

**A CASE STUDY OF THE CONSTRAINTS PERCEIVED AND
ENCOUNTERED BY GRADE 10 TEACHERS IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS
A SECOND LANGUAGE IN RURAL COMBINED SCHOOLS IN THE
OSHANA REGION**

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SIMON DHIMBULUKWENI LUMBU

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Main Supervisor: Dr T. C. Smit

Co-supervisor: Dr M. N. Hamunyela

Abstract

A qualitative case study investigated the constraints encountered by Grade 10 teachers in teaching English as a Second Language in rural areas of the Oshana region, in Namibia. The convenience sampling techniques were used to sample the 10 schools for participation in the study. Using a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews as instruments, the study investigated, firstly, the constraints teachers encounter in teaching ESL; secondly, the kind of support teachers in rural schools receive from the Ministry of Education, the Oshana Education Regional Office, and other educational stakeholders; and thirdly, the perceptions of teachers of ESL towards the teaching of the English language. The study found that there exist generally positive attitudes towards the English language in rural areas of the Oshana region. The study concludes that the major constraints that JSC teachers encounter range from lack of materials to teachers' poor English language proficiency and the effects of error fossilization and error inheritance.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgement	x
Dedication	xi
Declaration	xii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Background of the study	1
1.1. Problem statement	4
1.3. Research questions	4
1.4. Significance of the study	4
1.5. Limitations	5
1.6. Delimitations of the study	5
1.7. Definitions of terms and concepts	5
1.8. Summary	6
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	8
2.1. Introduction	8
2.2. Theoretical framework	8
2.3. The physical aspects of the classroom environment	11
2.4. The relevance of literary texts in helping learners to study English	12
2.5. Classroom sizes	12
2.6. Instructional materials	13

2.7. Error fossilization.....	13
2.8. Language learning, acquisition and proficiency	14
2.9. Perceptions of language teaching.....	17
2.10. Learner Motivation	19
2.11. Summary	21
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	22
3.1. Introduction.....	22
3.2. Research design	22
3.3. Population	23
3.4. Sample and Sampling procedure.....	23
3.5. Data collection procedure	24
3.6. Research instruments	24
3.7. Data analysis	26
3.8. Ethical considerations	27
3.9. Summary	27
CHAPTER 4: Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation.....	28
4.1. Introduction.....	28
4. 2. Presentation of data from the questionnaires	30
4.2.1. Biographical data of respondents	30
4.2.1.1. Gender.....	30
4.2.1.2. Age.....	31

4.2.1.3. Highest qualification	32
4.2.2. Perceptions of JSC teachers towards the teaching of ESL	34
4.2.2.1. Teachers' feelings about ESL	32
4.2.2.2. Medium of instruction to be used in ESL teaching	36
4.2.2.3. Teachers' perceptions of learners' ability to learn the English language	38
4.2.2.4. Methods used to motivate learners to learn ESL	40
4.2.3. Support provided to JSC teachers of ESL	42
4.2.3.1. Support from the Subject Advisors	42
4.2.3.2. Support from the Heads of Language Departments	44
4.2.3.3. Other support from the Oshana Education Directorate	45
4.2.3.4. Support from other stakeholders	47
4.2.3.5. Suggestions on how the teaching of ESL in rural areas can be improved	42
4.2.4. Constraints encountered in teaching ESL	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.2.4.1. Participants' teaching experience	51
4.2.4.2. Participants' experience in teaching ESL at the Grade 10 level	51
4.2.4.3. the number of learners teachers taught ESL	52
4.2.4.4. Materials used in JSC ESL teaching	54
4.2.4.5. Constraints in using the materials in the teaching of ESL	56
4.2.4.6. Library facilities	58
4.2.4.7. Summary of JSC teachers' challenges in ESL teaching	60
4.3. Analysis and interpretation of data from interviews with teachers	62

4.3.1. Biographical data of participants	63
4.3.2. Constraints on access to resources	63
4.3.3. Teaching English in a remote school	64
4.3.4. Role of teachers of other subjects	66
4.3.5. Biggest challenges in ESL teaching rural schools	68
4.3.6. Teaching methods	70
4.3.7. Points of reference for teachers	71
4.3.8. Support	72
4.3.8.1. Support from the Subject advisor and parents	72
4.3.8.2. Support from educational management	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.3.8.3. Support from the general community around the school	76
4.3.9. Reasons why participants opted to teach English and not other subjects	78
4.3.10. Researcher's comments on interviews with teachers	78
4.4. Presentation of data from interview with the Subject Advisor	81
4.4.1. Biographical data	81
4.4.2. Other challenges to ESL teaching in the Oshana region	82
4.4.3. Support from educational leadership	84
4.4.3.1. Advisory services	84
4.4.3.2. The Ministry of Education	85
4.4.4. Teaching in a rural area versus teaching in an urban area	85
4.5. Summary	87

<u>CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, CRITICAL REFLECTIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND</u>	
<u>RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	<u>88</u>
<u>5.1. Introduction</u>	<u>88</u>
<u>5.2. Discussion</u>	<u>88</u>
<u>5.2.1. Demographic profile of the sampled schools</u>	<u>88</u>
<u>5.2.2. Demographic profile of the teachers</u>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<u>5.2.3. Perceptions of the teaching of the English language in rural schools</u> Error! Bookmark not defined.	
<u>5.2.4. Support to ESL teachers in rural schools</u>	<u>93</u>
<u>5.2.5. Constraints that Grade 10 teachers encounter in teaching ESL in combined</u>	
<u>schools in rural areas in the Oshana region</u>	<u>96</u>
<u>5.2.5.1. English Language proficiency and medium of instruction</u>	<u>96</u>
<u>5.2.5.2. Materials</u>	<u>101</u>
<u>5.3. Summary of findings</u>	<u>104</u>
<u>5.4. Limitations of the study</u>	<u>109</u>
<u>5.5. Contributions of the study</u>	<u>110</u>
<u>5.6. Critical reflections on the study</u>	<u>111</u>
<u>5.7. Conclusions</u>	<u>111</u>
<u>5.8. Recommendations</u>	<u>113</u>
<u>5.9. Recommendations for further studies</u>	<u>114</u>
<u>REFERENCES</u>	<u>115</u>
<u>APPENDICES</u>	<u>119</u>

[APPENDIX A: Questionnaire for teachers.....](#) 119

[APPENDIX B: Interview Guide for teachers](#) 129

[APPENDIX C: Interview Guide for the Subject Advisor.....](#) 131

[APPENDIX D: Permission letter to the Oshana Education Regional Director](#) 133

[APPENDIX E: Response from the Oshana Education Regional Director.....](#) 134

List of Tables

<i>Table 1: The participating schools.....</i>	<i>41</i>
<i>Table 2: Teacher Qualifications</i>	<i>45</i>
<i>Table 3: Languages in which ESL should be taught.....</i>	<i>49</i>
<i>Table 4: Teachers' perceptions of learners' ability to learn English</i>	<i>51</i>
<i>Table 5: Motivation strategies</i>	<i>52</i>
<i>Table 6: Support from the ESL Subject Advisors.....</i>	<i>55</i>
<i>Table 7: Support from the Head of Language Department</i>	<i>57</i>
<i>Table 8: Support from the Ministry of Education / Oshana Education Directorate.....</i>	<i>58</i>
<i>Table 9: Support from parents and community to ESL teaching</i>	<i>59</i>
<i>Table 10: Participants' views on how the teaching of ESL in rural areas can be improved.....</i>	<i>61</i>
<i>Table 11: Teaching experience of participants.....</i>	<i>64</i>
<i>Table 12: Teacher – learner ratio.....</i>	<i>65</i>
<i>Table 13: Materials used by participants in ESL teaching</i>	<i>66</i>
<i>Table 14: Other materials used in ESL classrooms.....</i>	<i>67</i>
<i>Table 15: Problems encountered by participants in using materials</i>	<i>69</i>
<i>Table 16: Constraints to ESL teaching</i>	<i>73</i>
<i>Table 17: Learners' problems in ESL learning</i>	<i>77</i>
<i>Table 18: Participants' major constraints.....</i>	<i>80</i>
<i>Table 19: Community's perceptions towards the English language.....</i>	<i>88</i>
<i>Table 20: Participants' reasons for choosing to teach English.....</i>	<i>90</i>
<i>Table 21: Reasons why teachers opt to teach in urban areas.....</i>	<i>91</i>

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Dedication

When the flames were burnt out and the ashes of hope blown away by the winds, it was my father that kept the fires of hope and inspiration burning. I many a times almost lost courage to continue my studies particularly during the early years of my schooling, it was the words of encouragement, inspiration, motivation and the unwavering support from my father that kept me going. My father not only nourished me, but he also guided and advised me through the thick and thins of life. I therefore dedicate this work to my father, Thomas Lumbu, who passed on while I was busy with the coursework of this programme. The successful completion of this study and my entire educational success is greatly indebted to him.

Declarations

I, Simon Lumbu, declare hereby that this study is a true reflection of my own research, and that this work, or part of thereof has not been submitted for a degree in any other institution of higher education.

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.....
Simon Lumbu

Date.....

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the study

During the colonial era, education in Namibia was provided along racial segregation. Education was intended to separate and divide Namibians. According to Schmied (1991), Afrikaans was used as a medium of instruction in state schools in most parts of Namibia. English was only used as a medium of instruction in private and some elite schools. After Independence in 1990, the new Namibian government introduced English as the sole official language, doing away with the Afrikaans medium.

As people from different regions of Namibia speak different languages, a local language could not be used as *lingua franca* because one ethnic group would be empowered at the expense of others. Afrikaans could not be used either because it was generally regarded as the language of the oppressor, leaving English as the most suitable alternative (Benjamin, 2004).

In line with the implementation of English as an official language, the Ministry of Education introduced English as the medium of instruction in all state schools and schools subsidized by government (Jansen, 1995). This move received mixed reactions from the Namibian population since English was largely a foreign language, and only a few people could speak it (Benjamin, 2004). Teachers were expected to teach in an English medium despite not being fully proficient in the

English language. Nyathi (1999) documented whole communities in rural areas of Khorixas that were not conversant with the English language.

According to Malaba, Wolfaardt, Shimhopileni, Munganda & Compion (2007) studies on the role of English as the official language in Namibia have been conducted before, although recommendations were not systematically followed up and implemented. The apparent effect of this is visible in the low English language proficiency of Namibian teachers and the impact this has had on the general academic performance of learners in the Grades 10 and 12 national examinations.

Nyathi (1999, 2001) found that some of the major challenges that schools faced were a lack of adequately qualified English teachers and the availability of resources. By 2011, 10 years after Nyathi's 2001 study, many English Second Language (ESL) teachers have graduated with suitable qualifications (i.e. teaching diploma/degree) from the former teacher training colleges and the University of Namibia. Similarly, new teaching materials, such as text books, which are more communicative, have been developed. It can, therefore, be expected that in 2011 the constraints that teachers have been facing since 2001, should have evolved and should now be minimal.

Nyathi's research (1999, 2001) described some of the constraints that Grades 11 and 12 teachers faced in teaching ESL at the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) level, using the Cambridge curriculum. Although some constraints that teachers faced 10 years ago can be generalised to current teachers, many factors have changed. The curriculum, for example, has been revised

and localised. More in-service training workshops have been offered (e.g. the Namibia English Teachers' Association workshops).

While there is some knowledge on the constraints that teachers face at teaching ESL in Grades 11 and 12 (IGCSE level), little is known about the constraints that JSC ESL teachers are facing. The JSC level is particularly interesting as it forms a bridge between junior and secondary education. If there are constraints at senior secondary phase, such constraints can be expected to be bigger at the JSC phase. Possible interventions should thus be identified and targeted at the JSC phase. According to Ambarowati (2009), in order for a curriculum to be implemented successfully constraints in the teaching should be identified and solved because they do not only negatively affect learners' learning achievements, but they also affect the teachers' work in managing the teaching and learning process.

1.2. Problem statement

Many teachers teach in isolated rural parts of Namibia where they encounter constraints that are different from those being experienced by teachers in urban areas. The EMIS Education Statistics of 2005 reveal that there are more than 1739 teachers in the Oshana region where the majority teach in rural areas. National examination results regarding JSC released by the Directorate of National Examinations and Assessment (DNEA) reveal poor academic performance in ESL by many learners in the 2009, 2010 and 2011 national examinations, particularly in rural areas. Teachers receive their share of the blame from the local media and the public, as does the Ministry of Education (The Namibian newspaper 03/02/2011). Although studies have been carried out on ESL teachers at senior secondary schools, there is little

knowledge on the constraints that JSC ESL teachers perceive to be facing. Success in the JSC is imperative because this phase forms a bridge between junior and senior secondary education. This study, therefore, investigated the factors that hamper the effective teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL) in Grade 10 in combined schools in rural areas of the Oshana region.

1.3. Research questions

In this study, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What are the perceptions of Grade 10 teachers of ESL of the teaching and learning of the English language in rural areas?
2. What kind of support do teachers in rural schools receive from the Ministry of Education, the Oshana Education Regional Office and other educational stakeholders?
3. What are the constraints that Grade 10 teachers encounter in teaching ESL in combined schools in rural areas in the Oshana region?

1.4. Significance of the study

It is envisaged that this study's findings will assist policy makers in the Ministry of Education, learners and teachers of ESL and other stakeholders in understanding some of the causes of poor academic performance of learners and of some of the causes of the de-motivation of teachers in schools in rural areas. The major objective was to pave direction to the type of assistance needed by ESL teachers in rural schools in order to improve Grade 10 JSC results. It is also expected that other

researchers will find the findings and recommendations of the study invaluable in identifying key areas that need further study.

1.5. Limitations

Since the study only involved small scale research, there are bound to be some limitations that might militate against its generalizability. Due to time and budgetary constraints, the sample was limited to combined schools in rural areas in the Oshana region only. These schools might not be fully representative of the whole country; however, the sample was studied in depth.

The fact that the participants knew that they were being studied might have created an unnatural atmosphere which might influence the research findings: however, the researcher spent adequate time with the participants to create as natural an environment as possible. All the limitations were considered in data analysis and interpretation.

1.6. Delimitations of the study

The study was limited to Grade 10 teachers of English as a Second language in rural areas of the Oshana region. Grade 10 teachers of ESL in secondary and combined schools were excluded from the study, as the focus was on combined schools in rural areas of the Oshana region. However, a study that explores the statistical patterns on a national level could be undertaken in the future.

1.7. Definitions of terms and concepts

Although the following terms and concepts may have definitions other than those presented in this section, the meaning provided here represents the referral, contextual meaning of the terms used in this thesis.

Constraints – Igbemi (2011) defines constraints as things that limit or restrict. In the context of this thesis, constraints refer to factors that hamper the effective teaching of English as a Second Language in rural areas.

Combined school – a school with a combination of primary and junior secondary phases.

Rural / remote area – In general, a rural area is a geographic area that is located outside the cities and towns.

Perception – The process by which people translate sensory impressions into a coherent and unified view of the world around them. Though necessarily based on incomplete and unverified (or unreliable) information, perception is equated with reality for most practical purposes and guides human behaviour in general.

Oshana region – Oshana is one of the thirteen regions of Namibia. The name Oshana lends itself well to this region as it describes the most prominent landscape feature in the area, namely the shallow, seasonally inundated depressions which underpin the local agro-ecological system. Although communications are hindered during the rainy season, the fish which breed in the ‘oshanas’ provide an important source of dietary protein (NPC, 2002).

1.8. Summary

Chapter 1 provided the introduction, background related aspects which laid the foundation of the study. English was introduced as official language and medium of instruction in Namibia at Independence in 1990. Mixed reactions to the implementation of English as medium of instruction were documented by scholars in Namibia and studies on the constraints encountered in ESL teaching have been conducted before. The latter will be discussed in detail in the following Chapter on reviewed literature.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature pertaining to constraints in ESL teaching. This review of literature provides the theoretical framework which formed the basis for the design of the research instruments. The methodology was particularly inspired by the literature. The literature reviewed in this chapter guided the set of functional categories that were used in the data discussion in Chapter 5.

Studies on some of the ESL teaching constraints have been conducted in Namibia and elsewhere before. The most recent of these were conducted in Nigeria (Igbemi, 2011), and India (Ambrowatti, 2009). In Namibia, the latest study was conducted in 2001 by Nyathi. However, none of these studies was conducted at the Grade 10 level. The Grade 10 level is a significant Grade as it serves as a bridge between the junior and senior secondary school phases. Although some of these studies were conducted in countries geographically different from Namibia, the findings provide relevance to this study.

2.2. Theoretical framework

The most recent study on constraints was conducted in Nigeria by Igbemi in 2011. Igbemi (2011) studied constraints in teacher education and effects in teaching and learning home economics and she concluded that the following were the main constraints: facilities and equipment, funding, teachers' welfare, entry qualifications into teacher training programmes and crowded classrooms. The lack of facilities and equipment hampers effective teaching, while the lack of funding in institutions (i.e.

teacher training colleges) has left them ‘to contend’ with dilapidated and run-down structures, inadequate infrastructures and facilities, most of which are outdated and decrepit. The latter, according to Igbemi (2011), is responsible for the lack of self-confidence in teachers and teachers moving out of the teaching profession.

Similar to Igbemi, Ambrowatti (2009) also studied constraints, but specifically in the English language teaching and learning process in Indonesia. The study was carried out by means of a case study of an elementary school, the S D Muhammadiyah Girikerto, in Indonesia. Ambrowatti used the qualitative approach in his case study. The study concluded that constraints in the teaching and learning process could be found in some of the teaching and learning process components. These components were: learners, teachers, materials, methods, media, time and space and supporting services. Maturity, intelligence, interest, learning habits and behaviour were found to be constraints from learners’ side in the teaching and learning of English. Teachers were found to have constraints ranging from planning, implementation and evaluation of learners’ learning activities. Uninteresting, too difficult or level inappropriate materials were found to be constraints to the teaching and learning processes of English.

In another study, Nakabugo, Opolot-Okurut, Ssebbunga, Maani & Byamugisha (2008) studied large-class teaching in resource-constrained contexts in Ugandan primary schools. The study was conducted in two phases: the first was a baseline study using the descriptive survey design on 20 schools involving 35 teachers in rural and urban areas; the second was a reflective action phase involving ten teachers in five schools. Interviews and observations were used to collect data. Nakabugo *et al.*

found that teaching and learning were mainly constrained by large classes, while a lack of resources also emerged as a major constraint. Nakabugo *et al.*'s study concluded that teachers' strategies of handling large classrooms needed to be complemented by institutional and policy support, as well as the provision of infrastructure, such as bigger classrooms.

In Namibia, Nyathi (1999) conducted a study on constraints in ESL teaching in the Grades 11 and 12 Higher/International General Certificate of Secondary Education (H/IGSCE) level. Combining qualitative and quantitative methods, Nyathi's study (1999) found that teachers' constraints were mainly the lack of teaching materials and the traditional teaching methods that they used. In 2001 Nyathi conducted a similar study in two regions: Oshana and Khorixas. Again, he studied senior secondary school teachers. The results of this study were similar to those of his 1999 study: inadequacy of resources, poor teacher educational qualifications and the use of inappropriate (traditional) teaching methods. These findings concur largely with the findings by Igbemi (2011).

Cullingford (2005) conducted a study on the 'effective teacher' which revealed that good teachers are those with great knowledge of their subject, are willing to work hard, are trustworthy, understanding and have patience, as well as empathy towards their learners. Effective teachers, according to Cullingford, are invariably concerned about effective teaching and learning, as well as creating a conducive learning environment for their learners. A conducive learning atmosphere is one that allows learning to occur easily and smoothly.

Cullingford finds that there are many factors that constrain students' learning, in general, and their academic performance, in particular, these factors range from social factors, learners' emotional wellbeing, the physical aspects of the classroom, motivation, teachers' qualifications and enthusiasm, diligence, determination and dedication, as well as their willingness to act. Another major finding of Cullingford's study was that, in order for effective teaching to take place, teachers should develop their learners' English language skills, communication skills, as well as skills for dealing with emotions so that they will be able to learn, interact, socialize and ultimately communicate with others in English.

2.3. The physical aspects of the classroom environment

Daniel (2002) conducted a study on 'effective teaching' in New Zealand. His study found that an important aspect of the classroom was the appearance of the physical features, such as the arrangement of desks, chairs and tables. He suggests that these should be logically arranged in order for the teacher and the learners to move freely in the classroom. Chairs and tables should also be arranged in ways which would enable them to be changed at any time into groups or for pair work for learners. Daniel (2002), like Nyathi (2001), combined quantitative and qualitative methods to study effective language teaching in New Zealand. Daniel's study concluded that colourful and bright displays of pictures and photos in classrooms make teaching more pleasant, while at the same time it facilitates learning, because learners use the visual displays as learning aids.

Another major finding of Daniel's study is that inadequate consideration of learner efforts by the teacher in the classroom hampers the teaching and learning process. He

concludes that effective teaching takes place when teachers ensure that all learners' work, including that of both talented and lesser talented learners, contribute to the development of the classroom climate.

2.4. The relevance of literary texts in helping learners to study English

Dreyer (2006) researched the relevance of current literary texts related to learners' cultures, which is a major constraint in teaching. He used the quantitative method to conduct a case study on two high schools in Pretoria. He found that in ESL learning, learners needed to be exposed to, and given, authentic and relevant literary texts, such as textbooks, cartoons, advertisements, magazine articles and poems. As learners read more literary texts, they become more subconsciously aware of linguistics and its rules. According to Perrot (1982), learners can improve their understanding of the target language by improving and increasing their vocabulary and communication in the target language. Perrot's (1982) study, which was similar to Daniel's (2002), made an assumption that students knew how to study and that the basic conditions for successful study were quite simple: intelligence, motivation, hard work, determination and dedication; these, however, do need to be enhanced by effective teaching.

2.5. Classroom sizes

A Strategic Plan for the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP) study conducted by Nawala (2005), supports the claim that if the learner-teacher ratio is very high, the learners' achievements will be severely and negatively affected. The study found that one of the major constraints to effective teaching in

Namibia was learner/teacher ratio. The 2005 ETSIP study reports that in Namibia, the pupil-teacher ratio is usually about 1:35, which constrains many teachers to teach effectively. The study concluded that a modest reduction in classroom sizes would lead to effective teaching and learning, and thus reduce one of the constraints of teaching English to improve learners' overall performance.

2.6. Instructional materials

It appears that increasing the provision of instructional materials, especially textbooks, is the most cost effective way of raising the quality of education in schools (Daniel, 2002). The scarcity of learning materials in the classrooms, especially in rural areas in Namibia, seems to be one of the most serious impediments to quality and effective education in Namibia. According to Daniel (2002), there is relevant evidence that the gap in the provision of instructional materials and facilities among the country's different regions is completely different. Urban areas are perceived to be well off, while rural areas are most negatively affected by the acute lack and insufficiency of educational materials.

2.7. Error fossilization

According to Han (2004), second language acquisition research over the past three decades has generated a wide spectrum of different interpretations of "fossilization" – a construct introduced by Selinker (1972) for characterizing lack of grammatical development in second language learning. Han considers these conceptual differences to have become increasingly clear, creating confusion rather than offering clarification, thereby obstructing a coherent understanding of the theoretical notion

as well as empirical research findings. Selinker (1972) defines fossilization as “the point at which no further learning appears possible, with the student’s performance apparently impervious to both exposure to English and explicit error correction (i.e.: ‘set in stone’).”

Hasbun (2007) conducted a cross-sectional study on the most frequent grammar errors made by 159 English Foreign Language college students. The data consisted of eight sets of writing samples produced either in class or out of class as part of the regular course activities. The students were evaluated, and the errors were classified according to an error taxonomy. The study found that although the frequency of certain errors increased and decreased unpredictably across levels, errors pertaining to subject omission, subject verb agreement and negative forms were found to be more common in beginners. Hasbun concluded that errors related to the use of articles and prepositions and incorrect verb forms were the most frequent categories across levels. Another conclusion of Han’s study was that most errors were a result of using uncorrected, incorrect grammatical forms.

2.8. Language learning, acquisition and proficiency

Krashen (1975) distinguishes language acquisition from language learning. He defines language acquisition as ‘a process similar, if not identical, to the way children develop ability in their first language. Language acquisition is a subconscious process; language acquirers are not usually aware of the fact that they are acquiring language, but are only aware of the fact that they are using the language for communication’. The result of language acquisition, acquired

competence, is also subconscious. Krashen argues that in language acquisition, people are generally not consciously aware of the rules of the languages they have acquired. Instead, they have a 'feel' for correctness. Grammatical sentences 'sound' right, or 'feel' right, and errors 'feel' wrong, even if they do not consciously know what rule was violated. Krashen states that some of the prerequisites for language acquisition under the input hypothesis are interaction and exposure to the target language.

Language learning, on the other hand, is defined by Krashen (1973) as a way to develop competence in a second language is by language learning, emphasising the use of the term 'learning' to refer to conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them. In non-technical terms, learning is 'knowing about' a language, known to most people as 'grammar', or 'rules'. Some synonyms include 'formal knowledge' of a language or 'explicit learning'.

According to Krashen (1985), adults have two different ways of developing competence in second languages: acquisition and learning. "There are two independent ways of developing ability in second languages. 'Acquisition' is a subconscious process identical in all important ways to the process children utilize in acquiring their first language, a conscious process that results in knowing about the rules of language" (p. 87). The acquisition-learning distinction is considered as one of the most essential of all the hypotheses in Krashen's theory and the most widely known among linguists and language practitioners.

Some second language theorists have assumed that children acquire, while adults can only learn. The acquisition-learning hypothesis claims, however, that adults also acquire, that the ability to "pick-up" languages does not disappear at puberty (Krashen, 2003). This does not mean that adults will always be able to achieve native-like levels in a second language. It does mean that adults can access the same natural "language acquisition device" that children use.

In Namibia, even though English is the official language, it is spoken and learned by many as a second language: one of the reasons for the varying language proficiency among Namibians. Kisting (2011) reports a 2011 nationwide survey conducted by the Ministry of Education to test the English language proficiency of teachers in Namibia. The survey was conducted by means of an English language test administered to 23000 teachers in all schools in Namibia. According to the preliminary findings leaked to the local media, more than 70 per cent of teachers in the senior secondary phase were unable to read and write basic English, 63 per cent in the junior secondary phase were not sufficiently proficient in English, while at primary school level, about 52 per cent of lower primary teachers struggled with the English language, and about 61 per cent faced English language difficulties. According to Kisting (2011)'s coverage of the preliminary report, a total of 7 850 teachers scored between 0 and 52 per cent ('pre-intermediate') in the test, while 10 094 scored between 53 and 74 per cent ('intermediate'), and 4 145 scored between 75 and 92 per cent ('advanced'). Only 561 managed to get between 93 and 100 per cent.

The test consisted of a comprehension section, a language usage part and a writing category – in which teachers had to construct four complete sentences. Listening, speaking and pronunciation skills were not tested in the test.

The report, Kisting (2011) says, claimed that the teachers in the ‘advanced’ category battled with capital letters, subject-verb agreement, singular and plural forms, articles and the use of full stops. Teachers were also reported as lacking skills in critical thinking and discourse analysis.

The report further states that “it was also apparent that those [teachers] who scored poorly in the reading and language use sections also performed poorly in the writing section” (p. 2). Kisting argued that, “there was strong evidence that this low performance of teachers and other educators overall has a negative impact on learners’ performance in English and all other subjects.” Some teachers, the report states, struggled “to fill in personal data required on the front of the answer sheet”. The report emphasised that there was “much work to be done to upgrade teachers’ English abilities, specifically reading, comprehension, specific fossilised grammar features and punctuation errors” (p. 1-2).

According to the report, younger teachers were more proficient in English than older teachers, while those who were better qualified also read, wrote and spoke better English.

2.9. Perceptions of language teaching

Studies on teachers’ perceptions and beliefs have been carried out since the 1970s. The studies of teachers’ perceptions were mostly concentrated on examining the

relationship between teachers' belief and practices. The findings of most of these studies indicated that teachers' practices were usually consistent with their beliefs and thoughts and were related to students' performance (Fuchs, Fuchs & Phillips, 1994; Johnson, 1992; Mangano & Allen, 1986; Rupley & Logan, 1984). For instance, Fuchs, Fuchs & Phillips (1994) examined the relationship between teachers' beliefs about the importance of good student work habits and their responsiveness to students' academic performance. One hundred and twenty-one elementary school teachers participated in the study. Teachers' beliefs were measured by means of questionnaires. The results indicated that teachers with strong beliefs about good student work habits planned with greater responsiveness to student performance than teachers with less strong beliefs. Their students' learning disabilities also achieved better than those with teachers who had less strong beliefs in them.

The most recent study on teacher perceptions was conducted in the United States of America (Jia, 2004). Jia studied ESL teachers' perceptions and use of classroom-based reading assessment. The study was conducted on six middle school ESL teachers and seven elementary school ESL teachers. Data were collected through interviews with the participating ESL teachers, classroom observations and assessment of materials. The findings of the study indicated that there were three kinds of classroom-based reading assessments commonly used by ESL teachers in the classrooms: tests, observation, and using writing to assess reading. These classroom-based reading assessments served ESL teachers in two ways: helping teachers make decisions about individual students and helping teachers make

decisions about instruction. Jia (2004) concluded that ESL teachers highly valued classroom-based reading assessments, considering them valuable, accurate and efficient.

2.10. Learner motivation

Norris-Holt (2005) divided motivation into two basic types: integrative and instrumental. Integrative motivation is characterised by the learner's positive attitudes towards the target language group and the desire to integrate into the target language community. Instrumental motivation underlies the goal to gain some social or economic reward through Second Language or Foreign Language achievement, thus referring to a more functional reason for language learning. Both forms of motivation were examined in light of research which had been undertaken to establish the correlation between the form of motivation and successful second and foreign language acquisition. Norris-Holt (2005) studied motivation in the Japanese English Foreign Language context. She studied Japanese learners' attitudes towards both the English culture and language. The results showed that learners who failed to conceptualise the importance of learning another culture (English), neither performed well nor showed much interest in socio-cultural activities. She further identified motivation as the learner's orientation with regard to the goal of learning a second or foreign language. Her conclusions were that students who were most successful when learning a target language were those who liked the people that spoke the language, admired the culture and had a desire to become familiar with or even integrate into the society in which the language is used (Norris-Holt, 2005, p.225).

Furthermore, researchers such as Andrew LittleJohn (2008) and Sultan Qaboos (2004) have studied the variables of learner motivation from a teacher's perspective. The purpose of their study was to determine the possible teacher contributions to learner motivation. A group of language teachers (12) was studied by means of interviews. The findings of this research revealed that teachers' informal discussions of learner motivation often emphasized the need to find ways to motivate learners, most usually through 'fun' or 'dynamic' activities. Their study started from the assumption that part of the work of the teacher was to avoid the 'demotivation' of learners, and that there was a need to consider the overall structural organization of teaching and learning, not just the kinds of activities which learners did. As a result, four factors significant in affecting learner motivation were emphasized, namely the locus of control, a sense of value and purpose, self-esteem and feelings of success.

In another study by Al-Mahrooqi, Abrar-UI-Hassan & Asante (2012), it was found that the inability of many English Foreign Language (EFL) students to motivate themselves to learn English could be attributed to socio-cultural factors that were beyond the control of the individual learner. The study was a modified replication of Cheng and Dörnyei's (2007) study. The 286 participants that were studied rated the 48 strategies according to importance and the frequency with which they employed the strategies in their teaching contexts. A nationwide survey of representative EFL teachers in Omani schools, colleges and universities was also conducted in an attempt to analyse the importance that EFL teachers attached to the use of specific strategies for motivating students to learn English and also to establish how often they used these strategies in their teaching practice. The results were analysed in

terms of the most and least important motivational strategies, those most frequently and infrequently used, and the relationship between importance and frequency of use. The results indicated that EFL teachers in Oman overwhelmingly endorsed the use of the 48 motivational strategies. Moreover, the most favoured strategies among the teachers were those related to the teacher's personal performance in the classroom. The study concluded that the most favoured motivational strategies were praise and criticism because they required little effort from the teacher, although the strategies could be considered as only somewhat effective in increasing learner motivation.

2.11. Summary

Studies on some of the constraints regarding teaching constraints have been carried out before, but only on Senior Secondary School teachers. Nyathi's (2001) study is the latest in Namibia. Since 2001 many things have changed (such as the syllabi, localisation of national examinations and the introduction of the English Language Proficiency Programme (ELPP)). While there is some knowledge on constraints encountered by Senior Secondary School teachers, almost nothing is known on JSC teachers. This study, therefore, aims to fill this gap of knowledge on the constraints encountered by JSC teachers in teaching ESL in rural areas in Namibia. Ambrowatti's (2009) model on the teaching and learning process components was used as a baseline for the development of the research instruments.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1.Introduction

The purpose of the study was to investigate the constraints encountered by Grade 10 teachers in teaching ESL in the Oshana region. This chapter describes the methods and procedures used to collect data.

3.2. Research design

This was a case study using the qualitative approach. The qualitative approach was used to provide an in-depth understanding of the research problem. Although the study followed a qualitative approach, the nature of some of the data also permitted quantitative analysis. Bodgan & Becklein (1982) maintain that qualitative research is accepted by interpretivists to be an integral part of the quantitative method. Grix (2004) maintains that qualitative research methods allow for in-depth investigation in search of a better, more meaningful understanding of complex issues through the collection and examination of data from several perspectives and the focus on natural settings which are flexible and sensitive to social context. In addition, qualitative research takes into account historically or culturally significant phenomena, values participants' perspectives on their worlds, and often relies on the words of individuals as its primary data (Grix, 2004). The literature reviewed in Chapter two revealed that in all studies conducted on the problem, a mixed methods approach was used. In this study, the researcher adhered mainly to the qualitative paradigm to research the research problem.

The research was field-focused. It was conducted in a natural school situation with no interventions, as opposed to an experimental design (Leedy, 1993). The study was conducted in combined schools in the Oshana region, between June and July 2011, over a period of five weeks. Combined schools were chosen because they bridge primary and secondary education. Grade 10 ESL teachers were studied in particular, because they are the ones who prepare learners to write JSC national examinations.

3.3. Population

The Oshana region was chosen by means of purposive sampling: it has one of the highest numbers of combined schools. Over the past ten years (2001 – 2011), the National examination results revealed by the DNEA indicated poor performance in ESL by learners, especially in combined schools. In this region, there are 47 combined schools: four of these schools are in towns (Ongwediva and Ondangwa), while 43 are in rural areas. The four schools in towns were excluded from the study because the focus was on schools in rural areas.

There are two Subject Advisors for each subject in the Oshana region. The population of this study, therefore, comprised 43 ESL teachers from the 43 combined schools in rural areas in the Oshana region, as well as the English Subject Advisors.

3.4. Sample and sampling procedure

The convenience sampling technique was the most appropriate for this study as not all of the 47 combined schools in the Oshana region were accessible because of the 2010/2011 floods. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique

where subjects are selected because of their convenient accessibility to the researcher (Leedy, 1993).

The initial sample comprised 10 Grade 10 ESL teachers, one from each of the 10 combined schools in rural areas in the Oshana region, as well as one Grade 10 ESL Subject Advisor. It transpired during the data collection process that one school had two ESL teachers. Both teachers were included in the study, increasing the sample to 11 teachers. Sampling was done in such a way that the 10 participants were representative of all the combined schools in rural areas of the Oshana region.

3.5. Data collection procedure

Participating teachers as well as the Subject Advisor, were requested to fill in a questionnaire which was pilot tested beforehand at four combined schools in the Oshikoto region. The pilot study was conducted at Onyuulaye, Iihongo, Okankolo and Ontana combined schools in the Oshikoto region. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with the participants, and administered the filling in of questionnaires.

3.6. Research instruments

The researcher used two different qualitative research instruments to conduct a detailed investigation into the constraints encountered by Grade 10 teachers in teaching ESL in combined schools in rural areas in the Oshana region. In this study, two research instruments were used: questionnaires and interviews. Although most of the content in the research instruments was based on Ambrowatti (2009)'s teaching

and learning components model, each instrument contained a section on each research question.

- **Questionnaire**

Questionnaires can be very useful tools for data collection when doing research (Leedy, 1993). The primary reason for choosing questionnaires relates to their handy information from respondents, such as knowledge, perception, beliefs and attitudes on specific items. The researcher designed the questionnaire to access the respective respondents' perception, opinions and views on the constraints encountered by ESL teachers, as well as the perceived support that teachers in rural schools received from the Ministry of Education, Oshana Education Regional Office and other stakeholders.

The questionnaire comprised both open-ended and closed/structured questions, and was administered to the 11 teachers that participated in the study. The open-ended questions allowed the respondents to elaborate their views on the constraints they encountered. These views provided the departure point for interview questions. In order to increase the reliability of the questionnaires, a pilot study was conducted beforehand on five ESL teachers from five combined schools in the Oshikoto region.

- **Interviews**

As a research strategy, interviews are regarded as having the potential to provide more complete and more accurate information than other techniques (Newman & Benz, 1988). In this study, semi-structured interviews were arranged with the 11 participants. An interview guide was compiled beforehand to standardise the

interviews. Robson (2002) argues that semi-structured interviews have predetermined questions, but the order can be modified based on the interviewer's perception of what seems most appropriate. Question wording can be changed and explanations given: particular questions which seem inappropriate with a particular interviewee can be omitted or additional ones included.

The interview guide comprised mainly open-ended questions which provided an in-depth insight into the respondents' attitudes and feelings in relation to the research questions. With the permission of the respondents, a digital voice recorder was used to record the interviews. The interviews were conducted after the researcher had spent two weeks with the participants to provide an accommodating environment.

3.7. Data analysis

Bogdan & Beklein (1982) indicate that there are two approaches to data analysis, namely the inductive and deductive modes. An inductive process means that categories and patterns emerge from data, rather than being imposed on data prior to the data collection (MacMillan & Schumacher, 1997). Data analysis followed the analytic, induction methods although a deductive mode of thinking – that of moving back and forth between analysing raw data and recasting tentative analysis at each phase – was used when necessary.

Collected data were descriptively analysed and interpreted question by question. Data from the different instruments were triangulated, based on the research questions of the study and presented, using the phenomenological analysis technique. The phenomenological method has an idiographic focus, which means that it aims to

offer insights into how an individual in a given context makes sense of a given phenomenon (Nunan, 1992). The data were analysed and the findings were presented according to emerging themes.

3.8. Ethical considerations

Permission was sought from the Oshana Education Regional Office, the Director of Education, inspectors of schools, school principals and teachers (see appendices D and E). Participants were allowed to refuse or withdraw participation from the study at any time that they wished to do so. All information from participants was treated confidentially. Where necessary, pseudonyms were used instead of real names to further protect the identities of participants.

3.9. Summary

The purpose of Chapter 3 was to provide the methodology used to undertake the study. The study adhered to the qualitative research design of a case study. The population of the study was 43 ESL teachers from 43 combined schools and the ESL Subject Advisor. The convenience sampling technique was used to draw a sample of 11 teachers and the one Subject Advisor. The following Chapter is a presentation, analysis and interpretation of the collected data.

CHAPTER 4: Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter the collected data are presented and analysed according to the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of Grade 10 teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL) of the teaching and learning of the English language in rural areas?
2. What kind of support do teachers in rural schools receive from the Ministry of Education, the Oshana Education Regional Office and other educational stakeholders?
3. What are the constraints that Grade 10 teachers encounter in teaching ESL in combined schools in rural areas in the Oshana region?

In order to respond to these research questions, two research instruments were used to collect data, namely a questionnaire and interviews (see appendices A and B). Data were collected from Grade 10 ESL teachers in 10 rural combined schools in the Oshana region. These schools were: Elolo, Onyeka, Oshikondiilongo, Omashekediva, Oikango, Mvula, Oshekasheka, Nengushe, Iindangungu and Otala. One of the two ESL Subject Advisors in the Oshana region also participated in the interviews.

Ten rural combined schools comprised the sample. The school that was closest to a tarred road was three hundred metres from the nearest tarred road, and the furthest was twelve kilometres. Only one school did not have electricity, although the process

of providing electricity to the school was in progress when data were being collected.

The table below provides detailed information on each school.

Table 1: The participating schools

Name	Circuit	Distance from tarred road	Electricity
Oshikondiilongo	Onamutayi	12km	Available
Onyeka	Onamutayi	6km	Not available
Elolo	Onamutayi	1km	Available
Mvula	Eheke	700m	Available
Oikango	Eheke	6km	Available
Oshekasheka	Onamutayi	10km	Available
Nengushe	Onamutayi	8km	Available
Omashekediva	Eheke	8km	Available
Otala	Onamutayi	5km	Available
Iindangungu	Onamutayi	300m	Available

Participating teachers from these ten schools completed a questionnaire and participated in follow-up interviews. The data from open-ended questions were descriptively analysed by using content analysis techniques. The results are presented in a narrative form, accompanied by graphs, pie charts and frequency tables.

Although data analysis was inductive, a deductive mode of thinking at appropriate times will be used. Even though there might be slight distinctions between the terms “respondent” and “participant”, the two were used interchangeably in this chapter to refer to the sampled teachers and the Subject Advisor.

4. 2. Presentation of data from the questionnaires

One of the key instruments used to collect data was the questionnaire. A questionnaire was administered to 11 JSC ESL teachers in all ten sampled combined schools. The questionnaire consisted of four sections designed according to the research questions (see Appendix A). The first section collected the biographical data of the participants; the second explored the type of support that teachers received, while the third studied perceptions towards the teaching of ESL. The fourth section investigated the nature of the constraints encountered by JSC ESL teachers in the rural areas of the Oshana region.

4.2.1. Biographical data of respondents

Biographical data collected consisted of the gender, age and academic qualifications, which provided a detailed profile of the participants. The biographical data were collected in questions one to five of the questionnaire (see Appendix A for participants' biographical information).

4.2.1.1. Gender

The questionnaire was administered to eleven respondents. Of the eleven participants four (36%) were males while seven (64%) were females, as illustrated by Figure 1 below.

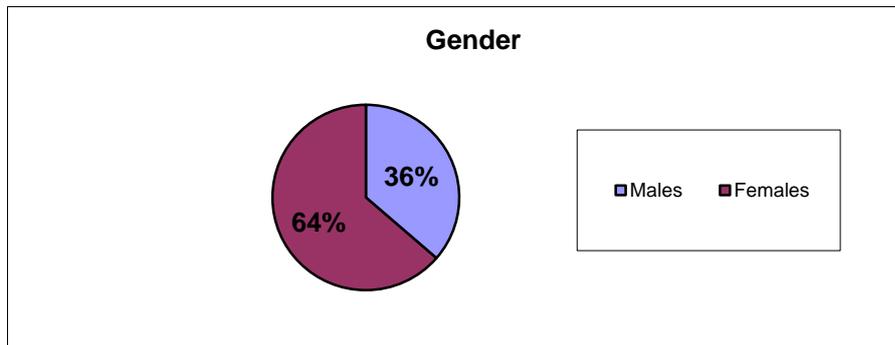


Figure 1: Percentages of male and female participants who completed the questionnaire

Although the majority of the respondents were female, gender did not appear to have an influence on the responses to questions in the questionnaire as there seemed to be an irregular pattern in the types of responses to questions across the different gender groups.

4.2.1.2. Age

The ages of the 11 participants, as illustrated in Figure 2 below, ranged between 23 and more than 45. Five participants were aged between 38 and 44; three were aged between 31 and 37, while two were between 23 and 30 years old. Only one participant marked the group category of aged 45 and older (see Figure 2 below).

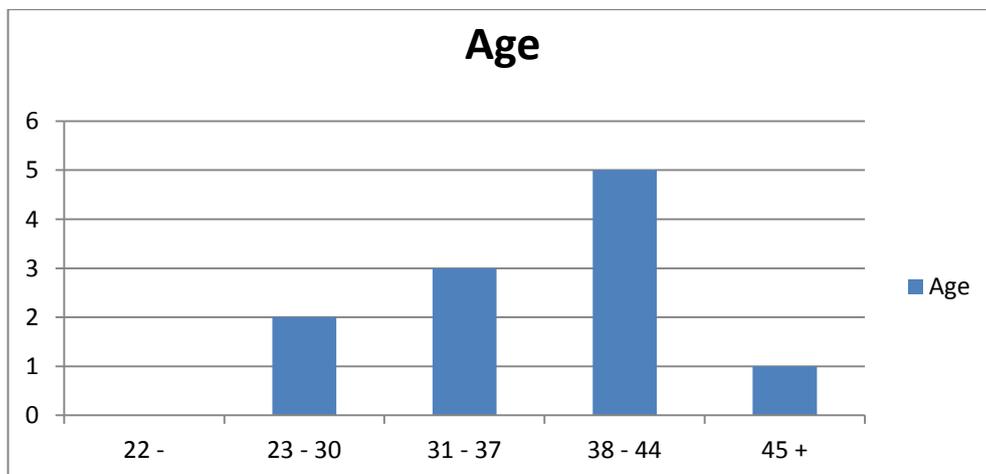


Figure 2: Age of participants

It appears that the respondents' age influenced their responses. It seemed that the younger the respondent, the fewer difficulties he/she had with the use of the English language. The older participants had more difficulty expressing themselves in English and answering open-ended questions in the questionnaire.

While analysing data from the questionnaire, the researcher looked at the participants' own English language proficiency. Although each participant made numerous grammatical and spelling errors, the older participants made the most errors. The oldest participant, responding to a question on teaching materials used in class, said that she used the "photocopy machine" in class, an indication of a lack of understanding of the question. In filling in questionnaires, the participants aged between 23 and 30 made the fewest errors. Participants aged 38 and more had more difficulty understanding interview questions. The interviewer had to simplify and rephrase questions to get responses. From this, the researcher deduced that the English language proficiency levels of these teachers vary across the different age groups.

4.2.1.3. Highest qualification

The researcher was further interested in the education levels of the participants. Therefore, question 3 of the questionnaire required participants to give information on their educational qualifications. Table 1 below illustrates that six of the eleven participants held the Basic Education Teacher's Diploma (BETD) from the former Colleges of Education; three had either the ACE or DEAL qualifications from the Institute of Open Learning and the University of Namibia respectively, while two had the Bachelor of Education Degree (B.Ed) from the Institute of Open Learning. It

is understandable that the majority (six) of the participants held the BETD qualification as it is the minimum qualification required for JSC teachers in Namibia.

Table 2: Teacher Qualifications

Teacher qualifications	Number of teachers	Institution
B.Ed	2	IOL
BETD	6	CoE
Other : ACE / DEAL	3	IOL / UNAM
Total Respondents	11	

Table 2 shows the academic qualifications of participants. Qualifications did not have a significant influence on the responses. However, the B.Ed and ACE/DEAL qualifications dictated teaching positions (i.e. Head of Department).

Many of the qualifications (seven out of eleven) were obtained between 2000 and 2009, while three were obtained between 1991 and 1999; only one was obtained in 2010 and after (see Figure 3). Like the ages, it appears that the earlier the qualifications were obtained, the more difficulties the respondents had with the English language. This could be a result of the respondents' personal experiences with the English language. English was only introduced as official language and medium of instruction in 1990, which means that some of the participants had completed their education either through a medium of instruction other than English or were only introduced to English towards the end of their schooling.

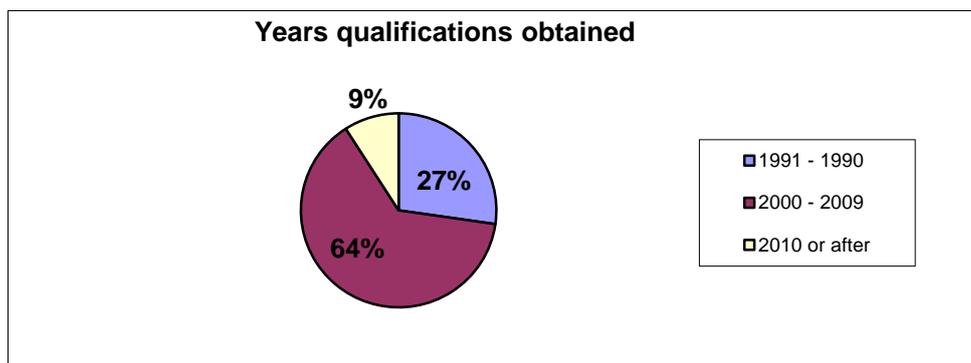


Figure 3: Years when qualifications were obtained

Figure 3 shows that most of qualifications were obtained between 2000 and 2009, between 10 and 19 years after independence. The participants' were qualified to teach at the JSC level, as the Ministry of Education requires teachers to have at least the Basic Education Teacher's Diploma (BETD).

4.2.2. Perceptions of JSC teachers towards the teaching of ESL

The second section (Section B) of the questionnaire comprising mainly open-ended and ranking type questions, examined the teachers' views on the teaching of ESL in rural areas. Particular interest was placed on how the participants felt about the teaching of the English language, the perceptions towards the medium of instruction in ESL teaching, the learning ability of their learners in ESL, and the motivation strategies they used in their ESL classrooms.

The salient objective of the section was to respond to research question one: What are the perceptions of Grade 10 teachers of ESL of the teaching of the English language in rural areas? This section relates to questions 6 to 9 of the questionnaire (see Appendix A). Although the terms 'perceptions' and 'feelings' have related but differing meanings, they are used interchangeably in this report to refer to feelings.

4.2.2.1. Teachers' feelings about ESL

In a ranking order type question, participants were asked to list different languages in order of importance (see questions 6 of the questionnaire, Appendix A). The list investigated mainly languages taught in schools in the Oshana region. The languages were: German, French, Afrikaans, Portuguese, English and Oshiwambo (Oshindonga or Oshikwanyama) or other local languages. The majority (nine out of eleven) of the respondents listed English as the most important language to teach learners in rural schools, and only two respondents listed Oshiwambo as the most important to teach rural learners. French was ranked by seven participants as the second most important language, while Portuguese was ranked third by nine participants.

Surprisingly, most of the participants (eight) ranked Oshiwambo, Afrikaans and German as the least important, in that order. Considering the many domains and uses of the Oshiwambo language as the first language in the Oshana region, it was a reasonable expectation of the researcher that Oshiwambo would be regarded as the most important. The fact that Portuguese was ranked in the top three can be associated with the Namibia-Angola border relations where there are many domains requiring the use of either Oshiwambo or Portuguese.

The fact that Afrikaans and German were ranked as least important was probably to be expected, as these were seldom used languages in the Oshana region. The fact that both German and Afrikaans were related to the colonial history of Namibia might also have contributed to the poor ranking. French being ranked as second was the biggest surprise as it was completely foreign in the Oshana region. Its international

status might have been a factor, as participants might have related it to employment and foreign relations opportunities.

4.2.2.2. Medium of instruction to be used in ESL teaching

The preceding subsection investigated what the participants perceived as the most important language to teach learners. This subsection explored the language(s) used as media of instruction in ESL classrooms. Participants were asked to state the language in which they felt ESL should be taught. The question was multiple-choice and it included English, Afrikaans, Oshiwambo and code-switching. As in the question on language importance (see § 4.2.2.1.), eight participants felt that ESL should be taught through the medium of English only, while three considered code-switching as an effective approach to teaching ESL.

The participants were further asked to elaborate on their responses in an open-ended question. The responses gave rise to four major themes: the significance of English/difficulty of teaching ESL through another language, language policy, socio-economic and code-switching. Table 3 presents these three themes with verbatim quotations from the participants' responses.

Table 3: Languages in which ESL should be taught

Theme	Verbatim Quotes
Significance of English / difficulty of teaching ESL through another medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“I think no one can teach a language through the medium of another language. I cannot teach Oshikwanyama. Why should I then teach English in Oshikwanyama?”</i> - <i>“Furthermore, the basic competencies will never be met, like if I want learners to be able to fluently express themselves in English whereas I teach it in Oshikwanyama. I think here the opposite is applicable.”</i> - <i>“Because it will help our learners to stipulate and be fluently in it”(sic)</i> - <i>“English because all other subject are written in English and it will be easier to understand them.”</i> - <i>“Because we are training these learners to become fluent speakers and writers of English as a Second Language that means it should be taught in English rather than other languages which are not even common and not offered at higher institutions.”</i> - <i>“It is the only way because throughout their school life English is the only language that they will come across in most books. It is for that matter the official language, in some schools English should be the be the medium of instruction as from the early grades because our learners in rural areas have great difficulties in spelling and grammar, they cannot even express themselves in the simplest way.”</i>
Language policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“Why our learners are struggling with English is because as from grade 1 – 4 Oshindonga is the medium of instruction they only come to use English as from grade 5 which is too late.” “It should be taught in English to help both teachers and learners to communicate and write nicely.”</i>
Socio-economic reasons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“Understanding and able to give reasons in different activities for communication through the world English the official language used.”</i> - <i>“Should be English because it is the one used in most of the SADC countries as well as in other European country for trade and economic development and emancipation.”</i>
Code switching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“There are times that a teacher may need to explain some issues in the language that learners understand better. This does not mean everytime but only when it is required.”</i> - <i>“For learners to be able to understand the language they will need to get meanings in context from the world is used. If something is not clear a demonstration must be used to give clarity.”</i> - <i>“Because the problem is, at rural areas, combination of languages to be used it will be better for the learners to understand fully, when they compare two languages e.g. English and Oshindonga for instance. Only because of their poor background and on the other hand both are languages taught in schools, as curriculum offered.”</i>

The researcher further investigated the participants' perceptions towards the use of a medium other than English in ESL teaching. Table 2 above shows participants' strong arguments against the use of a medium of instruction other than English in ESL teaching.

Worth noting was the blaming by participants of the lower primary teachers for the poor language proficiency of Grade 10 learners (see last quote in the first theme in Table 3). The lower primary curriculum allows teachers to teach learners through a mother tongue medium. The status of the English language as an official language might have given it a high prestige, hence the emergence of a theme on language policy.

While most participants wanted ESL to be taught through English, a few considered code-switching as an option. One of the arguments as presented in Table 3 above is a lack of understanding by learners of what is being taught. Because learners have difficulty understanding the English language, proponents of code-switching feel that, by using code-switching in ESL classrooms, learners will stand a better chance of learning if they were taught in a language they understand, and thereby enhance their comprehension in ESL.

4.2.2.3. Teachers' perceptions of learners' ability to learn the English language

In this subsection, the participants' confidence in their learners' ability to learn the English language was studied. In an open-ended question, participants were asked to explain whether they felt that their learners would ever be fluent speakers and writers

of the English language or not. In Table 4, responses are categorized as either “no” or “yes” with the participants’ responses quoted verbatim in the column on the right.

Table 4: Teachers’ perceptions of learners’ ability to learn English

Theme	Verbatim responses
No, but there is hope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“No, I don’t think so, because the environment in which they are does not force or encourage them to practice speaking nor writing in English. But on the other hand if they start early they might be good speakers and writers but not fluent enough.”</i> - <i>“Undoubtedly, I don’t think so. Their level of English is quite a challenge to them although some will advance their English with studies they will improve eventually.”</i> - <i>“No because the assistance they get is low, only at school no different media e.g. tv, magazines. Some are lazy and shy, no enough resource even at schools”</i>
Yes, but...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“Yes, if they only communicate in English in school premises or when they consult offices outside. If they adhered to spelling of words. If they recognise that English is the medium of instruction used everywhere nationally, continentally and globally. Main thing, if teachers (English teachers) only use/speak English language from 8h00– 2h00.”</i> - <i>“Yes, if there is commitment from all stakeholders in education and the interest with encouragement for learners to learn ESL.”</i> - <i>“Yes, as long as English teachers and the whole school work together to make sure that they help the learners in whatever way that they can to help these learners become fluent speakers and writers of English language.”</i> - <i>“Yes learners need to start with English at lower grade (gr 0) so they can learn while they are young. The ESL teachers should be trained and properly selected so that learners are helped because a person cannot give what he/she does not have.”</i> - <i>“Yes, I hope and believe that the child’s mind can be set and moulded at early age and only then can we improve the fluency in English but if it is only at grade 4 while</i>

	<p><i>the child is grown up, we still have the same problems we have currently.”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“Yes if the provision of adequate teaching and learning are supplied, I think they will be fluent and proficiency will be good to learners in rular schools.”</i> - <i>“Yes, with the necessary support, materials, positive minds and motivation, they can, of course, be fluent in both speaking and writing. In addition, if learners are constantly exposed to the use of English and are rewarded for positive output, this will also promote fluency.”</i>
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Two participants did not respond to this question; three participants felt that learners would not become fluent, but with some changes and interventions there would be hope. Five of the participants who made up the majority of responses had confidence that their learners would become fluent speakers and writers of the English language.

4.2.2.4. Methods used to motivate learners to learn ESL

Question nine of the questionnaire studied the motivation strategies used by the participants to motivate learners to learn ESL. The responses were classified in five categories: feedback/praise and criticism, self-correction, a lot of reading, cooperative teaching/learning styles and practical use of the English language. These themes emerged from the responses of the participants (see Table 5).

Table 5: Motivation strategies

Motivation strategy	Verbatim responses
Feedback / praise and criticism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“By giving feedback that stresses correct spelling correct pronunciation and overall good use of the language.”</i> - <i>“I also praise positive output through applause and positively discourage negative / poor output.”</i> - <i>“I give them reward for reading and sharing the story they have read and also encourage storytelling and writing their own diary.”</i> -

Self-correction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“Mostly since I am not an Oshiwambo speaking person I always encourage a conversation where they will be able to respond in English, and I don’t always correct their mistakes. I tell them only that they did a mistake and allow them to seek for a correct word or grammatical usage themselves.”</i>
A lot of reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“Through reading different medias like newspapers, magazines, borrow books from the library, established reading corner, although learners at deep remote areas destroyed everything (books disappeared) – using dictionaries and of down meanings of words, do debating, have debating club at school, drama society too. But still learners show lack of vocabulary. The way forward: continue to speak, read many English books and others for the sake of improvement.”</i>
Cooperative teaching / learning styles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“Yes, make corner reading with them and sum-up the main points, writing long and short pieces, through Listening using radio, speaking or debate”</i>
Practical use of English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“I persuade them to read and also to speak English in and outside the class.”</i> - <i>“By encouraging them to use/speak English around the school and in class and even at home. By telling them not to laugh at others when they make mistakes but rather correct the person. By also asking them the difficulties that they face in English and correcting them.”</i> - <i>“I encourage them to speak English at school, bring them to the library and have a story corner with them. I sometimes bring story books and encourage them to read and come give a review orally. Communication is strictly done in English and advise them not to laugh at each other we all learn from mistakes.”</i> - <i>“By explaining to them the importance of English, encouraging them to learn new languages.”</i> - <i>“By motivating them to read, but reading materials are scarce, the library at school is just a small room and doesn’t have materials. I also tell them to listen to national radio often as there are no TVs at their houses.”</i> - <i>“By telling them the advantages of English as a subject as well as giving them ample time to read story books and other sources of information available around them.”</i>

Feedback/praise and criticism appear to be the most commonly used strategies among the participants, as four participants out of eleven claimed to use these. This could be because it is easy to use or perhaps because it is the most widely used strategy. Showing learners the significance of the English language is considered by some to be an effective motivation strategy. Participants felt that whereas the cooperative teaching/learning strategy gave learners a sense of ownership and belonging, it could also instil intrinsic motivation in learners. The researcher's interest in studying motivation strategies was to determine whether the lack of use of motivation strategies related to constraints encountered by teachers in teaching ESL.

4.2.3. Support provided to JSC teachers of ESL

Section 4.2.2 investigated the perceptions of the teaching ESL in rural areas. This section refers to Section C, questions 10 to 18 of the questionnaire. The main purpose of this section was to respond to research question two:

What kind of support do teachers in rural schools receive from the Ministry of Education, the Oshana Education Regional Office and other educational stakeholders?

The section also contains suggestions from participants of how the status quo concerning support to ESL teachers could be improved. The questions posed were mainly open-ended to allow respondents to provide detailed responses.

4.2.3.1. Support from the Subject Advisors

The respondents were asked to give information on the last ESL workshop that they had attended. All the respondents reported that there had been a workshop on

teaching literature, and it was in May 2011, a month before data collection. Literature was a new component in the JSC curriculum. The fact that participants reported that there had been a recent workshop on literature is an indication that the Ministry of Education, through the ESL Subject Advisors, does support teachers, especially when there are new programmes.

There were two ESL Subject Advisors for the Oshana region. All (11) of the respondents affirmed that they knew at least one of the ESL Subject Advisors whom they saw at least once a year at a workshop. When investigating the role of the Subject Advisors, the questionnaire asked the participants to state how the Subject Advisor assisted them in improving the teaching of ESL at their schools. The question was open-ended.

The majority of the participants (six) stated that they received assistance from the Subject Advisors through workshops, while four participants claimed that they either did not receive enough assistance or did not receive any assistance at all. Four of the participants lamented that the services of the Subject Advisors were only limited to workshops and that they were never visited at their schools. One participant chose not to respond to this question.

Table 6: Support from the ESL Subject Advisors

Theme	Verbatim responses
Assistance is provided through workshops only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="679 1720 1409 1787">- <i>“By providing us with language materials and conducting workshops for ESL teachers.”</i> <li data-bbox="679 1794 1409 1895">- <i>“through workshops that he used to do it once per term or per year which is not enough especially to new [teachers] on the system.”</i> <li data-bbox="679 1901 1409 1968">- <i>“By conducting workshop on various aspects of English language teaching”</i> <li data-bbox="679 1975 1409 2036">- <i>“He conducts workshops where we gain skills and knowledge and inform us on the changes in English teaching or teaching</i>

	<p><i>of ESL.”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“Not often but he does share the information when there is a workshop.”</i>
The Subject Advisor is not very helpful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“The Subject Advisor does not help us ESL teachers, they are either centred at their duty stations, they don’t visit schools to acquaint themselves with the problems the teachers have out there.”</i> - <i>“Not much is being done by the Subject Advisor apart from conducting workshops. That is the only time I see them.”</i> - <i>“Rarely that we get assistance on how to teach and improve the teaching of ESL. Materials are lacking so is guidance.”</i> - <i>“Not so much, may be next time, I hope.”</i>

Based on responses from the participants reported in Table 6, it seems that Subject Advisors did not visit schools and were, therefore, not entirely familiar with what was happening at the schools. Subject Advisors were based at the Ongwediva Teachers’ Resource Centre (OTRC) which is approximately 10 kilometres from the closest school and 35 kilometres from the furthest school. This relatively long distance might have made Subject Advisors inaccessible to participants at crucial moments, as participants did not always have transport and time to visit the office of the Subject Advisors and vice versa.

4.2.3.2. Support from the Heads of Language Departments

Three of the participants themselves were Heads of (language) Departments (HODs) while two participants did not have an HOD for languages at their school. They could thus not provide data on the support that teachers received from HODs. However, four of the respondents reported that they received assistance from their HOD.

Only one participant claimed that she did not receive assistance from her HOD. From the responses of the five participants that maintained that they received assistance

from their HODs three major aspects emerged: mentoring, the use of the syllabus and motivation. Table 7 presents these themes with verbatim responses from the participants.

Table 7: Support from the Head of Language Department

Theme	Verbatim responses
Mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“By identifying areas where I need assistance. I am always given a feedback.”</i> - <i>“We plan together, look for or help each other with relevant materials.”</i>
How to use the JSC syllabus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“How to assess effectively throughout the year, how to design activities that are in line with the syllabus competencies and techniques on coaching the learners especially grade 10 towards end of year examinations.”</i>
Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“Class visits with constructive feedback on what to improve, monitoring of class and target setting.”</i> - <i>“She does encourage on how to go about learners who can’t communicate. Even though she can’t do a lot because she is not an English teacher but Oshindonga.”</i>

The three themes in table 7 complement each other in being the most essential for effective support and guidance to teachers. When materials and teaching aids are lacking, constraints in the use of materials might arise. It is also possible that a novice teacher might encounter constraints in using the syllabus.

4.2.3.3. Other support from the Oshana Education Directorate

A question in the questionnaire was designed to investigate the nature of assistance that participants received from the Ministry of Education or the Directorate of Education in the Oshana region. Seven participants stated that the Ministry of Education or the Oshana Education Directorate provided them with sufficient

support through the supply of materials and teaching aids and the Subject Advisor, while four participants felt that they received poor support (see Table 8).

Table 8: Support from the Ministry of Education / Oshana Education Directorate

Theme	Verbatim responses
Supply of materials and teaching aids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“The Ministry is constantly trying to provide up to date textbooks, stationeries and advisory services.”</i> - <i>“Teaching and learning materials e.g. books.”</i> - <i>“Yes I do, they normally provide textbooks for the grade I teach, latest syllabus and scheme of work, and documents on improving continuous assessment mark for learners.”</i> - <i>“The ministry sends out some textbooks which is a true great effort for our learners to each have a textbook.”</i> - <i>Sending of books even though there are not enough.”</i>
Poor support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Workshops I attended, but not enough. Perhaps what I can say there is an ignorance towards this subject compared to Oshindonga first language, which I am currently teaching too.”</i>

According to Table 8, support from the Ministry of Education/Oshana Education Directorate was in the form of supply of teaching and learning materials. The participants considered the provision of textbooks as support from the Ministry. However, the participants that were unhappy with the support from the Ministry felt that other subjects, such as Oshindonga First Language, were receiving better support.

4.2.3.4. Support from other stakeholders

The other key stakeholders in education are parents and guardians, as well as other community members around the schools. Section C, question 17 of the questionnaire investigated the role of parents and community members as key stakeholders in the teaching of ESL in their communities.

In an open-ended question, participants were asked to comment on the role of parents and community members in the teaching of ESL at their schools (see question 17, Appendix A). There was a general consensus among all eleven participants that parents and community members gave minimal support to JSC ESL teachers. The respondents' verbatim responses reflect this theme: little or no support (see Table 9).

Table 9: Support from parents and community to ESL teaching

Theme	Verbatim responses
Little or no support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“Not real, but they support the school’s initiative of the English policy, whereby learners are compelled to speak English within the school.”- Learners are fined N\$1 every time they speak a language that is not English.</i> - <i>“Few of the parents buy newspaper but the majority of them they did nothing because some do not know how to read even, not provide learning sources for them.”</i> - <i>“They do not do anything, they are reluctant to participate in activities that aim to improve English e.g. readathon.”</i> - <i>“They do not help at all. Maybe is a lack of knowledge of the subject or maybe is due to lack of reading and writing skills in English.”</i> - <i>“Nothing”</i> - <i>“Not really sure about this but during parents meeting we normally encourage them to buy dictionary for their learners to improve the learners vocabulary.”</i> - <i>“This is another major role that parents are supposed</i>

	<p><i>to do but in this case most parents in rural areas cannot speak English, evidently most learners live with the elderly and only few people are exposed to the language.”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“Lack of parental and community members involvement. It seems the community around not well understood what really education is because learners absent too much as well.”</i> - <i>“They don’t play a role”</i> - <i>“Not so much, because there do not encourage their learners to learn English as a language, but encourages them to use their mother tongue as far as possible.”</i>
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The evidence as presented in Table 9 reveals that the participants felt that parents and communities did not participate much in the teaching of ESL in their communities. This could probably be attributed to the poor literacy levels of parents and community members at large. Very few parents could speak, read and write English (see second quote in Table 9). According to the participants, parents did not buy newspapers for their children to read, which triangulates with a response by one participant who said that parents and community members lacked reading and writing skills themselves.

4.2.3.5. Suggestions on how the teaching of ESL in rural areas can be improved

Participants were given an opportunity to say what they felt should be done to improve the teaching of ESL in rural areas. Five major themes emerged from the analysis of the responses: firstly, contributions by the Ministry, parents, schools and teachers; secondly, provision of infrastructure, such as library facilities; thirdly, motivational speeches by public figures; fourthly, the provision of teaching and learning materials; and lastly, teaching activities. In Table 10, the major themes are presented as ranked in order of importance.

Table 10: Participants' views on how the teaching of ESL in rural areas can be improved

Theme	Verbatim responses
Contributions of the Ministry, parents, schools and teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Content subject teachers to teach their subject in the language of the textbooks.</i> - <i>[school] announcements to be done in English.</i> - <i>English teachers to receive awards, not for 100 percent achievement, but 50 percent.</i> - <i>“Introduce ESL at lower primary level”</i> - <i>“Implement English language in schools as a medium of instructions in all grades.”</i> - <i>“Improve in-service training in English language and train more teachers especially at lower primary schools.”</i> - <i>“Educate parents through parent programmes on the importance of English as a language and how they can integrate and be involved.”</i> - <i>“Most schools should be allocated with 2 or more teachers who cannot speak the vernacular. Facilities such as TV, videos must be made available to teachers and learners. English competitions such as spelling and debates should include aspects of their background s. There could be training for teachers in rural schools on how to improve teaching ESL because it is quite challenging for us. Teachers could...”</i> - <i>“The use of English as medium of instruction from pre-primary through to grade 12.”</i> - <i>“I think the lower and upper primary teachers should teach the basics of English and competencies at large. I also think learners should be introduced to English as early as possible to help them communicate with one another.”</i>
Infrastructure / facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“Libraries to be established, well equiped and functional.</i> - <i>“Provide adequate facilities and equipments such as computers, and build bigger libraries, and provide enough books and give teacher opportunities to further their field of specialisations.”</i> - <i>“Make the materials available at school, although we have a photocopy machine in most cases no papers as most learners pay their school fund towards the end of the year or not pay at all for the whole year. The school rely on that fund to buy papers.”</i>
Motivational speeches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Motivation Session twice per term by teachers and learners from town or different schools and also from the circuit inspector.”</i>
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“Enough sources (learning materials)”</i>
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Debate to be taken serious.</i> - <i>Dramas and plays to be staged in English.</i>

Whilst the first four themes in Table 10 were valid suggestions that could be realised through external interventions, the fifth theme depends upon the teacher and

deliberate teaching strategies. In the first theme, there is an outcry for interventions regarding the English language proficiency of both teachers and members of communities. Another notable response from the participants is the participants' call for teachers of the lower primary phase to receive in-service training. This can be interpreted to mean that the participants had some doubts about the language skills of their colleagues. The participants felt that by having English language development programmes in the community, parents would be more involved in the teaching of ESL in schools.

The provision of mini-libraries could be a good initiative, but the second theme in Table 10 suggests that the mini-libraries at the schools were poorly equipped (this will be discussed in detail in § 4.2.4.6). The outcry for a fully equipped library can be interpreted to be an outcry for materials.

The request for motivational speeches points to a question of who should organise motivational speeches. Perhaps the participants were too dependent on receiving support instead of improvising.

4.2.4. Constraints encountered in teaching ESL

This section reports findings concerning the constraints that JSC teachers encounter while teaching ESL in rural schools. This section refers to section D; questions 19 to 25 of the questionnaire (see Appendix A). The questions were mixed open-ended and closed questions. This section aimed at collecting data to answer research question one: What are the constraints that Grade 10 teachers encounter in teaching ESL in combined schools in rural areas in the Oshana region?

The questionnaire contained a section dedicated to research question one. The constraints that were explored in the questionnaire ranged from teaching experience of the participants to the provision of teaching aids and materials, as well as to challenges.

4.2.4.1. Participants' teaching experience

This question explored the number of years that the participants had spent in the teaching profession. The teaching experience of the participants ranged from less than one year to more than 17 years. Only one of the participants had spent less than a year in the teaching profession. Three participants had spent 2 to 6 years; another three had spent 7 to 11 years in the teaching profession. A total of four participants comprised the most experienced participants, with two having served 16 years, and the other two having served more than 17 years of teaching.

A lack of teaching experience could be a possible cause for many constraints such as confusion or inappropriate methodology and approaches (see § 4.2.4.). It is interesting to note that the participants were experienced teachers. However, it is still not clear whether this experience was in teaching ESL or in teaching other subjects. This is the subject of the following subsection.

4.2.4.2. Participants' experience in teaching ESL at the Grade 10 level

While ten participants had spent two or more years in the teaching profession, the experience in teaching ESL at JSC level was slightly lower. Five of the participants had been in the teaching profession longer than they had taught ESL at JSC level. Only one participant had more than 17 years of experience in teaching ESL at JSC

level. Another participant had 9 years of JSC ESL teaching experience, while the majority (seven) had 3 years' experience. Only two participants had less than a year of teaching experience at Grade 10 level. Many (five) of the participants spent the larger part of their teaching years teaching other subjects, such as Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga, as opposed to teaching English. Participants thus had fewer years of experience in teaching JSC ESL than in other subjects (see Table 11 below).

Table 11: Teaching experience of participants

Years of teaching experience	Number of teachers	Years of teaching ESL at JSC level
1 year -	1	2
2 – 6 years	3	7
7 – 11 years	3	1
12 – 16 years	2	0
17 years +	2	1

Teachers' lack of experience in JSC ESL teaching and their own language proficiency that might have rusted and decayed due to a lack of interaction in the English language might be contributing factors to numerous constraints. Table 11 above, shows the discrepancy between the teaching experience of the participants in teaching ESL and other subjects.

4.2.4.3. The number of learners teachers taught ESL

Question 21 of the questionnaire looked into the teacher-learner ratio. Studies (i.e. Nyathi, 2001 & 1999) have found that teacher-learner ratio could hamper effective teaching. Question 21 was designed to investigate whether the teacher-learner ratio

was a constraint to JSC ESL teaching in rural areas. The collected data revealed that five of the participants offered ESL lessons to between 30 and 60 learners in total, three had to between 90 and 120 ESL learners, while two taught a total of more than 120 ESL learners.

Table 12: Teacher – learner ratio

Total number of learners	Number of teachers
30 – 60	5
60 – 90	1
90 – 120	3
120 +	2

As Table 12 shows, only one participant had between 60 and 90 ESL learners in total. The respondents did not have over-crowded ESL classrooms as all class sizes were well below the required ratio of 40 learners per class.

Respondents, however, expressed dissatisfaction with working hours. Teachers in the north stayed on school premises from eight o'clock in the morning until three or four o'clock in the afternoon, unlike their counterparts in urban areas who stay on school premises until one or two o'clock only.

One problem is that we have study after school until four o'clock. We don't have time for banks and library. (Verbatim comment by one of the participants)

Schools in urban areas do not have after-school study programmes and teachers are released at half past one in the afternoon. Teachers in rural areas, conversely, seemed to have little chance of accessing a library as most libraries closed at five o'clock in the afternoon.

4.2.4.4. Materials used in JSC ESL teaching

In addition to teaching experience, constraints were explored from a teaching aids and materials perspective. Three of the participants did not use audio and visual materials in their classes and five participants used materials ‘other’ than audio, visual and reading. Data were collected in question 22 of the questionnaire (see Appendix A). The collected data were presented in a table containing three categories: audio, visual, and reading (see Table 13). The participants were required to group the materials that they used into these three categories. Provision was made for materials that the participants felt did not fit into any of the three categories. These were categorized as labelled “other”.

Table 13: Materials used by participants in ESL teaching

Audio	Visual	Reading
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Story telling</i> - <i>DVD</i> - <i>Radio, cassette CD</i> - <i>Cell phones</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>English handbook and study guide</i> - <i>Hard copies of targeted topics</i> - <i>Dictionaries</i> - <i>Scrabble</i> - <i>Pictures in speaking debate or describe the picture</i> - <i>flashcards</i> - <i>Flip charts</i> - <i>Posters, newspapers</i> - <i>Pictures</i> - <i>Photocopy machine</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Grammar Buster, various novels, newspapers and leaflets</i> - <i>English in Context for Grade 10</i> - <i>Books from the library, magazines</i> - <i>Novel – The Other Presence</i> - <i>Short stories – reading for enjoyment</i> - <i>Poetry – Shower of Voices</i> - <i>Magazines, Literature textbooks.</i> - <i>Textbooks, story books, dictionaries</i> - <i>Calabash (as short stories book)</i> - <i>Growing up with poetry (poetry book)</i> - <i>Boestan and Lena (drama book), newspapers</i> - <i>“Newspapers, magazine, different textbooks, Namcol materials”</i> - <i>“Textbooks, newspapers and magazines”</i>

When analysing question 22 of the questionnaire (see Appendix A), the researcher found that the participants experienced some difficulty in categorizing visual and

reading materials, some reading materials could also be used as visual. The audio section was also problematic to the participants as most of them did not use audio materials because of either a lack of electricity or unavailability of audio materials. One participant indicated in the “other” section that they used DVD and CD audio materials at their school, when they did not have electricity at the school. After further probing in the interview, it appeared that the participant did not use DVD materials at the school, while CD materials were used on batteries for examinations only. Audio devices, such as DVD and CD players, were expensive and required electricity, CDs and DVDs.

Table 14: Other materials used in ESL classrooms

Theme	Other materials
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The learners’ textbook</i> - <i>Newspapers, library books</i> - <i>English for All for Namibia as prescribed book</i> - <i>English in Context as references</i> - <i>On target, kick off (references)</i>
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Role playing, demonstrations</i> - <i>Debating and English club</i> - <i>For grammar usage</i>

Some of the participants tended to classify as “other material”, every material that they were not sure how to categorise, whereas some participants included activities as “other material”. This can be interpreted as evidence of limited English language skills of the participants; hence the poor understanding of the category of materials. Based on the responses from participants, responses to question 22 were analysed and grouped using the content analysis techniques (see Table 14 above).

4.2.4.5. Constraints in using the materials in the teaching of ESL

If the materials presented in § 4.2.4.4 were being used by the participants in their ESL classrooms, it was interesting to establish if the participants experienced any problems with the materials. Participants were given a list of possible problems with the usage of materials, from which they had to tick the appropriate option. The question was complemented by an open-ended question to enable the participants to add any other problems that were not included in the closed question. The majority (five) of the participants felt that the materials were too difficult; three felt that the materials were not relevant to learners, while two felt that the materials were old and outdated. Only one felt that the materials did not cover the syllabus content. Figure 4 below presents the participants' perception of available materials.

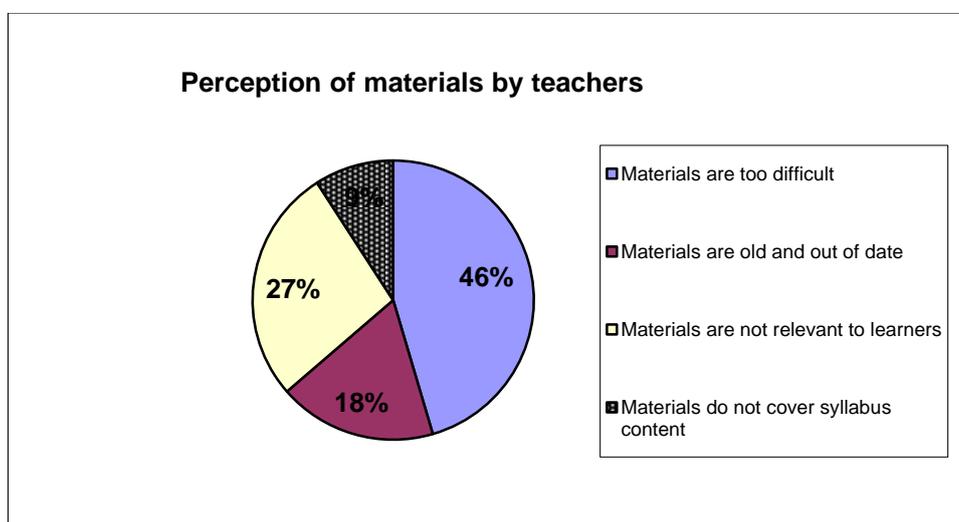


Figure 4: Perception of ESL materials by teachers

In addition to the above-mentioned problems, the participants also noted the following problems in using the teaching materials. These problems were grouped into four themes by means of content analysis. These were:

- a lack of exposure to reading materials,
- the unavailability of reading materials,
- poor motivation,
- and the inadaptability of materials.

The responses of the participants are presented verbatim in italics in Table 15. The themes emerged from the participants' responses and, therefore, encompass only the perceptions of participants (see Table 15).

Table 15: Problems encountered by participants in using materials

Theme	Verbatim responses
Lack of exposure to reading materials	<i>“Learners are not always familiar with the content of the materials, i.e. they are not fully exposed.”</i>
Unavailability of reading materials	<i>“These materials are few and cannot cater for all learners, they have to share in groups.” “Means no relevant prescribed English books, nothing!”</i>
Poor motivation	<i>“Learners do not have that desire to read especially magazines & they say the language used is difficult they can't understand it.”</i>
Inadaptability of materials	<i>“Some of the materials contain information that does not suit the environment learners live in because of its remoteness. It sometimes get difficult for the teacher to prepare simplified material because of the work load.”</i>

The motivation strategies used by participants will be explored later in this section, while the lack of exposure and provisions of reading materials and library facilities are the subject of the following subsection.

4.2.4.6. Library facilities

Another area of interest was the participants' access to libraries. Libraries are resource centres that provide both reading environments and materials. The participants were asked in question 24 of the questionnaire to indicate whether they had access to library facilities or not. This was followed by two other questions which explored the frequency of library visits by the participants, and the distance the participants had to cover to get to a library. As Figure 5 illustrates, at least ten of the respondent had access to library facilities; only one participant did not have access to library facilities.

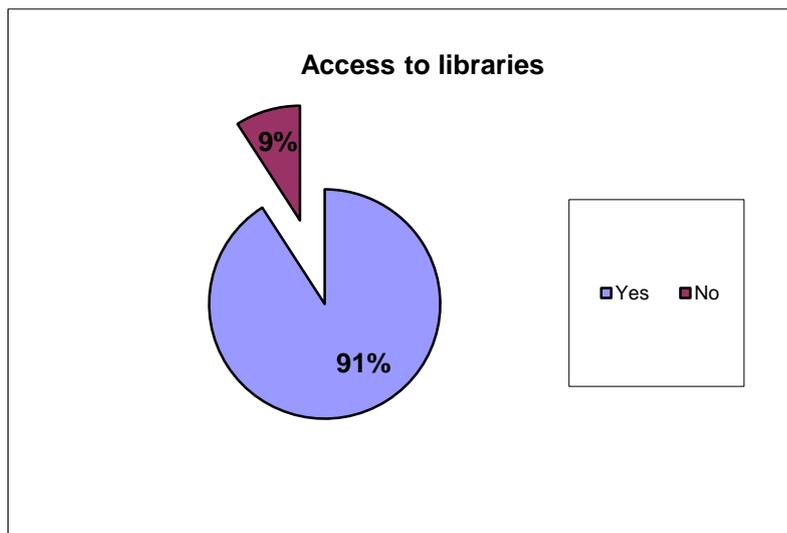


Figure 5: Access to libraries

Seven of the respondents visited libraries 2 – 3 times a week; three visited the library only once a term/year, while one participant visited the library 4 – 5 times a week. It seemed as if libraries were accessible to the participants. However, when data from questions 24.1 (If yes, how often do you have access to library facilities?) and 24.2

(If *yes*, how far is the library from the school?) of the questionnaire were triangulated, it appeared that the participants did not have access to full libraries.

Figure 5 shows that ten of the respondents who had access to library facilities had libraries on their school premises. However, when the researcher visited these school libraries, it became clear that none of the schools had a proper library. The libraries referred to by the participants were mere store-rooms with old books and prescribed materials that were no longer in use. It was usually the institutional workers, such as cleaners, who looked after the mini-libraries although teachers monitored the management of the mini-libraries. Learners were not allowed to enter these mini-libraries, although they could borrow books. Newspapers and magazines were absent from the mini-libraries. Due to the schools' distance from towns and tarred roads, daily newspapers and magazines did not reach the schools.

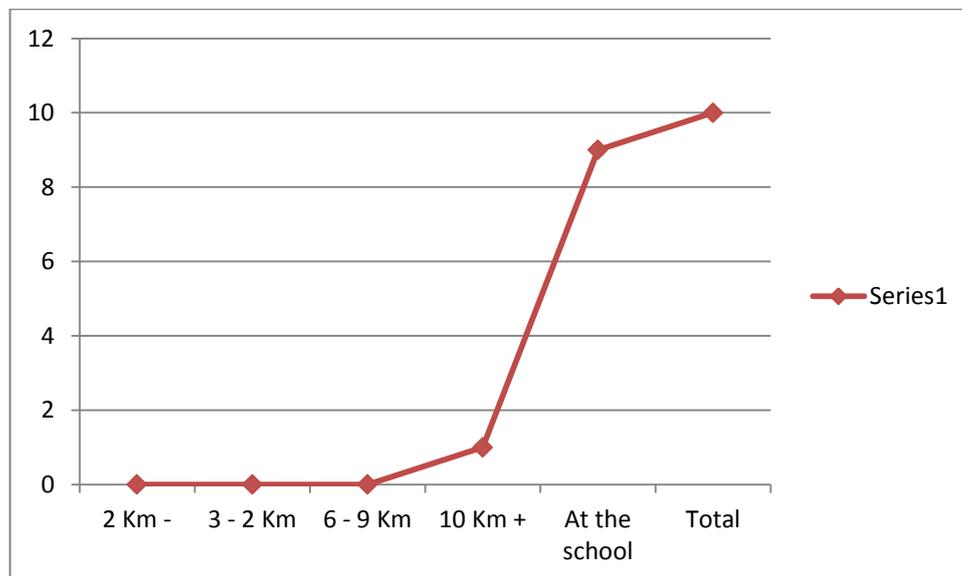


Figure 6: Distance to nearest library

Figure 6 shows the distance participants had to cover to reach a library. Participants sometimes had to travel ten kilometres or more to access the closest library. This is the same distance learners had to cover to access a full library.

Distance can be considered to be a limitation to participants' library access considering that not all them had cars. When the distance from libraries is combined with the working hours of teachers in rural areas (see § 4.2.4.3), it is clear that teachers' access to libraries is constrained.

4.2.4.7. Summary of JSC teachers' challenges in ESL teaching

While subsections 4.2.4.1 to 4.2.4.7 dealt with what previous researchers (i.e. Nyathi, 2001 and Ambrowatti, 2009, see § 2.2) found to be constraints, this sub-section allowed participants to mention all the challenges that they themselves experienced in teaching ESL at the schools.

Participants were asked to state and list what they considered to be preventing them from teaching effectively. The question was open-ended to allow participants to give as much information as possible. The responses from the participants were grouped into themes using content analysis techniques. The responses are quoted verbatim in Table 16.

Five major themes emerged from the responses. The most prominent theme had to do with learners experiencing difficulty learning the English language because of limited exposure to English and poor motivation. Most rural communities in the Oshana region are monolingual, with Oshiwambo being the only language used. Learners are not exposed to English outside the school. Since almost everyone is

conversant in Oshiwambo, normal daily business is conducted in Oshiwambo. Learners do not see the need to learn English, hence their poor motivation.

Table 16: Constraints to ESL teaching

Theme	Verbatim quotes
Learners having difficulty leaning English / limited exposure / motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“Rural school learners lack communication skills coupled with misconception and missperling”</i> - <i>“Transferring of learners from grade to grade even they did not met the requirements.”</i> - <i>“Lack of proficiency and poor communication / skills especially in speaking.”</i> - <i>“poor writing skills (spelling and grammar in general).”</i> - <i>“Learners in rural combined schools do not express themselves that much in English, they tend to be too queite when it comes to speaking, they are afraid to make mistakes in front of the class so they would rather be quite and the teacher have to elicit answers from them.”</i> - <i>Speaking is also a biggest challenge as learners cannot express themselves in English as they are used to the mother tongue. Pronunciation of words, learners do not know how to pronounce words in English.”</i> - <i>“Communicative activities as well as spelling during writing activities. Learners are not willing to try to speak English.”</i> - <i>“Lack of language understanding.”</i> - <i>“Learners’ background, very poor. Learners do not not access too many things e.g. TV etc.”</i> - <i>“Learners finding it difficult to answer questions in English as they don’t understand the questions.”</i> - <i>“Lack of exposure”</i>
Teacher training/skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“Due to the poor vocabularies and knowledge we gained, is not granted to teach grade 10 because the basic [training/education?] We had at that time is low.”</i> - <i>“Making learners understand the rules of grammar.”</i>
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Another thing our learners are not interesting in reading most of the time are at cuca-chops, no magazines or tv to help them, don’t like to speak English.”</i> - <i>“Most learners are not fully developed in reading skills. They do not have a culture of reading. They do not like to use during and after lessons.</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“Reading, some learners can read but in most cases not all of them.</i> - <i>“Reading with understanding is lacking.”</i>
Below learner level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“Learners come to grade 10 without knowing what they were suppose to know at primary and upper primary phases. E.g. not knowing the basics of English, reading, writing and even listening.”</i>

4.3. Analysis and interpretation of data from interviews with teachers

Another key instrument used to collect data was semi-structured interviews. The researcher intended to conduct interviews with all eleven teacher participants and one Subject Advisor, but only eight participants were available for interviews. Two participants declined to take part in the interviews, while one participant had to travel on a tour with Grade 9 learners. Therefore, a total of eight teachers and one Subject Advisor participated in the interviews. This section presents the data collected in the interviews.

An interview guide was used to standardise interviews, although the researcher added one or two different questions in some interviews when the situation or nature of responses from the interviewee required further probing. Interview questions covered all the research questions of the study, and included some re-phrased questions from the questionnaires. This was done to verify responses to questionnaire items and to allow respondents to elaborate on their responses in the questionnaire.

The interviews were recorded with a digital voice recorder with the permission of the participants. Data from the interviews were transcribed and are presented question by question with selected verbatim quotations from the responses.

The content analysis method was used to analyse the data. Data from the interviews with teachers were triangulated with data from the interview with the Subject Advisor.

Since interviews were a follow-up on responses to questionnaires, the interview guide contained questions built on the participants' responses to questionnaire questions. As with the questionnaires, the interview guide consisted of four sections designed according to the research questions: biographical data; constraints encountered by JSC ESL teachers; ESL teacher support and perceptions of the teaching of ESL in rural schools.

4.3.1. Biographical data of participants

The purpose of collected biographical data was to provide a detailed picture of the characteristics and nature of the participants, their backgrounds and environments. The gender, age, and academic qualifications of the teachers that participated in the study were presented in § 4.2.1. "The Subject Advisor" refers to the Subject Advisor that participated in this study. § 4.3.2 will look in detail at the constraints on access to resources.

4.3.2. Constraints on access to resources

The participants' access to resources was probed further, based on their responses in the questionnaires. Resources, such as the internet, photocopy facilities and libraries, were the prime focus of this section.

Only one of the respondents had access to internet facilities at the school. Although there were internet facilities at schools C, G, F and D, participants claimed that these

facilities were only accessible either in the Head of Department or Principal's office. Only four participants had internet access at home, while three accessed internet from internet cafés. The participants attributed the lack of internet access to either the lack of access to electricity facilities at their homes, the cost of wireless internet or the lack of adequate cell phone network coverage in their areas. The participants who accessed internet were the younger participants. Compared to the younger participants, the older participants seemed less keen on using new technology.

Similarly, photocopy access was investigated. At least five schools had photocopy machines on the school premises. Three other schools made special arrangements for photocopying. Another school made photocopies at its cluster centre, while the remaining two made use of either the Oshana printing shop or the Ongwediva Teachers' Resource Centre for photocopy and printing services.

Only four respondents had easy access to the photocopy machine or photocopy facilities at their schools. These were all Heads of Department. The other respondents had to go through someone else (usually the Head of Department/Principal/other teachers) to make photocopies.

4.3.3. Teaching English in a remote school

In light of the limitations with the resources mentioned in the previous subsection and the constraints raised in the data from the questionnaires, it was interesting to explore participants' views on ESL teaching in remote areas. The teaching methods used by the participants were also explored.

All eleven participants were convinced that teaching ESL in rural areas was different from teaching in urban areas. The respondents argued that the availability and access to materials and technological facilities, such as television and internet, were responsible for the difference.

- *“Yes! There is a big difference because learners in urban areas they are access to many things, for example T.V.s, they are access to use other references, compared to learners at rural areas.”* (- verbatim response by one of the participants)

Even though it is possible that there could be a difference in the teaching of ESL in rural areas from teaching in urban areas, the data from the participants were not reliable as none of the participants had taught in an urban area before.

In an open-ended question, participants were asked how they felt about ESL teaching at their school, in a rural area. The responses were analysed using content analysis techniques. Two themes emerged from the responses: lack of learner exposure to the English language and learners’ poor English language proficiency (see Table 17).

Table 17: Learners’ problems in ESL learning

Theme	Quote
Learners lack exposure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“learners they are lack of exposure because their background is very, very poor because of that lack of exposure and also the teachers, I hope some of them they are not specialise in English. That’s why all those are contributors to poor performance.”</i> - <i>“the environment also, like I indicated before there is no electricity at the school, so they [learners] are not used to watching television or any other type of programmes. All they do and see around here is what they might show. It’s not an easy thing; it’s also the understanding of the people around the school, the parents.”</i>
Poor learner English	- <i>“these learners it’s just so difficult to them</i>

language proficiency	<p><i>they just don't in most cases they just don't understand like for instance if you are talking to them it's easy for them just to say yes or no but to express their feeling in English they can't do it and even give reasons if it's in Oshiwambo they can do it but if it is English just to express themselves they can't do it."</i></p> <p>- <i>"The kids, the language level is really, really quite low. It's not easy to work with them [learners], their level is not really their grade. You have to work with them at a level of grade 7 or 6. Their level is really low."</i></p>
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The participants lamented the learners' lack of exposure to facilities, such as internet and television. The unavailability of televisions sets at schools made it impossible for teachers to expose learners to television as a visual medium. The lack of exposure co-related with the learners' poor language proficiency.

4.3.4. Role of teachers of other subjects

Apart from participants' perceptions of ESL teaching in remote schools, the role of teachers of other subjects was studied. The JSC curriculum prescribes that English be taught across the entire curriculum. The researcher investigated the extent to which the latter was being done. All the respondents affirmed that English was being taught across the curriculum at their schools because other subjects were also taught in English. The following verbatim quotes from the participants' responses encapsulate the main ideas behind the responses of the participants.

- *Yes, because other teachers, not knowing how they are doing it, they also do it [teach English].*
- *Yes, English is used to teach other subjects, but some teachers teach in the vernacular.*

The participants, however, lamented the level of commitment from their colleagues in instilling correct writing forms in learners, as they neither punished nor corrected writing/grammatical errors. One participant said:

- *Some teachers, they don't even mark a wrong spelling of the month like if a learner write 'august' as 'ogust'.*

Participants seemed to lack confidence in the English language proficiency of their colleagues. Most (six) of the respondents argued that their colleagues did not have the necessary language proficiency to assist the teaching of English across the curriculum. Two argued that most of the junior secondary phase (Grade 8 to 10) teachers had the necessary language proficiency, while the lower primary phase teachers were doing an injustice to ESL learning by the learners. The arguments of the respondents are summarised as follows:

- *Aaye, English is not at a big/good standard teachers, they are not specialise in English and some of us we were taught long, long time ago during the colonial era in other languages [Oshiwambo].*
- *Sometimes their construction of sentences if you want to say something, it gets a bit scattered a bit.*
- *Some of them speak wrong English and learners learn this wrong things (sic) as the correct English.*

It is true that some teachers were taught in mediums other than English throughout their schooling. This is consistent with the data analysed in § 4.2.1.3. It appears that many teachers, in general, had very few years of English language learning themselves and therefore had low levels of proficiency in the English language.

The last quoted sentence raises an interesting question for reflection: what are the effects of the teachers' low English language proficiency on the learners' mastery of the English language. This aspect will be considered in detail later in this chapter.

The respondents further maintained that their colleagues teaching other subjects contributed to their struggles in teaching English at the school. If teachers did not have the necessary language proficiency, English could not effectively be taught across the curriculum. It thus appears that the low English language proficiency of teachers of other subjects is also a constraint to ESL teaching in rural combined schools.

4.3.5. Biggest challenges in ESL teaching rural schools

Participants were asked to reveal what they considered to be their biggest challenges in teaching ESL in rural areas. The respondents encountered many challenges but considered materials, lack of facilities (i.e. reading) and exposure to speaking situations as the biggest challenges. Some representative responses are presented in Table 18.

Table 18: Participants' major constraints

Theme	Verbatim responses
Reading	- <i>"Huh! The biggest of them is reading. Learners have problems in reading with understanding, that's the main problem."</i>
Lack of resources	- <i>"Biggest challenges are: we don't have prescribed books. We have lack of facilities like library books, only few of them."</i>
Medium of instruction in lower grades	- <i>"Here, the biggest challenge is just that like in our case from grade 1-4 the medium of instruction is Oshindonga. They [learner] just come across English when they're going to</i>

	<i>grade 5 and actually that will be kind of difficult to them that's why they are just having that problem up to grade 10 because you can find even a grade 10 learner give him, aah! Let me say it's an essay to write but she just doesn't know which tense to use - is it past tense, future tense or present tense?"</i>
Error fossilization	- <i>"We have to correcting language forms that have been taught by teachers in preceding grades"</i>

The participants felt that reading comprehension was among the biggest challenges that they faced in teaching ESL. The problems of reading comprehension triangulate with the teachers and learners' lack of access to resources and library facilities (see § 4.2.4.6 and § 4.3.1). Learners were less likely to make an effort to travel close to 10 kilometres to access a library. The unavailability of books limited opportunities for reading practice.

Section 4.3.5 discussed teachers' low English language proficiency. The theme of error fossilization from the participants' responses presented in Table 17 relates to the theme of low English language proficiency of teachers. ESL teachers had to correct incorrect language forms that were taught to learners by their predecessors.

Probed on where they found their reading materials, participants maintained that they found reading materials from libraries, the Teachers' Resource Centre in Ongwediva, and colleagues. These materials included old newspapers and magazines.

- *Resources! Textbooks are not much of a problem, but how to design some of these materials also. We don't have electricity, you cannot make copies sometimes. So, that contributes I think, to learners not having a sufficient understanding of the language. because you might need to make copies for them for example to fill in a form, from these other areas where you need to make copies sometimes it's not accessible or it's not done on time.*

Libraries and the Teachers' Resource Centre were more than ten kilometres away from most participants (see § 4.2.4.6). The latter can be regarded as a constraint to participants' access to reading materials. Similarly, participants raised concerns over the lack of photocopy facilities at their schools.

4.3.6. Teaching Methods

The teaching methods used by the participants were also studied. Previous studies on ESL teaching constraints found teaching methods and teaching approaches as constraints (Nyathi 2001). The question "Which teaching methods do you often use in your ESL classrooms?" investigated the types of teaching methods used by the participants and how these were applied in ESL classrooms. None of the participants knew what the communicative language teaching approach was; instead they all referred to the learner-centred approach and emphasised that it was what they used in their classrooms. The responses to this question were mostly centred on activities and division of tasks among learners rather than on the method. The participants responded by saying:

- *Normally the one I use mostly is pair work whereby their working together two of them and at the end of the day they are to report on what they discussed or group work but I don't really like group work.*
- *I use group work, pair work. Mostly learner centred.*
- *I mainly use learner-centred education because learner-centred education is the one in line with the curriculum.*

Although the responses were centred only on the types of activities used in the classrooms, the researcher deduced from these activities that the participants conformed to the learner-centred teaching paradigm.

4.3.7. Points of reference for teachers

In view of the various challenges and constraints presented, it was necessary to investigate whom participants consulted or what they did in an event of confusion or misunderstanding of a syllabus component. The question was open-ended in nature and was coined as follows: What do you do when you have something you don't understand (i.e. subject or syllabus content)?

Only two of the ten schools that participated in this study had more than one JSC ESL teacher. All the others had only one. The participants who taught ESL at the same school answered that they consulted each other for assistance. Three participants claimed that they consulted the Ongwediva Teachers' Resource Centre; one participant consulted her principal for assistance, while another participant responded that she either consulted her counterparts from other schools or she "just tries to understand". Some of the responses were as follows:

- *I go to the other teachers that I know at other schools. Sometimes I just try because the other schools are far.*
- *Sometimes I consult my principal (was he an English teacher?) – I think he was. Sometimes I just try to understand. Sometimes I go to the teachers' resource centre in Ongwediva.*
- *I ask my colleague.*

The teachers who had a colleague teaching JSC ESL at their school seemed to have better support than their counterparts that were teaching JSC ESL alone. This reinforces the findings of § 4.2.4.3 and § 4.2.4.6 where the combination of learner numbers and working hours indicated a constraint to teachers' access to resource centres.

4.3.8. Support

In addition to the challenges mentioned in § 4.3.6, the respondents also seemed to experience challenges pertaining to support. In response to research question two, the nature of support that participants received from various educational stakeholders was investigated. A variety of questions was used, although open-ended questions were the most frequent (see Appendix B).

4.3.8.1. Support from Subject Advisor and parents

Participants raised complaints about poor, or lack of, support from Subject Advisors and parents. The participants also claimed that they were faced with the challenge of correcting incorrect language forms that had been taught by teachers in preceding Grades. Some of the responses were as quoted verbatim below:

- *“Other challenge is also parental involvement and community as well. What I experience so far is lack of parents to be involved or help learners. Most of them cannot come to school so that they can check their learners’ work. And then maybe the problem is English, not many of them can understand the language.”*
- *“The teachers in lower primary level are sometimes teaching wrong English things to learners, so we have to re-teach these things, which is not easy.”*

These quotes represent the general feelings of the participants as far as support from parents and colleagues was concerned. In the first quoted sentence, participants complained about the lack of parental and community involvement. The low English language proficiency and the low literacy levels of most parents in rural areas could account for the lack of parental involvement in ESL teaching and learning.

The second quote reinforces the notion of error fossilization as a constraint (see § 4.3.5) caused by teachers of other subjects. Participants had little confidence in the

English language proficiency levels of their colleagues. The participants accused the lower primary teachers of teaching incorrect language structures which become fossilized and difficult to reverse.

4.3.8.2. Support from educational management

This subsection of the interview investigated the role of immediate supervisors and the educational management hierarchy in addressing the constraints encountered by the participants. Respondents were posed questions following the leadership hierarchy in education: first the Head of Department and Principal, the Subject Advisor and then the Education Directorate (Ministry of Education).

Questioned on the awareness and actions of immediate supervisors concerning the challenges mentioned in the previous two sections, all the participants affirmed that their Heads of Department/Principals were aware of their challenges and had done something about it. Some respondents reported that their principals assisted them in availing funds for making photocopies and printing; some said their principal/HODs invited parents to meetings, while some maintained that their principals banned learners from speaking languages other than English on school premises.

Nonetheless, at one school English fell under the Science Department. The respondents claimed that because of this, more attention was paid to science subjects. The latter was the only participant to complain about the role of her immediate supervisor in addressing constraints. Below is a list of verbatim quotes forming a representation of all the responses from the respondents.

- *Yes, he is aware because sometimes he helps us even in making copies. Our school has a low budget, but he is aware.*
- *Yes, yes, he's also aware*
- *Yes, he force learners to speak English only at the school.*
- *He normally just tell me to invite the parents to come so that they can come and check their learners' work and after that they go and discuss with their kids at home.*
- *Yes, our school is quite small. Our HOD is a science teacher. They concern more on science. I do put my concern across but they are usually ignored.*

The fact that participants were satisfied with the roles of their immediate supervisors, notably their Heads of Department, supports the responses to the questionnaire (see § 4.2.3.2). Heads of Departments appeared to be providing key support to the participants. It was also positive to find that principals often prioritized English and sacrificed the schools' few resources to invest in ESL teaching and learning activities.

In addition to Heads of Departments and Principals, the contributions of the ESL Subject Advisors were studied. All the participants knew at least one of the Subject Advisors, although none of them had easy access to a Subject Advisor. The Subject Advisor had also never visited the schools of the participants. Advisory services were only rendered upon request. Responses were analysed using the content analysis method and are summarized by the following verbatim quotes:

- *Ahah! I never ever saw him coming to our school I've been teaching for over eight years now but I never saw the advisory teacher at school.*
- *Yes, I do. But they have never visited me at my school. When you go to them, they are usually busy with workshops or they are not available.*
- *He also invite us to go attend these workshops at Ongwediva teachers' resource centre and they provide us with relevant materials. They give us advice if we ask. We pose our questions to them and then they try to give us with relevant answers.*

The role of the Subject Advisors appeared to be questionable. Although some amount of support was being rendered through professional development workshops, specific cases of teaching constraints seemed not to have been addressed by the

Subject Advisors. The latter triangulates with § 4.2.3.1 where six of the participants reported that the services of the Subject Advisors were usually limited to workshops. The fact that Subject Advisors were office-bound can be considered to limit not only their availability, but also their awareness of the nature of the constraints being encountered by ESL teachers.

Finally, participants were asked about the role of the Oshana Education Directorate and the Ministry of Education in addressing the constraints. The participants affirmed that the Oshana Directorate of Education was aware of the challenges they were facing, and they felt that the directorate was assisting them in organizing workshops and providing textbooks. Nevertheless, some respondents argued that the assistance they were getting was not enough. Some of the responses were as follows:

- *The regional directorate, they normally call us to go and attend workshops sometimes, once or twice a year.*
- *They send us text books. It's not enough, but it's something.*

Participants were satisfied with the role of the Directorate of Education. The last sentence in the quote is a sign of appreciation of the directorate's efforts in spite of the few resources. When the participants' responses on the support from the Subject Advisors are triangulated with their responses on the support from the Education Directorate, the latter and the former appear to be providing the same type of support. This can be interpreted to indicate that the support from either the Subject Advisors or the Oshana Education Directorate is not clearly visible.

4.3.8.3. Support from the general community around the school

The purpose of this subsection of the interview was to triangulate responses to questions on community support towards ESL teaching posed in the questionnaires (see § 4.2.3.4). An open-ended question asked participants whether they received any support from the community around the school. The participants' perceptions of the attitudes and perceptions of the community towards ESL teaching were also studied.

The participants were convinced that the community around their school had a positive attitude towards the English language and wanted their children to learn English. However, some (two) of the respondents argued that in spite of this, community members themselves were reluctant to learn English, and instead gave more attention to their mother tongues. Using the content analysis method, two themes emerged: the English language is less significant than the mother tongue, and the poor use of English in the community.

Table 19: Community's perceptions towards the English language

Theme	Quote
English is less significant than mother tongue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>"I usually encourage learners to practice English at home. One day one learner told me: why should I speak English when it is not my mother tongue? Learners and parents really don't see English as something they should learn. They think their mother tongue is more important. But the parents want them to learn [English] which is a good thing."</i> - <i>"Aaye ah, aaye! This community maybe they don't understand what is English really but they never mind with the language. They accept the language, that's why they said that our learners, we feel proud that they are taught in English."</i>
Poor use of English in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>"Ha-ha looking at our community it could be maybe one of the influence to our learners because you hardly find anyone speaking English in our community. The parents say we must keep up teaching English but all they speak is just oshiwambo even in the school environment if you just go outside"</i>

	<p><i>there and listen to the learners communicate, it's just in oshiwambo like for instance if you are trying to communicate to learner in English she will just respond in oshiwambo, she will just respond in oshiwambo."</i></p>
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The two themes complement each other. The poor use of the English language in the community made the English language less significant than the language that was commonly used. It was clear though, that the English language enjoyed a high prestige in the communities; hence, parents advocated that their children be taught English.

However, as mentioned in § 4.2.3.4, parents were little involved in ESL teaching and learning activities. It was also mentioned that a possible reason for the non-participation of parents could be their low literacy levels. Based on this, participants were questioned on whether there were existing literacy programmes in their communities aimed at improving the literacy skills of adults in the community.

Only three participants could confirm the existence of a literacy programme in their school community. The other participants did not know for sure of the existence of any literacy programme. There was, nevertheless, a common understanding among all the participants of the positive contributions that literacy programmes would have on the teaching of ESL at their schools. The respondents felt that through literacy programmes parents could learn English and be able to help and motivate their children to learn as well.

4.3.9. Reasons why participants opted to teach English and not other subjects

In an open-ended question, participants were asked why they opted to teach English and not another subject. The aim of the question was to investigate whether the respondents taught English out of choice or because the situation did not allow other options. Table 20 presents the responses grouped into three themes: Good in English, Role model, and Only option.

Table 20: Participants' reasons for choosing to teach English

Theme	Quote
Good in English	- <i>"From Grade 7 up to Grade 12 I have always been the best in English. I always had a passion for English."</i>
Role model	- <i>"I was just motivated by this English teacher of mine who was teaching us English at Mweshipandeka. She was good at English and then just by looking at her is also where I get that picture Oh! I also want to be an English teacher like her so she is my role model."</i>
Only option	- <i>"I wasn't that good in English at school, but I liked English and I like languages. When I went to college I decided to choose it."</i> - <i>"It was the only subject I could do with Oshiwambo."</i>

All eleven respondents claimed to have had a soft spot for the English language.

One respondent was inspired by her high school English teacher; another was a high achiever in English at school, while two had a desire to become linguists.

4.3.10. Reasons why teachers in rural areas want to transfer to schools in urban areas

This subsection studied whether participants were considering the possibility of moving to schools in urban areas. An open-ended question was posed to participants

on whether they would be willing to occupy teaching posts in an urban area at the same level as they occupied at the time.

The participants were quick to point out that they would accept an opportunity to teach in an urban area. They were convinced that teaching in an urban area would ease the teaching process, since they were of the opinion that there were fewer challenges in urban areas. The reasons for the latter were grouped into three major themes: the ease of the teaching process, personal growth/improvement, and change of environment. The following table presents the themes with the relevant quotes.

Table 21: Reasons why teachers opt to teach in urban areas

Theme	Quote
Ease of teaching process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“I will definitely grab that chance with both hands because teaching English there is easy because that’s why the learners there are performing and they are now looking at us teachers in rural areas that we are not doing anything because our learners are failing. But truly speaking we are doing our best it’s only that learners here they don’t understand.”</i> - <i>“Yes I will take it because now I am become an experienced teacher. I feel I want to teach in urban areas because there are few problems there.”</i>
Personal growth/improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“Yes I would. I would really enjoy teaching. Because if I look at myself where I am now, there is a lack of knowledge in English. I want to teach in a place where you’ll be talking about something and the learners know what you are talking about, because they have access to computers and internet. Teaching here is also making my English weak. Teaching in town makes things more easier. The kids in towns are more exposed to a lot of stuff unlike the kids here.”</i>
Change of environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“I would do. I would do and I feel the issue of one person or other people being in one area in a long time might also contribute to either</i>

	<p><i>poor performance or good performance. The environment might also contribute. Changing environments helps you to learn new things. Would definitely take it.”</i></p>
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The last two themes in Table 21 complement each other. Participants felt that personal growth and improvement could be stimulated by the environment. The second sentence in the last quote supports the notions on the possibility of language decay.

There exists a general notion that teaching ESL in urban areas is easier because schools in urban areas perform slightly better. While it could be true that teaching in urban areas is less challenging than teaching in rural areas, there exists no empirical proof of this notion. The fact that one participant felt that she was now ready to teach in an urban area because of her experience, is a sign of a lack of self-confidence in teachers in rural areas which could be a constraint.

4.3.11. Researcher’s comments on interviews with teachers

Some of the participants were reluctant in participating in the interview, but decided to participate anyway. Interviews were conducted in an English medium which proved to be problematic to some of the participants, especially the older participants.

One participant thanked the interviewer for giving her the opportunity to test her English by talking to someone who could speak English properly. All interviews were conducted after school, before the afternoon study sessions, in the participants’

classrooms or office. The duration of interviews ranged between five and ten minutes.

4.4. Presentation of data from interview with the Subject Advisor

The data collected from the ESL Subject Advisor for the Oshana region will be presented in this section. There are two ESL Subject Advisors for the Oshana region. Only one participated in this study, by means of an interview. The interview was recorded with a digital voice recorder, with the permission of the interviewee. The data were transcribed and analysed using the content analysis method and are presented according to the questions that guided the study.

Interviews with the Subject Advisor were conducted after data were collected from participating teachers. This was done to further triangulate responses from the participants, concerning research question two in particular (i.e. what kind of support do teachers in rural schools receive from the Ministry of Education, the Oshana Education Regional Office, and other educational stakeholders?). Although the Subject Advisor was posed questions related to all the questions that guided the study, research question two was the main reference point.

4.4.1. Biographical data

The Subject Advisor, a male, between 50 and 59 years old, holds a Basic Education Teachers' Diploma (BETD) and a Bachelor of Education Degree (B.Ed) from the former Ongwediva College of Education and the University of Namibia respectively.

He had taught ESL for more than 15 years at all grade levels, from Grade One to Twelve, before becoming a Subject Advisor, a position he has held for four years. There is no specific training for advisory teachers in Namibia; hence the interviewee did not receive any training in advisory teacher services.

4.4.2. Challenges to ESL teaching in the Oshana region

This subsection presents the views of the Subject Advisor to the constraints encountered by Grade 10 teachers in teaching ESL in the Oshana region. Only open-ended questions were used to allow the participant to provide maximum data. Most interview questions were similar to those posed to teachers, although a few were modified to suit the characteristics of the participant (i.e. he is not a practising teacher).

The Subject Advisor lamented that the Oshana region as a whole was faced with the challenge of finding suitably qualified ESL teachers.

“The biggest challenge to us in Oshana region is to find qualified teachers in to teach in rural schools because some teachers resign and apply for posts at other schools.”

Questioned on what the major challenges to ESL teaching in the Oshana region were, the participant felt that the biggest challenge for ESL teachers in rural combined schools was the lack of exposure to the English language, because learners and teachers spoke English only at their schools. According to the respondent, the further challenges that ESL teachers in rural areas faced were: lack of access to reading materials and poor language skills. Materials were insufficient; schools could not afford new materials because they worked on low budgets. The Oshana region

was also experiencing problems in finding and keeping qualified ESL teachers to work in remote areas.

The participant further maintained that a lack of reading skills in teachers, learners and parents was another challenge. According to the participant, because parents and teachers did not have the necessary reading skills, they were unable to assist learners in developing reading skills. The participant also argued that the mother tongue of learners was preventing them from learning English properly.

The responses of the Subject Advisor support earlier suggestions that the English language proficiency of some teachers and parents was low (see § 4.2.1.2). One of the main possible causes of poor reading skills in learners and teachers is the lack of materials which was revealed in § 4.2.4.5.

The Subject Advisor stated that:

“Some of the language problems that learners have are passed on from the lower grades to the upper grades.”

According to the Subject Advisor, learners learn most language errors in lower grades. These errors are internalized and continue in learners as they progress through grades.

“Some of the language problems that learners have are passed on from the lower grades to the upper grades.”

In brief, learners fossilized errors in lower grades. These errors are inherited throughout in different grades as learners progress from grade to grade.

The idea of error inheritance has a lot of merit. According to the Subject Advisor, if teachers in the primary phase have poor English language proficiency, they are likely

to teach incorrect English language forms. These incorrect forms will likely be reinforced by other primary phase teachers, thereby enhancing error fossilization in learners. Teachers in the secondary school phase (Grades 10 to 12) will be faced with the task of un-teaching the fossilized errors. In any case, learners are also likely to inherit speaking, writing and spelling forms from their teachers through modelling and imitation. Incorrect language forms can thus also be inherited from the teachers by the learners (see also § 4.3.5).

4.4.3. Support educational leadership

This section explored the nature of support available to ESL teachers from educational leadership. Leadership includes the Ministry of Education as whole and the Subject Advisors. The Subject Advisor liaised with the teachers (schools), inspectors of education and the Ministry, and was thus in a position to provide information on the entire educational leadership. Questions were posed in order of a bottom-up hierarchy: Subject Advisors first, then the Ministry as a whole. The salient purpose of this section was to triangulate responses of the Subject Advisor with those of the teacher participants, and finally to explore other possible factors.

4.4.3.1. Advisory Services

Similar to the views of teachers, the Subject Advisor conceded that ESL teachers received assistance from the advisory services office through workshops and were advised on “how to teach some ESL subject contents”. The Subject Advisor further reaffirmed that advisory services to teachers were being rendered on request from his office. He rarely paid schools visits because of the size of the Oshana region and a

lack of transport. The latter explains earlier laments of the lack of school visits by Subject Advisors (see § 4.2.3.1 and § 4.3.7.1).

However, the participant conceded that a major limitation of workshops was attendance. Not all teachers attended workshops.

Some of them [teachers] do not show up for workshops.

Although workshops were conducted at least twice a year, some teachers did not attend due to ministerial and institutional regulations. The Ministry requires teachers to be in classes the whole year, which makes it difficult for Subject Advisors to force teachers to attend workshops. The participant reported that some schools prevented teachers from attending workshops. Due to the distance from the workshop venues, some teachers did not attend because of a lack of transport.

4.4.3.2. The Ministry of Education

Like the teacher participants, the Subject Advisor had difficulty separating his roles from those of the Ministry of Education. According to the Subject Advisor, the Ministry assisted ESL teachers by buying materials, such as textbooks for schools, by subsidizing school fees (school development fund) and by sponsoring workshops. Both the Ministry and the Subject Advisors tried to find new textbooks and reading materials.

4.4.4. Teaching in a rural area versus teaching in an urban area

This subsection relates to research question one: What are the perceptions of Grade 10 teachers of ESL of the teaching and learning of the English language in rural

areas? The purpose of the subsection was to determine whether there was a perceived difference in teaching ESL at different levels or in different areas. The questions used were relatively similar to those used in the interviews with the teacher participants, but with slight modifications to vary location or level (grade).

The Subject Advisor was of the view that there was no difference in teaching ESL to Grade 10 learners at a combined school in a rural area from ESL teaching at a secondary school in an urban area. “It depends on the teacher and how comfortable the teacher is in teaching the subject.” The participant was however convinced that there was a difference in the nature of constraints that teachers experienced in urban and rural areas.

Children in urban areas are more exposed to new technologies. There is a difference. Teachers in rural areas struggle more than teachers in urban areas.

This confirms what the teachers said in § 4.3.5. According to the teacher participants, both secondary schools and combined schools in remote areas shared a learner population that had similar characteristics. The lack of reading materials, low English language proficiency and many other challenges presented in § 4.3.5 characterised the learner population in rural areas across different grades.

The participant’s view that there was a difference in the constraints that teachers in rural areas encountered from the constraints encountered by their counterparts in urban areas is an interesting point. This triangulates with what the teachers said in § 4.3.5 that teachers in urban schools were more advantaged than those in rural schools.

4.5. Summary

This chapter presented the analysis and interpretation of the collected data. Two instruments were used to collect data: a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire was administered to the eleven participating teachers. Follow-up interviews were conducted with the teacher participants and one Subject Advisor. Data from both instruments were triangulated to ensure the validity of the responses from participants. The following chapter presents a discussion and interpretation of the findings presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, CRITICAL REFLECTIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the constraints encountered by Grade 10 teachers in teaching ESL in combined schools in rural areas. This chapter presents a discussion of data presented in Chapter 4 and the related literature reviewed. The discussion is presented according to the research questions that guided the study, while themes that emerged from the data are grouped within the research question sections.

5.2. Discussion

5.2.1. Demographic profile of the sampled schools

Data were collected from 10 combined schools in rural areas of the Oshana Region. Nine of the studied schools had one ESL teacher, while one school had two ESL teachers. The total number of teachers that participated in the study was therefore 11.

Although it is often assumed that schools in rural areas lack electricity facilities, nine of the ten schools had electricity at the school. Only one school did not have electricity facilities, although there was evidence proving that the problem was being addressed. A lack of electricity can hamper the use of technological multimedia devices such, as radios, computers and internet, which can negatively affect the teaching of listening skills in ESL classrooms. However, since all schools had electricity, this was not a constraint.

Another common assumption is that schools in rural areas are very far from tarred roads. In this study, the school that was closest to a tarred road was two hundred metres, while the furthest was twelve kilometres. The average distance of schools from a tarred road was six kilometres. Tarred roads form important connections with towns and services. The average distance of these schools from a tarred road can thus be regarded as close enough for reasonable accessibility of schools by the Ministry of Education and any other stakeholder. It could therefore, be expected that textbooks and other ESL materials (i.e. newspapers) would have easy access to the schools closest to a tarred road.

The literature (Nakabugo *et al.*, 2008) indicates that large class sizes can constraint effective teaching (see § 2.2). In the Oshana region, class size did not emerge as a constraint to ESL teaching. The study found that classroom sizes ranged between 22 and 32 learners per class, while most ESL teachers had a total of between 30 and 60 ESL learners. Unlike ESL teachers in urban areas, classroom size was not a major constraint to teachers in rural schools. While this finding refutes Nawala (2005)'s claim that a high learner-teacher ratio in Namibia negatively affects effective teaching, the 2011 EMIS statistics support the findings of this study, in that the average teacher-learner ratio in the Oshana region was well within the acceptable range (22:1 and 30:1).

The low numbers of learners in rural schools can be attributed to urbanisation and the increase in the number of combined schools in rural areas. It is possible that some parents migrate with their children to urban areas, leaving gaps in schools in rural

areas. School dropouts could also be a contributing factor that needs to be explored. Class size could therefore not be regarded as a constraint to teaching in rural areas.

5.2.2. Demographic profile of the teachers

The study found that gender did not influence participants' responses significantly. Age did, however, influence responses from a language perspective, as will be discussed later in this Chapter.

The study found that all the participating teachers had at least the Basic Education Teachers' Diploma (BETD) which is the minimum qualification required for one to teach in Namibian schools. This finding is in contrast to Nyathi's (2001) suggestion that there was a shortage of adequately qualified teachers in rural areas, which constrained ESL teaching. Eleven years after Nyathi's (2001) study, interventions by relevant stakeholders seem to have yielded positive results. Poor, or lack, of teacher qualifications can constrain effective teaching as both content, methodology and approach may be either absent or level inappropriate. Both Cullingford (2005) and Nakabugo *et al.* (2008) argue that effective teaching can be constrained by a lack of content knowledge. An inadequately qualified teacher can thus not be expected to teach effectively.

This study found that there were adequately qualified teachers in rural areas, although the Subject Advisor expressed the concern that more and more teachers transfer to urban schools. Various factors such as infrastructure and access to resources (as will be discussed later in this Chapter) might be contributing factors to teacher urbanisation.

5.2.3. Perceptions of the teaching of the English language in rural schools

The study found that teachers perceived positive attitudes to the teaching of ESL in their communities. The study also found that ESL teachers perceived English as the most important language to teach learners in rural areas, while French and Portuguese were ranked second and third respectively. The fact that teachers ranked English as the most important language is an indication that teachers had positive attitudes towards the teaching of ESL in rural schools. It is, however, surprising that French and Portuguese enjoyed some prestige among the participants. Perhaps this could be linked to both the international status of these languages and Namibia's relations with neighbouring Angola.

The study further found that teachers felt that ESL should be taught through an English medium, and very few were in support of the code-switching approach as an option. This finding could be interpreted as a possible indication of the high level of self-confidence among these ESL teachers in their own English language proficiency. Krashen (1975) argues that foreign or second language learning is best in an immersion situation, where learners are taught through the target language. The teachers' support for the use of an English medium can be considered as an indication of their awareness of language teaching and learning theories. Awareness of language teaching and learning theories can enhance effective teaching. Nevertheless, it was found that teachers had little confidence in the language proficiency of their colleagues who teach other subjects (this finding will be discussed later in this Chapter).

The study established that some teachers had confidence in their learners' ability to one day become fluent speakers and writers of English while some teachers felt that interventions were necessary for their learners to be fully fluent. The teachers' confidence in their learners' ability to learn could be associated with their confidence in their own teaching. The interventions that were considered necessary by the participants ranged from the provision of materials to motivation. This finding is consistent with Norris-Holt (2005)'s claim that motivation as a driving force to learn is crucial for both language acquisition and learning.

It emerged that the motivation strategies used by the participants were: praise and criticism, self-correction, cooperative teaching/learning styles and practical use of English. These are the most widely used motivation strategies in education (Al-Mahrooqi, Abrar-Ul-Hassan & Asante, 2012: see § 2.10). Teachers could use a variety of motivation strategies for increased motivation in learners. These could enhance motivation in learners. Despite this, the study found that ESL teachers perceived the motivation in their learners to be low.

In addition, the study found that parents and communities around schools, on the other hand, were perceived by the participants as having positive attitudes towards the teaching of English in their communities. The status of English as official language in Namibia might have influenced communities and parents to have positive attitudes towards English. Speakers of English are in general considered to be educated and to have access to better jobs because of the official language status of English. A lack of motivation could thus not be ascribed to the communities'

attitudes to the teaching of ESL. The level of support of communities and parents to ESL teachers will be discussed in the following section.

Noris-Holt (2005) defines motivation as the learner's orientation with regard to the goal of learning or doing something. It is the inner drive that pushes the learner to learn. When motivation is lacking, learning is likely to be slow and almost impossible. This study found that a lack of motivation in learners constrains ESL teaching. Many learners in the Oshana region have low motivation in learning English because they do not see the significance of the language in their surroundings.

As mentioned earlier, it was found in this study that in most communities in the Oshana region, English was only spoken in ESL classrooms and occasionally in other school subject classrooms: normal day to day business in the community is done in the Oshiwambo language. Although English is the official language, it is rarely used in official settings in the Oshana region. This finding, however, seems to be inconsistent with the perceived positive attitudes of communities towards the teaching of ESL. When there is a perceived positive attitude to the teaching of ESL, it is expected that there would be motivation to learn English. The relationship between motivation and attitudes towards ESL teaching requires further investigation.

5.2.4. Support to ESL teachers in rural schools

Support to ESL teachers was explored, starting from the key stakeholders in education through the leadership hierarchy: the Ministry of Education, ESL Subject

Advisor, Principal, and Head of Department. The study found that the lower levels of the educational hierarchy provided the most support. Heads of Departments (HODs) provided more direct support to ESL teachers, while the Ministry of Education's support was more indirect. It seems that the higher the stakeholders are on the leadership hierarchy, the more distant they are from the teachers (in terms of channels) on the lower levels of the hierarchy. Therefore, the people closer to ESL teachers on the leadership hierarchy, in this case Heads of Departments (HODs), can be expected to have a better understanding of the constraints encountered by ESL teachers, and hence should be in a better position to provide much more direct support to ESL teachers. The most immediate support to ESL teachers is first from HODs, then Principals, and then Subject Advisors and the Ministry of Education.

Similarly, it was found that, due to the long distances between schools, ESL teachers had to rely on their colleagues at schools for assistance on teaching subject matter in an event of misunderstanding of teaching content. Teachers who had a colleague at their school that taught ESL at the JSC level were advantaged as they could consult their colleagues in an event of confusion. Likewise, teachers who had other schools nearby could consult their colleagues from neighbouring schools for assistance. However, teachers who were the only JSC ESL teachers at their schools had to either make an extra effort in reaching the Ongwediva Teachers' Resource Centre (ORTC), travel to consult a colleague at another school or improvise. The latter is a cause for concern for teachers to 'just try' as they could be considered to be taking risks by relying on trial and error, which could be a major constraint to ESL teaching.

The study further found that HODs supported ESL teachers through mentoring, motivation, and guidance on the use of the syllabus, while Principals assisted through their leadership styles. It appeared that Principals often allocated funds to ESL teaching activities which could be considered as a necessary support for ESL teaching in terms of provisions of materials. The fact that HODs taught under the same conditions as the participants could have placed them at an advantaged position to provide key support to ESL teachers.

Upon graduation, it is expected that an individual will have mastered the basic theoretical concepts of practice in the field studied. However, it is possible that the reality of conditions and situations of existing practice in the field might pose challenges to an individual's transition from theory to practice. It can thus be considered positive that HODs, being more experienced teachers, provide some mentoring and guidance to junior teachers.

There were two ESL Subject Advisors for the 135 schools in the Oshana region. The study found that support from the ESL Subject Advisors was primarily in the form of workshops. It emerged that Subject Advisors did not visit schools because of both the lack of transport and the large size of the Oshana region. The fact that Subject Advisors did not visit schools could be linked to the provision of their support to the participants being in the form of workshops only. In addition to the distances of the schools from OTRC, the knocking off hours of teachers at 15h00, might be accountable for the limitation of support services from Subject Advisors to workshops, as some teachers could not, on their part, reach the OTRC in time to

consult a Subject Advisor. Subject Advisors will as a result not know the necessary support needed by ESL teachers in remote areas.

It was also found that support to ESL teachers from the Ministry of Education (MoE) through the Oshana Directorate of Education was in the form of pedagogical materials. ESL teachers perceived support from the MoE to be in the form of ESL textbooks. Participants appeared somewhat content with the support from the MoE, as they felt that this support was small, but better than nothing considering the few resources available. The materials used by the teachers will be discussed later in this chapter.

5.2.5. Constraints that Grade 10 teachers encounter in teaching ESL in combined schools in rural areas in the Oshana region

According to the findings of this study, the constraints encountered by Grade 10 teachers in teaching ESL in combined schools in the Oshana region could be classified as: language proficiency, access to teaching materials, low reading culture, error fossilization, and error inheritance.

5.1.5.1. English Language proficiency and medium of instruction

Although it was not a major objective of the study to test the language proficiency of participants, a high number of grammatical errors coupled with an inability to comprehend some of the interview questions was observed. This indicated that the English language continues to be a barrier to many people, including ESL teachers. This finding is consistent with the 2011 survey on teachers in Namibia which found that the English language proficiency level of at least 90% of teachers in Namibian

schools was a cause for concern (Kisting, 2011: see § 2.9). This finding is in support of Cullingford (2005) and Nakabugo *et al.* (2008)'s argument that effective teaching can be constrained by a lack of content knowledge. The effective teaching of ESL in the Oshana region might therefore be constrained by the low language proficiency of teachers.

The study found, however, that the younger teachers appeared to have better English language proficiency. This finding relates particularly to the findings of the 2011 survey on the English language proficiency of Namibian teachers which suggested that younger teachers' English language proficiency was at a higher level than that of the older teachers (Kisting, 2011). Although all participants made grammatical errors in their written responses, syntactical and spelling errors were more frequent among the older participants. Furthermore, the interviewer had to occasionally simplify interview questions for older participants to be able to elicit proper answers to questions.

The low English language proficiency of the older participants could be attributed to the education that they had received during the colonial and early post-colonial eras. Before Independence in 1990, the medium of instruction was Afrikaans. English was only introduced as medium of instruction at Independence in 1990 (Schmied, 1991: see § 1.1). It is thus possible that the older teachers enrolled at the College of Education with six years or less experience in ESL learning, while the younger participants had more experience in ESL learning with an approximate minimum of between ten and twelve years of schooling in an English medium. This finding has not been addressed in previous studies; although it posits itself under the language

acquisition theories of Krahsen (1973: see § 2.9). Krashen's language acquisition theory states that for language acquisition to take place there must be exposure and interaction: the more exposure and interaction, the better the chances of effective language acquisition. Relating to Krashen's theory, one can thus state that in Namibia, the older the teacher, the fewer opportunities he or she might have had for interaction and exposure to the English language, and therefore the fewer opportunities for acquiring English. Once again, low language proficiency of teachers could constraint ESL teaching in the Oshana region.

The study, furthermore, found that due to the linguistical make-up of the Oshana region, English in most rural communities in the Oshana region could be considered to be almost a 'foreign language' and not necessarily 'second language' as prescribed by the JSC curriculum. It was found that many learners (and teachers) only accessed English in ESL classrooms at their schools, as the day-to-day business was conducted in the indigenous language, Oshiwambo, which was the language spoken by almost everyone in the communities around the schools. It can, therefore, be concluded that exposure and interaction in English were limited to schools. This limited exposure, according to Krashen (1973), means that learners in the Oshana region can be expected to have a low chance of acquiring the English language effectively.

Although English is the official medium of instruction in all state schools in Namibia, the study found that some teachers of other subjects did not teach through the medium of instruction. ESL teachers lamented the English language proficiency of their colleagues, and argued that it was proving to be a constraint to the teaching

of English. Teachers with low English language proficiency could induce errors in learners. This finding is supported by the claim of some teacher participants in this study that learners reach Grade 10 with a below average level of English (see § 4.2.4.7).

As Han (2004) found, uncorrected teacher induced errors could lead to error fossilization. When learners are exposed to incorrect English language forms by teachers too often, they might begin to accept these incorrect forms as correct forms. It can thus be concluded that the low English language proficiency of teachers in the Oshana region could induce errors in learners, and when these errors are reinforced, instead of being corrected by other teachers, the errors could become fossilized. This finding is consistent with Han's (2004) claim that reinforced errors lead to error fossilization. As discussed earlier in this chapter, almost everybody in the Oshana region shares Oshiwambo as a first language. First language interference and negative transfer from Oshiwambo to English are thus likely to be similar, which in turn makes error reinforcement more likely to occur as more and more people are likely to make the same error. Error fossilization might pose a serious constraint to Grade 10 ESL teachers.

Furthermore, as learners move from Grade to Grade, meeting different teachers and other learners, they might pick up some errors: a process that may be referred to as 'error inheritance'. A learner might inherit incorrect English language forms that are used commonly by peers in the classroom, in the same Grade or across different Grades. Similarly, it is assumed that teachers of different Grades might inherit learner errors that might have been induced by their colleagues that taught the

learners previously. It is also possible that a learner might inherit an error from the teacher and vice versa. When the errors are not corrected they might be reinforced, lead to fossilization and can be passed on from Grade to Grade throughout the system. Like error fossilization, error inheritance can be a constraint to ESL teachers who would have the task of dealing with errors that were either induced or should have been corrected by their colleagues.

The Namibian lower primary curriculum prescribes that learners be taught through a mother-tongue medium from Grade One to Four. While this is possible in monolingual societies, such as those in the Oshana region, it is not possible in multilingual societies such as those in urban areas, i.e. Windhoek. A delay in transition from Oshiwambo as medium of instruction to English as medium of instruction in the Oshana region could be a constraint to ESL teaching in Grade 10. According to Krashen (1973), language acquisition occurs best at the early ages of a person's life. A delay in transition to English might delay a learner's acquisition of English. Learners in urban areas have thus, according to this theory, a better chance of acquiring the English language compared to their rural counterparts. ESL teachers in the Oshana region are, therefore, more likely to be required to put in more effort in helping their learners to be on par with their urban counterparts.

When one looks into the language proficiency of teachers, it is worth taking into account that some teachers might have had high levels of English language proficiency when they started teaching in rural schools. The possibility of language decay can thus not be ignored. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the study found that, like learners, teachers have minimized opportunities to interact in the English

language in rural areas in the Oshana region. Exposure is minimal as most of the day-to-day affairs were conducted in the Oshiwambo language. The few English speaking domains limit the exposure of both learners and teachers to English. The study found that some learners (and teachers) in the Oshana region were only exposed to English at school. Teachers had thus a limited chance of improving their English language proficiency under the ‘practice makes perfect theory’. It can, therefore, be argued that the English language of many teachers decays and gets rusty as it is used minimally.

The different factors surrounding the English language, ranging from status to decay, error fossilization and error inheritance, are worth warranting English as a constraint to JSC ESL teaching. The study found that JSC ESL teachers in rural areas have a problem with the language they are expected to teach. Nevertheless, the English Language Proficiency Programme (ELPP) designed to improve the proficiency of all teachers in Namibia raises some hope.

5.2.5.2. Materials

Daniel (2002) advocates that investment in the provision of materials enhances quality education. This study found that ESL teachers in the Oshana region used a variety of teaching materials, ranging from visual to audio and reading. The audio materials used by ESL teachers were DVDs, CDs/cassettes and cell phones. While these audio materials could be of interest to learners, the frequency of use and up-to-datedness of the materials need further exploration. The lack of use of computers could be considered to be depriving teachers and learners of access to latest trends in multimedia pedagogical materials available on computer software and internet. This

finding builds on the findings of Nyathi (1999: see § 2.2) who found that ESL teachers in Khorixas used only radios and cassettes as audio materials. The use of CDs and DVDs can be considered to be an indication of evolution in the use of audio materials in rural areas since the 1999 study.

However, some teacher participants in this study experienced difficulty in classifying reading and visual materials, which was interpreted to be an indication that not all teachers knew the genre of materials that they used. Some teachers had difficulty differentiating materials from activities. The study found that visual and reading materials used by ESL teachers included posters, flash cards, pictures, newspapers, letters and textbooks. These materials were either collected from libraries or provided by the school. In accordance with Bax's (2003) description of the communicative teaching approach, most of these materials were authentic, which shows that teachers in the Oshana region used contemporary teaching methods. Both Nyathi's studies of 1999 and 2001 (see § 1.1 and § 2.2) found ESL teachers in rural areas to be using traditional methods. The findings of this study, however, show that eleven years after Nyathi's study, teachers in rural areas are using much more contemporary teaching materials, an indication that teachers are keeping up with the new, accepted trends in language teaching.

However, it was found that reading materials were not sufficient for learners in the Oshana region. The problem of the insufficient number of reading materials at schools in Namibia is a nationwide problem. Even in some urban areas textbooks are shared by between two and three learners (Benjamin, 2004: see § 1.1). Sharing materials could be a challenge in rural areas where learners often live more than ten

kilometres apart, making textbook-based homework and exercise tasks almost impossible. The number of prescribed reading materials was also found to be sometimes insufficient for some classes, in which case learners were unable to take the textbooks home. The study found the insufficiency of reading materials to be a constraint to ESL teaching. This finding is consistent with Nyathi (1999, and 2001), Ambrowatti (2009) and Igbemi (2011) (see § 1.1 and § 2.2) who all found that inadequate materials were a source of constraint in teaching. While improvisation is a possible solution to the problem, many teachers seemed to be hesitant to be creative.

Furthermore, the study found that although almost every school had a library at the school, the library was usually the size of a storeroom. It was also found that books in the libraries were usually out-dated, dirty and constituted mainly old textbooks and old prescribed reading materials that were no longer used. It was the institutional workers, such as cleaners, that took care of these libraries and learners were not allowed inside the libraries. Idbemi (2011) sees a lack of facilities at a school a constraint in teaching. Igbemi's finding is supported by the findings of this study when ESL teachers and their learners are deprived of access to reading materials usually available in a library.

Apart from visiting these mini-libraries, some teachers travelled more than ten kilometres to access a fully-equipped library. Libraries were in towns, such as Ondangwa, Ongwediva and Oshakati, where learners went only in the rarest cases. From the findings, it is thus clear that since it was costly for teachers to go to these fully-equipped libraries, they seldom went there. Teachers and learners in rural areas

have, therefore, little benefit from the advantages of libraries, a possible contribution to the poor reading culture among learners in rural areas. The establishment of fully-equipped community or school libraries might help improve the reading culture in both teachers and learners, which could ultimately reduce reading as a constraint in ESL teaching.

Another key stakeholder in education was the parents. Parents can motivate and help discipline learners. Parents can also ensure that their children do their school work (i.e. homework, assignments). However, it appeared that in the Oshana region, children spent most of their time in their parents' care usually involved in agricultural activities shared with parents. It is hence imperative that parents join forces with teachers to enhance learning.

The teachers in this study argued that parents were little involved in the education of their children. Most parents were illiterate and did not speak English. It is thus difficult for parents to meaningfully assist their children in learning English. As will be discussed in the next sections, the perception of parents towards the teaching of the English language is also a factor. Parents and community members should participate in the teaching of English in their communities by motivating children to learn English and to read more, by allocating time to study by participating in school activities, and by being supportive to (ESL) teachers.

5.3. Summary of findings

This study was prompted by the perceived lack of performance by English as Second Language (ESL) teachers in combined schools in rural areas in Namibia. Using the

case of the Oshana region, ten combined schools in rural areas of the Oshana region were studied using the qualitative approach. A questionnaire and interviews were the instruments used to collect data from 11 ESL teachers and one Subject Advisor. Data from the instruments were presented and triangulated according to emerging themes. The convenience sampling technique was used to sample the 10 schools for participation as some schools could not be accessed due to the 2010/2011 floods. Nevertheless, the findings succeed in providing answers to the research questions.

Three research questions guided the study. Based on the findings of the study, the following answers to the research questions were found.

1. What are the perceptions of Grade 10 teachers of ESL of the teaching of the English language in rural areas?

1.1. Teachers have positive attitudes towards the English language.

1.2. Teachers consider English to be the most useful language for learners to learn and are convinced that ESL should be taught through an English language medium.

1.3. Teachers believe that in spite of all the challenges, their learners can become fluent speakers and writers of the English language.

2. What kind of support do teachers in rural schools receive from the Ministry of Education, the Oshana Education Regional Office, and other educational stakeholders?

- 2.1. The Ministry of Education through the Oshana Education Directorate supports teachers in rural areas by supplying schools with materials, such as textbooks and teaching aids,
 - 2.2. Subject Advisors support teachers through organizing professional development workshops and by advising teachers how to teach subject content areas. However, Subject Advisors are not easily accessible to teachers as they do not visit schools due to a lack of transport and due to the geographical size of the Oshana region.
 - 2.3. Heads of Departments support ESL teachers through mentorship and guidance. HODs are more accessible to teachers than Subject Advisors and thus provide more immediate support.
 - 2.4. School principals assist ESL teaching through responsive and supportive leadership styles, and by allocating resources to ESL teaching and learning activities.
 - 2.5. Parents are not very involved in the education of their children mainly because most of them are illiterate and do not speak English.
3. What are the constraints that Grade 10 teachers encounter in teaching ESL in combined schools in rural areas in the Oshana region?
 - 3.1. The English language is a constraint to ESL teachers. Most teachers in rural areas, including ESL teachers, have poor English language proficiency contributing to a state of error fossilization in learners. The

language proficiency of teachers decays as teachers spend less time using the English language frequently.

3.2. The status of the English language in rural areas of the Oshana region is rather that of a foreign language and not necessarily second language as implied by the national JSC standards. Learners' English language levels are, therefore, below the normal JSC level. English is mainly only spoken in ESL classrooms, limiting exposure and interactions in the English language.

3.3. The lack and inaccessibility of reading and teaching materials are constraints. Teachers and learners do not have access to daily newspapers, magazines or the internet. Only mini-libraries are available in schools. Learners are not allowed inside these libraries which are usually poorly equipped. Fully-equipped normal libraries are more than 10 km from schools.

3.4. Motivation in learners is a constraint. Learners are not motivated to learn the English language. As reading materials are insufficient and inaccessible, learners are not motivated enough to read independently.

3.5. Due to urbanisation and the increase in the number of schools in rural areas, classroom over-crowdedness is not a problem in the Oshana region. Classroom sizes are within the normal range of between 20 and 35. The teacher-learner ratio is thus also well within the normal range.

3.6. ESL teachers in rural areas of the Oshana region have a problem with the English language, the language they are expected to teach. Teachers lack

the necessary language proficiency and confidence, especially the older teachers. The younger teachers seem to be more likely to have better language proficiency than the older teachers.

3.7. Teachers may lose their language proficiency as they spend more and more years in rural areas using English minimally, a case of language decay.

3.8. The language proficiency of teachers of other subjects is a constraint to ESL teaching as it can contribute to error fossilization. This also contributes to learners having a below normal level in Grade 10

3.9. Learners and teachers have zero to limited access to fully-equipped libraries. Schools have mini-libraries which are poorly equipped, and to which learners are not allowed.

3.10. Learner motivation is a constraint to ESL teaching. Learners do not immediately see the significance of English, and are thus more interested in learning the vernacular than learning English.

3.11. Subject Advisors support ESL teachers through professional development workshops and advisory services on subject content teaching areas. However, advisory services are only provided on request at the Teachers' Resource Centre as Subject Advisors are unable to travel to schools due to a lack of transport and due to the size and geographical nature of the Oshana region.

5.4. Limitations of the study

Although the study was conducted in ten schools only in the Oshana region, most of the findings could be generalised to the whole Oshana region and to other rural areas in Namibia due to similar demographic profiles, while some findings may not be entirely generalizable. The Education Management Information System (EMIS) (2011) for example, revealed that there were 25 teachers teaching without formal teacher training, of which three had qualifications lower than Grade 12 while this study found that all Grade 10 ESL teachers had the minimum required teacher qualification (BETD). While it could be possible that the unqualified teachers reported in the EMIS documents might be teachers of subjects other than ESL, the fact that this study was not conducted in the entire Oshana region and/or on all teachers at the participating schools weakens the reliability of a claim that all ESL teachers in the Oshana region were qualified to teach at JSC level.

The findings of the study might have been different if schools that were remoter than the ones studied could be accessed. Although the schools studied were rural, there were more remote schools that could not be accessed due to the 2010 and 2011 floods. There were some schools in the Oshana region that were located much further from tarred roads, without electricity and water. It is possible that data from such extreme remote schools might have provided findings different from those found in this study.

5.5. Contributions of the study

While this study found findings similar to those found by previous studies, the study still makes relevant contributions to the body of knowledge on ESL teaching constraints in rural schools. Studies on ESL teaching constraints have been done before this study (for example Nyathi, 1999 & 2001; and Ambrowatti, 2009: See Chapters 1 and 2 of this study). Nevertheless, before this study, no study had been conducted on the constraints encountered by teachers in teaching ESL at the Grade 10 level, as previous studies were done on the Grade 12 level. Therefore, all findings of this study, including those supported by findings of preceding studies provide new knowledge on constraints encountered by Grade 10 teachers in teaching ESL in rural areas. However, the study failed to prove that the constraints encountered by Grade 10 ESL teachers in rural areas are different from those encountered by the Grade 12 and teachers of other Grades in rural areas.

The study's finding on error inheritance, a process of error transfer, is a new contribution to the literature on ESL teaching constraints in Namibia. Errors are sometimes cycled in a classroom, in a Grade, and/or across different Grades, Grade 10 ESL teachers may inherit in their classrooms incorrect grammatical forms that might have been induced by their colleagues who taught the learners in preceding Grades. These errors are likely to be fossilized and require targeted strategies to assist learners to unlearn. Error inheritance can occur in rural and urban schools. This finding is thus generalizable.

Library access in rural areas is another contribution of the study. The schools in this rural area had poorly-equipped mini-libraries that were the size of a store-room.

These mini-libraries were the closest libraries to learners and teachers as fully-equipped libraries were more than 10 kilometres away. The lack of library access could have a negative effect on the development of a reading culture among learners and teachers.

Another contribution of the study which is generalizable to all monolingual rural areas is the phenomenon of language decay. Language decay can be defined as a process where an individual loses language proficiency due to a lack of non-use. The study found that there were few domains in the Oshana region that required the use of English since an overwhelming majority of people could speak and understand Oshiwambo. As a result, teachers (and learners)' use of English was mostly confined to a few moments in the classroom.

5.6. Critical reflections on the study

The build-up to the study raised hopes and expectations that were different from those experienced. The study helped me realise that conducting research in the field is very different from theoretical research.

It was only until the end of the pilot study that I learnt to contain my personal opinions, feelings and emotions towards both the subjects and the research topic. The study helped me grow as a self-criticising researcher who is able to take a third person critique on my own work.

5.7. Conclusions

The study concludes that ESL teachers in rural areas encounter constraints ranging from language proficiency to lack of materials and support. Some of the constraints

encountered may be similar to those encountered by their urban counterparts. The difference is the availability of support networks, library resources and information communication technology (ICT) facilities. Unlike teachers in urban areas who can easily consult colleagues from other schools, go to resource centres or access internet in the event of confusion and misunderstanding of teaching content, teachers in rural areas have no access to internet facilities, and sometimes travel more than ten kilometres to consult a colleague from another school or a resource centre.

The study further concludes that Heads of Language Departments as the first point of reference to ESL teachers in remote areas, are the most supportive. The fact that HODs are in the field with the ESL teachers places them in the best position to meaningfully assist and support ESL teachers because they understand and share most of the constraints encountered. The inability of Subject Advisors to visit schools makes them inaccessible, limiting their services to workshops and delivering advisory services only on request.

It is a positive conclusion of this study that some teachers make an effort to travel long distances to consult others for assistance. However, the “I just try” teachers are a cause for concern. When understanding is lacking, the probability of error occurrence is high. Teachers that do not seek assistance on areas they do not understand risk teaching incorrect language and content forms, thereby providing room for teacher-induced errors, error fossilization and error inheritance. The study thus concludes that some errors in various Grades are inherited from the learners’ peers, from teachers of different subjects, across a Grade and/or across different

Grades and across different schools. These errors, if not corrected, can be recycled throughout the education system.

The study finally concludes that Grade 10 ESL teachers perceive English as the most important language for learners to learn. In spite of all the many challenges that learners in rural areas experience, ESL teachers believe that their learners can become fluent speakers and writers of the English language. Teachers reject the idea of teaching ESL through languages other than English.

5.8. Recommendations

In view of the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made.

1. ESL learners in the Oshana region, compared to their counterparts in urban areas such as Windhoek, have fewer opportunities for exposure and interaction in English. It is therefore recommended that more after-school activities promoting the use of English be implemented.
2. It is recommended that English development programmes for teachers, such as the ELPP (English Language Proficiency Programme), be provided to teachers in rural areas with weekly classes. Regular classes will provide more opportunities for teachers to interact in English, and thereby reduce the possibilities of language decay.
3. It is recommended that more Subject Advisors be employed in the Oshana region, and be decentralised per circuit. This will enable Subject Advisors to be more mobile, easily accessible to teachers and able to regularly visit

schools. It is recommendable that special resources be availed to Subject Advisors for the provision of teaching aids and transport.

5.9. Recommendations for further studies

In view of the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations for further studies are made:

1. It is recommended that a study be carried out to investigate the relationship between motivation and attitudes towards ESL teaching.
2. It is also recommended that a similar study be carried out in all the different remote areas in Namibia. Such a study will not only determine the various constraints ESL teachers in the different corners of Namibia encounter, but it will also determine the real status of the English language in remote areas of Namibia. A study on national level will assist the Ministry of Education and key educational stakeholders in paving direction for future intervention programmes.
3. It is further recommended that a study be carried out to investigate the relationship between library access and reading.
4. It is finally recommended that a study that explores constraints from a learners' perspective be carried out. Such a study would complement this and other studies in trying to explain some of the causes of poor academic performance. Possible intervention programmes will also be informed by the findings of such a study.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Questionnaire for teachers

Questionnaire for teachers

Dear Sir / Madam

My name is **Simon Lumbu**, a Master of Education student at the University of Namibia. I am doing a study on the constraints encountered by Grade 10 teachers in teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) in combined schools in rural areas of the Oshana region. I therefore kindly ask you, as an ESL teacher, to provide me with relevant information, which will greatly help me in my study. The information that you will provide will be treated confidentially. The purpose of the study is not to judge, evaluate or assess you, it is to help identify the various constraints that teachers encounter while teaching ESL in rural areas. You are therefore urged to answer all questions as honestly as possible. If the information you want to write does not fit in the space provided, please feel free to request more paper.

Instructions:

- ❖ Do **not** write your name on this paper
- ❖ Please, try to answer all the questions
- ❖ Where a choice is needed use a cross, like this:

X

Thank you

Section A: Biographical Information

1. Gender

Female	
Male	

2. Age

22 -	
23-30	
31 - 36	
37-44	
45 +	

3. Highest qualification

M.Ed	
B.Ed	
BETD	
Other (please specify)	

4. Year in which qualification was obtained

Before 1990	
1991 - 1999	
2000 - 2009	
2010 or after	

5. Institution at which qualification was obtained.

University of Namibia	
Polytechnic of Namibia	
College of Education	
Institute of Higher Learning (IOL)	
Other (please specify)	

SECTION B: Constraints encountered in teaching ESL

1. How long have you been in the teaching profession?

1 year -	
2 – 6 years	
7 – 11 years	
12 – 16 years	
17 years +	

2. How long have you been teaching ESL at grade 10 level?

1 year -	
2 – 6 years	
7 – 11 years	
12 – 16 years	
17 years +	

3. To how many learners do you currently teach ESL in total?

Less than 20	
Between 30 and 60	
Between 60 and 90	
Between 90 and 120	
More than 120	

4. What materials do you use in teaching English Second Language (ESL) to Grade 10 learners? (If possible, please name the titles)

4.1. Audio

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4.2. Visual

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4.3. Reading

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4.4. Other

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5. What problems do you experience in using the materials mentioned in question 3 in your teaching of ESL?

	Materials are too difficult
	Materials are old and out of date
	Materials are not relevant to learners
	Materials are too simple
	Materials do not cover syllabus contents

Other

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6. Do you have access to library facilities?

Yes

No

- 6.1. If yes, how often do you have access to library facilities?

	Very often (4 – 5 times a week)
	Sometimes (2 – 3 times a weeks)
	Seldom (once a week/term/year)

- 6.2. If yes, how far is the library from the school?

	2 km -
	3 – 5 km
	6 – 9 km
	10 km +
	At the school

7. What do you consider to be the biggest challenges that you and other teachers experience in teaching ESL to grade 10 learners in rural combined schools?

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SECTION C: Support

8. When was the last time did you attended a workshop concerning ESL? (Month and year, if possible)

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9. What was the theme / topic of the workshop?

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10. Do you know the Grade 10 Subject Advisor for ESL in the Oshana region?

Yes	
No	

11. How does the Subject Advisor assist you in improving the teaching of ESL?

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12. How often do you communicate with the Subject Advisor?

	Very often (4 – 5 times a week)
	Sometimes (2 – 3 times a weeks)
	Seldom (once a week/term/year)

13. Do you receive any assistance from your head of department?

Yes	
No	

13.1. If yes, please elaborate on the kind of assistance you receive.

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14. Do you receive any assistance from the Ministry of education or the Directorate of Education in the Oshana region?

Yes	
No	

14.1. If yes, please elaborate on the kind of assistance you receive.

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15. What roles do parents and members of the community around the school play in the teaching of ESL to learners at your school?

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16. What do you think should be done to improve the teaching of ESL in rural areas?

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SECTION D: Perceptions towards the teaching of ESL

17. Which language do you think is the most important to teach learners in schools?
 Rank the following languages in order of importance, with 1 being the most important and 6 being the least important.

French	
Portuguese	
German	
Afrikaans	
English	
Oshiwambo or other local language	

18. Through which medium of instruction do you think ESL should be taught?

English	
Afrikaans	
Oshiwambo	
Code-switching (combination of languages)	

Please elaborate on your response to question 18.

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19. Do you think learners learning ESL in combined schools in rural areas will ever be fluent speakers and writers of the English language? Please explain.

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20. Do you motivate learners to improve their ESL?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

If yes, how do you motivate your learners to improve their ESL proficiency?

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APPENDIX B: Interview Guide for teachers

- briefly tell me about your school, location, distance from nearest tarred road, electricity (available or not), etc.
- do you have access to internet facilities at school or at home? What about photocopy machines?
- How does it feel to teach ESL in a remote school? Is it any different from teaching in an urban area?
- is English taught across the curriculum? (Through other subjects) what are your views on the English language proficiency of your colleagues?
- what do you consider to be the biggest challenge to you in teaching ESL at your school?
- what do you think is the biggest challenge to ESL teachers in rural combined schools? Is this challenge(s) different from those being experienced by ESL teachers in secondary schools in rural areas?
- what role do your colleagues play in the teaching of ESL at your school? How do they contribute to learning of English by learners?
- is your head of department and your principal aware of these challenges that you are facing? If yes, what are they doing about it? If no, why haven't you communicated to them about it?
- what has the ESL Subject Advisor done to help you over-come these challenges? And the Ministry as whole, through the Directorate of the Oshana region, what have they done?
- Would you say that intervention programmes should be targeted to grade 10 or grade 12 levels? Which grade do you think deserves more assistance? Why?
- what is the community's general attitude towards the teaching of ESL at your school?

APPENDIX C: Interview Guide for the Subject Advisor

Interview guide for the Subject Advisor

1. Where did you complete your grade 12?
2. What is your highest qualification?
3. When and from which institution did you receive this qualification?
4. At which school did you teach ESL?
5. For how long did you teach ESL?
6. Did you receive any specific training in Subject Advisory?

7. What do you think is hampering the effective teaching of ESL in rural combined schools in the Oshana region?
8. What are the major challenges that ESL teachers in remote combined schools are facing?
9. As Subject Advisor, what do you do to deal away with challenges that grade 10 ESL teachers face in teaching ESL?
10. What kind of support does your office and the Ministry provide to ESL teachers?
11. Do ESL teachers in remote schools attend ESL workshops? How often? When was the last workshop on ESL and what was the theme?
12. In your view, what are the teachers' attitudes towards the teaching of ESL in rural areas?
13. Is teaching JSC ESL in a combined school more difficult than teaching JSC ESL in secondary schools? Please elaborate.
14. Which grade do you think deserves more intervention programmes, grade 10 or 12? Why?
15. Is there a difference in the constraints being experienced by teachers in remote rural areas from those being experienced by teachers in urban areas? What is the difference?

APPENDIX D: Permission letter to the Oshana Education Regional Director

University of Namibia
Private Bag 13301
Windhoek
16 June 2011
Tel: 061-2063855
Fax: 061-2063806

The Director
Oshana Educational Region
Oshakati

Cc. Mr Alred Ilukena
Permanent Secretary: Ministry of Education

Dear Sir / Madam

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A MASTER OF EDUCATION STUDY IN THE OSHANA REGION

I, Simon Lumbu, am a Master of Education (Literacy and Learning) student at the University of Namibia. I hereby wish to request permission to conduct a research study in the Oshana region, which will serve as partial fulfilment of the requirements of a master's degree at the University of Namibia.

The study is entitled: **constraints encountered by grade 10 teachers in teaching English as a second language in rural combined schools in the Oshana region.** The study will investigate some of the causes of poor academic performance of learners and of the de-motivation of teachers in schools in rural areas. The findings will identify possible intervention programmes to develop teaching environments in rural areas to improve Grade 10 ESL results.

The study is scheduled to take place between 04 July 2011 and 29 July 2011. Care will be taken to avoid interruptions of normal school proceedings. Hence, interviews and questionnaires will be administered at conveniently suitable times that will not disrupt teaching.

Participation in the study will be entirely on a voluntary basis and all data collected will be treated confidentially. The findings and conclusions of the study will be made available to the Oshana Education Regional Office.

Yours faithfully

Simon Lumbu

APPENDIX E: Response from the Oshana Education Regional Director