The Role of Foundation Phase Educators in the Implementation of First Additional Language as Required by Curriculum Statement in Foundation Phase at Dzondo Circuit

T. Manyage, A. P. Kutame[*], N.P. Mudzielwana, L. Mabuza, M. Maluleke, A. Ramaano, V. Mbulaheni, F. Ravhuhali and H. Mutshaeni

University of Venda, Thohoyandou, Limpopo, South Africa, 0945Kutame, AP, P.O Box 85, Shayandima, 0945
[*]Fax: +27865259111;[*]E-mail: Philip.kutame@univen.ac.za

ABSTRACT The Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement, the latest curriculum introduced in South African education system since change over from apartheid education in 1994, was adopted based on the principles of the Revised National Curriculum Statement to improve the quality of education. The new curriculum was also introduced to shift from content to outcomes-based education which experienced marked implementation challenges. The aim of this study was to investigate the implementation of First Additional Language in Foundation Phase as required by the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement in the public schools in the rural areas of Limpopo Province. This quantitative study used a self-administered questionnaire to collect data from one hundred and fifty five educators from public schools. Results reveal that there are challenges that educators are facing in the process of implementing First Additional Language as stipulated in the new curriculum. It was also found that the majority of educators are not effective in implementing First Additional language. The findings of this study should assist in the implementation process of the First Additional language in Foundation Phase as required by Curriculum assessment policy statement in public schools.

INTRODUCTION

According to National Department of Education (NDoE 2007) Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement was developed to strengthen and streamline Revised National Curriculum Statement, which was reviewed in 2000 and became policy as the Revised National Curriculum Statement in 2002. The Revised National Curriculum Statement specifically re-affirms the change from teacher-centred teaching to learner-centred teaching as promoted by Curriculum 2005 (C2005). Both C2005 and the Revised National Curriculum Statement form a two-part process in the revision of the national curriculum that preceded 1994. This study intends to investigate the implementation of English First Additional Language in the foundation phase as required by the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement in the public schools.This study focuses on the literature review in which the researchers looked at different views held by different authors regarding curriculum implementation.

It is important for the policymakers to follow the implementation process closely because if teachers are not able to understand the requirements or identify with the policy then its goals may not be fulfilled. Concepts such as practical, foundational and reflexive competences that are essential to the implementation of the policy requirements need to be clearly understood. According to Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) challenges facing teachers in educational reform today are that: The vision of practice that underlies the nation's reform agenda requires most teachers to rethink their own practice, to construct new classroom roles and expectations for student outcomes, and to teach in ways they have never taught before – and probably never experienced as students.

Tomlinson (2003) asserts that writers should use this as a framework to guide the materials development process. Frameworks should be more "principled, coherent and flexible" to provide a more theoretical justification for the different stages and sequences of the materials development process. Tomlinson (2003) suggests thatcurriculum developers, materials developers and teachers should use feedback to interact in an open dialogue. Feedback from both evaluation and piloting is useful to publishers for improving and revising materials.

This would be in keeping with the empowerment principles advocated by Fetterman (2005) where all stakeholders are involved in the three stages of developing a mission statement, taking stock and developing strategies; and docu-

menting and negotiating progress. Feedback would be integral to this process. According to Ball and Cohen (1996), although the textbook has the potential to influence the work of teachers and to provide a common curriculum particularly where school systems are fragmented or unequal, in practice, curriculum materials have played an uneven role in education. If teachers' books are to provide guidance they should have notes which are useful and explicit; there should be sufficient guidance; and tape scripts if not in the course book, answer keys, vocabulary lists, structural, functional inventories, a description of the unit template; and a rationale and lesson summaries should be included (Tomlinson 2003). The materials should allow opportunities for teachers to adapt and localize to suit their context. They should allow for teacher agency so that the teachers can add, delete, change and improvise where desired and also have a choice and control over the content. Teachers' guides should also allow for reflection and encourage innovation and experimentation especially with regard to implementing curriculum change. The teacher should be encouraged to be creative, imaginative and exploratory and also to reflect on and evaluate the lessons provided.

Carlos Islam and Chris Mares (cited in Tomlinson 2003) argue that a good teacher's guide should supplement materials with useful alternatives and adaptations, but where this does not happen or a teacher does not have the teacher's guide, adaptation would become part of the creative dialogue between teachers and published materials. But Tomlinson (2003) disagrees and argues that because evaluation and adaptation are important in the learning process, this should not be left to chance but should rather be built into the development of the materials. He further asserts that time and training should be set aside so that teachers can develop these skills (Mudzielwana 2014b).

Ball and Cohen (1996) believe that if materials are well-designed they could be a resource for teacher learning and professional development. They suggest that when new materials are introduced, consideration should be given to the provision of instruction to teachers on how to use them. Teachers should be encouraged to engage with the materials in a manner that would be capacity building by encouraging professional development and improving their teaching performance. This would entail a redrawing of the boundaries (framing) between curriculum materials and teachers and a closer relationship between the enacted curriculum of teachers and how designers construct curriculum materials. If teachers and designers are seen as partners in practice then the curriculum and designers' work should be reconceptualised (Bernstein 2000) as sites for teacher learning and curriculum materials should provide opportunities for teachers to learn. This means that instead of seeing the textbook, as only for the students and the teachers' guide as only an instructional manual for teachers, both should be used as sites for teacher learning.

Educator Development

Educator development should be regarded as a national priority to enable educators plan for the changes ahead of them and understand such changes. McNeil (2003) maintains that: education is a labour-intensive field that requires educators' training and therefore educators' development is regarded as a major key in the success of curriculum change and implementation. The training should equip educators with the ability to plan in an integral way, to deliver the content using appropriate teaching strategies and to use a variety of methods to assess whether the outcomes have been achieved

Teaching and Learning Materials

For the successful implementation of First Additional Language, adequate teaching and learning materials are important as they form a crucial part of teaching. Harbemas (1984) states that: materials are important because they provided the vehicles by which pupils are taught to read. They are merely tools of the trade in teaching, reading. Like any tools, they are only as good as a craftsperson using them. A balanced and flexible reading program requires balance and flexibility in the choice and use of instructional materials.

For the first additional language to be successfully implemented, the following factors need to be taken into account: the preparedness of educators, training, planning and involvement of all stakeholders. Fairclough (1989) mentions that the success of curriculum implementation depends on the willingness of educators to change their practice in line with new approach and their level of understanding of the new ap-

proach. Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement should not come as a surprise to the educators. The educators should instead be given time to discuss and make inputs so that they may have the sense of ownership. This study seeks to examine the readiness of educators to implement the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement approach to education.

Planning

The success of first additional language implementation requires careful planning that entails one's efforts, time and action. Planning should relate to the desired and identifiable change that is to be implemented. The success of first additional language implementation requires careful planning that entails one's efforts, time and action. Fairclough (1989) indicate that the implementation of curriculum should be manageable and feasible for the average educator. Planning should relate to the desired and identifiable change that is to be implemented.

Training Process

Fairclough (1989) regards problems related write the material and possible readers was not addressed in the expert. He further said that the report found from observation and interest that much of the success of training depend on the individual presenters. Not all team members had an extensive background and in depth knowledge of curriculum (Kelly 1995).

Fetterman (2001), if the quality of manual was inadequate, then facilitators would be required to reorganise material and prepare activities which would require a relatively high level of expertise, should the trainers be highly skilled they would compensate fix lacks in the manual. Despite the shortage of monitoring report of the curriculum orientation programme for intermediate phase, the importance of both of trainers and course material is highlighted.

The assumption that teachers were uncomfortable with a training approach which focused on their own experiences and ideas is supported by Jansen (2000) who notes that "many are uncomfortable with group dynamics, self-analysis and consciousness raising" and Modiba (1999) who describe teachers as seeing themselves as 'operatives' rather than 'agents'. Teachers had not been trained to use reflection to improve their teaching practices and did not know the methods and approaches for higher-order reflective skills such as comparing, analysing, synthesising and brainstorming. Tomlison (2003) claims that designers as mediators of this new policy have themselves not made the shift, Some designers still imagine teachers, learners and the English curriculum in ways that do not sufficiently recognise social, cultural, economic and linguistic diversity within and beyond South Africa. She argues that textbook designers in South Africa have to visualise three readerships: learners, teachers and education department officials when they prepare their texts. She is worried that although their work is informed by C2005 and explicit reference is made to it in the introductions to the texts, these designers have not made the shift to the new teaching methodologies linked to multiliteracies. She claims that this message, which is in the introduction to one of the five textbooks in her study, is meant to reassure teachers that they will find a lot that is familiar in the new textbooks. The designers are not placing sufficient emphasis on raising the teacher's consciousness particularly with regard to multiliteracies.

Kelly (1995) refers to this as *"taking up the forms rather than the substance"* of learner-centred teaching practices. The forms that they refer to are the strategies of learner-centred teaching and the substance is the learning theory upon which this approach is based. What this research found is that teachers tend to develop a hybrid teaching style as they adjust from an old practice to a new one; that the context of the under-resourced teaching environment has a constraining effect on the ability of teachers to implement changes; and that the pace of change has been too fast and teachers need more support and time to help them through the transitional stages of adapting to reforms. Curriculum packages of materials need to provide sustained support and guidance, more research is needed on how teachers understand pupils' learning and more research is needed on learning in South Africa for purposes ofscaffolding and mediating new knowledge.It is however interesting that these authors seem not to be aware of the importance of mediating concepts or theory in a manner that is sensitive to the circumstances within which teachers work for its implications to be grasped and subsequently translated into effective practice (Harbenas 1984).

The message here is that both teachers and teacher-educators need to transcend barriers and find a meeting place that Nsibande and Modiba (2005) write about, where old perspectives of knowledge can be re-evaluated and new values and perspectives can be reconceptualised and accepted. To gain access to this knowledge, educators need to meet mediators of the curriculum in the middle ground (between the borders). Here, in this meeting place, educators will have access and can create a new product out of their existing practices and the new practices required of them. What this is reflecting is what Bernstein (1996) and Gough (1999) emphasise, namely that what is being taught needs to be opened up. We need a kind of intervention that is sensitive to the positioning of teachers.

Bernstein (2000) advocates that the school must involve all stakeholders so that meaningful change can occur. Jacobson, et al. (1998) recommend psychologists, special education teachers, support staff be consulted so that there are shared values and a sense of ownership and commitment towards new curriculum. MacNeil (2003) maintain that curriculum has been ineffectively implemented in the schools because it reproduces social class divisions that have widened the gap between the historically advantaged and disadvantaged schools. Research shows that the new curriculum has a particular educator and school in mind that is mainly founded in former model C schools (Bernstein 2000).The disadvantaged communities were enthusiastic about curriculum due to its political significance but they were not well prepared to handle it. The educator had to give up space, corporal punishment, content and the text books (Jansen 2000). Jansen questions why the problem of what policy claims and what practitioners experience remain dislocated from each. The "gap" persists in what the educator claims to do in the classroom and what they actually do in practice (Bernstein 2000). The implementation of the effectiveness of Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement is also hindered by the idealised image of the educator as having good attributes but they have been living in a society where poverty, racial oppression and pedagogical neglect exists (Bernstein 2000).

METHODOLOGY

The population of this study were 321 educators from Dzondo circuit in the Vhembe District of the Limpopo Province in South Africa who are teaching in First Additional Language in foundation phase. Purposive sampling procedure was used to select 154 primary school educators inDzondo Circuit. The researchers selected them because they are the ones who teach in those phases. They informed the participants about aims of the study and that participation was entirely voluntarily. The self-constructive questionnaire for this study was pre-tested on six educators from the schools where we were working before being administered. The researchers personally gave respondents the questionnaire after discussing the purpose and sought permission with the principal. All the 154 questionnaires were returned.

The data was analyzed through the computer loaded with Statistical Package for Social Science version 21 programme. The presentation of results was mainly descriptive, supported by tables showing frequency distributions and percentages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Presentation of data analysis and discussion is guided by the tables to substantiate the results.

First Additional Language Quarterly Projects

Table 1 shows observation by educators on whether quarterly first additional language projects help learners to first additional language more efficiently.

Table 1: Learners quarterly projects

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	11	7.12
Agree	41	6.63
Not sure	48	1.22
Disagree	43	7.9
Strongly disagree	11	7.1
Total	154	100.0

There were 33.7percent of respondents who felt that educators should give projects to learners quarterly while 36.2 percent of respondents were neutral.The results are consistent with literature (McNeil 2003) which indicates that to improve learner's academic performance remedial and feedback should be compulsory in the curriculum development.

Giving Learner's Daily Homework

Table 2 is giving the observation that giving learners daily homework would improve their academic performance.

Table 2: Daily homework for learners

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	85	55.2
Agree	63	40.9
Not sure	3	1.9
Disagree	1	.6
Strongly disagree	2	1.3
Total	154	100.0

Giving learners homework daily by educators is viewed in positive terms by 55.2 percent of respondents. A further 40.9 percent agreed that educators should give learners homework daily. Overall there were an overwhelming 96.1percent of respondents who viewed the notion in positive terms. A minority, 1.9 percent of respondents, viewed the notion in negative terms, while another 1.9 percent of respondents were neutral.The results are consistent with literature (Verma 2005) which indicates that to improve learners' academic performance tasks such as homework would improve their academic performance.The statistics would support the notion that the majority of respondents agreed that educators should give learners homework daily to learners.

Compulsory Arrangement of Learners

Table 3 shows the observation of educator's observation on whether arrangement of learners sitting in groups should be compulsory.

Table 3: Compulsory arrangement of learners in groups

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	43	27.9
Agree	72	46.8
Not sure	18	11.7
Disagree	12	7.8
Strongly disagree	9	5.8
Total	154	100.0

The results are consistent with literature (Yochum 1996) which indicates that to improve learners' academic performance, learners should be in groups based on their abilities and capabilities (Mudzielwana 2014a). Since the majority of 74.7percent agreed that arranging learners in groups should be compulsory as it assist learners to improve their academic performance then it should be one of educator's functions to arrange learners in groups.

Learner's Mandatory Oral Work

Table 4 shows the observation of educator's observation on whether oral work should be mandatory to learners.

Table 4: Mandatory oral work

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	41	26.6
Agree	57	37.0
Not sure	41	26.6
Disagree	7	4.5
Strongly disagree	8	5.2
Total	154	100.0

The majority 63.6 percent respondents agreed or strongly agreed that mandatory oral work should be encouraged as it contributes to learner's academic performance. Only 26.6 percent of the respondents were neutral. It was only twelve out of 154 respondents who disagreed with the notion. The results are consistent with literature (Gee 1990; Manyage 2014) which indicates that to improve learner's academic performance mandatory oral work should be compulsory in the curriculum development. Since 63.6 percent of respondents agreed that mandatory oral work should be encouraged as it contributes to learner's academic performance then it should be educator's role to do mandatory oral work.

Compulsory Recording of Learners Marks

Table 5 shows the observation of educator's observation on how learners' marks should be recorded.

Table 5: Recording of learners marks

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	47	30.5
Agree	102	66.2
Not sure	1	.6
Disagree	1	.6
Strongly disagree	3	1.9
Total	154	100.0

The results are consistent with literature (NDoE 2011) indicated that the successful implementation of Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement requires the involvement of all stakeholders across the education spectrum particularly parents (Mudzielwana 2014a), educators, and education officials at all levels of government. Since 96.7 percent of respondents strongly agreed with the notation that educators are required by the principals to record learners' marks to improve their academic performance then that means it is the task of educators to ensure that learners' marks are recorded to improve their academic performance.

Educators Make First Additional Language Requisition of Books

Table 6 shows observation on requisition of first additional language books

Table 6: Requisition of books

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	5	3.2
Agree	19	12.3
Not sure	12	9.7
Disagree	92	59.7
Strongly disagree	23	14.3
Total	154	100.0

Late delivery of ordered books by the principals was seen as a challenge by 74.6 percent of respondents. A further 9.7 percent of respondents were neutral while 15.5 percent agreed with the notion that books ordered by principals are delivered on time. These results are consistent with literature (Sieborger 2000) which indicates that most educators were confused with availability of books. He further said that educators did not know what, where and when to assess the learners.

Educator's Feedback to Learners

Table 7 shows observation on how educators give feedback to learners after teaching to improve their performance academically.

Just over half 51.3 percent of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that principals are the only one to ensure that educators report back learning outcomes achievement to learners. A further 24.6 percent of respondents agreed

Table 7: Reporting back of learning outcome achievement

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	1	.6
Agree	37	24.0
Not sure	37	24.0
Disagree	70	45.5
Strongly disagree	29	5.8
Total	154	100.0

or strongly agreed with the notion. Only thirty seven out of 154 respondents were neutral. The results are consistent with literature (McNeil 2003; Manyage 2014; Mudzielwana 2014a) which indicates that to improve learners' academic performance remedial and feedback should be compulsory in the curriculum development.

A definite need to improve the role of educators as far as supervising learners on reporting back learning outcome achievements was reflected in these findings. 51.3 percent of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that principals are not the only one to ensure that educators report back learning outcomes achievement to learners.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that educators in public primary schools need guidance on how best they can implement first additional language in public primary schools. The study was conducted to investigate the effectiveness of the implementation of first additional language in foundation phase of the primary schools. These findings show that educators are not as involved as would be expected under normal circumstances. In this paper the problem was stated and the aims of the study were spelled out. A literature review was conducted to establish what implementation of first additional language under Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement entails and the challenges that come with implementation of first additional language were also presented. The study managed to accomplish its stated aims and answered all the research questions stated. From the findings, it is clear that a number of factors contribute to poor implementation of first additional language in public primary schools. The research has found that there is poor involvement by the educators towards the effective implementation of first additional language in foundation phase. On the other

hand, the study found that the Department of Education is also not doing enough to support educators.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From what has been sourced out in the survey questionnaire by educators of primary schools in foundation phase, it is pertinent to indicate that all stakeholders are to be involved in the effective implementation of first additional language in foundation phase of the primary schools. Once there is effective collaboration among all stakeholders, there is a possibility that educators will be highly effective to improve implementation of first additional language in foundation phase of the primary schools.

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