives the term 'classic' from the fact that it was mainly used to translate from classical languages to mother tongue. By classical languages, reference is made to Greek and Latin. The object was not to communicate in classical languages, but it was believed that through studying classical language one would gain insight into knowledge, *per se*.

According to Kilfoil and Van der Walt (1989:08) this method developed writing and reading skills almost to the exclusion of the other two skills (that is, speaking and listening). In other words, the method went against what is today referred to as the integration of the four skills in a normal communication situation. Shortly, a human being listens and responds orally to what is said; and reads and thereafter writes in response to what he or she has read. There has to be an integration of productive and receptive skills. In this method there was very limited interaction among learners. The teacher would be the source of information, especially when he or she had to correct what was said by

learners. Again, in this method it was very imperative that the responses were grammatically correct. The textbook provided the rules and paradigms, and literacy texts were introduced later. The grammar translation method eventually fell into disfavour. One could assume that this was particularly because of its ineffectiveness in terms of providing learners with all the skills necessary for proper communication. One could also speculate that it fell into disfavour because of the fact that much of the interaction in the class was on mother tongue.

b.The Direct Method

This method evolved in the pedagogical circles between 1920 and the 1950's. As the word suggests, the aim behind it was to avoid the use of the mother tongue but the target language had to be used in the class. The method is at times referred to as an approach of 'total immersion' in the target language, according to Kilfoil and Van der Walt (1989:9). The proponents of the method believed that the mother tongue would interfere with the acquisition of the foreign language, and therefore it was not used in class. The authors cited above point out that in the initial stages learners would practise the phonetic system of the target language intensively as the purpose of language teaching was to speak the language. They also state that the teacher would initially rely heavily on pictures, drawings, maps and charts as learners would have not been exposed to the target language before. Grammar was not taught explicitly but learners would acquire rules from everyday situations. Kilfoil and Van der Walt (1989) finally point out that there was objection to the method as it was criticized on the grounds that was too loosely structured and this resulted in grammatical items being presented in a haphazard way.

c.The Audio-lingual method

The audio-lingual method evolved between the 1930's and the 1970's. This method became popular during the Second World War (which started in 1939 up to 1945) when the American soldiers needed to communicate with their allies. For this reason it has been

termed colloquially the Army Method or Army Specialised Training Program (ASTP) (Brown 1994:70).

The method was premised on the principle that, in relation to the four skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing), ‘nothing spoken before it is heard, nothing read before it is spoken, nothing written before it is read’ (Kilfoil and Van der Walt, 1989:11).

The above-mentioned authors also point out the fact that the mother tongue of a learner also played a major role.

Prator and Calce-Murcia 1979 as cited by Brown (1994:70-71) sum up the characteristics of the Audio-lingual method as:

New material is presented in a dialog form; there is dependence on mimicry, memorization of set phrases and over-learning; structures are sequenced by means of contrastive analysis and taught one at a time; there is much of tapes, language labs, and visual aids.

These characteristics are not meant to be exhaustive. Kilfoil and Van der Walt (1989:11) are of the opinion that the use of tapes and language laboratories led to the wasteful prolongation of the use of the audio-lingual method. It was later discovered that the money spent on building these laboratories had been wasted as they eventually fell into disfavour.

In order to account for how language and culture are viewed in this method Larsen-Freeman (1986:44) points out that language in this method has been influenced by descriptive linguists. Every language is seen as having its own unique system. The system is comprised of several different levels: phonological, morphological, and syntactic. Each level has its own distinctive patterns. Everyday speech is emphasized. The level of complexity of the speech is graded, however, so that beginning students are presented with only simple terms. Culture consists of the everyday behavior and lifestyle of the target language speaker.

d. Communicative Approach

Since the object of this research is to critique the current syllabus which is claimed to be premised on the communicative approach, in this discussion, this approach will only be peripherally discussed. Much has been said of this approach in the syllabus design section. Generally the communicative approach is premised on the view of language as a communication tool. In other words, this approach is more concerned with what we do with language rather than the form of language. This approach encourages that the outside world be brought into the classroom so that the learners would acquire the language naturally – that is, communicate to get things done or to get the message across. The communicative approach is generally perceived as learner-centred since it is the learner who finds himself in a situation where he or she has to communicate meaning.

In order to communicate effectively one should have a certain degree of communicative competence. It is defined by Clarence-Fincham et al (2002:32) as a measure of a language user's ability to communicate successfully. They further point out that it includes knowledge of a particular language and ability to use grammar, vocabulary, rules and register of a language.

Communicative competence could, in short, be divided into communicative competence and communicative performance. The former relates to a language user's knowledge of the grammar of a particular language while the latter refers to the actual usage or behavior of language as performed by the utterer and conventions involved in a particular language usage. What a person knows about a language is not always retrievable when one is supposed to use that particular language. That is where the question of linguistic performance becomes pertinent. In short, performance refers to the speaker's ability to apply what he knows about the language in a specific situation at a specific time. What seems to be the case is that communicative competence does not guarantee effective competence. This could be as a result of a number of factors like anxiety, lack of confidence, etc.

According to Kilfoil and Van der Walt (1989:14) in a communicative approach it is idealized that the teacher is supposed to conduct a needs analysis. Obviously, this is necessary as it gives the teacher a picture of the actual entry situation of the learners –that is, how much and what do they know about the language. The teacher gets to know if the learners are advanced users of the language or not. These authors further assert that some supporters of this approach feel that the target language should not be an exclusive meaning of communication.

In a nutshell the communicative approach is premised on the following principles, according to Larsen-Freeman (1986:128-130).

Language as it is used in a real context should be introduced; the target language is the vehicle for classroom communication, not just the object of study; errors are tolerated; the grammar and vocabulary that students learn follow from the function, situational context and roles of interlocutors.

Conclusion and Summary

The foregoing chapter has shed light on some theoretical premises that underpin language syllabus design. These include theories of second language learning/ acquisition-most importantly the Monitor model. What can be inferred from this model is that there is no single theory that can comprehensively account for second language learning/ acquisition. This is evident in that the Monitor model is presented in five hypotheses which collectively attempt to account for this phenomenon. Each of these hypotheses is challenged by McLaughlin (1987) whose contentions highlight that second language acquisition as a discipline is open to further exploration and research. Language course designers, it appears, need to constantly review their courses in keeping with latest developments in second language research. Much has already been said about how insightful the Monitor Model is and how McLaughlin's (1987) contentions help the reader to objectively scrutinize the Monitor Model.

This chapter has also highlighted how Interlanguage and Pidginization theories can be relevant to second language learning/acquisition. What can be inferred from Interlanguage theory is that when a child acquires a first language or mother tongue, he/she is not merely acquiring the language per se as it is used by adult speakers, but he/she also acquires underlying rules and principles according to which languages operate. Therefore one can theoretically argue that acquiring a first language better equips one to acquire/learn a second language since the rules and principles governing languages have been internalized. Pidginization theory sheds light on the fact that a second language may, to a large extent, be ‘acquired’ without classroom instruction. Again, the Universal Grammar theory, like Interlanguage, highlights the capability of a child to acquire any language because the capability to do so is innate.

The other part of this chapter has broadened our understanding of how language syllabus design has evolved as well as how teaching methodology has been viewed from earliest times up to the contemporary period. In this light, the chapter makes the researcher have a broader scope and develop new insights into the phenomenon of second language acquisition/learning which can be attained through a comprehensive language syllabus.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter it is imperative that one highlights how researchers view knowledge found in second language research. Not only will this chapter focus on various methods of data collection but it will also focus on data collection methods the researcher deemed relevant for this study.

According to Seliger and Shohany (1989:13-16), responding to a question how a researcher knows when he/she has found the answer to a question in a research undertaking, point out that research findings in second language studies and bilingualism may be categorized according to four types of knowledge which these findings represent. First is the view of knowledge as belief. This knowledge, they point out, refers to common knowledge that has never been submitted to an empirical test. Conclusions that are based on belief may be regarded as possible hypotheses for research but not as established knowledge about second language.

The second type of knowledge is the view of knowledge as authority. The authors point out that this type of knowledge is somehow similar to the first type in the sense that it is accepted at the face value of the source. The source may be an educated judgement of a respected researcher. Like the first type, such knowledge is merely hypothetical and so needs to be carefully examined.

The third type is the priori knowledge. The authors point out that this type of knowledge is arrived at by starting with a set of axioms about some phenomenon and then developing our knowledge of it by using reason and logic working within the system defined by the axioms. They further point out that though this knowledge resembles beliefs, it is usually founded on some previous systematic empirical work or observation.

The point of departure in this type of knowledge is a prediction. Afterwards an experiment is carried out in order to test it.

Lastly, there is empirical knowledge. It is arrived at through observation and experimentation. A researcher interacts with the real world, observes phenomena and then draws conclusion from experience. The authors point that empirical knowledge is externalized. This means that knowledge obtained can be checked by other researchers for validity. Externalizing a research question, they argue, allows researchers to control effects of various extraneous factors that might result in wrong or misconceived interpretations being applied to arrive at conclusions. The researcher has to submit the results to the public for inspection. This knowledge is carefully documented by the researcher to allow others to validate it and replicate its findings.

The foregoing discussion underpins data collection methods. It sheds more light on what data is and how different types of knowledge may be applied and what the consequences thereof may be in terms of validity of the research findings. Having established insight into how knowledge may be viewed in second language research, the discussion now focuses on the various methods employed in collecting data for research purposes.

Seliger and Shohany (1989: 113-132) deal with data collection methods which they refer to as categories of research design. These include: qualitative and quantitative / descriptive, correlational and multivariate research. In their attempt to make a distinction between qualitative and quantitative research, Seliger and Shohany (1989) have quoted Shulman (1981) as saying

While qualitative analysis will allow us to study performance closely, it may or may not represent the behaviour of other learners and is therefore of questionable value for generalization to language acquisition by others. On the other hand, when our interest is in the normative acquisition behaviour of a population, quantification represents a reality for that group. Such a reality may be generalizable to other groups, assuming that sampling procedures are adequate.

However, Seliger and Shohany (1989) do not want to confine themselves to the qualitative – quantitative dichotomy. They have grouped different research methodologies into qualitative, descriptive research and experimental research.

Seliger and Shohany (1989: 116) point out that qualitative research is heuristic and not deductive. The reason for it to be heuristic, they further point out, is that very few, if any, decisions regarding research questions or data are made before the research begins. The two authors point out that when we say the research is heuristic, we claim we do not know enough about the subject or phenomenon being studied. Such research is more inductive and is likely to arrive at new insights into the phenomenon being studied. The researcher needs to plan and decide on how to collect or gain access to data (Seliger and Shohany, 1989:88).

In deductive research we make assumptions and try to predict cause-and-effect relationships or the co-occurrence of phenomena. A researcher tries to support his/her predictions by designing an investigation, collecting data and then statistically examining results. A researcher needs to be extra careful when designing this research in order to ensure that other factors are not responsible for the phenomenon; he/she must control the variables thereby ensuring that the research conforms to internal and external validity (Seliger and Shohany, 1989:88).

The above-mentioned authors say that descriptive research can be heuristic or deductive. Descriptive research as a type or category of research refers to investigation which utilizes already existing data or non-experimental research with a preconceived hypothesis. Descriptive research involves a collection of techniques used to specify, delineate or describe naturally occurring phenomena without experimental manipulation. Data collection methods in descriptive research include: tests, surveys, questionnaires, self-reports, interviews and observations (Seliger and Shohany, 1989).

Let us now consider experimental research. According to Seliger and Shohany (1989:136-7), experimental research involves the control or manipulation of the

population, the treatment and the measurement of the treatment. It is concerned with studying the effects of specified and controlled treatments given to subjects that are usually in a group form. The treatment refers to anything done to groups in order to measure its effect. What is peculiar about this research is that the treatment is not a random experience which the groups might have, but it is an experience that is controlled and intentional. The last aspect of experimental research is measurement treatment. This refers to how the effects of the treatment will be evaluated.

Lastly, there is multivariate and correlational research. Seliger and Shohany (1989) more properly regard these as methods for analyzing data than as methods of research. These methods are primarily concerned with discovering relationships between categories of data. The investigator may want to study possible relationships between sets of variables. He/she may collect data as part of the study or use data that is already existing- from previous studies.

Two methods of data collection, which according to Seliger and Shohany (1989) can be classified under descriptive research, were used for this study. The first method was the use of questionnaires and the second one was observation. The discussion which follows gives details of how and why the questionnaires were designed as well as the target groups to whom they were given. The discussion will then highlight how the observation was conducted and explain why such an observation was significant for the study. These methods of data collection fall under primary research – in particular a survey study. Brown (1988:3) points out that ‘survey studies focus on a group’s attitude, opinions, and/or characteristics. They often take a form of questionnaire that is sent out to a group of people.’ He further points out that the advantage of this type of research is that substantial amount of information is collected in a short space of time.

3.1 Questionnaires

The questionnaires were designed to elicit original responses from the respondents. They were targeted at three groups who are involved in the teaching and learning of English as

a second language. The first questionnaire was directed at the Subject Advisor(s) of English second language for the Empangeni Region. The reason why the Subject Advisor was involved in this study is that he/she is the 'engineer' of the subject in the region. He is expected to render professional advice to all educators who teach English second language. He is expected to be more informed on the subject than the educators who seek his counsel. The other set of questionnaires were given to the educators who teach English as a second language. This is the most critical group in the research as they determine the effectiveness of the English second language curriculum. Course designers may come up with very good ideas pertaining to syllabus design. However, the educators are the ones who are supposed to implement those ideas. Without the educators, the good ideas and the objectives of a syllabus may never be realized. The third set of questionnaires was given to learners who learn English as a second language. This third group is at the receiving end of the syllabus design continuum. In order for the language course to be said to have been designed appropriately, the learners must display the competence that was envisaged by the syllabus designers. Therefore, it is in a classroom situation that the effectiveness of course design and implementation are evaluated.

The respondents in the third group (learners) were randomly selected from grade 11 and 12 classes in four different high schools under Ndlangubo circuit, Eshowe. The respondents were a hundred in total and were from both sexes. Their ages ranged from sixteen to twenty-one. The high schools from which these respondents came had an enrolment of only Black African learners. The reason for the random sampling of respondents is offered by Brown (1988:111), who states that the point of a random sample is to ensure that each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected for the sample. He further points out that the researcher has to identify the population to which the results are to be generalized.

3.1.1 Research Questions and Questionnaire Design

This section of the study deals with the questions that were in the questionnaires and how these questions were designed. The questions were categorized in terms of the target

groups for whom they were formulated. The questions were formulated so as to guide the researcher on the type of responses that would answer the research topic.

3.1.1.1 Questionnaire for the Subject Advisor

(i) How do you think the CLT syllabus ought to be implemented?

This question was asked in order to find out what the language-in-education policy expectations of the Department of Education KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) were, with regard to the implementation of the communicative syllabus (core syllabus 1996, standards 8, 9 and 10). In terms of the design in the questionnaire, the Subject Advisor was expected to *explain*.

(ii) Do Subject Advisors work hand in hand with syllabus designers?

The reason why this question was included was that the researcher deemed it important for subject advisors to have a working relationship with syllabus designers. This would ensure that Subject Advisors offered accurate information to educators who, in turn, make good use of such information in the classroom situation.

In terms of design this was a 'YES' or 'NO' question. It allowed the respondent, however, to state what he or she felt should be the case if he/she answered 'No'.

(iii) Is the current syllabus informed by learners' needs?

The reason for the inclusion of this question was to ascertain if the current syllabus conforms to what some language syllabus design scholars believe. For example, Munby (1978) believes that in order for the communicative syllabus to be effective a needs survey has to be conducted so that the course that is subsequently designed meets the needs of the learners.

In terms of design in the questionnaire, the question's key words were '*Do you think?*' The reason for this key phrase was that the question is dependent on question number (ii).

In other words, it depends on whether subject advisors and syllabus designers work together or not.

(iv) Is the current syllabus accompanied by suggested teaching and learning material?

The question was included to establish whether the designers of the syllabus in question did take account of the fact that in order for the aims of the syllabus to be realized it must have learner support material suggested.

(v) Are educators able to fully implement the CLT syllabus?

The subject advisor was asked this question in his or her capacity as an official who dealt with educators on regular basis. Although the question was wide and relative, the respondent was expected to have a general view given the poor matric results as stated in chapter one. As the question is relative, the design was '*Do you think?*'

(vi) What are the expectations of the Department of Education on the teaching of grammar?

This question was particularly pertinent as it established whether the explicit teaching of grammatical structures is still considered as significant, as it was before the inception of the communicative approach to second language teaching. This question also shed light on whether it is appropriate when setting examination papers to test knowledge of grammatical rules, the structure of language, etc.

In terms of design in the questionnaire the key phrase was '*would you encourage?*'. This question highlights the authority the subject advisor has over the subject.

(vii) Is the setting of Grade 12 exam papers fully informed by the content of the syllabus?

This question was relevant to the respondent as he/she, at the time, was the examiner of English Second Language Paper One as well as the Chief Marker of the same paper in

KZN. It was aimed at establishing whether there is coordination and continuity between syllabus design and evaluation of learners for whom it is designed. The question was designed as '*to what extent?*.' This is admission of the fact that some aspects covered in the examination papers are included in the syllabus.

(viii) Are ESL teachers in your area of work sufficiently trained and qualified as English Language or Language teachers?

Again this question was essential. As a person who dealt with educators regularly and even recommended them on merit as markers at the end of the year, the respondent was expected to have a rough picture. In terms of design this was a 'Yes' or 'No' question. The respondent was allowed to comment.

(ix) What are the possible reasons for poor matric results in English, in your view?

This question was included to elicit professional view and opinion of the authorities, who are not involved in the classroom situation, on what they think could be the cause of the high failure rate that was highlighted in Chapter One. The responses to this question would be analyzed against what the teachers thought and felt were the reasons. In terms of design, the question was 'why' as it sought to find out possible reasons for the high failure rate.

(x) What is the Department of Education doing about the poor matric results, particularly in English as a second language among many Black learners?

To answer this question, the respondent was asked to state the programs that were in place or at least in the pipeline to eliminate the problem. The key word in the questionnaire was '*What*' to reflect that response should be an original one.

3.1.1.2 Questionnaire for Educators

(i) Is the interim core syllabus for standard 8, 9 and 10 user-friendly?

This question was included in the questionnaire to establish whether the general layout of the syllabus did or did not create problems in terms of accessions of its contents. The answer that was expected in the questionnaire was 'Yes' or 'No' answer, with perhaps explanatory views.

(ii) What aspects are problematic with the English syllabus currently used?

This question was designed to elicit a variety of responses. The responses would inform syllabus designers of the areas that needed to be reviewed in the current syllabus or a syllabus to be designed in the future as the current one is said to be interim, although it has been in use for more than six years.

(iii) Are the general aims of the current syllabus realistic?

The educator as the person who is involved in the implementation of the syllabus has a better idea, through experience, of whether aims set out in the syllabus are realistic. The question was designed in such a way that a 'YES' or 'NO' answer could be provided. The respondent was also expected to additionally comment in relation to this question.

(iv) What are the possible factors that contribute to the poor matric results in English as second language?

Through this question, which in terms of design is open-ended, the aim was to find out from educators where they think the problem lies. The responses could be attributed to various individuals or officers or circumstances. Such circumstances would need to be taken into account when English second language syllabus was designed.

(v) Are educators aware and able to deal with language-in- education policy issues?

The object of a communicative syllabus is to empower the educator to bring outside or real life experiences into the classroom. Overtly the educator becomes a syllabus designer. However, if the educator is not fully empowered with sufficient knowledge of theory, the exercise could be abortive. The question was, therefore, included to find out whether educators were confident in their micro- syllabus design exercise. The responses would determine whether this does become a contributing factor or not towards the failure of matric learners. This question would also shed some light on the quality of teacher training programs that are there in the country. The questions addressing these issues were 'YES' or 'NO' type.

(vi) Are educators able to cope with change in education?

As the wording suggests, the syllabus is interim. The implication is that it is undergoing some transformation. The question sought to establish if the change in policy related matters was perceived in a negative or positive way by educators. Their attitude towards change would determine how effectively it was implemented. Educators were expected to comment on this.

(vii) Does the syllabus give an educator ideas regarding classroom practice?

The question was included to establish the extent to which the syllabus is a guiding document to the educator. The key words in the questionnaire were '*Do you think?*' The respondents were also expected to comment in relation to the previous question.

(viii) Is there a link between a syllabus and what is examined?

The reason why this question was included was to find out the view of educators with regard to papers set by non-educators who are examiners. The educators were expected to answer 'YES' or 'NO' and make a comment afterwards to motivate their answers.

(ix) What are educators' views on the explicit teaching of grammar?

This question was included to find out if educators believe in the tradition of explicit teaching of grammatical structures. In terms of the syllabus this is not encouraged. The syllabus designers' view is that learners will acquire the structure of language through the communicative mode, hopefully, in an osmosis fashion, as they go along. The responses would, therefore, shed more light on this stand. The design of the question required a 'YES' or 'NO' response.

(x) Do educators use the syllabus to the letter, faithfully, as stipulated on the various aspects of language items?

The question was included to establish whether the syllabus is used by educators to guide their teaching practices. This is with regard to the total coverage of each area of learning. This question is important as it may bring to the attention some of essential omitted topics, as well as administrative factors. The question was designed to yield 'YES' or 'NO' responses from educators, with their explanatory views on the general coverage of the language syllabus.

(xi) Do educators have and follow language policies?

The question to address this issue was designed as a 'YES or 'NO' question. Educators were also expected to comment with regard to this question. The responses would give an indication on how keen educators are when it comes to policy issues.

3.1.1.3 Questionnaire for Learners

(i) Are Senior Secondary school learners confident about the way they speak English?

This question was included to find out from learners themselves whether the English input they have been exposed to has become intake or not. This is supposed to be manifested by self-confidence when learners express themselves. The question was designed as a 'YES' or 'NO' question. They were also asked if they could speak to native speakers of English fluently without being hesitant and about their general confidence about the way they express themselves in English.

(ii) How often do learners use English?

The purpose of this question was to establish the degree of exposure of learners to English, and in what contexts they use English, whether as an instructional language and also for social interaction. They were supposed to indicate whether they use it at school in the classroom and outside the classroom voluntarily or when the teacher asked them or both at school and at home.

(iii) Does the English syllabus at high school level have a 'surrender value'?

In order to find out the 'surrender value' of the syllabus, the learners were asked if they stopped schooling before finishing Grade 12, could they use the English they had acquired at school in the work place? The respondents were required to respond by 'YES' or 'NO' or 'NOT SURE'.

(iv) Does the teaching method and content correspond with what learners find in tests or exams?

This question, as indicated before, establishes whether there is a link between syllabus design, implementation and assessment. The respondents would answer by indicating *'Sometimes'*, *'Always'* or *'Never'*.

(v) What aspects of the English course give learners problems?

The question was aimed at establishing aspects, if there are, that give learners problems. They were expected to tick those aspects in a given list.

(vi) Which language do learners prefer between Zulu and English

This question was aimed at establishing what the learners' attitudes were towards English. It was included so that it could be clear whether not learners are inhibited by motivational factors to learn English as their second language and be competent in it. Learners were supposed to state the reasons why they preferred either language.

3.2 Observation

Some of the data was collected through observation of learners in the four high schools which are a focus of this study. These high schools are: Mgitshwa High School, Phangifa Technical High School, Nomyaca Secondary and Bhekeshowe High School. They are rural schools under Eshowe circuit. Geographically, they are located closer to Empangeni (north coast of KwaZulu-Natal) than Eshowe. One class of about 60 learners was observed in each school. Learners and teachers were not aware that they were being observed since the observation was carried out while some learners were in class and others were outside (it was time approaching final examinations). The observation, however, was done outside the classroom situation on three different occasions. The researcher noted down in a pad what was happening both inside and outside the

classroom as he pretended to be having a chat with a fellow teacher in the verandah. The presence of a stranger in a formal and controlled situation would have yielded calculated responses on the part of both the teachers and learners. What this means is that if the respondents were aware that they were being observed, they would not have behaved in a most natural and normal way.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA FROM THE RESPONDENTS

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter all the responses that were gathered from the Subject Advisor, Educators as well as from the learners will be presented. In other words, the focus will be on how each of the questions was addressed by the respondents. Ultimately the data that will have been presented at the beginning of this chapter will be interpreted and discussed. In other words attention will be paid to the responses of the Subject Advisor, Educators as well as learners. A consideration will also be taken of the implications of the responses of the respondents mentioned above.

4.1 PRESENTATION OF DATA

4.1.1 Questionnaires

As indicated in the previous chapter, questionnaires were directed at the Subject Advisor for English second language, Educators who teach English in Grade 12 and 11 as well as learners of English second-language from Grades 11 and 12.

4.1.1.1 Responses from the Subject Advisor

With regard to the question of how the Department of Education expects the communicative syllabus to be implemented, he responded by saying that educators are expected to teach the language in context and move away from the purely structural teaching of grammar.

Concerning the involvement of Subject Advisors in the syllabus design, he pointed out that they do not work together with syllabus designers. He went on to comment that he felt that they should work together.

Furthermore, the Subject Advisor admitted that the current syllabus is not completely informed by learner needs. In this regard, he did point out that while learner needs need to be prioritized, cognizance should be taken of the needs of the country in developing learners who are able to fit into a globalizing society.

On the question of learning material, the Subject Advisor pointed out that the current syllabus does not give attention to that aspect. He further mentioned that he believed that (the) assumptions are made about where teachers access these materials and regretted that at times these assumptions are not realized.

On the question of whether educators are able to effectively implement the communicative language teaching (CLT) syllabus, he pointed out that they were unable to effectively implement the syllabus. He went on to point out that the majority of them were college-trained where, he believed, limited attention had been given to CLT.

Concerning the extent to which the setting of Grade 12 papers is informed by the content of the syllabus currently in use, he thought it was adequately informed.

He pointed out that the majority of educators are qualified to teach English as they had taken it as a major subject in their studies. Concerning the question why, then, matric results were so poor in English, he pointed out a number of reasons which are as follows:

- (i) The learner population is largely rural with limited access to reading material in English and where Zulu or other mother tongue monolingualism predominates in the classroom as well as outside;
- (ii) Schools are poorly resourced, with hardly any reading materials in the target language which is English;

- (iii) The culture of reading is poor and virtually non-existent. This is both among educators and learners;
- (iv) There is a lack of teacher motivation given the 'trying' circumstances that most teachers work in. By trying circumstances reference is being made to factors like over-crowded classrooms, low incentives, constant movement to new schools, etc;
- (v) There is the Department of Education (provincial) failure in providing learner resources on time or hardly at all in years and
- (vi) Limited professional support is given to educators – especially at the primary school level.

On the measures being taken by the Department of Education to rectify the situation of the high failure rate among matric learners, the Subject Advisor mentioned the following:

- (i) The upliftment of the level of motivation among teachers through constant motivational and supportive messages of the Regional Senior Manager;
- (ii) The culture of learning and teaching strategy (COLTS) initiative through which selected poorly performing schools are adopted and provided support by departmental officials. In short, this is an initiative of the Provincial Department of Education aimed at improving the standard of teaching and learning in schools that are performing below 50% in terms of results. Such schools are given special attention and support by officials in the department of education, and
- (iii) Matric Intervention Program through which selected schools are given concentrated attention. This is a program from the Provincial Education Department which makes it mandatory for schools with less than 50% pass average to make a written undertaking in which they state categorically how they will improve their results.

4.1.1.2 Responses from Educators

A second set of questionnaires were given to six educators from the four selected schools. All these educators were qualified and had substantial teaching experience in English ranging from five to twenty years.

Three out of five educators indicated that they found the interim core syllabus for English second language user-friendly while two did not. One did not indicate. All six educators highlighted some problems pertaining to this syllabus, however. The problems mentioned by the two educators who said the syllabus is not user-friendly are:

- (i) It needs to be updated and that it is no longer in line with what should be taught;
- (ii) The items that are being emphasized, especially, in testing cover a little portion in the syllabus itself;
- (iii) It has been difficult to address some items in the syllabus especially as there seem to be impromptu amendments to what should be emphasized. As a result some parts of the syllabus can only be assumed to have been covered by whoever educator and that
- (iv) Much has not been disclosed on the 'how'.

Problems mentioned by the three educators who found it user-friendly include:

- (i) Unlike the one used in the 1980's, the interim syllabus is vague. By vague reference is being made to the fact that it does not explicitly list grammatical items to be covered and that
- (ii) Books used these days force learners to find information on their own while learners are not exposed to libraries, newspapers, etc. especially in the rural areas. (By information reference is made to tenses, collective nouns, etc.)

Four out of six educators highlighted that they found the general aims of the English syllabus currently used in Grade 10 to 12 unrealistic or not easy to achieve. They came with reasons why they felt like this. These include:

- (i) Teachers need a lot of training and exposure to new language methods that are currently used;
- (ii) Teachers in lower classes need to do considerable amount of reading with the learners using different texts;
- (iii) In Black schools it is difficult because of the lack of facilities such as books (i.e. English readers) and the lack of qualified and sufficient teaching staff and that
- (iv) The redeployment of teachers and Post Provisioning Norms used by the Education Department to allocate educators in schools also adds to the problem.

One of the two educators who indicated that the aims are easy to realize commented:

- (i) 'There should be clear indications from the government as to what really should be followed. I suppose this emanates from the impromptu amendments that are made to the syllabus emphasizing what should be covered.'

Educators were asked to make comments on the factors they felt were responsible for Grade 11 and 12 learners failing English.

Four of the educators blamed the learners themselves for their failure. They made the following comments:

- (i) The children are demotivated to learn and they do not do assignments. This sentiment was shared by all four educators;
- (ii) Two educators blamed both teachers and learners for not doing their work;

- (iii) Two educators blamed the lack of resources such as libraries in schools and English readers among other reading materials in English;
- (iv) Three educators pointed out that Subjects Advisors do not visit schools and that where they do, this is not regularly carried out;
- (v) One educator pointed out that some educators still use IsiZulu to teach English. He went on to point out that educators are over-indulging in this practice hence learners show greater signs of mother tongue interference;
- (vi) The above-mentioned educator also highlighted that some learners are not exposed to English outside the class;
- (vii) Another educator mentioned old methods that teachers still use as responsible and
- (viii) The educator also mentioned the fact that teachers fear change, as well as big numbers of learners in class that make it impossible to give individual attention to learners and which hamper communication during teaching.

Furthermore four of the six educators pointed out that they felt the education they received did not prepare them to contribute to policy-related matters in education. Asked if they felt part of the change going on in the department of education, four out of six educators responded by indicating that they did not feel part of the change.

The educators were asked to indicate how convenient or inconvenient they found the policies and decisions that come with the department of education when it comes to English as a subject. They made these comments:

Four educators pointed out they found these policies inconvenient. The other two would not say they were inconvenient but they did point out how problematic these policies were. The comments were:

- (i) The change was too sudden; lots of workshops should have been conducted so that teachers would face change without fear of failure;

- (ii) Every school must be represented at each decision-making meeting;
- (iii) Communication with educators on any change in policy is always not timeous;
- (iv) The department takes decisions without taking the educators into consideration;
- (v) Owing to the Post Provisioning Norms in schools, teachers who are poor in English teach English in Grades 8, 9 & 10. When these learners come to Grade 11 and 12, they are obviously poor in English;
- (vi) One educator complained about the distance learning colleges where, he or she felt that teachers cheat and get qualifications they do not deserve and
- (vii) One other educator pointed out that some changes are forced 'down their throats' even when observable loopholes are detected. He or she also added that such change comes without acknowledging the importance of prior reading and preparation towards its achievement.

Regarding the question whether the syllabus does (not) give ideas in terms of classroom practice, three out of five educators felt that it did not while two indicated that it did not have to as this allowed them to decide on the 'how' part of the syllabus.

Pertaining to the question of connection between the syllabus and what is set in the external exam, three out of five educators expressed that it did not cover much portion. However, the little portion that is covered is enshrined in the syllabus.

Furthermore, three out of five educators indicated that they did not teach grammar explicitly while two indicated that they did.

Four out of six educators admitted that they did not use the syllabus at all.

Four of six educators admitted they were aware of the new language policy for schools although four of them were adamant it was not followed and the other two were not sure. They made the following comments:

- (i) Problems arise in schools regarding Continuous Assessment and this is an indication that a lot needs to be done to the policy and
- (ii) In meetings of clusters of schools educators produce very different pieces of work from their learners which make one doubt if they use similar documents.

4.1.1.3 Responses from Learners

The questionnaires were also given to 100 learners from four selected high schools. Thirty-five learners indicated that they were confident about the way they spoke English as they were about to leave school. Three said they were not confident while sixty-two indicated that they were not sure.

Pertaining to how often learners used English, forty indicated they used it only at school. A further twenty said that they only used it when the teacher asked them to (obviously at school) while the other forty indicated that they used English both at school and at home.

Forty-three learners indicated that they could use English in the work place if they were to stop schooling at Grade 12. Nineteen indicated they could not use it, while thirty-eight indicated that they were not sure.

Furthermore, forty-nine learners indicated that they could speak English to native speakers. Sixteen said that they could not use it, while thirty-five indicated that they were not sure.

Asked if they found a connection between what they are taught and what is set in the examination in English, eighty-four learners indicated this happens sometimes, eleven said always while five said it never happened.

All learners indicated that there were some aspects that gave them problems in English.

Seventy-six learners indicated that they preferred English to their vernacular language (IsiZulu), while twenty-four indicated that they preferred IsiZulu. They came up with several reasons why they preferred either of the languages stated here.

4.1.2 Observations

In all the four high schools in the study the following was observed:

- (i) All learners were Blacks Africans.
- (ii) All educators were Black Africans.
- (iii) Learners spoke IsiZulu outside the classroom to fellow learners.
- (iv) Learners did speak IsiZulu in class in the presence of the teacher even though it was not an IsiZulu lesson.
- (v) Educators used IsiZulu among themselves and with learners outside the classrooms. It was clearly the case then that the central medium of instruction, English, was hardly practised for learning or communication purposes inside and outside classroom contexts.

4.2 INTERPRETATION OF DATA FROM RESPONDENTS

4.2.1 Interpretation of Responses from the Subject Advisor

From the given data it is clear that the Department of Education, represented by the Subject Advisor for English Second Language, does not expect grammar to be taught explicitly. Even though grammar is assessed in examinations, three out of five educators pointed out that they did not teach grammar explicitly. With regard to the point of grammar teaching there appears to be an agreement between the Advisor and Teachers that grammar need not be taught explicitly.

The Advisor pointed out that they did not work hand in hand with syllabus designers. The fact that he felt there is a need for them to work together means that this is a point worth

recommending to the Regional and subsequently to the National Department of Education.

Another point which is a flaw in the education system was the admission by the Advisor that the current syllabus is not completely informed by learner needs. The significance of this point was highlighted in Chapter 2 as propounded by Munby (1978). Yet another flaw was the admission by the Advisor that the interim syllabus does not give attention to learning material. He made it clear that assumptions are made about where teachers access these materials and at times these assumptions are not realized. This implies that the Department of Education should provide a syllabus as a package inclusive of learner support material. This would set a standard across the province thereby ensuring that all learners are exposed to relatively similar learning experiences irrespective of the socio-economic and cultural background of learners.

The Advisor pointed out that educators were unable to effectively implement the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) syllabus. The explanation pertains to college training that educators received. One educator mentioned the fact that subject advisory services are not extended to primary schools. The implication of this is that in order for all educators to effectively implement language syllabi, they need to constantly attend workshops and in-service training, where there is a link in the issues that are discussed for workshops at primary as well as secondary school level.

The Advisor, summarily, attributed the high failure rate in ESL by matriculants to:

- (i) Limited access to reading material. (As indicated, the Department of Education needs to rectify this problem);
- (ii) A poor culture of reading among educators and learners. This problem could be eliminated by Heads of Departments in schools, Principals as well as Subject Advisors and
- (iii) The lack of motivation on the part of the teachers. This could be rectified by the Department of Education through the provision of a

conductive working environment and reasonable recognition of good work done by teachers.

4.2.2 Interpretation of Responses from Educators

Most educators said that they found the Interim syllabus user friendly. Notably, four out of six educators later admitted they did not use the syllabus at all. We could, therefore, arrive at the conclusion that educators find the syllabus not addressing the needs of the learners and thus not user friendly. It would be recommended that a syllabus need not be bureaucratically decided on and given to educators to implement, but rather professionally designed from the teacher to other informed education stake-holders. One educator complained that there are always impromptu amendments to what should be emphasized, especially for common tests purposes. This results in some aspects of the syllabus being assumed to have been covered by whoever the educator is at some point.

While one educator felt that much has not been disclosed on the 'how' part of the syllabus, most educators were of the opinion that the how part of the syllabus was for them to contribute innovatively to the final input of syllabus design. This is indicative of the fact that the educators do need to play a more meaningful role in syllabus design than being mere recipients of syllabi that have been decided upon by designers. One educator even indicated that she or he felt each school should be represented when syllabus decisions are taken.

Most educators felt that the education they received did not prepare them for policy matters. This echoed the sentiment shared by the Subject Advisor. As a result of this sentiment, most educators who responded said that they did not feel part of the change going on in the department of education. Most of them felt the change was rather very sudden and communication with educators on any change of policy was said to be always untimely. The implication of all this is that the Department of Education needs to be strategic when planning. It is apparent that educators are always under pressure to adapt to ever-changing policies from the Department of Education. The issue of being strategic

is in terms of involving educators at the initial stages of all processes affecting them. This would bring a harmonious working relationship between the educators and the department. Besides blaming learners for not doing their work, the educators appeared to put the blame on the bureaucratic structures of the Department of Education.

4.2.3 Interpretation of Responses from Learners

From their responses, it is clear that when the majority of learners leave school they are not sure whether they can speak and write English meaningfully. This is a cause for concern since school leavers need to be employed or go to tertiary institutions. The surrender value of their learning English becomes questionable. It remains to be seen whether the syllabus does have a surrender value. This could partly be explained by the fact that the majority of learners who responded in the questionnaire obviously learn English only at school.

On the question of a connection between what is taught and what is examined the majority indicated this is not always the case. This point reflects what was alluded to earlier on, i.e. the standardization of learner support material in order to ensure almost all learners are exposed to similar learning experiences.

When asked which language they preferred between Zulu and English, the majority preferred English. They did provide some reasons. Among the reasons cited, they mentioned that it is an international language of communication and it is associated with securing viable employment. The implication of this is that even though there may be factors causing learners to fail ESL but motivation may not be a major factor. That learners associate English with viable employment prospects should, instead, be a motivating factor for them to study and pass English.

4.2.4 Observation

It has already been stated that from the observation, learners are not encouraged to speak English outside the classroom. They also do not invariably use English among themselves. It would have been worthwhile for them to practice English among themselves to perfect their competence. Neither do they use it when talking to their teachers outside the classroom or even in the classroom. Given the fact that the area where the survey was conducted is rural and is without adequate access to newspapers, the use of the vernacular language at school deprives learners the chance of practising English. It is also of concern that educators of different subjects do not consistently use English with learners even though learners are examined through the medium of English. This does not set a good example to the learners.

It is clear from the foregoing interpretation of the data that the Department of Education can play a major role in improving ESL results for matric learners. It needs to have a well-worked out management plan in consultation with ESL Educators, Subject Advisors, Syllabus Designers and the parent community. In this study the respondents appear to have potential to bring about improvement in their areas of operation. However, each group shifts the blame to other role players in the education system and this makes it imperative that all systems in education be integrative in approach rather than continue to be bureaucratic as they currently seem to be.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter will mark an end of this research study. It will focus on the conclusion to be drawn from the findings of the study as well as suggesting the recommendations which will sum up what has been discussed in the study and hopefully provide answers to some questions that arose at the initial stages of the study.

5.1 Conclusion

From the discussion in this study, it is clear that all stakeholders in education need to work harmoniously in order for the ESL results in the surveyed schools to improve. It is an understandable fact that there are always financial constraints in any system that seeks to attain high standards of performance. However, the recommendations set out below would, if given proper attention, hopefully bring about an improvement in the learners results. It appears that a lot still needs to be done. The Education department needs to engage in massive infrastructural development- building libraries and classrooms to ensure conducive learning environment is there. Qualified librarians need to be employed to run those well-resourced libraries. It is an undeniable fact that without resources like readers, newspapers, journals, etc second language learners may not be exposed to a wide variety of learning experiences. Learners from previously disadvantaged rural schools are not as exposed to spoken and written English as their urban counterparts. By providing these resources, the Department of Education would bridge the gap caused by economic factors between rural and urban schools.

Pertaining the issue of ill-trained teachers, the Education Department needs to engage in vigorous capacity development. It is a fact that English in South Africa is associated with power, economy, prestige and education. In higher education institutions it is largely used as a medium of instruction. It would be self-defeating for the Education department not to

invest in English since it is the medium towards the attainment of economic stability. Educators, like other professionals, need to be constantly developed to keep abreast with latest developments in the field. The development need not be focused only on Grade 12 educators, but all educators in both primary and secondary schools need constant workshopping.

What can be inferred from the study is that there should be co-ordination between Subject Advisors and Syllabus Designers. The two components have expert opinion on the English course outline. The fragmentation between these service providers contemplated by the Subject Advisor does not serve the learner. If there was a harmonious working relationship between them, some of the problems encountered by learners would be eliminated.

5.2 Recommendations

The following factors should be considered when designing a comprehensive syllabus of English Second Language as envisaged in this study:

- (i) The involvement of educators in the syllabus design;
- (ii) The establishment of categorical learner needs;
- (iii) The provision of standard learner support material;
- (iv) The establishment of a working relationship between ESL Subject Advisors and ESL syllabus designers;
- (v) The constant development and participation of workshops by all educators, both in primary and secondary schools;
- (vi) The improvement in the provision of reading material by the Department of Education;
- (vii) The building of libraries or resource centres in schools;
- (viii) Proper and timeous communication between education authorities and educators on policy matters;

- (ix) A crucial and realistic review of teacher training programs in colleges and universities;
- (x) The need for formulation of education policies – not a rapidly changing policy making and
- (xi) Canvassing the services of syllabus designers when setting matric exam papers.

What the outlined suggestions point out is that if these and others, given by subject advisors and other professionals were considered in the design of a comprehensive communicative syllabus, laudable results could emanate from such efforts. As matters stand currently, the same cannot be said to be the case. This is particularly the case where, for more than almost a decade now, the teaching syllabus, which has not been attended to, is still categorized as 'interim'. When exactly professionals will be asked to review it, remains unknown. This is in order for a more comprehensive syllabus to suit learners' competence for academic and also for integrative and social-cultural communicative needs, given that English is now the worldwide undisputed global language of power.

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APPENDIX ONE

A QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE SUBJECT ADVISOR ON THE KNOWLEDGE AND USAGE OF ENGLISH

Kindly complete the following questionnaire to the best of your knowledge:

1. Could you briefly explain what the expectations of the Department of Education are with regard to the implementation of the Communicative Syllabus (Core Syllabus 1996, Std 8,9 &10) ?

2. Do the Subject Advisors work hand in hand with Syllabus Designers?

Yes ——— / No ———

3. If your answer to 2 is 'No', don't you feel they should?

4. The first stage in the design of a communicative syllabus the needs survey.

Do you think the current interim syllabus for English Additional Language (Std 8,9 & 10) is informed by the needs of the learners?

5. A syllabus is a guideline on what has to be taught. It must be accompanied by suggested material to be used in order for the aims and objectives of the syllabus to be realized.

To what extent do you think this is the case with regard to ESL syllabi more specifically?

6. Do you think educators are able to effectively implement the CLT syllabus?

7. Would you encourage the explicit teaching of grammar?

Yes ----- / No -----

8. If your answer to 7 is 'No', how would you expect communicative activities to flow without learners being given the metalanguage?

9. To what extent is the current style of setting of Grade 12 ESL papers informed by the content of the syllabus?

10. To what extent do you think the communicative approach recommended in the interim core syllabus has realizable / 'tangible' outcomes?

11. Are the teachers teaching ESL in the area you serve in trained as language teachers?

Yes ----- / No -----

Comment: -----

12. If your answer to 11 is 'Yes', why are results poor at matric level, in your view?

13. What is the Regional Department of Education doing about this situation?

APPENDIX TWO

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE EDUCATOR ON SYLLABUS – RELATED ISSUES.

Kindly complete the following questionnaire to the best of your knowledge. The researcher will not divulge any information pertaining to your identity. The researcher is merely an academic, not a departmental official.

1. Gender (please tick)
Male ----- / Female -----
2. Number of years you spent on training in tertiary education.

3. Number of years teaching English second language at:
Junior Secondary level -----
Senior Secondary level -----
4. Do you find the interim core syllabus for English second language for standard 8,9 and 10 user-friendly? (Please tick)
Yes ----- / No -----

5. What do you find problematic about the English syllabus currently being used for standard 8,9 and 10, if any?

6. Do you think in the current situation the general aims of the English syllabus are easy to realise / achieve? (Please tick)

Yes ----- No -----

7. You may comment with regards to question 6.

8. The Subject Advisors are not happy with the general performance of Grade 12 learners in English.

What do you think are causes / factors that contribute to the general

low performance among grade 11 and 12 learners in English?

9. We are in a period of transition in the Department of Education; there is a lot of change with regards to policy issues.

Do you feel that the education you received prepared you to contribute in policy-related matters in the Department of Education?

Yes _____ /No _____

10. As an educator, do you feel that you are part of the change going on in the Department of Education?

Yes _____ No _____

11. The policies and decisions that come from the Department of Education pertaining to your subject are either convenient or inconvenient on your part.

Comment _____

12. Do you think the syllabus gives you ideas regarding classroom procedure?

Yes _____ / No _____

Comment _____

13. Do you find a connection between what is stated in the syllabus and what is set by the Department for Grade 10 and 12 in Common Tests / Examinations in English?

Yes _____ / No _____

Comment _____

14. Do you teach grammar explicitly / directly?

Yes ----- / No -----

15. Do you use the syllabus at all?

Yes ----- / No -----

16. Do you have the current language policy in your school?

Yes ----- / No ----- / Not Sure -----

17. Would you say all teachers in your school are familiar with the
Language Policy documents?

Yes ----- / No ----- Not Sure -----

18. Would you say these policies are followed to the letter?

Yes ----- / No ----- / Not Sure

Comment -----

APPENDIX THREE

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE LEARNER ON THE KNOWLEDGE AND USAGE OF ENGLISH

Kindly complete the following questionnaire to the best of your knowledge:

1. Age :-----

2. Gender (Please tick)

Male ----- / Female -----

3. The Place where you live : -----

4. Which grade are you doing (Please tick)

Grade 10 ----- / Grade 11 ----- / Grade 12 -----

5. Do you feel confident about the way you speak English as you are about to leave
school?

Yes ----- No ----- Not Sure -----

6. How often do you use English?

Only at school --- / When the teacher asks me to ---/ Both at school and home---

7. If you were to stop schooling at Grade 12 level, would you say the school taught you English that you can use in the workplace?

Yes ----- / No ----- /Not Sure -----

8. Would you be comfortable to speak English to a person for whom it is mother tongue?

Yes ----- / No ----- / Not Sure -----

9. Do you think what and how you are taught English corresponds with what is set in the examinations and tests?

Sometimes ----- / Always ----- / Never -----

10. Is there any aspect or part in the English course that gives you a problem?

Yes----- / No -----

11. If your answer is Yes to 10 indicate with a tick all the aspects that give you problems from the list below:

Summary -----

Comprehension -----

Spelling -----

Punctuation -----

Skimming -----

Scanning -----

Advertisements	-----
Diaries	-----
Reports	-----
Minutes	-----
Obituary	-----
Formal letters	-----
Informal letters	-----
Directions	-----
Cartoons	-----
Poetry	-----
Short Stories	-----
Novels	-----

12. From the list given above, is there any aspect that is totally new to you?

Yes -----/ No -----

13. What is your attitude towards English as compared to IsiZulu?(In other words which one do you prefer and why?)
