

PERCEPTIONS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS ON THE ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY PROGRAMME IN THE OKAHANDJA  
CIRCUIT OF THE OTJOZONDJUPA EDUCATION REGION

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF EDUCATION (CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT STUDIES)

OF

THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

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AUGUST 2018

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study gauged primary school teachers' perceptions of the English Language Proficiency Programme (ELLP) that was implemented from 2011 to 2015. The English Language Proficiency Programme (ELPP) was developed by the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) because of the findings that “many Namibian teachers and student teachers had a low level of [English language] proficiency” (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2010, p.1). This study examined the views and perceptions of primary school teachers in the Okahandja Circuit of the Otjozondjupa Education Region about the ELPP and how their perceptions might have influenced the ELPP implementation.

A mixed method sequential explanatory study was undertaken, using Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System Theory (L2MSST) to situate the study in its context. In the first quantitative phase, questionnaires were administered to primary school teachers in the Okahandja Circuit. In the follow-up qualitative phase, focus group interviews were conducted with three groups.

The findings of this study revealed that the majority of the teachers were positive towards the ELPP and requested its reinstatement, but also proposed improvements. Furthermore, the participants expressed their willingness to improve their ELP on condition that incentives are provided, tutorials are offered during the holidays and the course is customised to provide subject-specific content.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND/OR ACRONYMS**

ELP	English Language Proficiency
ELPP	English Language Proficiency Programme
L2MSST	L2 Motivational Self System Theory
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoEAC	Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture
NIED	National Institute for Educational Development
UNAM	University of Namibia

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*“If God sends us on stony paths, He will provide us with strong shoes.”*

*Alexander MacLaren*

First and foremost, I thank my Heavenly Father that this arduous task has finally come to fruition. My Lord and Saviour gets all the glory not only for restoring my body, but also for providing me with strong shoes to tread on the rocky road.

I have the following “strong shoes” to thank: The primary school teachers and their principals from the Okahandja Circuit who participated in this study. Thank you for taking the time to make your voices heard.

My main supervisor, Dr Villet, the Dean of the Faculty of Education, and my co-supervisor, Dr Wolfaardt. Without your guidance, thorough feedback and support, this thesis would not have happened.

My dear friend and colleague, Dr Perien Boer, to whom I am deeply indebted for her ceaseless encouragement, pep talks and most of all, for believing in me. Your sometimes annoying “write something every day”, will be etched on my memory forever.

To my loving husband, Hans, for his patience, sacrifices and unconditional support. My eternal gratitude goes to my precious daughters, Hayley, Sadie and Alexa-Kay, and my boys, Emill and Anesh for their understanding and patience throughout my studies. They know the reason why they have been my strongest motivation to complete my thesis.

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late parents and my siblings who have always believed in me; not forgetting my precious grandchildren, Evan, Ariana and Ariella, who innocently inspired me.

“We gain strength, and courage, and confidence by each experience in which we really stop to look fear in the face...we must do that which we think we cannot.”

*Eleanor Roosevelt*

## DECLARATION

I, Anne-Marie Sauer, hereby declare that this study is my own work and is a true reflection of my research, and that this work, or any part thereof has not been submitted for a degree at any other institution.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Orientation of the Study

The English Language Proficiency Programme (ELPP) was developed by the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) because of the findings that “many Namibian teachers and student teachers had a low level of [English language] proficiency” (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2010, p.1). The ELPP was aimed at developing and improving the “language proficiency of Namibian teachers and thus enhance the quality of teaching and learning for Namibian children” (MoE, 2010, p. 2). Dippenaar (2004) defines language proficiency as the ability to communicate effectively in the target language by using all four skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening).

In September 2011, the English Language Proficiency Test (ELPT) was written country-wide to establish the English proficiency level of individual teachers and final year student teachers. It was the outcome of this ELPT that has put the issue of Namibian teachers’ English language proficiency in the spotlight when Kisting reported in a local newspaper that “a staggering 98 per cent of Namibian teachers — or 22 089— cannot read, write and speak English well enough” (2011, p.1). Areas of particular concern were Lower Primary (LP) and untrained teachers’ level of English (MoE, 2010). Harris (as cited in Kisting, 2012) cites evidence of poorer results in maths classes taught by older teachers who have low English levels, compared to classes taught by younger teachers whose competence in English is higher because of better training.

This situation was compounded when the majority of novice teachers who joined the teaching corps in 2013 were placed on intermediate and pre-intermediate levels of

English language proficiency, based on their results in the ELPP placement test (University Central Consultancy Bureau [UCCB], 2012). Dippenaar and Peyper (2011) argue that teacher language proficiency is central to learner success; where a teacher is not proficient the likelihood of a learner experiencing success is minimal. The poor English language proficiency of the teachers “will negatively impact on the quality of teaching and learning at all phases of education, including tertiary level” (MoE, 2010, p. 2).

The researcher’s own workplace experience as a teacher-educator and tutor of the ELPP, as well as views expressed by the teacher unions (Tjihenuna, 2014) has prompted the undertaking of this study to investigate how primary school teachers view the ELPP. Allowing the teachers to articulate their perceptions about the programme could determine if and to what extent the programme will be successful in its implementation. Countries such as South Africa, Turkey, the Philippines, and Korea that are facing similar problems with English language proficiency might find the information useful in terms of English education policy and practices.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The ELPP was implemented in 2011 to improve the English language proficiency of all teachers in Namibia. Self-study packs were provided to 22 000 teachers according to the level determined by their result in the Placement Test which was written in September 2011. Further support was provided at every school in the form of an ELPP School Facilitator trained by UNAM to tutor pre-intermediate and intermediate teachers. These face-to-face tutoring sessions took place on Saturdays from March to June 2015. This was done to assist the teachers and prepare them for the Exit test administered in July 2015. Discord between the teachers’ unions and the MoE emerged

when this intervention process was boycotted “due to the timing of the course and levels of proficiency according to which the participants will be rated” (Tjihenuna, 2014, p. 2).

Coetzee-Van Rooy (2011) argues that studies of affective factors such as perceptions are important because at the very basic level it is believed that perceptions influence behaviour. This study examined the views and perceptions of primary school teachers in the Okahandja Circuit of the Otjozondjupa Education Region about the ELPP and how their perceptions might have influenced the ELPP implementation. Furthermore, the study explored the teachers’ experience with the ELPP to establish whether it reached its goal of honing the teachers’ English language skills. The Okahandja Circuit was chosen as focus for this study for two reasons. Firstly, the researcher is familiar with the environment and did not foresee any difficulty getting access to participants at schools Secondly, schools in Windhoek are saturated with students doing their research.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The following questions gave direction to the study:

- 1.3.1 What are primary school teachers’ perceptions of the ELPP in the Okahandja Circuit?
- 1.3.2 How do primary school teachers in the Okahandja Circuit perceive their own English language proficiency?
- 1.3.3 To what extent do the teachers’ perceptions in the Okahandja Circuit influence their attitude towards the ELPP?
- 1.3.4 What could be done to ensure the effective participation in the ELPP by the teachers in the Okahandja Circuit?

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

It is envisaged that this study will make several contributions to understanding the environment within which teacher pre- and in-service training takes place. Thus, more in-depth knowledge could be provided about teachers' needs and problems which could lead to redesigning teacher training programmes and incorporating language training. Harris (as cited in Kisting, 2012) stated that many teachers were not ready, could not express themselves and were not trained in English. These were the same sentiments shared by many teachers during the focus group interviews. Uys, van der Walt, van den Berg and Botha (2007) opine that language skills are highly perishable and will deteriorate unless frequently used. Therefore, language courses need to be extensive and ongoing spanning the four years required for obtaining a teaching qualification. This study, therefore, highlighted the voices of the teachers, the recipients of the programme and also provided useful insights into helping teachers develop their English language proficiency. Upgrading the teachers' proficiency and skills will have an effect on learners' attainment of academic literacy (Uys et al., 2007).

#### **1.5 Limitations of the Study**

The main limitation of the study related to the sample size of the quantitative phase. This study presents the findings and voices of a small group of participants (73 teachers), and therefore cannot be generalised or transferred to the broader population. Although the small sample (43.9%) does not allow for generalisation of findings, West (2012) argues that it is possible when integrating the two phases. Larger samples across different regions might make generalisation of findings possible.

Data collection was also hampered by the teachers' reluctance to participate in yet another study that hints at their proficiency in English. This resulted in a response rate

of 43.9% as only 73 questionnaires were returned. In addition, three focus groups withdrew from the envisaged six focus groups. The inherent problem of self-reported data resulted in teachers not reflecting their actual proficiency (Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2011). However, through triangulation, reliability and validity of collected data were ensured.

### **1.6 Delimitations of the Study**

The study was carried out at 6 primary schools in the Okahandja Circuit. The study group was limited to all the teachers at the six primary schools in the Okahandja Circuit who underwent the ELPP training. The population comprised 166 teachers in the Lower and Upper primary phases at six primary schools across disciplines. The representative sample included male and female novice and experienced teachers in all age groups.

### **1.7 Definition of Terms**

The following is a list of terms used in this study:

**Code-Switching (CS):** Crystal (as cited in Skiba, 1997) argues that code-switching occurs between bilinguals when an individual may not be able to express him/herself in one language and so switches to the other to compensate for the deficiency. In this study, the teachers admitted that they switch between languages to make their learners understand the content. This was done because the learners in the Okahandja primary schools included those from the surrounding farms who do not speak or understand English.

**Demotivation:** “Specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioural intention or an ongoing action” (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 143). Other

researchers (Arai, 2004; Falout and Maruyama, 2004; Tsuchiya, 2006) include internal factors such as lack of self-confidence and negative attitude. In this study, the demotivating factors were identified as negative attitudes, anxiety, learning contents and materials, test scores, reduced self-confidence and failing memories.

**Language Proficiency:** Is the ability to effectively communicate in the target language by using all four skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) as mediating tools (Dippenaar, 2004). For the purpose of this study, it referred specifically to the English language proficiency required of teachers.

**Motivation:** Dörnyei, (2002) identifies motivation as “why people decide to do something, how long they are willing to sustain the activity [and] how hard they are going to pursue it” (p. 8). In this study, the discrepancy between the ideal selves and the teachers’ current selves motivated them to improve their levels of proficiency.

**Perception:** Refers to the subjective process of acquiring, interpreting, and organising sensory information. Survey questions that assess perception, as opposed to those assessing factual knowledge, are aimed at identifying the processes that (a) underlie how individuals acquire, interpret, organize, and, generally make sense of (i.e. form beliefs about) the environment in which they live; and (b) help measure the extent to which such perceptions affect individual behaviors and attitudes as a function of an individual's past experiences, biological makeup, expectations, goals, and/or culture (Lavrakas, 2008).

**Proficiency Test:** Hughes (2010) defines proficiency tests as those that “are designed to measure people’s ability in a language regardless of any training they may have had in that language” (p.11).

**Veteran Teachers:** For the proposed study, the term refers to the teachers who are between 40 and 55 years old. These are also the ECD and BETD holders and would normally teach the lower primary grades. The term included the teachers who received their teacher training in Afrikaans and had the most teaching experience.

### **1.8 Summary**

This chapter provides an introduction to the study and includes the background to the study. It gives a brief overview of the statement of the problem, states the questions pertinent to the study, and outlines the significance and delimitation of the study. Some limitations to the study were identified and relevant terminologies defined.

In the next chapter, the literature review is presented and the appropriateness of using Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System Theory (L2MSST) is discussed.

## **CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides an overview of the scholarly writings pertinent to the study that probed the perceptions of primary school teachers on the English Language Proficiency Programme in the Okahandja Circuit. Taking into account the plethora of literature on English language proficiency (ELP), this chapter addressed only the salient points that linked it to the four research questions:

- What are primary school teachers' perceptions of the ELPP in the Okahandja Circuit?
- How do primary school teachers in the Okahandja Circuit perceive their own English language proficiency?
- To what extent do the teachers' perceptions, in the Okahandja Circuit, influence their attitude towards the ELPP?
- What could be done to ensure the effective participation in the ELPP by the teachers in the Okahandja Circuit?

The review has been organised into three sections. First, the use of Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System Theory (L2MSST) as the underlying theoretical framework, is explained. The second section explores literature generic to the issue of ELP by situating the study in its historical context, exploring the construct of teacher perceptions, and factors that affect second language learning, acquisition and proficiency in adulthood. This is followed by discussions on demotivating factors and perceived barriers caused by low ELP. Furthermore, it describes demotivating factors and ends with providing measures for effective participation. Finally, it concludes with a summary of the ideas discussed in this chapter.

## 2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study pivots on Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System Theory (L2MSST), a comprehensive theory which integrates the notions of perception, motivation, and language learning (Coetzee-van Rooy, 2011). The L2 Motivational Self System Theory comprises the following three components:

- The **Ideal L2 self** which is the language-specific part of the ideal self that relates to the notion that if the person we would like to become speaks an L2, the ideal self would be a powerful motivator to learn an L2 because of the desire to reduce the discrepancy between our actual and ideal selves.
- The **Ought-to L2 self** which is related to the attributes one believes one ought to possess to meet expectations and avoid negative outcomes.
- The **L2 Learning experience** which concerns the effect of the immediate learning environment and experiences of language learning.(Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 84-88)

Dörnyei (2002) identifies motivation as “why people decide to do something, how long they are willing to sustain the activity [and] how hard they are going to pursue it” (p. 8). The theory states that if language learners are aware of the discrepancy between their actual L2 self and their ideal L2 self, such awareness will result in sustained motivation and effort that lead to higher achievement in language learning (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). The inverse is also true, if teachers overestimate their proficiency in English their motivation to expend efforts in the intervention programme will be diminished and they would probably not be highly motivated to sustain efforts in the ELPP (Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2011).

In this study, the conceptual framework was used in the following way:

- **The Ideal L2 self** is reflected in the study by the teachers' vision of themselves as competent users of the L2 in the future (Lamb, 2017). This motive serves as an active aspiration towards achieving the desired goal of English language proficiency. This study found that there was a discrepancy between the teachers' perceived and actual level of proficiency. With the exception of a few older teachers, most of the teachers overestimated their ELP levels.
- **The Ought-to L2 self** is reflected by the participants' conceptions of what other people believe they 'ought to' be like in future (Lamb, 2017). It includes attributes one believes one ought to possess to meet expectations and avoid negative outcomes. During the interviews, the teachers admitted that they felt humiliated by the leaking of the ELP placement results and the consequent newspaper headlines. Therefore, the pre-intermediate and intermediate teachers attended the tutorials to improve their levels amid adverse publicity and challenging situations.
- **The L2 Learning experience** has to do with the teachers' attitudes to, experiences of, the effect of the immediate learning environment and experiences of language learning. The study revealed that many teachers were disgruntled with the way the process was handled. According to them, the test was ill-timed and they were not properly informed of the reasons for the test. Also, that it was too hot in the zinc classroom to think properly.

Coetzee-Van Rooy (2011) opines that the theory provides a compelling rationale for the importance of studies of perceptions of English proficiency in South Africa. Due to similar historical contexts between the two countries, it is also appropriate in the Namibian context.

### **2.3 Historical Context of English Language Proficiency (ELP)**

Proficiency, as defined by Knox (1980), is a level of competence, adeptness, and confident control which is based on expertise, skill and knowledge acquired through education and experience. Teachers' ELP has always been a cause for concern and rightly so. Krugel and Fourie (2014) found a clear correlation between the proficiency of learners and teachers, and argue that learners will not achieve their full potential if they are taught by teachers with unsatisfactory levels of ELP. For that reason, the Ministry of Education, not only in Namibia, but also in countries like the Philippines (Crisostomo, 2003), United Arab Emirates (Zaman, 2012), Turkey, the United States and East Asia (Butler, 2004) had to bow to public pressure on the issue of testing teachers' ELP.

In the Philippines, the blame for the teachers' low ELP was put on the change of the medium of instruction from English to Filipino. All the English teachers have to undertake an English proficiency test to determine whether they are qualified to teach, and those who fail, have to undergo a re-training programme (Crisostomo, 2003).

In the United Arab Emirates, the Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) expects their teachers to achieve minimum scores in Standard English proficiency tests like the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Whereas Arabic Language and Islamic Studies teachers are exempted from this requirement, different pass rates apply to teachers in the other fields. The English language teachers need to be at the highest band of proficiency, followed by the science and mathematics teachers. The latest results indicated that 90% of English language teachers have the required levels of ELP, but only about 50% of science and mathematics teachers have the recommended knowledge of English. The ELPP was therefore introduced as a

professional development programme that offers six hours of training per week to teachers (Zaman, 2012).

For the past decade, prospective teachers in Hong Kong have been subjected to an English proficiency test because the public has lost confidence in them and blame the learners' poor performance in English on the teachers' low English proficiency. Only those who pass the exam are considered qualified to teach. In 2013 only 45.2% of the 1357 candidates who wrote the English language proficiency test, passed the test. Although it was an improvement of the previous year's pass rate of 38.5 per cent, the public was worried. Nonetheless, the test seems to be an effective tool for keeping the incompetent away from the classroom (South China Morning Post, 2013).

Korean, Taiwanese and Japanese teachers perceived their proficiency levels to be lower than the minimum levels they thought necessary to teach English at primary schools. According to Butler (2004), such perceived shortfalls could influence their confidence, pedagogical skills, teaching content, student motivation and ultimately their learners' success in acquiring English.

In Namibia, the results of the nationwide placement test written in 2011 revealed that more than 70% of teachers in the senior secondary phase and 63% in the junior secondary phase were not adequately proficient in English (Kisting, 2017). At primary school level, about 52% of lower primary school teachers struggled with the official language, while about 61% faced English language difficulties. Of the 23 000 teachers who took the test, 7 850 (35.8%) of the teachers were placed at the pre-intermediate level of ELP, 10 094 (42.9%) were placed at the intermediate level, and 4 145 (19.6%) were placed at the advanced level of ELP. A mere 561 (1.6%) teachers achieved an apt level of proficiency and were exempted (Kisting, 2017).

Johanna Absalom, the spokesperson of the then MoE, stated that the English Language Proficiency Programme (ELPP) was developed after a thorough analysis and study of the education system revealed that both the teaching of the mother tongue and of English were regrettably poor in primary schools. Initially, the ELPP caused controversy in the education circles and was temporarily put on hold after a boycott from the teachers, but resumed with face-to-face sessions on 21 June 2014. These sessions were offered only to the teachers at the pre-intermediate and intermediate levels, and on Saturdays for a period of three months. Whereas Haingura, the secretary-general of the Namibia National Teachers' Union (Nantu) encouraged its members to attend the face-to-face sessions, the president of the Teachers' Union of Namibia (TUN), Kavihuha offered many reasons for its members not to attend (Tjihenuna, 2014).

Samson and Collins (2012) found that evaluation studies established that ELP programmes have been effective and successful in raising educational standards. It is thus worth exploring the teachers' experience with the ELPP to establish whether it reached its goal since its inception in 2011.

#### **2.4 Understanding the Construct of Perceptions**

Lavrakas (2008) defines perception as the subjective process of acquiring, interpreting, and organising sensory information. Survey questions that assess perception, as opposed to those assessing factual knowledge, are aimed at identifying the processes that (a) underlie how individuals acquire, interpret, organise, and, generally make sense of (i.e. form beliefs about) the environment in which they live; and (b) help measure the extent to which such perceptions affect individual behaviours and attitudes as a function of an individual's past experiences, biological makeup,

expectations, goals, and/or culture. In addition, Lavrakas (2008) posits that individual perception influences opinion, judgment, understanding of a situation or person, and meaning of an experience.

Furthermore, Van den Berg and Ros (1999) state that the perceptions of teachers speak to their concerns and consequently, represent their “subjective realities” (p. 879). Teacher concern, defined as “the questions, uncertainties, and possible resistance that teachers may have in response to new situations and/or changing demands” influences the success with which external reforms will be implemented in local school contexts (Van den Berg & Ros, 1999, p. 880).

#### **2.4.1 Teachers’ Perceptions of the ELPP in Namibia**

Nha and Burns (2014) observe that many teachers in Anglophone countries face a lot of challenges due to lack of proper training and preparation to use English as medium of instruction. For that reason, the ELPP for teachers has been developed and implemented to improve teachers’ level of ELP and to ensure that they teach their subjects effectively. Samson and Collins (2012) found that these programmes have been effective and successful in raising educational standards. This study, therefore, explored the teachers’ experience with the ELPP to see if it has accomplished its goal of improving the teachers’ ELP.

The English Language Proficiency Programme (ELPP) was developed after a thorough analysis and study of the education system revealed that both the teaching of the mother tongue and of English were regrettably poor in primary schools (Tjihenuna, 2014). This had serious repercussions for education, and therefore the ELPP was implemented in 2011 as a panacea for Namibian teachers’ ELP problems because

“there is 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” (Kisting, 2011, p. 2). Uys et al. (2007) concur that upgrading teachers’ proficiency and skills have an effect on learners’ attainment of academic literacy.

Although it was not the aim of this study to test the teachers’ ELP to see if there was an improvement, the countless grammatical errors and inability to answer some of the questions in the questionnaire and interviews were detected. It seems that after 28 years of using English as an official language and medium of instruction, many teachers still lack an apt level of ELP.

#### **2.4.2 Discrepancy between Teachers’ Perceived and Actual Levels of ELP**

Elder (2001) defines teacher language proficiency as language skills that “encompass everything that ‘normal’ language users might be expected to be able to do in the context of both formal and informal communication as well as a range of specialist skills” (p. 152). These specialist skills, according to Uys et al. (2005), include an expert command of the linguistic features of the medium of instruction (MoI), command of subject-specific language and terminology and knowledge about second language acquisition. Butler (2004) posits that the teacher factor, particularly their lack of English proficiency, has been pointed out as one of the biggest obstacles for successful teaching and learning of English.

The gap between the teachers’ perceived and actual levels of ELP resulted in sustained motivation and effort that led to higher achievement, as many teachers improved on their results. This is in accordance with Dörnyei and Ushioda’s (2011) claim that awareness of the discrepancy between the ideal L2 self and the actual L2 self will lead

to sustained motivation and effort that will result in higher achievement in language learning.

The self-evaluations of the teachers' perceived levels revealed that the youngest teachers perceived their ELP level as highly satisfactory or expected to be exempted while the majority of the older teachers either rated their ELP levels as acceptable, or admitted that it needed attention. According to Coetzee-Van Rooy (2011), inflated self-perceptions of proficiency will have some implications for teaching English to speakers of African languages in South Africa. If a discrepancy between perceptions and scores exists, it will have an impact on the teachers' attitude as will be seen in the next section.

## **2.5 Factors that Influence English Language Learning in Adulthood**

The differing levels of improvement in the teachers' post-test results (see Table 4.12) are indicative of the complex interplay of internal and external factors when adults learn a new language ("Factors that influence SLA", 2012). This discussion centres on factors that influence English learning in adulthood.

### **2.5.1 Attitudes and Motivation in Second Language Learning**

Krashen (1981) posits that adults have "two independent systems for developing ability in second languages, subconscious language acquisition and conscious language learning" (p. 1). In language learning, the adult makes a conscious effort to know about the language, for example knowledge of grammar rules through formal instruction.

Second language acquisition (SLA) as defined by Makewa, Role and Tuguta (2013) is the process of learning a second language after a first language is already established. Starks and Paltridge (1996) argue that learning a language is closely related to the attitudes towards the language. While there are many factors affecting this process, Gardner (1985) regards motivation and attitude as the most influential factors in SLA. Contrary to Gardner's (1985) theory, the teachers' positive attitude towards the ELPP (see Table 4.11) and their desire for a suitable level of proficiency (see Table 4.16), did not produce the results they were hoping for. This illustrates that other factors were clearly at work. The teachers cited age, fatigue, irrelevant content, coercion and not enough time as the main culprits. This finding is in accord with Wang's (1999) observation that age affects L2 acquisition.

Nunan (2011) also disproves the myth that adults should learn a second language in the same way as children learn their first language. He confirms that this idea was widely dismissed by researchers when they found no similarities between first and second language acquisition. Nunan (2011) claims that the process seems easier for a young child because of the more advanced cognitive development, and because of the deeply immersed environment in which the child is bombarded with the language for up to ten hours a day (the natural approach). In the case of adults (the teachers), the context and situation are very different. Adults have work and family commitments, and limited time to study the language (Nunan, 2011).

According to Makewa et al. (2013), learning environments in which students are autonomous in their learning, receive informative feedback concerning their progress, experience a friendly and positive atmosphere, and interact with each other during the learning process are likely to promote intrinsic motivation. Oláh (2010) supports the

notion that explicit attention to vocabulary and comprehension can benefit most students in a classroom, and agrees that every teacher is a language teacher. Lamb (2017) postulates that the teachers' visions of themselves as competent users of the L2 will lead to the desired goal.

The differences in ELP levels of the teachers in this study are also constant with the language acquisition theories of Krashen (1981) that the more exposure and interaction, the better the chances of effective language acquisition. Moreover, Butler (2004) argues that should a gap be revealed between teachers' perceptions of their English proficiency and the level they feel is needed to teach, the degree to which they feel they need to improve their English language proficiency will be determined.

The younger teachers' not only had higher ELP levels, but they were more confident and more articulate during the focus group interviews. This could be attributed to the fact that they had approximately ten to twelve years of being educated through the medium of English. The older teachers, however, had fewer opportunities for acquiring English and fewer years of experience in ESL learning. Furthermore, the low English language proficiency of the older LP teachers could be attributed to the training they received when Afrikaans was the medium of instruction, and also the fact that they teach in Mother Tongue. The younger teachers were more proficient, better qualified, more confident and more articulate than their older colleagues.

### **2.5.2 Demotivating Factors**

Dörnyei (2001) defines demotivation as "specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioural intention or an ongoing action" (p. 143). Many researchers (Arai, 2004; Falout and Maruyama, 2004; Tsuchiya, 2006)

agree that demotivation is also caused by internal factors such as reduced self-confidence and negative attitude. Lee and Oh (2011) state that demotivation can have a profound negative impact on language learning, and therefore needs to be eliminated by exploring the reasons and causes of demotivation. The qualitative findings confirmed that the teachers' motivation was threatened by external as well as internal factors. Sakai and Kikuchi (2008) identified six factors that lead to de-motivation:

#### **2.5.2.1 Anxiety**

According to Makewa et al. (2013), anxiety interferes with second language learning and performance. Scovel (as cited in Makewa et al., 2013), in an attempt to solve the enigmatic relationship between anxiety and second language learning recommends that researchers should be specific about the type of anxiety to be measured. Although some studies found that learners with higher levels of anxiety showed higher achievement scores, this study found a negative relationship between anxiety and the teachers' performance in the ELPT.

#### **2.5.2.2 Lack of Intrinsic Motivation**

According to Dörnyei (1994), intrinsically motivated behaviours are the ones where the rewards are internal, for example, the joy of doing a particular activity or satisfying one's curiosity. Dörnyei (1994) further defines self-confidence as the belief that one has the ability to produce results, accomplish goals or perform tasks competently. Falout and Maruyama (2004) found reduced self-confidence and attitude toward the L2 itself as the greatest de-motivators.

In addition, Dörnyei (2001) opines that future self-guides, and the ideal L2 self in particular, function as potent motivators for L2 learners in a variety of learning

environments, irrespective of age or learning situation. Lamb (2017) opines that frustrating classroom experiences engender negative attitudes which discourage extra-curricular practice and lowering confidence further. Falout and Maruyama (2004) argue that a teacher can sway the attitude of group members as well as modify a student's own self-confidence.

### **2.5.2.3 Teacher Competence and Teaching Styles**

Participants in Falout and Maruyama's (2004) study identified the teacher as the most interrelated and influential on other factors - after all, it is the teacher who directs the course and the pace. The teacher encompasses everything from personality and commitment to competence and teaching method (Falout & Maruyama, 2004). Knox (1980) supports this argument with the statement that effective teachers possess enthusiasm, humour, cultural awareness and clarity of explanation. Lamb (2017) views the teacher with low enthusiasm for the subject, unfriendly demeanour and lack of attention to individual needs, not only as a de-motivator, but also as one who lacks work motivation. This is in line with Lamb (2017), who argues that students are more actively involved in class activities and feel more motivated if their teachers are motivated. Falout and Maruyama (2004) opine that there is not much that can be done to change the L2 itself, but a teacher certainly can shape the perception of it.

### **2.5.2.4 Learning Contents and Materials**

Dörnyei (1994) opines that the syllabus of the course should be relevant by basing it on needs analysis, and involving the students in the actual planning of the course programme. Dörnyei's (1994) study confirmed that attractive course content that uses authentic materials within students' grasp as well as unusual and exotic supplementary

materials, recordings and visual aids will increase motivation. Another good idea will be to discuss the choice of teaching materials with the students (Dörnyei, 1994).

#### **2.5.2.5 Test Scores**

Poor test results are also considered demotivating. The teachers in this study wrote the first test unwillingly and as a result, most of them remained at the same level of proficiency in the first year. According to Dörnyei (2001), this tendency may be large for learners whose motivation is low, therefore teachers may give some encouragement or set goals for the next test. The teachers who progressed to higher levels and even exited the programme ascribe it to their change in attitude.

In accordance with Wang's (1999) observation, age affects L2 acquisition. The older participants in Wang's study (1999) endorsed this belief and cited failing memories, stiff tongue muscles that affect pronunciation, and commitments which result in a lack of concentration and energy for learning English as perceived barriers.

#### **2.5.2.6 Inadequate School Facilities**

Makewa et al. (2013) argue that learning resources play an important role in the English teaching process by making learning more effective. Falout and Maruyama (2004) cite big groups, incorrect ELP levels and frequent change of teachers as demotivating factors.

### **2.6 Challenges and Perceived Barriers caused by Teachers' deficient ELP**

The teachers indicated heavy workload, not enough time, not being motivated, teaching through English medium of instruction, mother-tongue interference, teachers' limited English proficiency, teacher self-esteem, and large class sizes as challenges.

Not all of these issues will be examined, only those that pertain to the teachers' low or insufficient ELP.

**Lesson Presentation:** One of the challenges that surfaced during lesson presentation, was the issue of mother tongue interference or code-switching. According to Crystal (as cited in Skiba, 1997) code-switching occurs between bilinguals when an individual may not be able to express him/herself in one language and so switches to the other to compensate for the deficiency. Mabule (2015) regards code switching and code mixing as processes that are commonly used throughout the world, and differentiates between the two. He defines code switching as the use of two or more linguistic varieties in the same conversation and code mixing refers to expressions in which a mixture of grammar of one language and another language is used without altering the grammar of the first language used (Mabule, 2015). He further argues that teachers should not be ashamed when they code-switch or code-mix as it is a useful linguistic tool when the teacher uses it to explain a point in another language as certain words and phrases are more suited in a specific language. Skiba (1997) argues that the switching is used as an effective teaching strategy for second language learning.

Crandall (as cited in Uys et al., 2007) argue that learners may fail to understand academic concepts through the language they are still learning because their subject content teachers are incapable of assisting them to do so. Dippenaar and Peyper (2011) support this notion by asserting that proficient teachers are paramount for the success in the classroom and therefore need to be adequately prepared during their studies.

Oláh (2010) sees the integration of language and content instruction as the solution to this problem. He further opines that all teachers need to know how phonology, lexicon, syntax and discourse features affect understanding of content. That means that teacher

at every content area need to learn how we talk (and write) impacts learners' learning of subject-area knowledge (Oláh, 2010). Dippenaar and Peyper (2011) agree that success in the classroom depends on the teachers' discourse and interactive skills, and requires effective communication skills and a high level of language proficiency. Oláh (2010) argues that all teachers need to act in the awareness that they are language teachers since all teachers of all levels, subjects and learner populations teach language every day. Uys (2006) recommends that language modules which focus on teacher proficiency (English for Teachers; ELP) should be run for at least three years.

## **2.7 Measures for Effective Participation in the ELPP**

Positive encouragement and motivation, incentives, teacher training programmes and continued support will be explored as some of the measures that would guarantee effective participation in the ELPP.

### **2.7.1 Positive Encouragement and Motivation**

Dörnyei, (2002) identifies motivation as “why people decide to do something, how long they are willing to sustain the activity [and] how hard they are going to pursue it (p. 8).” Language learners' motivation is considered one of the critical factors which influence learning effect (Csizer & Dörnyei, 2005; Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Gardner (1985) believes that motivation comprises three components: effort, desire to learn the language and favourable attitudes toward learning the language. Gardner and Lambert (1972) divided attitudinal and motivational factors into instrumental and integrative motivation. Instrumental motivation means studying a language for practical reasons such as getting a job or a degree, for higher salaries or passing an English course, while integrative motivation refers to a learner's desire to communicate or to integrate with members of the target language community.

The teachers' motivation can also be explained by Dörnyei's L2MSST. The ELPT scores showed that the teachers overestimated their ELP levels because they saw themselves as competent users of the English language. According to Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011), the ideal L2 self is formed when an individual visualises positive aspects of learning outcomes such as a good job or a promotion at work. This motive, the discrepancy between the ideal and the current state, serves as an active aspiration towards achieving the desired goal of English language proficiency. The ought-to L2 reflects the attributes one believes one ought to possess in order to meet expectations and to avoid negative aspects of the learning outcomes (Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011). The L2 learning experience focuses on the learners' real and present experience.

Falout and Muruyama (2004) opine that the learner's proficiency level is a critical factor in predicting motivation. Dörnyei (1994) posits that students' self-confidence should be developed by projecting the belief that they will achieve their goal and helping them to develop realistic expectations of what can be achieved in a given period. In addition, favourable self-perceptions of competence in L2 must be promoted and student anxiety decreased by creating a supportive and accepting learning environment in the L2 classroom (Dörnyei, 1994). This notion is supported by Doff (1987) who argues that a teacher's confidence in the classroom is undermined by a poor command of the English language which can affect the self-esteem and professional status of the teacher and interfere with simple teaching procedures.

### **2.7.2 Incentives**

According to Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011), the ideal L2 self would be a powerful motivator to learn an L2 because of the desire to reduce the discrepancy between our actual and ideal selves. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) acknowledge the insufficient

emphasis of motivational issues in L2 teacher education as one of the reasons why the teaching profession is struggling with serious difficulties that overshadow the satisfaction with the inherent qualities of the job. Other factors that contribute to the erosion of teacher motivation include growing restrictions on teachers' autonomy, the difficulty of maintaining intellectual challenge in the face of repetitive content and routinised classroom practices, and inadequate career structure to generate effective motivational pathways, and economic conditions which are usually inferior to those of other service professions with comparable qualifications (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

### **2.7.3 Teacher Training Programmes**

Uys et al. (2007) recommend extensive and compulsory training in L2MI should prevail over some of the more generic courses. Since language skills are highly perishable and will deteriorate unless frequently used, language courses need to be extensive and ongoing, spanning the four years required for obtaining a teaching qualification (Uys et al., 2007). They further recommend that subject content lecturers at teacher-training institutions should become involved in the teaching of language skills in the content classroom and help teacher trainees deconstruct the language of their textbooks (Uys et al., 2007).

### **2.7.4 ELP Support**

Uys et al. (2007) call for in-service training to be extensive and ongoing in the required language, methodological and presentation skills. Furthermore, all teachers who have to teach through the medium of English should be required to obtain a qualification in English medium of instruction. A language proficiency certificate should be issued once adeptness has been assessed and found satisfactory (Uys et al., 2007).

Nunan (2011) debunks the myth that traditional instruction is the best when it comes to language learning. He argues that certain aspects of language pedagogy can be taught more successfully using well-constructed Internet-based programmes than through face-to-face instruction. Teachers can work at their own pace with the time they have at their disposal. Another advantage of online learning programmes is that teachers can learn more in four 30-minute lessons over a week than they would in a two-hour lesson (Nunan, 2011).

Uys et al. (2007) posit that workshops and short courses are notorious for the fleetingness of their influence. This notion is supported by Nunan (2011) who argues that mastering grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation, as well as listening and reading, requires considerable time, effort and a great deal of repetitive practice which is not feasible in the classroom. For that reason, Nunan (2011) recommends language tools and programmes that teachers can access at their convenience, instead of providing costly face-to-face tutorials that *take them away from family and their businesses*. In cases where there are insufficient facilities and financial support, workshops that provide them with a variety of opportunities to communicate on real-life topics or universal issues with peers, both orally and in writing, confidently and without fear might also help. Knox (1980) agrees that learning tasks designed to enhance proficiency must build vocabulary and extend understanding of grammatical usage.

Online learning programmes will also solve the problem of those teachers who need a lot of practice and who are not so confident to speak English when their colleagues are around. Web technology also provides immediate, quite detailed, diagnostic feedback.

The closer the feedback is given to the performance, the more effective it is (Nunan, 2011). Providing immediate, detailed and individualised feedback in face-to-face classroom environments is simply not possible and will definitely not bolster anybody's confidence.

Course materials and learning contents must be more subject-specific. Wang's (1999) study revealed the complexity of adult L2 acquisition and draws attention to the fact that adults are physiologically, psychologically and sociologically more diverse than children. As teachers have specific needs and do not all learn at the same rate, it is therefore wrong to have a one-size-fits-all approach to adult learning. The instructional materials should be adapted to facilitate "real" communication. Glass and Denny (as cited by Wang, 1999) recommended developing "appropriate communicative contexts [in the classroom], which are reflective of social situations and of personal needs" (p. 115).

Long-term and comprehensive in-service training programmes will increase teacher morale. The in-service programmes should be more practical and provide opportunities for the teachers to communicate in real-life situations. Tilahun (2015) argues that subject teachers' English skills must be sharpened and they be provided with opportunities to gain hands-on experience, along with confidence in using English for academic and social life.

### **2.7.5 Teacher Involvement in Policy Making**

Allowing teachers to articulate their views could signal early warning signs of any misconceptions or misunderstandings that need to be addressed

(<http://www.irfocus.co.uk>). Olah (2010) opines that all teachers of all subjects, levels and populations teach language every day and have the right to sit around the table when designing curricula, assessments and instruction for English. Thus, more in-depth knowledge could be provided about teachers' needs and problems which could lead to redesigning teacher training programmes and incorporating language training. Kubow and DeBard (2000) concur that greater attention should be given to teachers' subjective realities because they are the ones assigned primary responsibility for implementing government policies.

## **2.8 Summary**

After 28 years of using English as an official language, medium of instruction and compulsory subject that must be passed at all levels of education, Namibia still faces the challenge of teachers with low ELP. This chapter reviewed literature on teachers' perceptions, factors that influence English language learning in adulthood, demotivating factors, challenges and perceived barriers caused by the teachers' deficient ELP

It also explored the link between the teachers' level of English proficiency and their learners' achievement. The importance of English as the medium of instruction demand a very good command to ensure that effective teaching and learning take place. The study found that the majority of teachers asked for the reinstatement of the ELPP or something similar to improve their ELP. The review explores suggestions that will ensure that a future intervention will be more successful in upgrading the Namibian teacher's ELP.

In the next chapter, the methodology used to collect data for this study is dealt with. It comprehensively describes the research design and the philosophical worldview

proposed in the study, the population, the sample and sampling procedures. Also described are the research instruments, the pilot study, the data-collection procedures and analysis of the collected data. Finally, adherence to ethical considerations is also explained within this chapter.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this explanatory sequential mixed methods study was to gauge primary school teachers' perceptions on the English Language Proficiency Programme (ELPP). For a better understanding of this phenomenon, the study addressed the following research questions:

- 3.1.1 What are primary school teachers' perceptions of the ELPP in the Okahandja Circuit?
- 3.1.2 How do primary school teachers in the Okahandja Circuit perceive their own English language proficiency?
- 3.1.3 To what extent do the teachers' perceptions in the Okahandja Circuit influence their attitude towards the ELPP?
- 3.1.4 What could be done to ensure the effective participation in the ELPP of the teachers in the Okahandja Circuit?

This chapter focuses on the methodology that was used to answer the study's research questions. It comprehensively describes the research design and the philosophical worldview proposed in the study, the population, the sample and sampling procedures. Also described, are the research instruments, the pilot study, the data-collection procedures and analysis of the collected data. Finally, adherence to ethical considerations is also explained within this chapter.

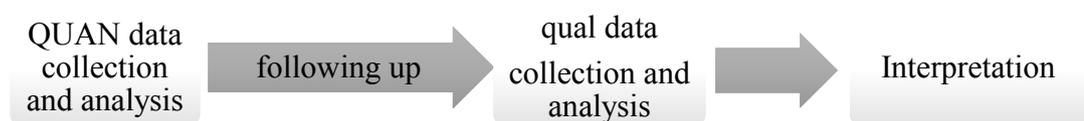
### **3.2 Research Design**

The research design provides a plan on how the research was conducted (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). This study used an explanatory sequential mixed methods design which consisted of two distinct phases (quantitative and qualitative) implemented in a

sequence and within a single study. Creswell & Plano Clark (2011) opine that, when used in combination, quantitative and qualitative methods “complement each other and provide a more complete picture of the research problem” (p. 304).

The philosophical worldview that underpins this study will be explored next. Creswell (2014) sees worldviews as “a general philosophical orientation about the world and the nature of research that a researcher brings to a study” (p. 6). This study is located within a pragmatic worldview and focuses on “what works as the truth regarding the research questions under investigation” (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, p. 7). Thus, the focus is on “the use of multiple methods of data collection to inform the problems under the study” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 41).

The explanatory sequential mixed methods design starts with the collection and analysis of quantitative data, followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data (De Vos et al., 2011). The rationale behind this procedure, is to have the qualitative data help explain in more detail the initial quantitative results. This model is “known as the QUAN-qual model because quantitative data are more heavily weighted than qualitative data” (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009, p. 463.) Figure 3.1 shows the sequential flow of the qualitative and quantitative phases, as well as the fact that priority is unequal and given to the quantitative data (De Vos et al., 2011).



*Figure 3.1: Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Design*

*Source: Adapted from Creswell & Plano Clark (2007, p.73)*

The explanatory sequential mixed methods design was selected as the most appropriate design to identify the predictive power of internal and external factors on the primary

school teachers' perceptions of the ELPP. In this study, the numeric data and results of the quantitative phase identified those factors and "provided a general picture of the research problem" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 304). The quantitative phase was instrumental in customising the qualitative phase with the purposeful selection of the teachers for the focus group interviews and the interview protocol. Thus the qualitative data refined and explained the statistical results by exploring the teachers' views regarding their perceptions in more depth. The results of the quantitative and qualitative phases were integrated during the discussion of the outcomes of the entire study (as diagrammatically shown in Figure 3.1). (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

### **3.3 Population**

De Vos et al. (2011) define a population as the totality of persons with which the research problem is concerned. It is important to differentiate between the target population and the accessible population. According to Gay et al. (2009), the target population is one "to which the researcher would ideally like to generalise the study results" and the accessible population one "from which the researcher can realistically select subjects" (p. 124). The target population of this study comprised all primary school teachers who participated in the ELPP in the thirteen educational regions in Namibia. However, due to a number of constraints in different areas, this study focused on the accessible population which comprised 166 teachers at the six primary schools (urban and rural) in the Okahandja Circuit of the Otjozondjupa Education Region.

### **3.4 Sample and Sampling Procedures**

A sample comprises a subset of the population considered for inclusion in the study (De Vos et al., 2011). A sample, according to Gay et al. (2009), refers to the number

of individuals, items or events selected from a population in such a way that they are characteristically representative of that population. All 166 teachers at the six primary schools formed the sample because it is a small group. Although Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) concur that a larger sample is ideal for greater reliability of the findings and for conducting a more sophisticated analysis, they add that sample size is dependent on the purpose of the study as well as the nature of the population being studied.

In the explanatory sequential design, sampling occurs at two points: the quantitative phase and the qualitative phase (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In the quantitative phase, questionnaires were administered to all 166 teachers, of whom 123 (74.1%) were female and 43 (25.9%) were male teachers, at the six primary schools in the Okahandja Circuit of the Otjozondjupa Education Region. In the qualitative phase, 3 focus groups of 7 teachers in two groups and 8 in one of the groups were purposefully selected based on their perceptions, both positive and negative, in the questionnaire. According to Creswell (2014), purposeful sampling selects people or sites that can best help one understand the central phenomenon. Since the aim of the explanatory design is to explain the quantitative results, the teachers for the qualitative follow-up phase were the same teachers who contributed to the quantitative data set.

In summary, quantitative data were collected from 73 primary school teachers and then followed up with 22 teachers who participated in the qualitative focus group interview.

### **3.5 Research Instruments**

The study made use of a structured closed and open-ended paper-based questionnaire and a semi-structured focus group interview protocol to collect the data. The

questionnaire was used for the quantitative data, and an interview protocol and audio recorder were used for the collection of the qualitative data during the focus group interview.

### **3.5.1 Questionnaire**

In the first, quantitative phase, a structured questionnaire consisting of closed and open-ended questions was used to investigate the teachers' perceived current and desired English proficiency levels. Moreover, the questionnaire established a baseline of areas that teachers feel were important for being proficient in English. The teacher questionnaire (see Appendix F) was self-developed and consisted of 27 questions. It was divided into three sections:

Section A collected biographical information of the teachers and consisted of six questions that required responses to questions on gender, age group, qualifications, area of specialisation, teaching experience and grades that they currently teach.

Section B related to the teachers' current and perceived English language proficiency. It consisted of four questions that required information on teachers' actual and perceived levels of proficiency, before and after the ELPP.

Section C of the questionnaire was subdivided into two parts and addressed teachers' perceptions of the English Language Proficiency Programme (ELPP) itself. Part 1 of this section includes the following items: (a) their opinions about the ELPP test as a measure of their language ability; (b) the effect of the ELPP test results; (c) their views of their English language proficiency needs; (d) their opinions on the effectiveness of the ELPP; (e) challenges they face and (f) how the ELPP can offer support. Part 2 consists of five open-ended questions that require teachers to give reasons for their

closed-ended responses regarding the ELPP. This was done to obtain supplementary information regarding the teachers' attitudes toward English Language Proficiency as their comments could express the challenges they experience during teaching and learning through the medium of English.

### **3.5.2 Focus Group Interviews**

Lambert (2012) regards interviews as a useful way of exploring people's experiences, perspectives and opinions in depth. The purpose of the focus groups is to shed light on the quantitative data already collected and to uncover factors that influence teachers' perceptions. Three focus groups of 7 teachers in each group were purposefully selected at the six primary schools in the Okahandja Circuit of the Otjozondjupa Education Region. An interview protocol was designed from the questionnaire data (see Appendix E). The interviews were semi-structured and based on the questions in the questionnaire. This led to probing more deeply to obtain additional information and also to triangulate the data with that of the questionnaire. All the interviews were audio taped and transcribed later.

### **3.6 Pilot Study**

The pilot study was conducted at one primary school in Okahandja with approximately six teachers to identify shortcomings in the design of the questionnaire and the interview protocol. These teachers did not form part of the sample for the main study later.

Before the piloting, the purpose of the study was explained to all respondents and consent, both verbal and written, was obtained. The teachers were informed that the reasons for the pilot-testing were verifying and improving the data-collection

instruments by incorporating suggested refinements into the final tools. They were then requested to provide feedback on issues of length, readability, time and whether questions were understandable and will yield the necessary information.

According to the pilot results, respondents raised issues with the length of the questionnaire and the focus group interview. Both instruments were modified based on the feedback from the participants. The questions that seemed repetitive, were eliminated and others were rephrased for clarity. Apart from this, the pilot study revealed no substantive changes to either instrument.

### **3.7 Data Collection Procedure**

The data collection procedure took place in two distinct phases, with rigorous quantitative sampling in the first phase and with purposeful sampling in the second. Data were collected with a structured open-ended and closed response questionnaire, followed up with focus group interviews. However, before the commencement of the data-collection process, written permission to conduct the research was obtained from the Permanent Secretary (PS) of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC), the Director of the Otjozondjupa Education Region, as well as the principals at the six primary schools in the Okahandja Circuit (See Appendix C).

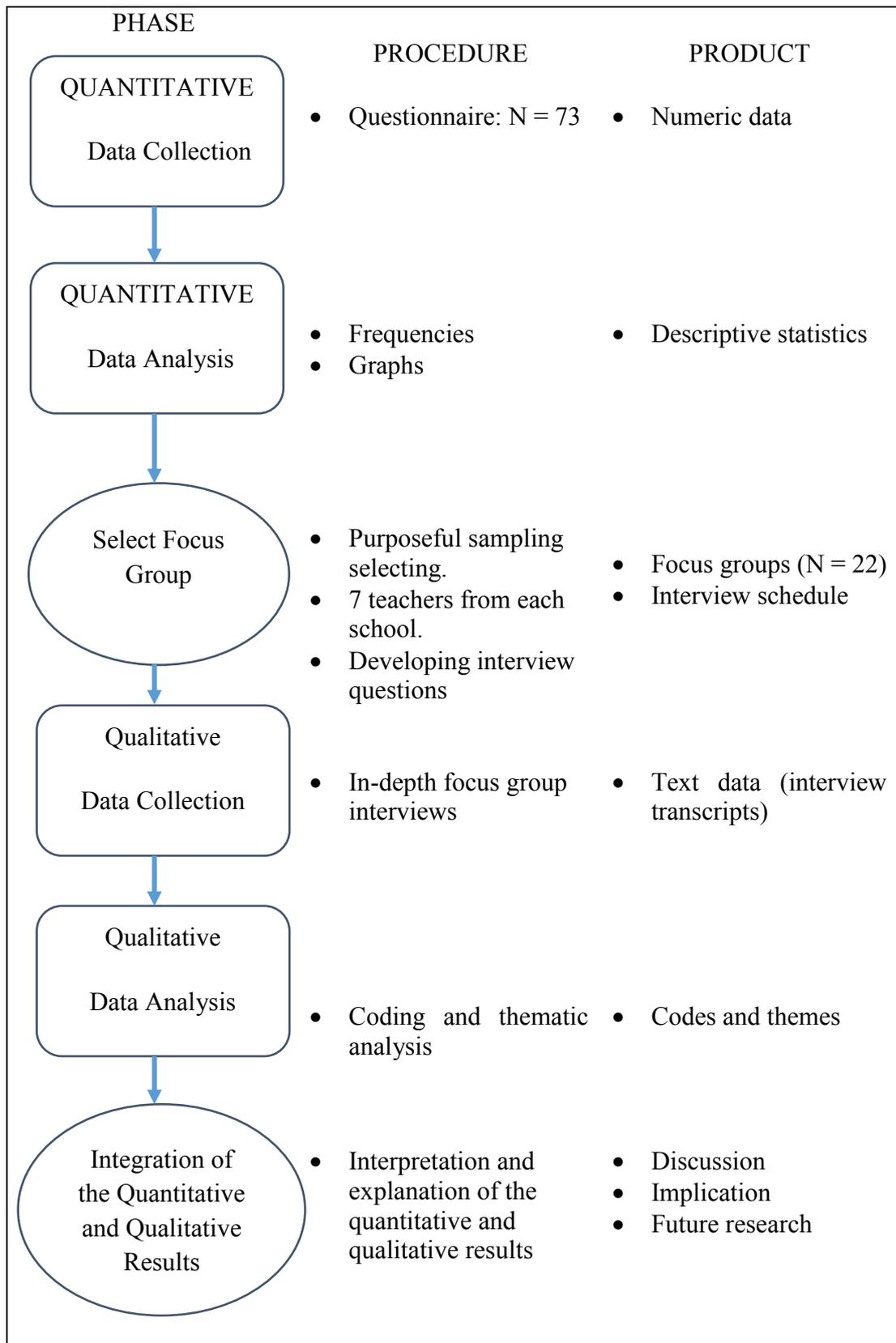
Appointments to meet the principals of the six primary schools were scheduled over the telephone and permission letters (see Appendix B) which included an abstract of the study, were e-mailed. Permission was granted by the six principals who instructed their Heads of Department (HoDs) to take responsibility for the process. Questionnaires were personally delivered to the HoDs and any uncertainties cleared.

To collect quantitative data for the first phase, all 166 teachers were invited to complete the questionnaires on pre-arranged dates. These pre-arranged dates did not interfere with the normal school activities and were carried out in the afternoon. From 166 potential teachers, only 73 returned the questionnaires which constituted a response rate of 43.9%. When queried about the low return rate, HoDs replied that some teachers exercised their right to not participate since the process was voluntary.

After the analysis of the quantitative data, an interview protocol (see Appendix F) was designed from the questionnaire data and seven teachers were purposefully selected at each of the six schools to collect qualitative data that would help explain teachers' perceptions in depth. Although a convenient time to hold the focus group interviews was scheduled with the same teachers who completed the questionnaires and showed an interest in joining the focus groups, teachers at three primary schools later withdrew from the process. So, from the envisaged six focus group interviews with a total of 42 teachers, only 22 teachers participated in the three groups.

### **3.8 Data Analysis Procedure**

Data analysis was undertaken soon after the collection and sorting of the data. The quantitative and qualitative data of the questionnaire and focus group interviews were analysed separately and then datasets were merged to ensure reliability and validity of the findings (see Figure 3.2).



*Figure 3.2: Mixed method sequential explanatory design procedures*

*Source: Adapted from Creswell & Plano Clark (2011, p. 305)*

### **3.8.1 Questionnaires**

The quantitative data analysis comprised mainly descriptive statistics. First, the analysis of the questionnaires was done. Descriptive statistics, such as frequency tables, were used to analyse the responses in the questionnaires. Thereafter, the responses to the open-ended questions were analysed qualitatively. That entailed categorising the teachers' comments and opinions according to the themes identified in the questionnaire responses and the research questions to reveal the ways in which the teachers perceived the issues around the ELPP. In the first, quantitative phase, data were collected using a questionnaire which contained both closed- and open-ended questions. Each questionnaire was assigned a unique number and responses were coded and entered into an Excel spreadsheet. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the biographical profile of the sample and the teachers' perceptions of the ELPP. Frequency distribution tables were formulated to make sense of the collected data (Peyper, 2014). The numeric data were analysed to provide a general understanding of the primary school teachers' perceptions on the ELPP.

### **3.8.2 Focus Group Interviews**

Qualitative data for the second phase were obtained from the semi-structured focus group interviews and accompanying field notes. The qualitative data analysis involved transcription, inter-rater reliability, and agreement to develop labels, codes, and themes. The analysis of the focus group interview data was transcribed according to themes identified in the questionnaire, as well as cluster themes that emanated from the interview data.

Firstly, audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and read and reread for recurring patterns and themes. The focus group interviews and the open-ended questions in Part 2 of the questionnaire not only provided the qualitative data, but gave an in-depth report of questions addressed in the questionnaire. The analysis of the qualitative data refined and explained the questionnaire responses by exploring the teachers' views in more depth.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

This study adhered to the requirements of the University of Namibia Research Ethics Committee (UREC) with the issuing of the ethical clearance certificate obtained from the Centre for Research and Publications (CRP). In order to use principals and teachers from the six primary schools in the Okahandja Circuit, permission was obtained from both the Permanent Secretary and the Director of the Otjozondjupa Education Region (see Appendices A & B)

All six principals received letters detailing the purpose of the study as attachments to emails and this was followed up with telephone calls. This letter of introduction included permission letters from the relevant authorities (see Appendices A, B & C) and a consent form to use the school as a research site. All participants were provided with information about the purpose of the study to ensure informed and voluntary consent (see Appendix F). Teachers signed a consent form indicating their preparedness to participate in the two stages of data collection, that is, the questionnaires and the focus group interviews. Teachers were asked to separate the questionnaires and the informed consent forms before dropping these through the slot of a sealed box. This was done to ensure anonymity of the participants and their schools. Confidentiality was maintained because no names were disclosed in the

research report, although the consent form and questionnaire were correlated to ensure that consent was obtained.

During the briefing session, it was stressed that participation was strictly voluntary which gave participants the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time they felt uncomfortable. In order to minimise risks, participants were informed about the detail of the study, by allowing them to ask questions relating to the study. Permission was sought for the recording of the discussions. Data obtained electronically would be stored on a Personal Computer (PC) which is password-protected and hard copies, in a lockable cabinet. Data will be stored for five years and then reformatted and shredded. Only the supervisors and the researcher have access to stored material.

### **3.10 Summary**

The research methodology used in this study in particular, the research design, population, sample and sampling procedures, research instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis procedures employed to answer the four research questions were described in this chapter. The chapter closed with a detailed explanation of how ethical considerations were maintained throughout the data-collection phase. In the next chapter, the findings are presented.

## **CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

As was stated in Chapter 1, the purpose of this study was to gauge the perceptions of primary school teachers on the English Language Proficiency Programme in the Okahandja Circuit of the Otjozondjupa Education Region. In seeking to understand this phenomenon, the study addressed the following research questions:

- What are primary school teachers' perceptions of the ELPP in the Okahandja Circuit?
- How do primary school teachers in the Okahandja Circuit perceive their own English language proficiency?
- To what extent do the teachers' perceptions, in the Okahandja Circuit, influence their attitude towards the ELPP?
- What could be done to ensure effective participation in the ELPP by the teachers in the Okahandja Circuit?

In order to answer these research questions, this chapter presents the results from the teacher questionnaires, as well as the emerging themes from the focus group interviews.

The explanatory sequential mixed methods design employed in this study, aimed to explain the initial quantitative results with the support of in-depth qualitative data. This two-phase design involved data collection and data analysis carried out in two distinct phases. In the first phase, quantitative questionnaire data were collected from 73 participants at six primary schools in the Okahandja Circuit. The results obtained in this phase were analysed and used to plan the qualitative follow-up. This study made use of descriptive statistics to analyse the data collected with the teacher questionnaire.

Descriptive statistics are procedures that describe numerical data by organising, summarising and interpreting sample data (Monette, Sullivan & DeJong, 2008). In this section the findings of the responses to the teacher questionnaire are discussed first.

The second qualitative phase was conducted via three focus group interviews to explain the quantitative results. The qualitative data helped explain in more detail the initial quantitative results (Creswell, 2014). Data for this phase were gathered by means of focus group interviews that were semi-structured and based on the questions in the teacher questionnaire. The results of the three focus group interviews are presented in narrative form and key quotations are included.

The quantitative data presentation is organised in three sections according to the structured questionnaire. In Section A, the biographical profile of the sample is explained. This is followed by Section B which focuses on perceived and actual proficiency levels of the teachers. Section C examines the teachers' perceptions of the ELPP and is divided into two parts: Part 1 requires closed-ended responses and Part 2 consists of four dichotomous questions followed by open-ended questions to obtain additional qualitative information. Part 2 ends with a completion question that required feedback from teachers about ways to encourage participation in the ELPP.

In the qualitative phase, twenty-three participants and three sites were purposefully selected from the six primary schools in the Okahandja Circuit to obtain supplementary data to better understand the quantitative data. The qualitative sample (twenty-three teachers) consisted of the same teachers who were in the initial quantitative sample (seventy-three teachers). This was done to follow up the quantitative results and explore it in more depth.

Given the nature of the explanatory sequential mixed method design, information from the questionnaires (quantitative) is presented first, followed by that of the focus group interviews (qualitative data). These findings are then triangulated by data from the questionnaire and the focus group interviews. Table 4.1 below indicates a map of the analysis from the instruments and how the research questions have been answered using the respective quantitative and qualitative data.

*Table 4.1: Map of Analysis from Instruments*

RESEARCH QUESTION	QUANTITATIVE DATA	QUALITATIVE DATA
Biographical Information (Refer to Section 4.2)	Questionnaire: Section A: Q1 - Q6	Interview Questions: Q1 - Q3
RQ1: Teachers' Perceptions of the English Language Proficiency Programme. (Refer to Section 4.3)	Questionnaire: Section C, Part 1: Q11 - Q14, Q18 - Q19 Part 2: Q23 - Q25	Interview questions: Q7- Q8, Q15
RQ2: Perceptions of teachers' own English language proficiency (Refer to Section 4.4)	Questionnaire: Section B: Q7- Q10, Q17 Section C, Part 2: Q26	Interview questions: Q12, Q19 - Q20
RQ3: Extent of Teachers' Perceptions on attitude towards the ELPP (Refer to Section 4.5)	Section C, Part 1: Q 15 - Q16, Q20	Interview questions: Q4 - Q6, Q9 - Q11, Q13 - Q14, Q16 - Q18
RQ4: Ways to ensure effective participation in the ELPP (Refer to Section 4.6)	Questionnaire: Section C: Q21 - Q22 Section C, Part 2: Q27	Interview questions: Q21 - Q 22

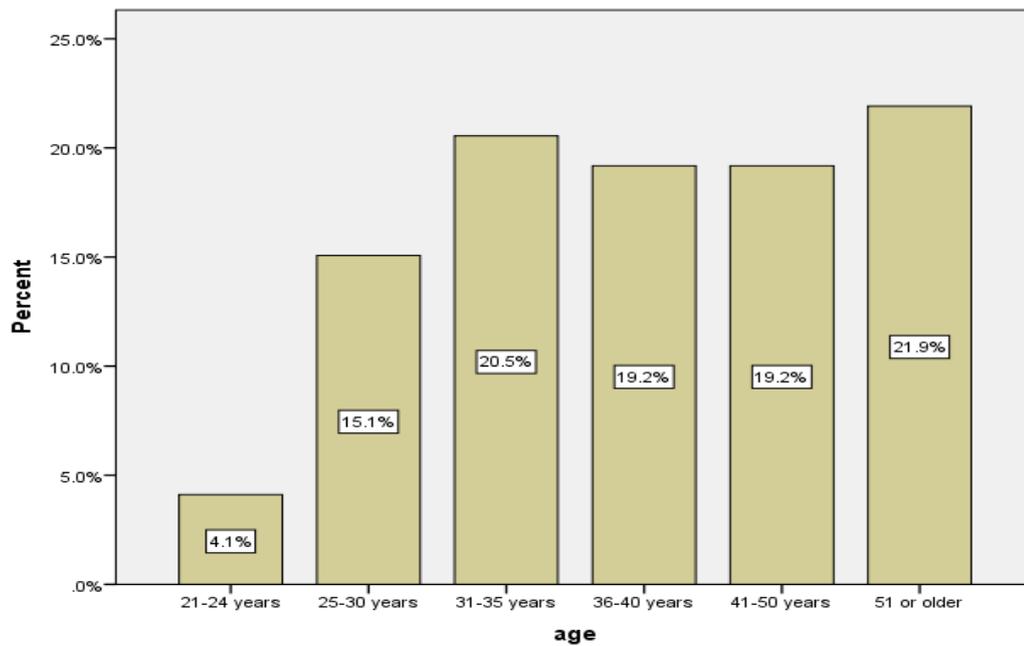
## **4.2 Biographical Information**

### **4.2.1 Demographic Profiles obtained from questionnaires**

The participants of this study were primary school teachers who participated in the ELPP. Out of a population of one hundred and sixty-six (166) primary school teachers in the Okahandja Circuit of the Otjozondjupa Education Region, seventy-three (43.9%) teachers, 56 females and 17 males, completed the questionnaire. All six primary schools in the Okahandja Circuit participated in the study. The questionnaire participants (73) are described by their gender, age, qualifications, teaching experience, specialisation and grades taught “as these factors are considered to have an effect on the ELP level of teachers” (Wolfaardt & Schier, 2011, p. 39).

**Gender:** The total participants (73) consisted of 56 (76.7%) females and 17 (23.3%) males.

**Age:** The smallest cohort was in the 21 to 30 age group and constituted 19.2 % (14) of the sample. The 31 to 35 age group represented 20.5% (15) while the 36 to 40 and 40 to 50 age groups represented 38.4% (28). The biggest (21.9%) and also the oldest age group, were those teachers in the 51 and older age group.



*Figure 4.1: Age of Participants*

**Qualifications:** The table below (Table 4.2) displays the qualifications of the participants, both as a count and as a percentage. The smallest cohort of teachers (7) were in possession of a Certificate in Education and constituted 9.6% of the sample. The target group, participants with a Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD) obtained at the Colleges of Education in Namibia, constitutes 71.2% (52) of the sample. The participants in possession of a Bachelor in Education Degree (B.Ed. Hons.) constitutes 17.8% (13) of the sample and form the second smallest subset. One teacher (1.4%) had a Bachelor's degree in Public Management.

**Table 4.2: Qualifications of Participants**

Qualifications			
Certificate in Education (ECD)	Basic Teacher Diploma (BETD)	Bachelor in Education B.Ed. (Hons.)	Other Bachelor in Public Administration
7 (9.6%)	52 (71.2%)	13 (17.8%)	1 (1.4%)

**Teaching Experience:** The table below (Table 4.3) shows the participants' teaching experience in years matched up with their qualifications.

**Table 4.3: Teaching experience in years**

Teaching Experience	ECD	BETD	B.Ed. (Honours)
1 - 2 years	0		100%
3 - 5 years	16.7%	83.3%	0
6 - 10 years	11.7%	80.0%	8.3%
11 - 15 years	6.7%	73.3%	20%
16 - 20 years	16.7%	83.3%	0
21 - 25 years		20%	80%
26+ years		91.7%	8.3%

The teachers who had the least teaching experience (1 - 2 years) were B.Ed. (Honours) holders while the BETD teachers outnumbered the other groups by far, with teaching experience ranging from 3 to 20 years. The BETD teachers (91.7%) were also the most experienced ones (more than 26 years). Of special note, is the 80% of participants who have been teaching for 21 to 25 years. These participants, 5 female teachers in possession of B.Ed. (Secondary) (Honours) degrees, were qualified high school teachers, and Heads of Department at their schools.

In summary, the biggest cohort of teachers had a BETD (71.2%) and 26 years and more teaching experience. The reason for this might be that up to 2010, the BETD that was offered at the four former Colleges of Education was the only option for further studies in primary education. It was only in 2011 when UNAM merged with the former

colleges that the B.Ed. (Pre-Primary and Lower Primary) (Honours), as well as the B.Ed. (Upper Primary) (Honours), was first introduced.

**Specialisation:** Table 4.4 provides the areas of specialisation and shows that 6.9% of participants specialised in Early Childhood Development. Participants who specialised in Lower Primary (LP) constituted 39.7% of the participants and teach grades 1 to 4 while 49.3% of the participants specialised in the Upper Primary (UP) phase and teach grades 5 to 7. This showed that there was a balance between the two phases. In LP, mother tongue instruction with English as a subject is taught, and English is the medium of instruction (MoI) in UP. Three participants (4.1%) were qualified in other fields, but taught at primary schools.

**Table 4.4: Participants' Areas of Specialisation**

Early Childhood Development	5 (6.9%)
Lower Primary	29 (39.7%)
Upper Primary	36 (49.3%)
Other (Junior Secondary, Senior Secondary, Public Administration)	3 (4.1%)

**Phases Taught:** Table 4.5 below shows the phases taught by the teachers. For ease of understanding, the grades were grouped according to phases. Whereas teachers in the Lower Primary Phase only teach one grade, those in Upper Primary teach a particular subject to more than one grade.

**Table 4.5: Phases Taught**

Phase	Count (%)
Lower Primary (Grades 0-3)	29 (39.7%)
Upper Primary (Grades 4-7)	44 (60.3%)

#### **4.2.2 Biographical Data of the Focus Group Participants**

Each focus group included novice and experienced primary school teachers across the disciplines. The composition of the three focus groups is given. In **Focus group 1 (FG1)** all the participants were female teachers: A Head of Department (HOD), two English teachers, two Lower Primary (LP) teachers, a Mathematics teacher and two Grade 4 teachers. The participants' work experience ranged from 5 years to 30 years, and they were all teaching in their area of specialisation, except for the HOD who is a qualified high school teacher.

**Focus Group 2 (FG2)** consisted of three male teachers (an HOD and Social Studies teacher, an Afrikaans teacher and a Mathematics teacher) and four female teachers (an HOD and English teacher, two LP teachers and a Grade 4 teacher). Their teaching experience ranged from 5 to 23 years, and all but the English HOD were teaching in their area of specialisation.

**Focus Group 3 (FG3)** included three male teachers (the Principal and Natural Science teacher, an English teacher, a Mathematics and Social Studies teacher) and four female teachers (an LP-, a Grade 4-, an Agriculture and an English teacher). Their teaching experience ranged from 4 years to 18 years, and almost all of them were teaching in their areas of specialisation.

#### **4.3 Teachers' Perceptions of the ELPP**

The results of the data analysis are presented in this chapter. First, the quantitative data are presented according to the research questions as outlined in the map of analysis in Table 4.1, followed by the qualitative data. (Refer to Table 4.1 on p. 47).

***Research Question 1: What are the primary school teachers' perceptions of the ELPP in the Okahandja Circuit?***

This question was answered primarily through the questionnaire completed by the teachers and received supporting evidence from the interview questions.

**4.3.1 Quantitative Data on Primary School Teachers' Perceptions**

Section C of the teacher questionnaire gauged participants' perceptions of the ELPP and was divided into two parts: Part 1 required closed-ended responses and Part 2 consisted of four dichotomous questions followed by reasons in order to obtain additional information. Part 2 ended with a completion question that required feedback from teachers about ways to encourage participation in the ELPP.

**4.3.1.1 Teachers' opinions about the ELPP as a measure of their language ability**

In order to determine the teachers' opinions about the ELPP as the only yardstick of their success as a teacher, a four point Likert-type scale ranging from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) to Strongly Disagree (SD) was used. A few of the teachers chose not to answer these questions for reasons not known to the researcher. The responses are reflected in Table 4.6.

**Table 4.6: Teachers' opinions on ELP Testing**

<b>Response</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Total</b>
Q11 ELP testing is not a good idea.	14 (20.9%)	20 (29.9%)	24 (35.8%)	9 (13.4%)	67
Q12 ELP testing is not a true reflection of my level of proficiency.	14 (20.9%)	20 (29.9%)	24 (35.8%)	9 (13.4%)	67
Q13 I do not like ELP testing because it makes me feel uncomfortable, stressed and anxious.	4 (6.6%)	14 (23.4%)	27 (45%)	15 (25%)	60
Q14 ELP testing is not relevant due to mother tongue instruction.	6 (9.8%)	17(27.9%)	27(44.3)	11 (18%)	61

As illustrated by Table 4.6 above, the participants were split in equal numbers on Q11 and Q12: Thirty-three out of sixty-seven participants (49.2%) disagreed and strongly disagreed that ELP testing was not a good idea while thirty-four (50.8%) teachers agreed and strongly agreed with the statement. The exact number of teachers (49.2% and 50.8%) shared the same views on ELP testing not being a true reflection of their level of proficiency. The vast majority of the teachers (70%) disagreed and strongly disagreed that they do not like ELP testing because it makes them feel uncomfortable, stressed and anxious while 30% agreed and strongly agreed with the statement. Twenty-three teachers (37.7%) agreed and strongly agreed that ELP testing is irrelevant due to the fact that they teach through mother tongue while thirty-eight (62,3%) out of sixty-one (61) teachers disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement.

#### 4.3.1.2 Teachers' Views on the ELPP Tutorials

The ELPP tutorials were offered as an intervention to teachers at the pre-intermediate and intermediate levels. These classes were offered by teachers who were exempted and lecturers at UNAM and took place at different schools on Saturdays from 8 o'clock to 1 o'clock. The teachers who were exempted and those at the advanced level did not answer this question, and therefore the number of responses vary. The teachers' views are tabled below (see Table 4.7).

*Table 4.7: Teachers' views on the ELPP tutorials*

<b>The ELPP tutorials...</b>	<b>Frequency (Percentage)</b>
(a) addressed only the needs identified by the test.	14 (19.2%)
(b) taught me new skills.	27 (37.0)
(c) were too advanced.	10 (13.7%)
(d) too basic or elementary.	7 (9.6%)
(e) were targeted at the right level.	10 (13.7%)
(f) improved my English language proficiency.	21 (28.8%)

The participants were required to indicate the statement(s) they found applicable, and a few ticked more than one statement. Although the statistics (see Table 4.7) reflect the views of the sample (73) on each individual statement, all the responses (89) were taken into account. The majority of the participants (81.0%) shared positive views on the tutorials while the negative views – that the tutorials were too advanced or too basic – were in the minority (19.1%).

#### 4.3.1.3 Challenges that Prohibited Participation in the ELPP Tutorials

Not all the participants answered this question as it was meant only for those at pre-intermediate and intermediate levels. Below is a breakdown of the sixty-six responses to the challenges that hindered the participants from attending the ELPP tutorials:

*Table 4.8: Challenges faced by teachers*

<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Frequency (Percentage)</b>
I have a heavy teaching load.	12 (18.2%)
I do not have enough time, but am motivated.	46 (69.7%)
I am not motivated at all.	8 (12.1%)

A heavy teaching load stood in the way of 12 teachers (18.2%). Forty-six participants (69,7%) were motivated, but could not find the time to attend while eight (12.1%) were not motivated at all. The teachers' attendance was also influenced by miscommunication between the teacher unions and its members, as well as strife between the teacher unions and the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC).

#### 4.3.1.4 Perceived Necessity for the ELPP

According to Gardner (1985), motivation and attitude are the most influential factors in second language acquisition. It was thus important to determine, firstly, what the teachers' perceptions of the ELPP were, and secondly, to what extent these perceptions would influence their attitudes towards the ELPP. That would determine the teachers' willingness to participate in efforts to improve their ELP.

In Part 2, three questions were used to obtain additional information concerning the teachers' perceptions of the ELPP. Their comments in this section will further

elucidate their perceptions of the ELPP and whether the programme should be reinstated.

#### 4.3.1.4.1 All Teachers Need the ELPP

Oláh (2010) opines that all teachers of all subjects, levels and populations teach language every day and have the right to sit around the table when designing curricula, assessments and instruction for English. Question 23 therefore required teachers to agree or disagree with the statement that “All teachers need the ELPP because every teacher is a language teacher” and then provide a reason for their answer. The majority of the teachers (76.7 %) agreed with the statement while 23.3% of the teachers disagreed. The table (Table 4.9) below gives the reasons provided by the teachers.

**Table 4.9: Reasons for the ELPP**

<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
ELPP or English is used everywhere in everyday interactions and not only in the classroom.	We are qualified in other subjects and not in English.
If teachers are not proficient, learners are likely to inherit, copy or learn the teacher’s mistakes.	Not all the teachers are teaching English; some have class teaching where they teach mother tongue instruction.
You need to pronounce, spell and use the tenses correctly in every subject that you teach.	ELPP is not the way to teach English.
We use English as a medium of instruction and it is also the country’s official language.	We teach mother tongue and do not need to be proficient in English.
It is a disgrace that a teacher cannot address the public using proper English. Some teachers sound very uneducated.	Teachers are qualified in their fields, and are employed according to their qualifications.

#### 4.3.1.4.2 Requisite Level of ELP for Primary School Teachers

The teachers were asked whether they agree or disagree with the statement that primary school teachers in general, require a lower level of English proficiency to teach at a primary school. Table 4.10 below reflects the reasons given for the statement. A third of the teachers (32.9%) agreed that primary school teachers require a lower level of ELP while two-thirds (67.1%) disagreed with the statement, and provided reasons for their decisions.

**Table 4.10: Primary school teachers require a lower level of ELP**

<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Primary teachers English should be at a lower level because if they use big words in lower grades, it will affect the learners negatively.	The learners' foundations are laid in the primary phases and thus the teacher's English should be excellent and fluent.
Teachers do not need to use good English because it might confuse the learners at lower grades.	We do not only communicate with little ones, but also with adults on a daily basis. It's embarrassing when grown-ups speak broken English and mispronounce words.
Teachers need to speak at the level of the learners because in some cases English is the learners' second or third language.	The primary phase is the foundation of a child, so if a child is exposed to the wrong pronunciation at an early stage, it's difficult to change it at secondary level.

#### 4.3.1.4.3 Teachers' Attitude towards the ELPP

As stated earlier, attitude is a determining factor in acquiring a second language (Gardner, 1985). The teachers were therefore asked, not only to indicate their views of the ELPP as positive, negative or neutral, but also to give reasons for their preference.

The results are presented in Table 4.11 below.

**Table 4.11: Teachers' opinions on the ELPP**

<b>Positive</b>
It gives you self-confidence.
I could see how my colleagues became excited after completing a level successfully.
It helps to improve all language skills and in that manner can lead to a high passing rate.
<b>Neutral</b>
In the beginning I thought it was forced on us, but later realised that I've learnt something.
I'm not sure whether it is to the benefit of the teachers.
I was interested at first, but was discouraged by the way the classes were conducted.
<b>Negative</b>
It's demoralising.
It is a waste of resources and time because every Namibian teacher is expected to study and be proficient in English.

Thirty-nine teachers (53.4%) were positive, twenty-nine (39.7%) were neutral, and five teachers (6.9%) were negative towards the ELPP. Their responses are displayed in the table above (Table 4.11).

#### **4.3.2 Qualitative Data on Primary School Teachers' Perceptions**

Data from the focus group interviews provided supporting evidence. The findings are broken down into subcategories derived from labels and codes from the focus group interviews. The themes are identified as teacher concerns, motivation, demotivating factors, teacher needs, challenges and improvements, and are discussed below.

#### **4.3.2.1 Teacher Concerns**

It was important to determine what the teachers' concerns were and whether it offered any resistance to the ELPP. The data from the focus group interviews supported the responses from the teacher questionnaires.

##### **4.3.2.1.1 Reasons for Writing the ELP Test**

Teachers had different reasons why they took the ELPP test. Most of the teachers reported that they were curious about their level of English proficiency. A teacher who graduated with a BETD sixteen years ago, "*saw it as a challenge*"(FG2) and another teacher took the test because she liked "*to do what she has to do*"(FG2). The younger BETD teachers who took the ELPP test before, "*wanted to see if there was an improvement*" in their proficiency. Among the reasons given were "*motivation*" and "*to find out if something happened to my level*" (FG3). Another teacher called for ELP testing to be an "*annual thing because it will help teachers*"(FG3).

##### **4.3.2.1.2 Uncertainty about the Future**

The teachers reported that they welcomed the testing, but would like to know what the plans were for the future. There was a general concern about their colleagues who were still at the pre-intermediate and intermediate levels and how this problem would be "*rectified*" otherwise the programme was "*useless*". One teacher at the advanced level was very excited about her progress and could not wait to be exempted, but "*unfortunately, the project came to an end*"(FG2).

#### **4.3.2.1.3 ELP Testing to become a Requisite for Teaching**

All the teachers in the focus groups agreed that there was a need for testing the teachers' ELP, but then the teachers should be helped to improve their ELP level. The teachers in FG1 would like to see the continuation of ELP testing to ensure that teachers have a good command of English because "*learners speak like their teachers*". The teachers in FG2 and FG3 would like to see only English teachers tested while content subject teachers should be tested on the content in their subjects to guarantee fairness.

#### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the primary school teachers in Okahandja perceived ELP testing as a necessary evil, that is, something that they do not like doing, but know that it must be done. The majority of the primary school teachers (81%) have positive views about the ELPP tutorials despite having had heavy workloads, not a lot of time on their hands and pressure from the teacher unions. The majority of the teachers (76.7%) agreed that all teachers must have a good command of the English language because English is our official language and MoI in the Upper Primary and Secondary Phases. They also concurred that the requisite level of ELP for primary school teachers should be an advanced level of ELP. The majority of the teachers were positive towards the ELPP as indicated by the quantitative data.

The qualitative data supported the teachers' perceptions of the ELPP. The teachers wrote the ELP test because they were curious about their level of ELP. They also expressed their disappointment at the termination of the ELPP and asked for its

reinstatement. However, the teachers would like to see testing done in the teacher's field of specialisation.

#### **4.4 Perceptions of Teachers' Own ELP**

*Research Question 2: How do primary school teachers in the Okahandja Circuit perceive their own English language proficiency?*

Data findings that answered this question were primarily from the questionnaire and were supported by the focus group interview questions. It was important to determine whether there was a discrepancy between the teachers' actual and perceived levels of ELP.

##### **4.4.1 Teachers' Actual and Perceived Levels of ELP**

In Section B of the teacher questionnaire participants were asked to do self-evaluations of their perceived and actual levels of ELP, both before and after the ELPP tutorials. They were also asked what level of ELP they think teachers must achieve to enable them to teach at a primary school. These responses will answer Research Question 2 and are important to establish if there is a discrepancy between perceived and actual levels of ELP. This will influence their attitudes toward the ELPP.

One of the contributions the study wishes to make, is to revisit the teacher training programmes at UNAM, and especially in the field of ELP. Currently, two proficiency courses are offered: English for Teachers which is a second-year module offered to B.Ed. (Honours); ELP Pre-intermediate Level to first-year Diploma in Junior Primary Education (DJPE) and ELP Intermediate Level to second-year DJPE students.

It is important to compare these results with teachers' qualifications to see if there has been a change in the teachers' perceptions to the ELPP after 2011. Also because the majority of novice teachers who joined the teaching corps in 2013 were placed at intermediate and pre-intermediate levels of English language proficiency, based on their results in the ELPP placement test (University Central Consultancy Bureau [UCCB], 2012).

#### 4.4.1.1 Teachers' Actual ELP Levels

The ELPP was officially introduced with the writing of a nationwide test which was compulsory for practising teachers. This was done to determine the teachers' level of proficiency and took place in the pre-programme phase. Teachers were grouped as pre-intermediate, intermediate or advanced level based on their scores in the first test. Tutorials were offered to teachers in the pre-intermediate and intermediate levels to improve their levels of proficiency. The small group of teachers who scored excellently, were exempted. Those teachers, together with the teachers at the advanced level, were not required to attend the tutorials. The post-programme test that was written after the tutorials was not compulsory and therefore 5 teachers did not take this test.

*Table 4.12: Results of teachers' pre- and post-programme tests*

<b>ELP Levels</b>	<b>Pre-programme Test (Compulsory)</b>	<b>Post-programme Test (Voluntary)</b>
Pre-intermediate	6.9% (5)	7.6% (5)
Intermediate	43.8% (32)	33.8% (23)
Advanced	47.9% (35)	44.1% (30)
Exempted	1.4 (1)	14.7% (10)
<b>Total number of participants</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>68</b>

According to Table 4.12, the number of teachers placed at the pre-intermediate level stayed the same. Nine more teachers were exempted following the tutorials (post-programme). Fewer teachers were placed at the intermediate (33.8%) and advanced levels (44.1%) after the post-programme which can be an indication that most of them progressed to the next level.

#### 4.4.1.2 Teachers' Perceived ELP levels

Participants were asked to do self-evaluations of their perceived levels of ELP. The responses reflected in the table below indicate the participants' own ratings of their ELP matched up with their age groups.

**Table 4.13: Participants' ELP level matched up with their age**

Age Group	Current ELP level			
	Highly satisfactory	Acceptable	Needs attention	Unsatisfactory
21 to 24 years	66.7%	33.3%		
25 to 30 years		72.7 %	27.3 %	
31 to 35 years	21.4 %	35.7 %	35.7%	7.2 %
36 to 40 years	35.7 %	57.1 %		7.2 %
41 to 50 years	8 %	50 %	42 %	
51 and older	18.8 %	37.5 %	37.5%	6.2 %

Participants in the 21 to 24 years age group rated their ELP levels as highly satisfactory (66.7%) and acceptable (33.3%). They were BETD and B.Ed. holders.

Participants in the 25 to 30 years age group rated their levels as acceptable (72.7%) while 27.3% acknowledged that their ELP needed attention. These participants were also BETD and B.Ed. holders.

Participants in the 31 to 35 years group rated their ELP levels as highly satisfactory (21.4%), in equal amounts as acceptable (35.7%) and needs attention (35.7%) while 7.2% felt that it was unsatisfactory. The vast majority of participants were BETD holders while ECD and B.Ed. holders followed in equal numbers.

Participants in the 36 to 40 age bracket rated their ELP as highly satisfactory (35.7%) and acceptable (57.1%). No one felt that their ELP needed attention and 7.2% of the participants were dissatisfied with their ELP level. Again the vast majority of participants were BETD holders, followed by B.Ed. holders and a few ECD holders.

Participants in the 41 to 50 age group rated their ELP level as highly satisfactory (7.1%) while 50% deemed it acceptable. The rest of this group (42%) acknowledged that their ELP needed attention, but no one was completely dissatisfied with their ELP level.

Participants in the 51 and older group comprised BETD and B.Ed. holders who rated their ELP level as highly satisfactory (18.8%). In equal numbers (35.7%) were those who deemed it acceptable and those who thought that it needed attention. A small number (6.2%) admitted that it was unsatisfactory.

The teachers were further asked to assess their own English language proficiency and to give reasons for the answers. Some of the responses are reflected in Table 4.14 below.

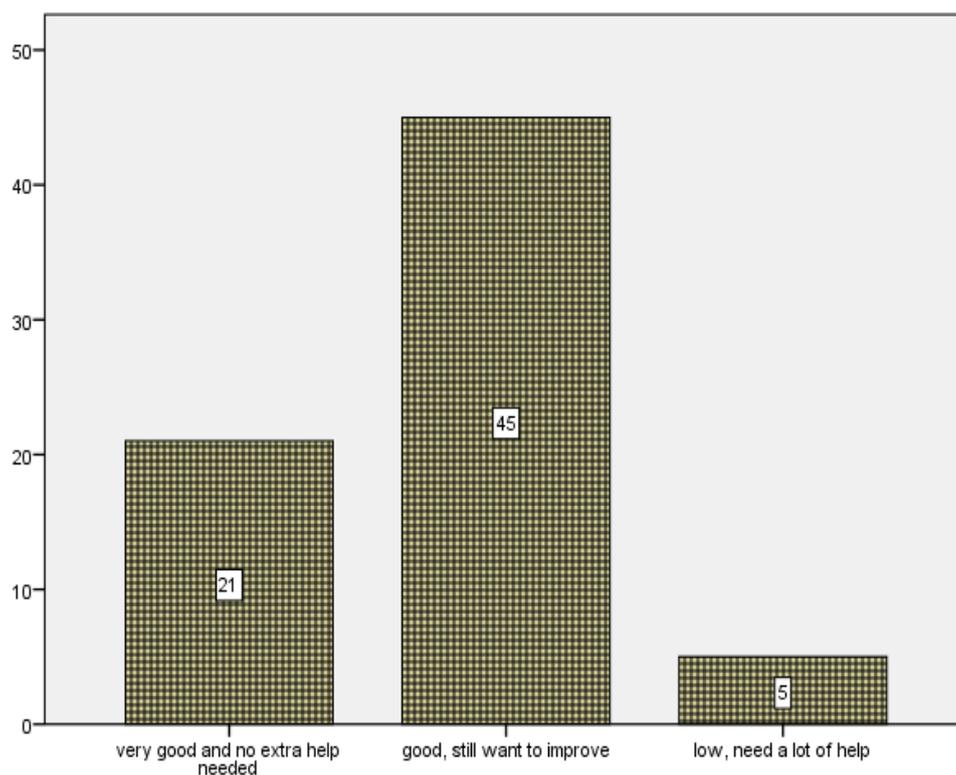
**Table 4.14: Teachers' ELP ratings and reasons for it**

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Frequency (%)</b>	<b>Reason</b>
Very good	13 (17.8%)	"I am comfortable using the language." "I have very good language skills because at heart I am a language person."
Good	49 (67.1%)	"I studied at the College and everything was done in English." "I comprehend most of the activities in English with ease."
Fair	10 (13.7%)	"I do not feel comfortable due to my pronunciation and vocabulary." "To speak English is a little bit easy, but writing it is hard."
Poor	1 (1.4%)	No reason was given.

The vast majority (67.1%) of the participants viewed their ELP as good while 17.8% regarded it as very good. Those who rated their ELP as fair constituted 13.7% of the participants while only 1.4% admitted that it was poor.

#### 4.4.1.3 Teachers' Perceptions of their ELP Needs

The teachers were required to indicate their ELP and whether they need help. The graph below (see Figure 4.2) displays the self-evaluations of seventy-one participants, expressed as counts.



*Figure 4.2: Participants' views of their ELP Needs*

Twenty-one (29.6%) participants regarded their ELP as very good and needed no extra help. Forty-five (63.4%) participants viewed their ELP as good, but still would like to improve it while five (7.0%) participants admitted that their ELP was low and that they needed a lot of help.

#### 4.4.1.4 Areas of ELP where help was needed

The participants indicated the areas where they feel they needed help with their ELP. The results vary greatly as teachers could indicate more than one area. Table 4.15 (below) reflects the frequencies and percentages according to each area.

*Table 4.15: English language components where help was needed*

<b>Component</b>	<b>Least</b>	<b>Most</b>
Reading	27 (73.0)	10 (27.0%)
Writing	20 (40.8%)	29 (59.2%)
Vocabulary	19 (37.3%)	32 (62.7%)
Speaking	21 (51.2%)	20 (48.8%)
Pronunciation	18 (36.7%)	31 (63.3%)
Listening	20 (51.3%)	19 (48.7%)

The participants indicated that help was needed the most with pronunciation (63.3%), vocabulary (62.7%) and writing (59.2%). The majority of the participants (73.0%) do not have a problem with reading, speaking (51.2%) or listening (51.3%).

#### 4.4.2 Teachers' Current Perceived and Actual Levels of ELP

The teachers were asked to describe their experience of the ELP test and subsequent tutorials. Their views during the focus group interviews are expressed below.

##### 4.4.2.1 The Placement Test Results

Although the majority of the teachers were happy with their ELP placement after the initial test, there were others who were filled with dismay. All of the participants in

FG1 were happy with their results. However, their colleagues were dismayed because they “*perceived higher levels*” and “*felt that they were downgraded*” (FG1).

The two youngest teachers in FG2 had been writing ELP tests since 2011 and thought that they “*would be exempted*”, but were disappointed to still be at the advanced level. Other teachers “*were actually happy*” that they were placed higher than their perceived level of proficiency (FG2).

The teachers in FG3 had mixed feelings about their results. One teacher (the school principal) was “*happy that he beat the English teacher*” although he was at the “*intermediate level.*” Another teacher “*doubted the results*” because “*it was very low*”. The teachers also reported that some of their colleagues were “*demoralised*” when they learnt that their supervisors received lower scores than themselves (FG3).

#### **4.4.2.2 After the Intervention of the Tutorials**

Some participants showed an improvement while others remained at the same level. Seven of the participants in FG 1 reported an improvement in the level. The English teacher in the group did not write the test because she was at the advanced level. They also reported that “*most of the old teachers, the veterans, did not upgrade*” (FG1).

The two youngest BETD teachers in FG2 thought that they would “*be exempted*” because they took the first ELPP test when they “*were at the College*” but was discouraged when they “*were still at the advanced level*”. Many teachers at the advanced level were “*down to the ground*” because they did not pass the test as the advanced test was “*too advanced*”. A teacher at the intermediate level claimed that her colleagues at the advanced level were “*disgusted*” with them because they were not given tutorials, but had to do self-study (FG2).

The English teacher was shocked to find that he “*remained at intermediate twice*” when he thought that he would “*be exempted*”. When he was “*mocked*” by the Mathematics teacher who was at the advanced level, it created “*conflict*” within him (FG3).

#### **4.4.2.3 Reasons why there was no Improvement**

The teachers cited reasons why the senior teachers, who they referred to as veterans, did not improve their English proficiency. These reasons were that “*the test was not easy for them*”, and that they were also “*too tired*”. Other reasons were that “*the timing was wrong*” because the tutorials took place after school when teachers “*wanted to go home*” and “*did not know why we were doing it*” (FG1).

According to FG2, the standard of the advanced paper was “*too high*”. It was also “*too long*” and “*too advanced*”. Teachers at the intermediate level claimed that the paper was not difficult, only that it required “*a lot of writing*” (FG2).

The teachers also reported that they should have been “*tested in their own area of specialisation*” and that “*the older teachers should have been assessed differently*”. Other reasons were the fact that they were “*forced to write*” as well as not knowing what the “*reason was for writing the test*”. Another teacher blamed the heat, the zinc classroom and the confusing content of the test for not performing the way she expected to (FG3).

#### **Conclusion**

The quantitative data revealed a discrepancy between the teachers’ actual and perceived levels of ELP. The teachers’ actual ELP levels showed an improvement after

the ELPP tutorials and many progressed to the advanced level while others were exempted. As for the self-evaluations of their perceived levels, the youngest teachers perceived their ELP level as highly satisfactory or expected to be exempted. While the majority of the older teachers rated their ELP levels as acceptable, others admitted that it needed attention. A few of the older teachers regarded their ELP level as unsatisfactory. A small group (29.6%) of teachers do not want any help as they rated their ELP as very good. The majority (63.4%) of the teachers rated their ELP as good, but asked for assistance to improve it while 7% of the teachers admitted that their ELP level is very low and that they were in need of a lot of help with pronunciation, vocabulary and writing.

The focus group participants endorsed the views expressed in the questionnaires. The teachers expected higher ELP levels and had doubts about the ELPP test results because the majority of the teachers stayed at the same level. Too much writing, fatigue, wrong timing of tutorials and difficult question papers were some of the reasons cited as to why there was no improvement in ELP levels.

#### **4.5 The Extent to which Teachers' Perceptions Influence Attitude**

*Research Question 3: To what extent do the teachers' perceptions in the Okahandja Circuit influence their attitude towards the ELPP?*

##### **4.5.1 Motivation to improve ELP**

Gardner (1985) sees motivation to learn a language as a combination of effort, desire to achieve a goal plus favourable attitudes. In order to determine whether the teachers' perceptions influence their attitude towards the ELPP (and to what extent), the teachers were asked to do self-evaluations of the aforementioned components.

#### 4.5.1.1 Desired Proficiency to teach at a Primary School

The teachers were asked to indicate the level of ELP they would need for teaching at a primary school. The sample (73 teachers) comprised thirty (41.1%) LP teachers and forty-three (58.9%) UP teachers. The responses were varied (see Table 4.16) and based on the level of ELP each teacher regarded as necessary to teach at a primary school.

**Table 4.16: ELP Level teachers needed to teach at a primary school**

Exempted	23.2%
Advanced level	52.2%
Intermediate level	21.7%
Pre-intermediate level	2.9%

The participants who felt that they should be exempted, constituted 23.2% of the sample. Those who would like primary school teachers to be at the advanced level of proficiency, formed 52.2% of the participants. An intermediate level of proficiency would be sufficient for 21.7% of the participants whereas only 2.9% said that the pre-intermediate level would suffice to teach at primary school level.

#### 4.5.1.2 Reasons for taking the ELPP test

The participants were required to indicate their reasons for taking the test. Not all the participants answered this question or indicated the degree of importance, and therefore the number of responses vary (see Table 4.17 on the next page).

**Table 4.17 Areas of importance of the ELPP test**

<b>Area</b>	<b>Least</b>	<b>Moderately</b>	<b>Most</b>	<b>Total</b>
Personal interest (curious about ELP level)	10 (17.5%)	17 (29.8%)	30 (52.6%)	57
To pass (to keep the job)	17 (33.3%)	16 (31.4%)	18 (35.3%)	51
For promotion (more and better opportunities )	10 (17.2%)	17 (29.3%)	31 (53.4%)	58
Communicate confidently (improve communication )	4 (8.5%)	8 (17.0%)	35 (74.5%)	47

As can be seen from Table 4.17 above, the majority of the participants (82.4%) took the test to determine their proficiency level while ten participants (17.5%) considered that reason to be the least important reason. On passing to keep their job, the participants were marginally equally split with 33.3% rating it the least important, 31.4% as moderately important and 35.3% as the most important aspect.

The majority of participants (82.7%) rated promotion purposes as moderately to mostly important while 17,2% regarded it as the least important reason for taking the test. The majority of the participants (91.5%) considered communicating confidently as moderately to mostly important with 8.5% viewing it as the least important aspect of the test.

#### **4.5.1.3 The Effect of the ELP Result on Teaching Ability**

Teachers were asked to tick the answer that applies to most cases about the effect the ELP result had on their ability as a teacher (self-esteem) in Question 15. This table reflects only the highest and lowest responses, both as a count and a percentage. The

scores of teachers who were uncertain and ticked the ‘sometimes’ box, as well as the ones who did not tick any box are not reflected here.

**Table 4.18: Effect of ELP test result on teaching ability (self-esteem)**

Statement	Frequency (Percentage)	
	Yes	No
(a) ... self-conscious speaking English in class	26 (35.6%)	34 (46.6%)
(b) ... self-conscious speaking English to colleagues	20 (27.4%)	28 (38.4%)
(c) ... quiet because I cannot express myself clearly	3 (4.1%)	46 (63.0%)
(d) ... demoralised/not motivated during tutorials	8 (11.0%)	44 (60.3%)
(e) ... more confident even if grammar is faulty	37 (50.7%)	13 (17.8%)
(f) ... comfortable speaking English in public meetings	46 (63.0%)	6 (8.2%)
(g) ... more confident to teach in English	50 (68.5%)	4 (5.5%)
(h) ... can participate face-to-face with native speaker	53 (72.6%)	3 (4.1%)

The table illustrates that fewer teachers (35.6%) are self-conscious, compared to the thirty-four (46.6%) teachers who are not self-conscious when speaking English in class. When speaking English to colleagues, twenty teachers (20.7%) feel self-conscious while twenty-eight (38.4%) do not. While only three teachers (4.1%) keep quiet because they cannot express themselves clearly, the majority of the teachers (63.0%) do not let their command of English get in the way. Eight (11.0%) teachers said they were demoralised or not motivated during the tutorials while forty-four (60.3%) were not affected by the tutorials offered to pre-intermediate and intermediate levels. While thirty-seven (50.7%) teachers claimed that they were more confident after the tutorials, thirteen (17.8%) were not. Forty-six (63.0%) teachers felt comfortable using English in public gatherings while six (8.2%) still felt uncomfortable. The teachers’ confidence in teaching through English also increased.

Fifty (68.5%) teachers said that they were more confident to teach in English while four (5.5%) were still not confident. When faced with a native speaker of English, fifty-three (72.6%) teachers interacted normally while three (4.1%) could not interact normally with native speakers.

#### 4.5.1.4 Personal Areas affected by the ELPP test scores

Participants were asked to indicate how they were affected upon receiving their ELPP test results. They indicated the area (self-image, motivation and whether they experienced increased anxiety) that was affected and the degree of this effect (see Table 4.17). The total number of participants varied as some of the teachers only ticked areas that they considered important.

**Table 4.19: Areas affected by the ELPP test scores**

<b>Effect</b>	<b>Self-image (n=64)</b>	<b>Motivation to learn (n=70)</b>	<b>Increased anxiety (n=62)</b>
Positively	36 (56.3%)	44 (62.8%)	12 (19.4%)
No effect	23 (35.9%)	22 (31.4%)	41 (66.1%)
Negatively	5 (7.8%)	4 (5.7%)	9 (14.5%)

In the area of self-image, the majority of the participants claimed that the ELPP test results had a positive effect (56.3%) while 7.8% of the participants were negatively affected by it. The vast majority of participants (62.8%) were positively motivated, 22 (31.4%) were not affected at all while four (5.7%) were negatively affected by the ELPP test results. Twelve (19.4%) participants were positively affected by the increased levels of anxiety, 41 (66.1%) experienced no effect while nine (14.5%) participants were negatively affected.

#### **4.5.2 Discrepancy between Perceived and Actual levels of ELP**

The focus group interviews revealed a discrepancy between the teachers' perceived and actual levels of ELP. If a discrepancy between perceptions and scores exists, it will have an impact on the teachers' attitude. According to Coetzee-Van Rooy (2011), inflated self-perceptions of proficiency will have some implications for teaching English to speakers of African languages in South Africa.

Butler (2004) postulates that a gap between the teachers' perceived levels of English proficiency and the ELP level they feel is needed to teach at primary school (desired proficiency) will determine the degree to which they feel they need to improve their ELP. One teacher was pleasantly surprised to be at the intermediate level when he thought he was *“going to fail everything completely and be at pre-intermediate level”* (FG3).

##### **4.5.2.1 Desired Proficiency**

The vast majority of the teachers expressed their desire to have high levels of ELP because *“a low level affects the confidence of the teacher”* and they unanimously asked for the *“ELPP to continue”*. One of the LP teachers stated that she *“cannot be comfortable speaking the English she speaks with her grade 1 kids”* (FG1). All the teachers in FG2 concurred that *“everybody should be able to express themselves very well”*. Only one teacher in FG3 said that content subject teachers should not be expected *“to be as fluent as the English teachers”*.

#### **4.5.2.1 A Goal for Learning English**

The teachers in all the groups reported that their goal for learning English was the fact that English is a *“lingua franca”* (FG1). Regardless of their proficiency levels, they had no problem speaking English. However, they *“prefer their mother tongue”* (FG1). Another teacher found it *“difficult to express”* herself and would speak English *“only when necessary”* (FG2). The principal in FG3 was *“worried because everybody else has a better command and his colleagues are teasing him about his competence in English”* (FG3). The results illustrated that the importance of English as the official language, and its status as a lingua franca are instrumental in achieving the goal of proficiency in English.

#### **4.5.3 De-motivating Factors**

Dörnyei (2001) defines demotivation as “specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioral intention or an ongoing action” (p. 143). Other researchers (Arai, 2004; Falout & Maruyama, 2004; Tsuchiya, 2006) also included internal factors such as lack of confidence and negative attitude within learners themselves. The findings below describe some of these demotivating factors.

##### **4.5.3.1 Emotions when writing the first Placement Test**

The teachers in FG1 experienced mixed emotions. Six of the teachers were *“excited”* to know their ELP level while another teacher was *“frightened”* because of the rumour that a low ELP level would jeopardise a teacher’s career. One teacher claimed indifference to the whole process.

The placement test also aroused a range of emotions among the teachers of FG2. One LP teacher, responsible for the Afrikaans stream at the school, felt “*nothing*” because she saw it as a “*joke*”. She also claimed that she met a few of her colleagues at the doctor’s waiting room who were unwell “*because of the test*” (FG2). Another teacher was overwhelmed when the materials arrived at their school and “*scared*” because she did not know what was going to happen to them once the results were released (FG2). Only one teacher was “*positive*” (FG2).

The teachers in FG3 reported the following. One teacher described herself as “*speechless*” at the beginning, but later enjoyed the test because it was “*not as challenging*” as she expected. The English language teacher felt apprehension and was “*frightened*” because of the “*rumour that you might be kicked out of the system if you don’t do well*” and the fact that he had “*no clarity about why we had to write it*”. The principal in this group was “*afraid*” of “*what his colleagues might think*” should his results be low.

#### **4.5.3.2 Effect of the Test Results on Ability as a Teacher**

The overwhelming majority of the teachers were not affected by the test scores. One teacher reported that he would only have been “*concerned if his ELP level would have dropped to the intermediate level*”. His colleague was happy to be at the advanced level when English was not his “*mother tongue*” (FG2). Another teacher was negatively affected, not by her own results, but that of her supervisor and felt that she could not go to him for advice when he had a lower level of ELP than herself and “*knows nothing*” (FG3).

#### 4.5.3.3 Teachers' Negative Attitudes towards the ELPP

The teachers in all the groups shared the same negative attitudes and elaborated on their reasons. The teachers in FG1 reported that the teachers at their school were negative towards the ELPP for a number of reasons. Some teachers saw it as “*a waste of time*” because they did not learn from it. Teachers also mentioned the fact that they “*did not receive any rewards*” and “*felt labelled*” at the beginning. Others were “*challenged by the test*” and could not finish it on time. While all the teachers are “*overloaded*”, the Mathematics teachers added that she had “*no interest*” in the test because it was not her field. The “*timing*” of the tutorials and “*the way the programme was introduced*” were also cited as reasons for the teachers' negative attitude.

The teachers of FG2 said that their colleagues “*hated*” the ELPP because they have written the test before and were “*uncertain about the outcome*”. Other teachers felt that only the English teachers should write the ELP test and “*saw no relevance*”. To others it was “*a waste of time*” since “*teachers were tested and rated, but now the programme came to an end*”.

The teachers of FG3 claimed that many of their colleagues' were “*demotivated and demoralised*”. According to them, the teachers should not have been “*forced*” to participate because that made them negative and their “*negativity influenced the others*”. Another reason for the negativity was the fact that it “*interfered with family time*” and their “*time to run their own businesses*”. Only a few teachers were “*not negative because everyone knows that our English must improve*”.

#### **4.5.4 Challenges Faced by Primary School teachers**

The teachers conceded that their ELP levels posed a number of challenges to their teaching and agreed that proficiency in English is important irrespective of their major subjects.

##### **4.5.4.1 “Every teacher is a language teacher”**

The statement was unanimously ratified with the comment that “*we all need proper English in all subjects*”. However, one of the teachers was adamant that she would “*not go out of her way to improve her ELP*” on her own (FG3). The teachers would also like subject-specific classes to improve their ELP because “*my mistakes will be transferred to my learners*” (FG3). Another teacher believed that “*if the teacher is well-trained, the Namibian child will be well-trained*” (FG3). Most of the teachers supported the statement.

##### **4.5.4.2 ELP level required for teaching at PS**

The majority of the teachers agreed that there should be no difference in the level of ELP for teachers and that an advanced level would suffice to be able to teach at a primary school. While one teacher felt that the “*classroom English should be adjusted to the learner’s level*”, another teacher felt that you should “*not downgrade your English*”.

##### **4.5.4.3 Areas influenced by Deficient ELP**

This section discusses the findings on the areas that were influenced by the teachers’ deficient English language proficiency.

#### **4.5.4.3.1 Lesson Presentation**

Most of the teachers felt fairly confident to teach through the medium of English. The teachers in the lower grades admitted that they “*often switch to mother tongue*” not because they lack the competence in English, but “*to make their learners understand*” the content. However, they always “*go back to English*” (FG1). Another teacher would find herself teaching in Afrikaans, only to realise later that the medium should be English. It frustrated the Mathematics teacher when his learners do not understand and he “*does not have alternative words to simplify it*” (FG2).

The teachers were divided into two camps over the reasons for the code switching. The LP teachers were not happy that they were “*forced to speak the simple language to make the learners understand*” who are mostly from the rural areas. The UP teachers felt that “*Afrikaans was used too much, more than English in the classroom*” and that could be because the teacher “*could not pronounce the words or could not express themselves well*” (FG1). The older teachers who were trained in Afrikaans also “*found it difficult to express themselves in English*” (FG2). More teachers agreed that they switched to mother tongue only in LP to make the learners understand, and not because they have a lack of vocabulary. (FG3).

#### **4.5.4.3.2 Teacher Self-esteem**

The teachers were eager to have their ELP improved for various reasons. One teacher was “*afraid to express myself in front of others*” while another felt that you need to be “*confident*” with colleagues. All of the teachers of FG1 said that they “*need*” the ELP “*not only for teaching, but also for ourselves*”. They asked for assistance especially in grammar and writing (FG1).

#### **4.5.4.3.2 “Attitudes are influenced by feelings”**

The teachers in FG3 reported that they were aware that they needed to improve their ELP and were “*positive towards the programme*”, but the teachers’ feelings needed to be respected as “*feelings can be connected to attitude and will influence attitude*”. The teachers’ negative attitude towards the programme was the result of the leakage of the ELPT results, and subsequent negative publicity.

#### **Conclusion**

The majority of the teachers (52.2%) opined that an advanced level of ELP is sufficient to teach at a primary school while 2.9% felt that a pre-intermediate level would suffice. The majority of the teachers (91.5%) took the test to improve communication, followed by promotion purposes (82.7%) and lastly to determine their proficiency level (82.4%). The overall effect of the ELP test result deemed to be positive with teacher claims that they were more confident teaching in English, comfortable speaking at public meetings and interacting with native speakers. The overall effect of the ELPP test scores was positive. The teachers reported positive effects on their self-image (56.3%) and their motivation to learn (62.8%). Only nine teachers (14.5%) reported increased anxiety levels while fifty-three (85.5%) did not experience increased anxiety levels when they received their results.

The qualitative data revealed the existence of a gap between teachers’ perceived and actual ELP levels. The vast majority expressed a desire to have high ELP levels as it will lead to self-confidence in the classroom. The focus group interviews also exposed demotivating factors ranging from mixed emotions when teachers wrote the first test to negative attitudes. A good command of the English language in the form of an

advanced level of ELP was seen as a challenge. The teachers also cited the interference of the mother tongue as one of the areas that was influenced by their competence in English. For that reason, they expressed their eagerness to improve their ELP.

#### **4.6 Measures to ensure Effective Participation in the ELPP**

Most teachers claimed that the ELPP was “*not marketed very well*” and shrouded in secrecy. They have also only learnt about the ELPP through the media with the leakage of the ELPT results.

***Research Question 4: What could be done to ensure effective participation in the ELPP by the teachers in the Okahandja Circuit?***

The teachers were asked for suggestions on how to encourage effective participation in the ELPP. The findings are presented in two broad categories: ways to encourage effective participation and improvements to be made to the ELPP. The teachers proposed that incentives should be offered, teachers should be motivated and the content should be interesting. In addition, they felt that the best solution would be to incorporate a three-year ELPP course into the teacher training programmes at UNAM.

The findings from the questionnaire and that of the focus groups were combined to lend more support to the question. The findings from the questionnaire will be presented first and then that from the focus groups.

#### 4.6.1 Continued ELPP Support

The participants were required to indicate how the ELPP could cater for their needs. The number of participants vary, as they ticked more than one option. The results are displayed in Table 4.20 below.

**Table 4.20: ELPP Support**

(a) Provide ongoing support in the form of tutorials on subject-specific English.	39 (53.4%)
(b) Conduct workshops at cluster schools on specific needs.	26 (35.6%)
(c) Incorporate a three-year English language proficiency module into Educational programmes (B.Ed.).	39 (53.4%)
(d) Provide on-line tutorials using social media.	9 (12.3%)
(e) Tech solutions such as audio files.	3 (4.1%)
(f) SMS motivation.	9 (12.3%)

As can be seen from Table 4.20 above, the first three options proved to be popular choices to provide assistance. Participant preferences are placed in rank order. The participants ranked in equal amounts (53.4%) ongoing support and incorporating a three-year English language proficiency module as the best options. The second most popular preference (35.6%) would be to conduct workshops on specific needs at cluster schools. On-line tutorials (12.3%), tech solutions (4.1%) and SMS motivation (12.3%) were the least favourite options.

#### 4.6.2 Ways to Encourage Participation in the ELPP by the Teachers

**Incentives:** Participants noted that a reward system for English Language Proficiency should be considered. Teachers made the following comments: “*Salary increase for*

*those who complete the advanced level.”; “Serve special treatments and prizes for attendance.”; “Award diplomas and degrees connected to salary adjustments”.*

**Teacher Motivation:** Motivation was highlighted as an important motivator for participation in the ELPP as per their comments: *“Motivate teachers more and omit discouraging comments.”; “Positive encouragement and motivation.”; “Motivation, Motivation – on a regular basis.”; “Visit all schools and motivate teachers with tangible gifts.”; “Clarity about the programme and re-enforcement.”*

**Timing:** Teachers opined that the tutorials should be scheduled at times suitable for all teachers. They suggested the following: *“Have the classes in the holidays when teachers have more time”; “It must be done during the holiday.”; “Afternoon ELPP tutorials must be inducted into schools.”; “Roll-call should be implemented.”* Furthermore, teachers felt that their workloads should be considered before the implementation of ELPP tutorials: *“Nothing, because teachers are overloaded with school work.”*

**Content:** With regard to the content, teachers had this to say: *“Make it more interesting.”; “Make the course attractive to the teachers.”; “They must cater for all the subjects, not English alone.”; “Test everyone in his/her area of specialisation, for example, LP must have its own test and so on.”; “Test them in the subjects that they are qualified in.”*

**Part of Teacher Training Programmes:** Teachers had the following to say about making the ELPP part of the teacher training programmes: *“Incorporate a three-year ELP course into study programmes.”; “We need in-service training at UNAM.”; “Continue with the idea of teacher licencing and make it ongoing.”; “Make it part of*

*their training.*”; “*Conduct workshops at cluster schools and implement a three-year ELP course.*”

#### **4.6.3 Improvements to be made to the ELPP**

##### **4.6.3.1 Motivation for Participation**

Some of the teachers admitted that they were initially negative towards the ELPP, but had a change of heart as they could see “*the benefit for themselves and their learners*” (FG1). The teachers in all the groups were motivated and had “*the desire to improve their proficiency levels*” (FG2). Another teacher said the tutorials “*were helpful*” and that ELP testing was “*common procedure at many institutions in South Africa*” (FG3).

Improvements to be considered included a “Proficiency Day” to be implemented by the MoEAC. Tutorials should be presented by English lecturers, and not colleagues at the same school. These should be scheduled for the first week of the school holidays, and subsistence and travelling allowance should be given to those who attend. The proficiency certificate should guarantee scholarships and bursaries for further studies. The tutorials must be stimulating. A refresher proficiency course should be offered by UNAM, or a three-year proficiency course should be incorporated into the teacher training programmes in an effort to be proactive.

There was also a call for the entry requirements to be revisited and the selection process to be more stringent to enrol only students with a C-symbol or higher in English. A three- or four-year ELP module must be included in the Teacher Education programme then there would be no need to “*test teachers who are already in the profession*”(FG3). Another teacher would like to see ELP classes run for at least five

years with regular workshops and in-service training, only then teachers “*would be at ease to teach in English*” (FG3).

Teachers would like to receive monetary incentives for their effort or category improvement. The teachers who were exempted should be considered for promotional posts. Lastly, the classes should be voluntary and teachers must know the purpose for writing the test, as well as what would happen afterwards or they might resent the programme.

#### **4.6.3.2 Instructional Materials**

According to a teacher in FG3, the ELPP “*was a good move*” as he saw it as a “*self-improvement programme*” to spur teachers on to keep up with the “*pace of the world*”, to become “*competent at your level of speaking and writing*”. Other teachers asked for more focus on subject-specific language and pronunciation practice to assist content subject teachers. The test should also be diversified to accommodate the veteran teachers who received their training in Afrikaans. Enough study materials should be dispatched to all the schools so that teachers can prepare themselves thoroughly (FG3).

#### **4.6.3.3 “Put mechanisms in place”**

The teachers felt that the ELPP was shrouded in secrecy and just “*dropped on them*”. That caused a lot of “*tears and frustration*” because the teachers were not “*equipped to teach through the medium of English*”. This veteran teacher further stated that “*learners and teachers were just thrown down the deep end*” with the switch to English as medium of instruction, instead of the Ministry filling the gap between Afrikaans and English “*with workshops*”. He had a firm conviction that all Namibian

teachers would have been “*at the advanced level or been exempted*” should there be mechanisms put in place (FG3).

#### **4.6.3.4 “Grading of the ELP tests”**

Many of the teachers felt that the tests were “*not graded according to the difficulty level*” of the teachers’ English language proficiency and cited that as a reason why they did not perform the way they thought they would (FG3). Another teacher agreed with him that the advanced paper “*was too high*”, had “*a lot of reading with big words*” and also “*a lot of writing*” to do (FG3). The teachers at the intermediate level said that the paper was not too difficult, but that it was also “*a lot of writing*” (FG3). All of the teachers thought that the time allocated to the tests was too short. Teachers also called for tests to be relevant to the teacher’s subject and to test teachers “*in their field*” (FG3).

#### **Conclusion**

The teachers proposed ongoing support in the form of tutorials on subject-specific English (53.4%) and incorporating a three-year English language proficiency module (53.4%) into teacher-training programmes as the most effective ways of providing support with ELP. While the teachers realised the importance of having a good command of English, their workload proved to be a hindrance. However, they expressed their willingness to improve their ELP should there be incentives, tutorials offered during the holidays and subject-specific content provided. Workloads must be considered and roll-call implemented during tutorials.

During the focus group interviews, the teachers suggested the implementation of a Proficiency Day by the MoEAC, ELP tutorials to be presented by English lecturers

from UNAM and scheduled for the first week of the school holidays. The entry requirements for prospective teachers should be revisited and students with good symbols be enrolled. A three- or four-year ELP module must be included in the Teacher Training Programme to ensure that the teacher's ELP is up to par.

#### **4.7 Summary**

This chapter presented teachers' responses to the questionnaire and data collected through focus group interviews. The questionnaire data revealed that the majority of the teachers were positive towards the ELPP and requested its reinstatement with proposed improvements. The next chapter provides a summary of the study, conclusion and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter summarises the results as they relate to the research questions. It also presents the integration of quantitative and qualitative data to answer the research question typical of the explanatory sequential mixed methods design, namely: How do the qualitative findings explain the quantitative results? These findings are then linked to the underpinning framework, namely Dörnyei's L2MSST (Coetzee-van Rooy, 2011). Recommendations are made for practice, knowledge and research. Finally, it draws conclusions on the basis of these findings.

### **5.2 Summary of Major Findings**

According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), result outcomes are strengthened when each phase of the study complements the other. That was achieved in this study by comparing and contrasting the two phases. The findings from the qualitative data (focus group interviews) supported the quantitative data, and what was uncovered in the interviews was explained by the quantitative data in the questionnaires.

#### **5.2.1 Primary School Teachers' Perceptions of the ELPP**

This part of the study explored the perceptions of the primary school teachers on the ELPP. The findings revealed both positive and negative opinions about ELP testing. The quantitative data found that the vast majority (70%) viewed ELP testing as necessary. This finding was supported by the participants of the focus group who were all in support of teachers taking the ELP test. Some of the teachers *were curious about their ELP level* while the younger BETD teachers *wanted to see if there was an improvement* in their ELP since they wrote the ELPP test before. Although all the focus

group participants agreed to ELP testing done annually, they would like it to be subject-related.

The views of the intermediate and pre-intermediate teachers on the ELPP tutorials (see Table 4.7) were also positive, as many indicated that they were taught new skills (37.0%) and that their English language proficiency improved (28.8%). According to Gardner (1985), attitude is a determining factor for acquiring a second language, therefore the teachers were asked to grade their attitude towards the ELPP and give reasons (see Table 4.11). The quantitative data indicated that the majority of the teachers (53.4%) were positive, 6.9% were negative and 39.7% were neutral. It is therefore safe to say that there would be little resistance to the reinstatement of the ELPP from the teachers. The majority of the teachers (81%) were positive about the ELPP tutorials offered to the teachers at intermediate and pre-intermediate levels despite lack of time (69.7%), heavy teaching loads (18.2%) and interference from the teacher unions who called for a boycott of this intervention “due to the timing of the course and levels of proficiency according to which the participants will be rated” (Tjihenuna, 2014, p. 2).

The majority of the teachers (76.7%) agreed that all the teachers must be proficient in English irrespective of their fields of specialisation. The reasons varied from English being Namibia’s *official language, medium of instruction* in the Upper Primary and Secondary Phases and *a lingua franca*, to the fact that *learners will inherit the teacher’s mistakes* and *teachers are public speakers and must be proficient in English*. The teachers also expressed their disappointment at the termination of the project, and asked for its reinstatement.

### 5.2.2 Teachers' Actual and Perceived Levels of Proficiency

The data gathered from the open-ended questionnaires and the focus group interviews indicated a discrepancy between the teachers' actual and perceived levels of ELP. The quantitative data (see Table 4.12) which were based on the actual results of the compulsory pre-programme test, revealed that the majority of the teachers (31 and 35) were placed at the intermediate and advanced level respectively. Only one teacher was exempted while five were placed at the pre-intermediate level.

However, the way the teachers' perceived their ELP levels (see Table 4.13) was the total opposite. Fourteen of the teachers were highly satisfied with their English language proficiency, thirty-five teachers regarded it as acceptable while twenty thought that their ELP needed attention. Only three teachers thought that their ELP was unsatisfactory. The reasons given (see Table 4.14) for their perceived ELP levels ranged from *I have very good language skills because at heart I am a language person* to *I do not feel comfortable due to my pronunciation and vocabulary*. The focus group participants endorsed the views expressed in the questionnaires. The teachers *perceived higher levels and felt that they were downgraded*. The two youngest teachers thought that they *would be exempted*. Others had mixed feelings. The school principal in FG3 was panic-stricken because he was teased about being at the intermediate level, although he *studied all night*. However, he was happy to have beaten the English teacher. The English teacher was *shocked* to be at the intermediate level for the second time when he expected to be exempted. He admitted to not have studied because *I am an English teacher*. The fact that he was beaten and mocked by the Mathematics teacher also *created conflict* within him. The focus group data endorsed these findings

and cited fatigue, too much writing, wrong timing of the tutorials and difficult tests as reasons why there was no improvement in the teachers' ELP levels.

Contrary to the opinion of Coetzee-Van Rooy (2011), the majority of the teachers (63.4%) were highly motivated to improve on their results despite having overestimated their ELP. Only one teacher was adamant that she would *not go out of her way to improve her ELP*. The teachers indicated pronunciation (63.3%), vocabulary (62.7%) and writing (59.2%) as the areas where help was needed the most.

### **5.2.3 The Extent of Teachers' Perceptions on their Attitude**

These findings combine the teachers' perceptions with the degree that these perceptions influenced their attitude towards the ELPP. It also includes motivators and de-motivators.

#### **5.2.3.1 Motivation to improve ELP**

Gardner (1985) sees motivation to learn a language as a combination of effort, desire to achieve your goal and favourable attitudes. Both data sets revealed that the environment for teachers to improve their ELP was conducive. The motivating factors are summarised below.

**Desired Proficiency:** The quantitative data revealed that a two-thirds majority of participants indicated that a high level of ELP is necessary for teaching at primary schools (see Table 4.16). The majority of the teachers (52%) desired an advanced level of proficiency while 21.7% opted for an intermediate ELP level. Only 2.9% opined that a pre-intermediate level would be good enough. The qualitative data supported these findings. The vast majority of the teachers desired high levels of ELP

because *a low level affects the confidence of the teacher*. An LP teacher stated that she *cannot be comfortable speaking the English (that) she speaks with her grade 1 kids*. These findings are in line with Butler (2004) who postulates that a gap between the teachers' perceived levels of English proficiency and their desired proficiency will determine the degree to which they feel they need to improve their ELP. The importance of English as Namibia's official language and its status as a lingua franca are instrumental in achieving the goal of proficiency in English.

**Reasons for taking the ELPP test:** Table 4.17 reflects the reasons why the teachers took the ELP test. The majority of the teachers (82.4%) were curious about their ELP levels, took it for promotion purposes (82.7%) and improved communication (91.5%). Those who thought they might lose their jobs should they fail the test, were in the minority (35.3%).

**The Effect of the ELP Result on Teachers' Teaching Ability:** In Table 4.18 the effect of the ELP test result on the pre- and intermediate teachers' teaching ability is presented. Both data sets revealed a positive effect. This is in line with Coetzee-Van Rooy (2011) who argues that an awareness of the discrepancy will result in sustained motivation and effort that lead to higher achievement in language learning. Fewer teachers (35.6%) reported self-consciousness when speaking English to their learners. Only 20.7% of the teachers were still self-conscious when addressing their colleagues. The teachers who admitted that they keep quiet in the staff room because of inarticulacy are in the minority (4.1%). Some teachers (50.7%) gained confidence while others (63%) became increasingly vocal. The tutorials also boosted the confidence of many teachers (68.5%). The majority of the teachers (72.6%) indicated that the tutorials enabled them to interact normally with native speakers.

**Personal Areas affected by the ELPP Test Scores:** The teachers also reported positive effects on their self-image (56.3%) and their motivation to learn English (62.8%). Only nine teachers (14.5%) claimed increased anxiety while fifty-three teachers (85.5%) were not worried at all (see Table 4.19).

### **5.2.3.2 De-motivating Factors**

Dörnyei (2001) defines de-motivation as “specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioural intention or an ongoing action” (p. 143). Many researchers (Arai, 2004; Falout and Maruyama, 2004; Tsuchiya, 2006) agree that de-motivation is also caused by internal factors such as lack of self-confidence and negative attitude. The qualitative findings confirmed that the teachers’ motivation was threatened by external as well as internal factors.

**Emotions Experienced during the First Placement Test:** The teachers reported mixed emotions ranging from excitement to indifference when they wrote the first placement test. One teacher was *frightened* because of the rumour that those who fail will be *kicked out of the system*. Other teachers *fell ill because of the test*.

**Effect of Test Result of Teaching Ability:** The qualitative data reported that the overwhelming majority of the teachers were not negatively affected by the test scores. However, one teacher has lost respect for her supervisor because *he has a lower ELP level and would not be able to give her advice as he knows nothing*.

**Teachers’ Negative Attitudes towards the ELPP:** The teachers reported negative attitudes towards the ELPP and elaborated on their reasons. The test was ill-conceived and seen as a *waste of time*. The teachers also *felt labelled* with the leaking of the results and *hated* the ELPP. The majority of the teachers were *demotivated and*

*demoralised* as they were coerced into writing the test that they could not finish on time. The Mathematics teacher claimed *no interest* as it was not her field. This *negativity influenced the others* who attended the tutorials because it *interfered with family time* and their *time to run their own businesses*. A tiny minority of the teachers were *not negative because everyone knows that our English must improve*.

### **5.2.3.3 Challenges Primary School Teachers Face because of their ELP**

The teachers conceded that their ELP levels posed a number of challenges to their teaching. A good command of the English language, irrespective of their subject areas, was desired by all.

**Every Teacher is a Language Teacher:** The qualitative data indicated that most of the teachers agreed that they all *need proper English in all subjects* otherwise *my mistakes will be transferred to my learners*. Another teacher ended the session with the statement *if the teacher is well-trained, the Namibian child will be well-trained*.

**Areas influenced by Proficiency in English:** The qualitative findings indicated lesson presentation as one of the areas influenced by the teachers' deficient ELP. Although most of the teachers felt fairly confident to teach through the medium of English, those in the lower grades admitted that they *often switch to mother tongue*. That was done, not because the teacher lacked the vocabulary, but *to make the learners understand* the content. The Grade 7 Mathematics teacher expressed frustration at himself because he *does not have alternative words to simplify it*. Code-switching became a crutch for those who *could not pronounce the words or could not express themselves well* (LP teachers), and those who *found it difficult to express themselves*

*in English* (veteran teachers). Most of the teachers claimed that their ELP was bedevilled by mother tongue interference.

**Teacher Self-esteem:** The qualitative data also revealed that teacher self-esteem was at stake. One teacher was *afraid to express herself in front of others*. All of the teachers *need the ELPP not only for teaching, but also for ourselves*. They expressed their eagerness to improve their ELP, especially in grammar and writing.

**“Attitudes are influenced by feelings”:** All of the teachers were *positive towards the programme*, but asked for their feelings to be respected as *feelings can be connected to attitude and will influence attitude*.

#### **5.2.4 Ways to Ensure Effective Participation in the ELPP**

The teachers agreed that continued support and incorporating a three-year ELP module into the teacher training programmes at UNAM (see Table 4.20) would best suit their ELP needs. The qualitative data explained in greater depth the teachers’ willingness to work harder at improving their ELP should there be pay rises and *motivation on a regular basis*. Monetary incentives, category improvement, promotional posts for those who were exempted, ELP tutorials offered during the first week of the holiday and even the implementation of a *“Proficiency Day”* by the MoEAC were some of the ideas proposed. They also asked for the implementation of a *three-year ELP course with interesting content* as part of the teacher training programmes at UNAM. Content subject teachers asked for subject-specific language and pronunciation practice. Another teacher asked for the ELP classes to run for at least five years with regular workshops and in-service training because only then would teachers *be at ease to teach in English*. The teachers who were negative at the start of the programme, changed

their tunes as they could see *the benefit for themselves and their learners*. They would prefer the tutorials to be presented by the Faculty's English lecturers, and not their own colleagues. UNAM should also take a proactive approach and select only students with a C-symbol or higher in English, so that they do not need to test *teachers who are already in the profession*. The ELP certificate should guarantee scholarships and bursaries for further studies.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

This study investigated by means of a literature review and empirical research, the perceptions of primary school teachers on the English Language Proficiency Programme in the Okahandja Circuit. The study used an explanatory sequential mixed methods design to best answer the research questions. The findings of this study revealed the need to upgrade primary school teachers' English language proficiency if we want to eradicate the vicious cycle resulting in learners' lack of English literacy skills.

The results of this study also made it clear that the status of ELP had a wider, deeper impact on teacher training programmes as teachers required a strong foundation in general language proficiency (Dippenaar and Peyper, 2011). It cannot be assumed that if teachers are able to speak English, they are able to use it effectively as the medium of instruction. Uys (2006) recommends that language modules which focus on teacher proficiency should be run for at least 3 years. The teachers in the study also asked for the incorporation of an ELP course that focuses on the methodology of teaching and learning English as a second language.

## **Implications for Practice, Research and Education**

The results of the present study suggest that UNAM should be more proactive about teachers' English language proficiency since it does have an impact on academic success. The participants called for a mandatory English language proficiency course to be incorporated in the teacher education programmes to better equip teachers and learners to cope with the current situation.

The findings from this study provided an in-depth understanding of Namibian teachers' ELP levels and their concerns. Since parents and schools in Namibia perceive English as the best choice, proficient teachers are paramount for the success in the classroom (Dippenaar & Peyper, 2011).

## **Linking the findings to the Theoretical Framework**

Dörnyei's L2MSST (Coetzee-van Rooy, 2011) comprises three main constructs:

5.3.1 The **Ideal L2 self** is reflected in the study by the teachers' vision of themselves as competent users of the L2 in the future (Lamb, 2017). This motive serves as an active aspiration towards achieving the desired goal of English language proficiency. Both data sets revealed positive attitudes among all the teachers. The older teachers claimed that they have improved in speaking and writing skills after the tutorials and the younger ones appeared very confident and articulated, despite their lack of teaching experience.

5.3.2 The **Ought-to L2 self** is reflected by the participants' conceptions of what other people believe they 'ought to' be like in future (Lamb, 2017). It includes attributes one believes one ought to possess to meet expectations and avoid negative outcomes.

Many teachers expressed their disappointment at the termination of the project as they wanted to prove to the public that they were now more proficient and more confident in using the English language, especially the ones at the lower bands of proficiency. They want to rid themselves of the stigma and the labels assigned to them with the leakage of the ELPT results and reclaim their position as respectable members of society.

5.3.3 The **L2 Learning experience** has to do with the teachers' attitudes to, experiences of, the effect of the immediate learning environment and experiences of language learning. The study revealed that many teachers were disgruntled with the way the process was handled. Some of the focus group participants claimed that they were *forced* to write tests that were *too advanced*, *too long* and *uninteresting*. According to the teachers, the test was ill-timed, teachers were not properly informed of the reasons for the test and that it was too hot in the zinc classroom to think properly.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made with regard to issues concerning teachers' English language proficiency and are based on the findings of this study:

1. **Control for Subjective Realities:** Awareness of the gap between the teachers' actual and perceived levels of ELP, posed a number of challenges to their teaching. All the teachers desired a good command of the English language, irrespective of their subject areas. They asked for the reinstatement of the ELPP, and continued support in the form of workshops that focus on their subject areas. Refresher courses offered by UNAM, the implementation of an ELP Day and reasonable workloads would enable them to improve their ELP levels.
2. **Involve teachers and keep them informed:** One of the reasons for the participants' anxiety was that they were ill-informed. Anxiety is also a cause

for poor performance in a test. For that reason, it is important to inform candidates about the different tests and what they measure. A proficiency test is one that measures a candidate's overall ability in a language and it is not related to a specific course. An achievement test on the other hand tests the students' knowledge of the material that has been taught on a course. Lastly, ELP tutorials should be voluntary.

3. **Improved Teacher Education Programmes:** Teacher education programmes should respond to the need to prepare trainee teachers to be language teachers from grade 0 onward as language is used across the curriculum. Every teacher must be involved in language and reading development throughout a learner's years of schooling. This reasoning will place the responsibility for developing language skills with every teacher, according to Van der Walt and Ruiters (2011) and also make sure that content teachers focused on how language made content accessible in their classrooms.
4. **Reward System for Teachers:** The teachers realised that society does not hold them in high esteem and that the situation was compounded with the leaking of the Placement Test results. They want their professions to be appreciated and recognised. For this reason they want to be rewarded when they reach the highest level of ELP. Salary increments, promotions and prizes ranked high on the list.
5. **Future studies:** Although not in the realms of this study, the significant differences between male and female teachers' perceptions, attitudes, experience and qualifications came to the fore. Therefore, a study focusing on male teachers' perceptions in more education regions and using multiple measurement tools on different components of teachers' English language proficiency is recommended.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Ethical Clearance Certificate



#### ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

**Ethical Clearance Reference Number: FOE/110/2016**

**Date: 16 August, 2016**

This Ethical Clearance Certificate is issued by the University of Namibia Research Ethics Committee (UREC) in accordance with the University of Namibia's Research Ethics Policy and Guidelines. Ethical approval is given in respect of undertakings contained in the Research Project outlined below. This Certificate is issued on the recommendations of the ethical evaluation done by the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee sitting with the Postgraduate Studies Committee.

**Title of Project:** PERCEPTIONS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS ON THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY PROGRAMME IN THE OKAHANDJA CIRCUIT OF THE OTJOZONDJUPA EDUCATION REGION

**Nature/Level of Project:** Masters

**Researcher:** Anne-Marie Sauer

**Student Number :** 200528840

**Faculty:** Faculty of Education

**Supervisor :** Dr. C.B. Villet (Main) Dr. D. Wolfaardt (Co)

Take note of the following:

- (a) Any significant changes in the conditions or undertakings outlined in the approved Proposal must be communicated to the UREC. An application to make amendments may be necessary.
- (b) Any breaches of ethical undertakings or practices that have an impact on ethical conduct of the research must be reported to the UREC.
- (c) The Principal Researcher must report issues of ethical compliance to the UREC (through the Chairperson of the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee) at the end of the Project or as may be requested by UREC.
- (d) The UREC retains the right to:
  - (i). withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance if any unethical practices (as outlined in the Research Ethics Policy) have been detected or suspected,
  - (ii). request for an ethical compliance report at any point during the course of the research.

UREC wishes you the best in your research.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Kapenda', is written over a horizontal line.

Dr. H. Kapenda

Director –Centre for Research and Publications

ON BEHALF OF UREC

## Appendix B: Research Permission Letter

University of Namibia, Private Bag 13301, Windhoek, Namibia  
340 Mandume Ndemufayo Avenue, Pioneers Park  
☎ +264 61 206 3111; URL: <http://www.unam.edu.na>



### RESEARCH PERMISSION LETTER

**Student Name** Anne-Marie Sauer  
**Student number** 200528840  
**Programme** MECA (Master in Education: Curriculum and Assessment Studies)  
**Approved research title** PERCEPTIONS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS ON THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY PROGRAMME IN THE OKAHANDJA CIRCUIT OF THE OTJOZONDJUPA EDUCATION REGION

### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I hereby confirm that the above mentioned student is registered at the University of Namibia for the programme indicated. The proposed study met all the requirements as stipulated in the University guidelines and has been approved by the relevant committees.

The proposal adheres to ethical principles as per attached Ethical Clearance Certificate. Permission is hereby granted to carry out the research as described in the approved proposal.

Best Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Hedimbi", is written over a horizontal dashed line.

**Name** Dr M. Hedimbi  
**Director:** Centre for Postgraduate Studies  
**Tel:** +264 61 2063275  
**E-mail:** [directorpgs@unam.na](mailto:directorpgs@unam.na)

22 Nov 2016

**Date**

## Appendix C: Letter of Permission from the MoEAC



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

### MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

Tel: +264 61-2933 278  
Fax: +264 61-2933 922  
Email: [ayeshawentworth@yaho.com](mailto:ayeshawentworth@yaho.com)

Private Bag 13186  
Windhoek  
Namibia

Ms Anne-Marie Sauer  
M.Ed Student  
[asauer@unam.na](mailto:asauer@unam.na)

Dear Ms Sauer

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT 6 PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE OKAHANDJA CIRCUIT**

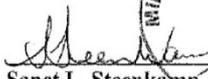
Our correspondence makes reference to your letter requesting for permission to conduct research at 6 primary schools in the Okahandja circuit on the perceptions of primary school teachers of the English Language Proficiency Programme. The Ministry wishes to applaud your efforts and believes that this research can provide valuable information to the Ministry.

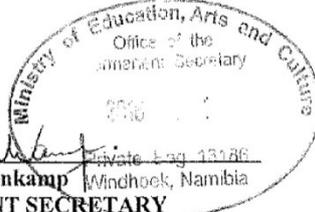
**Kindly be advised the permission to pursue the initiative has been granted under the following conditions:**

- 1.1 That permission is sought from the Regional Directors of the Otjozondjupa region;
- 1.2 That the teaching and learning in schools should not be disrupted;
- 1.3 That consent is received from all school Principals of sampled schools;
- 1.4 That informed consent is received from all participants;
- 1.5 That the outcomes of the research be shared with the Ministry at its conclusion.

Ms A.Wentworth, Deputy Director: DATS, has been designated as the focal person for facilitating your request. Please contact her should you require any further information.

Sincerely,

  
Sanet L. Steenkamp  
PERMANENT SECRETARY



12.12.16  
Date

*All official correspondence must be addressed to the Permanent Secretary*

## Appendix D: Letter of Permission from the Regional Director



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA  
OTJOZONDJUPA REGIONAL COUNCIL



DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

*"Committed and Dedicated For Quality Education"*

Tel no: 264 67 308000  
Fax no: 264 67 304871  
Enq: Ms. Flora ||Hoes

Private Bag 2618  
Erf. 280, Sonweg Street  
Otjiwarongo  
NAMIBIA

To: University of Namibia  
Private Bag 13301  
340 Mandume Ndemufyo Avenue  
Windhoek

Attention: Anne – Marie Sauer

**PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT SIX PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE OKAHANDJA CIRCUIT**

Your request forwarded to our office on the 7 December 2016, bears reference and is hereby acknowledged.

Your request to conduct research at six schools in Okahandja Circuit is positively considered.

Kindly present this letter to the Principal upon arrival at school and ensure that normal school programmes is not interrupted

Your sincerely,

  
Mr. Simon Tsuseb  
Director of Education, Arts and Culture



## **Appendix E: Permission Letter to Principals**

Dear Sir/Madam

### **LETTER OF CONSENT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

I would like to invite your school to participate in a study to determine primary school teachers' perceptions of the English Language Proficiency Programme (ELPP). This study is being undertaken as part of my Master's degree in Curriculum and Assessment Studies at the University of Namibia. This letter serves to explain my study to you.

#### **Title of study**

*Perceptions of primary school teachers on the English Language Proficiency Programme in the Okahandja Circuit of the Otjozondjupa Education Region*

#### **Purpose and Research questions**

The purpose is to understand the views and perceptions of primary school teachers about the ELPP and how their perceptions might influence the implementation of the ELPP. This will be done by answering the following questions:

- What are primary school teachers' perceptions of the ELPP?
- How do primary school teachers' in the Okahandja Circuit perceive their own English language proficiency?
- To what extent do the teachers' perceptions influence their attitude towards the ELPP/
- What could be done to ensure the effective participation in the ELPP?

#### **Method**

Questionnaires and consent forms will be hand-delivered to the six primary schools in the Okahandja Circuit, and only teachers who participated in the ELPP will be asked to complete a questionnaire. Thereafter, seven (7) teachers will be purposefully selected to participate in the focus group interview which serves as a complementary data source.

#### **Duration of the study**

The study will take place from March 2017 to April 2017.

#### **Ethical considerations**

In order to undertake this study, I have received permission from the Permanent Secretary and the Regional Director of the Otjozondjupa Region, as well as relevant authorities at UNAM (See letters attached). Research ethics will be adhered to and all participants will provide informed and voluntary consent.

## **Possible implications for your school**

A suitable time will be negotiated with Management, to ensure that teaching and learning are not compromised. The completion of the questionnaires and the focus group interview will take place on pre-arranged dates which will not interfere with the normal school activities and will be carried out in the afternoon.

The findings of this study could provide in-depth knowledge about teachers' needs which in turn, could lead to redesigning teacher training programmes and incorporating language training. This study will resonate the voices of the teachers and provide useful insights into helping them develop their English language proficiency. With improved English proficiency the long-term impact may be an enhanced learning experience for learners in Namibia.

### **Contact Details:**

Should you have any questions or require further information at any time, do not hesitate to contact me directly:

Anne-Marie Sauer  
Mobile number: 081 149 8615  
Email: [asauer@unam.na](mailto:asauer@unam.na)

Should you have concerns regarding the researcher, please contact my supervisors:

Dr C.B. Villet  
(W) 206 3631  
[cvillet@unam.na](mailto:cvillet@unam.na)

Dr D. Wolfaardt  
(W) 206 3906  
[dwolfaardt@unam.na](mailto:dwolfaardt@unam.na)

I thank you for taking the time to read this letter, and trust that you will participate in this meaningful study that is aimed at ensuring quality teaching and learning of the Namibian child.

Yours faithfully

*A. Sauer*

Anne-Marie Sauer

MECA student

**TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PRINCIPAL**

Please complete the consent form and email to [asauer@unam.na](mailto:asauer@unam.na)

I, ....., the principal of ..... have been informed about and fully understand the study to be undertaken by Anne-Marie Sauer as part of a Master’s degree study. I agree to my school being used a research site.

**1. Overview**

The study will determine how teachers perceived the ELPP and will include teachers in the primary phase (Lower and Upper Primary). The collection of data is envisaged to take place from March to April 2017 and participants will be all the teachers who participated in the ELP programme.

**2. Procedures**

Lower and Upper Primary teachers who expressed their willingness to participate in the study will be asked to complete a questionnaire. Thereafter, seven (7) teachers will be selected to participate in a focus group interview.

**3. Conditions of participation**

- I understand that informed consent from teachers will be obtained in writing before commencement of the study.
- Participants may withdraw from the study by informing the researcher verbally or in writing without fear of penalty.
- I am free at any time to contact the researcher should I have any concerns.

I have carefully read and understood the above and consent to my school being used as a research site for the purposes of this study described above.

Name: .....

Signature: .....

Contact number: .....

Email: .....

## **Appendix F: Informed Consent Form for Teachers**

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS

#### **Introduction**

I would like to invite you to participate in this study which is being undertaken as part of my Master's degree in Curriculum and Assessment Studies at the University of Namibia.

#### **Title of study**

*Perceptions of primary school teachers on the English Language Proficiency Programme in the Okahandja Circuit of the Otjozondjupa Education Region*

#### **Purpose and Research questions**

The purpose is to understand the views and perceptions of primary school teachers about the ELPP and how their perceptions might influence the implementation of the ELPP. This will be done by answering the following questions:

- What are primary school teachers' perceptions of the ELPP?
- How do primary school teachers' in the Okahandja Circuit perceive their own English language proficiency?
- To what extent do the teachers' perceptions influence their attitude towards the ELPP/
- What could be done to ensure the effective participation in the ELPP?

#### **Method**

Questionnaires and consent forms will be hand-delivered to the six primary schools in the Okahandja Circuit, and only teachers who participated in the ELPP will be asked to complete a questionnaire. Thereafter, seven (7) teachers will be purposefully selected to participate in the focus group interview which serves as a complementary data source.

#### **Duration of the study**

The study will take place from March 2017 to April 2017.

#### **Ethical considerations**

In order to undertake this study, I have received permission from the Permanent Secretary and the Regional Director of the Otjozondjupa Region, as well as relevant authorities at UNAM (See letters attached). Research ethics will be adhered to and all participants will provide informed and voluntary consent.

### **Possible implications for your school**

A suitable time will be negotiated with Management, to ensure that teaching and learning are not compromised. The completion of the questionnaires and the focus group interview will take place on pre-arranged dates which will not interfere with the normal school activities and will be carried out in the afternoon.

The findings of this study could provide in-depth knowledge about teachers' needs which in turn, could lead to redesigning teacher training programmes and incorporating language training. This study will resonate the voices of the teachers and provide useful insights into helping them develop their English language proficiency. With improved English proficiency the long-term impact may be an enhanced learning experience for learners in Namibia.

### **Contact Details:**

Should you have any questions or require further information at any time, do not hesitate to contact me directly:

Anne-Marie Sauer

Mobile number: 081 149 8615

Email: [asauer@unam.na](mailto:asauer@unam.na)

I thank you for taking the time to read this letter and trust that you will participate in this meaningful study that is aimed at ensuring quality teaching and learning of the Namibian child.

Yours faithfully

*A. Sauer*

Anne-Marie Sauer

MECA student

## Appendix G: Data Collection Instruments: Questionnaire

INFORMED CONSENT FORM
-----------------------

I have been informed about and fully understand the study to be undertaken by Anne-Marie Sauer as part of a Master's degree study.

### 1. Overview

The study will determine how teachers perceived the ELPP and will include teachers in the primary phase (Lower and Upper Primary). The collection of data is envisaged to take place from March to April 2017 and participants will be all the teachers who participated in the ELP programme.

### 2. Procedures

Lower and Upper Primary teachers who expressed their willingness to participate in the study will be asked to complete a questionnaire. Thereafter, seven (7) teachers will be selected to participate in a focus group interview.

### 3. Conditions of participation

- I understand that no research will be undertaken without my informed consent obtained in writing before commencement of the study.
- I may at any time withdraw from the study by informing the researcher verbally or in writing without fear of penalty.
- My identity will remain strictly confidential and not be made available to anyone other than the researcher.
- I am free at any time to contact the researcher should I have any concerns.
- Data gathered from me will be used for the purposes of this study alone.

I have carefully read and understood the above and consent to participate in this study.

Name: .....

Signature: .....

Date: .....

QUESTIONNAIRE ON PERCEPTIONS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS ON THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY PROGRAMME IN THE OKAHANDJA CIRCUIT OF THE OTJOZONDJUPA EDUCATION REGION

Dear Teacher

Thank you very much for taking the time to participate in this study. Your time and participation are highly appreciated, and will contribute to improved teacher education programmes and relevant in-service training courses in the Faculty of Education.

The completion of this questionnaire is anonymous and voluntary. All information supplied will be treated with the strictest confidence and will only be used for the purposes of this research study.

Please, remember that this is not a formal assessment of your proficiency, but a rating of how you **perceive the English Language Proficiency Programme**.

- Instructions:** (a) Do not write your name on this questionnaire.  
(b) Follow the instructions and answer all questions as best as you can.  
(c) Place the completed questionnaire and consent form into the sealed box.

---

**SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF TEACHERS Please tick (✓) the appropriate answer.**

1. Your gender:

Female	
Male	

2. Which age group do you belong to?

21 – 24	
25 - 30	
31 – 35	
36 - 40	
41 – 50	
51 and older	

3. Indicate your highest level of education obtained:

Certificate in Education	
Diploma in Education	
Bachelor's degree in Education	
Master's degree in Education	

4. Which **phase** did you **specialise** in?

Early Childhood Education (ECD)	
Lower Primary Education	
Upper Primary Education	
Other (Please, specify): .....	

5. How many years of teaching experience do you have?

1 - 2 years	
3 - 5 years	
6 - 10 years	
11 - 15 years	
16 - 20 years	
21 - 25 years	
26 years and more	

6. Which grade(s) do you currently teach?

Grade 0	
Grade 1	
Grade 2	
Grade 3	
Grade 4	
Grade 5	
Grade 6	
Grade 7	

SECTION B: PROFICIENCY

Please tick (✓) the appropriate answer.

7. Indicate your Pre-programme English language proficiency level (According to the placement test result):

Pre-intermediate level	
Intermediate level	
Advanced level	
Exempted	

8. Indicate your Post-programme English language proficiency level (After the tutorials):

Pre-Intermediate level	
Intermediate level	
Advanced level	
Exempted	

9. How would you rate your **current** English language proficiency level?

Highly satisfactory (Exempted)	
Acceptable (Advanced)	
Needs attention (Intermediate)	
Unsatisfactory (Pre-intermediate)	

10. What level of English language proficiency do you think is necessary for you to teach at a primary school?

Exempted	
Advanced	
Intermediate	
Pre-intermediate	

SECTION C: TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE ELPP

**Part 1: Please tick (√) the box that best describes your thoughts/feelings or provide written answers.**

Teachers' opinions about the ELPP as a measure of their language ability:

No.		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
11.	English language proficiency (ELP) testing is not a good idea.				
12.	ELP testing is a not a true reflection of my level of proficiency.				
13.	I do not like ELP testing because it makes me feel uncomfortable, stressed and anxious.				
14.	ELP testing is not relevant due to mother tongue instruction.				

15. Did your ELP result make you think differently about your ability as a teacher? (Please tick as applicable.)

	Yes	Sometimes	No
a) I feel self-conscious using English to speak in front of my class.			
b) I feel self-conscious to speak in front of my colleagues.			
c) I often keep quiet because I feel I am not expressing myself clearly.			
d) I felt demoralised/not motivated during the tutorials.			
e) I am much more confident even if I know my grammar is faulty.			
f) I feel comfortable using English in public gatherings.			
g) I am more confident to teach in English.			
h) In face-to-face interaction with an English speaker, I can participate in a conversation at normal speed.			

16. In what aspects have you been affected by your ELPP test scores?

	Positively	Not affected	Negatively
My self-image			
My motivation to learn			
Increased anxiety and emotional tension			

17. How do you view your English language proficiency **needs**? (Tick (√) the appropriate answer.)

My ELP is very good and I do not need extra help.	
My ELP is good, but I still want to improve it.	
My ELP is low and I need a lot of help.	

18. The ELPP tutorials

a) addressed only the needs identified by the test.	
b) taught me new language skills.	
c) were too advanced for me.	
d) were too basic or elementary.	
e) were targeted at the right level.	
f) improved my English language proficiency.	

19. What **challenges** prohibited you from participating in the ELPP tutorials?

I have a heavy teaching load.	
I do not have enough time, but am motivated.	
I am not motivated at all.	
Other reason (specify):	

20. Which aspect of the ELPP test was **important** to you?

	Least important	Moderately important	Most important
Personal interest (curious to find out about my level)			
To pass the test. (to keep my job)			
To have more and better opportunities in the future. (promotion)			
To be able to communicate confidently with everybody.			
Other reason (specify):			

21. In which area(s) do you need help? (You may choose more than one option.)

	Most	Least
Reading		
Writing		
Vocabulary		
Speaking		
Pronunciation		
Listening		

22. How can the ELPP help support your needs?

Provide ongoing support in the form of tutorials on subject-specific English.	
Conduct workshops at cluster schools on specific needs.	
Incorporate a three-year English language proficiency module into Educational programmes. (B. Ed.)	
Provide on-line tutorials using social media.	
Tech solution such as audio files (content)	
SMS motivation	
Other (specify):	

**Part 2: Tick (✓) the most appropriate box.**

23. Do you agree with the statement: “All teachers need the ELPP because every teacher is a language teacher”

Yes	
No	

Give a reason for your answer.

.....  
.....

24. Do you agree that primary school teachers require slightly lower levels of English language proficiency?

Yes	
No	

Give a reason for your answer in question 24.

.....  
.....

25. What is your view on the ELP Programme?

Positive	
Neutral	
Negative	

Give reasons for your answer.

.....  
.....

26. How do you perceive your own English language proficiency?

Very good	
Good	
Fair	
Poor	

Give reasons for your answer. (Say which aspects of the language do you find easy and which ones do you find hard.)

.....  
.....

27. What can be done to ensure that teachers participate in the ELPP?

.....  
.....

**Thank you very much for your time and your co-operation**

## Appendix H: Focus Group Interview Schedule

Questions	Enquiry hoped for
1. How long have you been a primary school teacher? 2. Are you teaching in your area of specialisation? 3. Are you content with your current teaching position?	Information about teaching experience (cross-section) Discovery of possible undertones Self-awareness (Specialisation)
4. How do you view teaching, as a calling or just a job/career? 5. What motivated you to become a primary school teacher? 6. How do you feel about English as MoI and official language? 7. Do you think there is a need for testing teachers' levels of proficiency? 8. What would be possible reasons for your answer? 9. What was going through your mind when you heard about the ELP test? 10. Why did you have those feelings? 11. How did you feel about the results? 12. Was there a discrepancy between your perceived and actual level of English language proficiency? Y/N 13. What could be possible reasons why you did not perform the way you thought you would? 14. What are teachers' attitudes towards the ELPP? 15. What is the general feeling among teachers about the ELPP? 16. What are the reasons for these feelings?	Identification of motivation (intrinsic or extrinsic) A goal for learning English Teachers' concerns (Opinions on the ELPP as measure of their language ability) Possible de-motivators Extraneous circumstance that led to discrepancy Teachers' attitudes
17. Do you enjoy teaching the subjects that you currently teach? If not, what are the reasons? 18. What is your opinion on the statement that "every teacher is a language teacher"?	Challenges and performance: Evidence of challenges because of English language proficiency

<p>19. Should primary school teachers have a slightly lower level of English due to Mother tongue teaching?</p> <p>20. What are your reasons for switching to Mother tongue during lessons?</p>	<p>Identification of areas that are influenced by command of English (self-efficacy, self-confidence, self-esteem)</p>
<p>21. How could teachers be helped to improve their ELP?</p> <p>22. What would motivate teachers to improve their EL proficiency?</p>	<p>Aid/Solutions Teacher concerns Motivators</p>