

THE ORAL PROFICIENCY OF ESL TEACHER TRAINEES IN DIFFERENT DISCOURSE DOMAINS

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Abstract

This article reports on a study that investigated the oral proficiency of ESL Teacher trainees in different discourse domains. The sample of the study consisted of twenty ESL teacher trainees in their final year at a College of Education. Different methods were used to measure the teacher trainees' oral proficiency in the English Communication Skills class while engaging in less formal conversations and in more formal teaching of content subjects during Practice Teaching. Three categories of constructs for oral proficiency were measured: Accuracy and fluency, classroom language and non-verbal communication. The findings supported the hypothesis: The oral proficiency of ESL teacher trainees is more satisfactory in some discourse domains, e.g. casual conversations, than in others, e.g. formal teaching. Although these findings cannot be regarded as conclusive they raise awareness of the problem. Recommendations were made on how to address the problem of poor oral performance of ESL teachers and teacher trainees teaching content subjects.

Introduction

In Namibia, after the country's independence, English was chosen as the official language and medium of instruction in schools. In the Report of the Presidential Commission on Education, Culture and Training (1999), the issue of the Language Policy of Namibia after independence is discussed comprehensively. The report states that:

Languages were used deliberately as a way of dividing the population into different ethnic groups who would be unable to oppose the policies of the government. Today the main concern of the Namibian government in terms of languages is to restore mother-tongues to a position of respect and to continue developing local languages and cultures. It is also of utmost importance to equip Namibians with a common lingua franca that will assist them in gaining access to the international community. This is the most important reason for the selection of English as national language of Namibia, as well as medium of instruction in schools.

However, the sudden switch to English as medium of instruction caused numerous problems. The problems mentioned in the Report that are relevant to this study are the following:

The Namibian environment does not create an atmosphere conducive for effective English learning. Many Namibian teachers are not competent enough to teach through the medium of English in spite of different attempts made since independence to improve the language proficiency of teachers. Furthermore, there seems to be a lack of research to discover the specific language needs of teachers.

It is recommended in the Report of the Presidential Commission (1999) that no student should be allowed to obtain a Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD)



or B. Ed without passing a test of competence in English. Students should also not be admitted to a teacher-training course without having passed an English proficiency test. The importance of proficiency in English is stressed again and again in the report "since progress in education requires such proficiency" (1999, p. 80). However, in the year 2002, students were still admitted at the four Teacher Training Colleges without passing a test of competence in English.

The problems mentioned above are relevant to the issue under investigation in this study, i.e. the oral proficiency of teacher trainees in different discourse domains. In the English Communication (ECS) class at the college, teacher trainees speak English quite fluently, but outside the familiar context of the college, when they do their Practice Teaching at schools during their School Based Studies (SBS), their oral proficiency is less than satisfactory. Teacher trainees are expected to use the target language as medium for organising, socialising and communicating in the classroom. Apart from the above, teacher trainees should be able to use English successfully to transmit knowledge or information when they teach; they should use the language effectively for managing their classes, for eliciting learner responses, etc. If the level of their oral proficiency is unsatisfactory, it will have an adverse effect on their teaching and on the learning process.

Principals and teachers at schools, as well as the teacher trainees' subject lecturers, are often dissatisfied with the way the teacher trainees express themselves when they teach various subjects (in English) during Practice Teaching sessions. This study tested the Hypothesis: ESL teacher trainees' oral performance is more satisfactory in some discourse domains, e.g. casual conversations, than in others, e.g. Practice Teaching.

If teachers are familiar with the reasons why their teaching is not effective, they might be able to address the problem in order to improve their teaching. One of the main objectives of an ESL (English as a second language) course (like the ECS courses offered at Namibian teacher training colleges) is to enable teacher trainees to function successfully in classrooms where English is the medium of instruction. The ESL students in this study are the teacher trainees themselves, whose oral performance was rated during ECS classes at the College, and while they taught in Practice Teaching situations.

Literature Review:

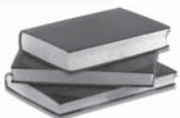
The review is organized according to the major points relevant to the problem, e.g. the dimensions of oral proficiency, important results of research conducted in the area of oral proficiency and possible explanations for the nature of the language problem.

• The constructs of oral proficiency

In a research study in which oral proficiency is to be investigated, it is important to know what constitutes oral production of a language learner.

The following constructs of oral proficiency of teachers were identified in the literature (De Jong and Van Ginkel, in Verhoewen and De Jong, 1992; Canale, 1983; Doff 1994; MBEC, 2000).

- (1) Fluency and accuracy: grammar vocabulary and pronunciation.



- (2) Classroom teaching: elicitation, instructions, explanations and level of English.
- (3) Non-verbal communication

De Jong and Van Ginkel (in Verhoewen & De Jong, 1992) believe that fluency is the ease and smoothness of speech. They state that even the man-in-the-street regards fluency and pronunciation as the most important features on which to judge someone's oral proficiency. According to Canale (1983, p. 7), accuracy in speech production refers to good knowledge and use of vocabulary, grammatical structures and correct pronunciation. The verbal mode includes pronunciation and vocabulary as constituent parts of grammatical competence.

Classroom teaching involves skills in elicitation, instructions, explanations and the level of English. Elicitation means asking questions to obtain learners' ideas and suggestions. It is a useful way of getting the learners to participate, because the teacher focuses their attention and makes them think (Doff, 1994, p.133). Instructions are guidelines given to the learners for answering questions, doing activities and performing in groups and pairs and should be clear and grammatically correct. If teachers give poor instructions learners will not understand the tasks and the lesson objectives will not be attained (MBEC, 2000).

According to Weller (1985, in Labarca & Bailey, 1985), explanations, i.e. communication of information should be coherent, logically ordered and complete. In assessing the appropriacy of teacher/teacher trainee's use of English to the learner's level of English, the ability of the teacher/teacher trainee to adjust his/her English to that of the learners is considered. Some teachers talk over the heads of learners by using difficult language that is incomprehensible to the learners. Others talk so much and with such sense of superiority that they silence the learners (MBEC, 2000).

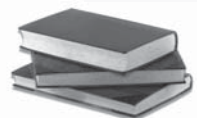
Non-verbal communication refers to non-oral means of communication like eye contact and other non-verbal aspects, e.g. gestures, facial expressions, posture, no distracting behaviours.

Important results of research conducted in the area of oral proficiency.

In many articles on ESL, authors expressed grave concern in terms of oral proficiency of teachers who teach English as a second language or teachers who use English as a medium of instruction in other subject areas.

Schrade (1992, p. 3) found that most ESL teachers are conscientious about their work and want to do a good job, but are hampered in their efforts because of inadequacy resulting from the fact that they are often products of traditional training and have not had exposure to native speakers. Consequently these teachers have inhibitions in terms of speaking English for fear of making mistakes. They openly admitted their inadequacy and expressed a strong desire and need for oral competency. She also found that teachers' confidence increased when they had some instruction that caused improvement in their oral competence.

Kgomoeswana (1993) even believes that ESL teachers use code switching because of language incompetence. He states that teachers with an insufficient command of the language of instruction often code-switch to their first language to explain



a concept. In Namibian classrooms, we sometimes find that nearly all the teaching is done in the teacher's first language.

Puhl and Swarts (1993) and Cullen (1994) express concern about the constant negative impact the teachers' poor quality of English is going to have on learners who actually need good role models of language use. Puhl and Swarts (1993) feel that it is not fair to the teachers themselves to be put in a situation in which they lack the language skills needed for them to cope. Cullen (1994) strongly recommends the incorporation of a language improvement programme in a teacher training course in order to improve the English proficiency of prospective teachers, so that they can teach more confidently.

In a study conducted by a British teacher development project, the English Language Teacher Development Programme (ELTDP), which involved Namibian Education Officers, principals, teachers and teacher trainees, alarming results in terms of teachers' and teacher trainees' oral proficiency in English were reported and the researchers recommend that rigorous strategies be implemented to improve levels of English proficiency among Namibian teachers and teacher trainees (MBEC, 2000).

• The nature of the language problem

Starfield (1992) and Cummins (1979,1980) in Brown (1987) clarified the nature of the language problem in terms of the BICS/CALP distinction. They distinguished between Basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and Cognitive/Academic language proficiency (CALP). Cummins' framework (in Starfield, 1992, p.3) is based on two intersecting continua (see figure 1)

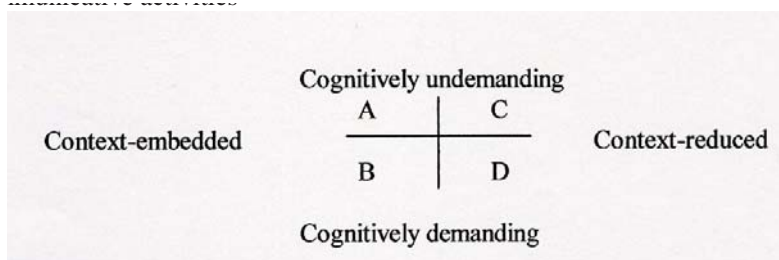
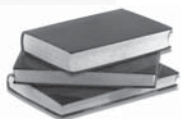


Fig. 1. Range of contextual support and degree of cognitive involvement in communicative activities

One continuum involves the range of contextual support available for expressing or receiving meaning. At one end of this continuum, we find 'context-embedded' communication, and at the other, 'context-reduced' communication. Context-embedded communication occurs when participants actively negotiate meaning in a face-to-face situation, e.g. in everyday, interpersonal exchanges (Starfield,1992) and this relates to BICS, which is the communicative capacity that all children acquire in order to function in everyday conversations (Brown,1987, p.199). In context-embedded communication, the contextual support available in the learning situation is quite sufficient (Smith, 1998).



Starfield (1992) explains that the other continuum deals with the degree of active cognitive involvement in the task or activity at hand. The two opposite poles of the continuum represent the 'cognitively undemanding' and 'cognitively demanding' features. The tasks can be cognitively demanding or less demanding depending on the amount of information that has to be processed simultaneously by the person completing the task. Obviously academic tasks entail language use in situations where contextual clues are often absent and in which abstracts concepts are used (Cummins, 1984, in Smith, 1998).

In figure 1 there are also the four quadrants A, B, C and D. BICS fall within the quadrant A skills, e.g. cognitively undemanding and context-embedded, and can be developed outside the classroom. On the other hand, the CALP skills fall within the quadrant D skills and are cognitively demanding and context-reduced communication tasks. The typical academic skills at tertiary institutions and the more formal classroom and school oriented language fall within quadrant D (Starfield, 1992). It appears that schools in general do not promote CALP concepts in the first and second languages, and teachers experience difficulties in explaining content subject concepts, because of poor language proficiency in the language of instruction. This problem directly relates to the problem at issue and explains why teachers and teacher trainees' oral proficiency appears to differ across discourse domains.

Cummins (1984, in Smith, 1998) argues that BICS in the first language (L1) as well as in the second language (L2) develop relatively independently of each other, but CALP in both languages develop relatively dependently. Consequently the level of competence an L2 learner may reach in an L2 in CALP depends to a certain extent on his/her proficiency in the L1. An L2 learner should therefore be able to think and communicate through his native language at a relatively advanced level in order for these skills to be transferred to the L2. Unfortunately this is not always the case. The teacher trainees under discussion can speak their native language quite fluently in everyday situations, but can often not think and communicate through their native languages at an advanced (or academic) level.

Similar findings in terms of BICS and CALP are reported by Chamot and O' Malley (1987, p. 228). Minority language students who participated in ESL programmes in the US performed satisfactorily when their language proficiency was assessed, and their teachers thought they were quite proficient in English communicative skills, but when they were mainstreamed into the all-English curriculum, they were faced with severe difficulties. Their problems were caused by the increased language demands made by the academic curriculum. In the upper grades (and even more so in tertiary education) the language of subjects like science and mathematics becomes more academic (context-reduced) and more remote from the language of everyday communication than is the case at primary school. Various researchers, according to Chamot and O'Malley (1987), have indicated that the development of these academic skills (CALP) lags behind the development of social communicative skills (BICS), often by more than five to seven years.

To conclude, the nature of the language problem can be explained in terms of the BICS/CALP distinction, according to the writers cited above. This distinction explains the discrepancy that seems to exist between the second language learner's oral performance in different discourse domains. It seems that their BICS (Basic interpersonal communication skills) are more developed than their CALP



(Cognitive/Academic language proficiency). L2 learners perform quite well when their oral performance is assessed in natural situations when engaging in context-reduced communication. However, when their oral performance is assessed in more formal situations, e.g. the more academic-oriented class, their performance is less than satisfactory.

Methodology

Research Design

The research was essentially qualitative with a few descriptive qualities. Both qualitative and descriptive researches provide descriptions of phenomena that occur naturally, with no intervention of an experiment or treatment (Selinger & Shohamy, 1989). This research took place under natural conditions.

Participants

The participants in the study were twenty teacher trainees in their third (and final) year of study. This class was a fairly representative sample of the population of final year teacher trainees at a Teacher Training College. They were men and women between the ages of twenty and twenty-five (young adults), who came from various regions in Namibia. They spoke different Namibian languages, e.g. Otjiherero, Oshivambo, Khoe-Khoe-gowab, Silozi, Ru-kwangali and Afrikaans natively. The teacher trainees were trained to teach different subjects (Social Studies, Mathematics, Science and Accounting).

Collection of data

Verbal data from the social environment were collected. The following categories of behaviours were identified to describe the oral proficiency of the teacher trainees in practice teaching situations and in ESL classes at the College:

- Fluency and accuracy: grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation
- Classroom teaching: elicitation, instructions, explanations, level of English
- Non-verbal communication.

Data concerning the teachers' perception of the teacher trainees' oral proficiency were also obtained.

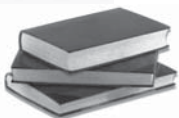
Instruments and procedures

Band descriptors

In the ESL or ECS classroom the teacher educator used band descriptors (see figure 2.) to assess the student trainees' oral proficiency while they engaged in less formal and context-embedded interactions like role play, informal interviews, pair and group work. This was done in the first term of the academic year, while the students were busy with their College-Based studies.

Classroom Observation bandscales

Observation bandscales were used to assess student trainees' oral proficiency while they were teaching classes during Practice Teaching in the second term. The constructs mentioned above, i.e. fluency and accuracy, classroom teaching and non-verbal communication were rated (See ratings for classroom observations in figure 6). The assessment was done by the ESL (or ECS) lecturer with the assistance of content subject lecturers (See figure 3 for first three questions of bandscales).



A.

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- **fluency:** can speak confidently in a wide range of situations, fully and fluently conveying ideas and experience, can use a wide range of vocabulary and phrases, including colloquialisms; can generally convey meaning accurately, even in complex situations; uses different styles of communication as appropriate, moving with ease between first language and English.
 - **accuracy:** usually accurate, whatever the context, including communication conducted at speed; most mistakes are self corrected.
 - **context required:** no requirements, but may need guidance in specific situations, e.g. practice for an interview.
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B.

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- **fluency:** can maintain a conversation with some confidence; can move between topics and express feelings and opinions in structured situations, though expression may be restricted in less structured situations or on abstract topics; can rephrase, use various strategies to get message across, ask for specific help, e.g. use of a particular word; can usually convey general meaning adequately and is beginning to include some detail and development of ideas; is beginning to use different styles of communication, e.g. register.
 - **accuracy:** accurate in simple tasks; accurate in more difficult situations with support; often recognises errors.
 - **context required:** some help to maintain conversation and explanation of specialised or unfamiliar language.
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C.

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- **fluency:** can initiate with some confidence and respond relevantly on familiar topics or in structured situations, using a range of basic language functions, though hesitations may sometimes affect communication; can use a range of familiar words and phrases; can rephrase, search for words, ask for help, check understanding; can adequately convey general meaning, though may lack detail and development of ideas; can recognise some errors;
 - **accuracy:** usually accurate in simple tasks; transfers language between situations, though there may be frequent structural errors in more difficult tasks or unfamiliar situations;
 - **context required:** co-operative with other speaker/s to maintain conversation in structured situations or on familiar topics.
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D.

Does not meet the basic criteria in terms of fluency and accuracy mentioned in C.

Figure 2: Band descriptors

Questionnaires

Data concerning the teachers' perception of the teacher trainees' oral proficiency were obtained by means of questionnaires. The teachers were working closely with the teacher trainees at schools and getting an opinion other than that of the subject lecturer was useful because it gave a more comprehensive picture of the phenomenon. The reason for using questionnaires was practicality. It would have been too time-consuming and demanding for the teachers to rate the teacher trainees' oral performance during classroom observations. However, in order to be



1. How accurate is the teacher trainee's grammar?

A.	Virtually no grammatical errors.
B.	A few grammatical errors.
C.	Fairly accurate, only some errors of minor consequence.
D.	Some disturbing errors that impede communication.
E.	Almost every utterance contains errors.

2. How clear and accurate are the teacher trainee's pronunciation, stress and intonation?

A.	Very good pronunciation, stress and intonation.
B.	Very few errors in pronunciation, stress and intonation.
C.	Satisfactory pronunciation, stress and intonation, only a few basic errors.
D.	Unsatisfactory pronunciation, stress and intonation.
E.	Numerous errors in pronunciation, stress and intonation, to such an extent that teacher trainee is hardly understood.

3. How correct is the teacher trainee's use of vocabulary?

A.	Vocabulary is used correctly.
B.	Only a few errors in vocabulary use.
C.	Adequate use of vocabulary generally, but a few mistakes occur.
D.	Inadequate use of vocabulary leads to communication breakdown.
E.	Very difficult to understand due to frequent incorrect vocabulary use.

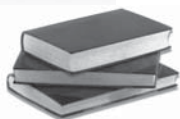
Figure 3: Bandscales

consistent, the assessment involved the same constructs of oral proficiency that were assessed during the observations.

Findings

Scores for casual conversations during College-Based-Studies and structured observations during School-Based studies.

The participants obtained grades for the oral proficiency in ESL/ECS classes in term 1 of their College-Based-Studies. They also obtained grades from the observation that were coded in columns in which all eight bandscales were indicated (See figure 6). Ticks were made to indicate the grade obtained by a participant for each of the constructs of oral proficiency measured. The table in figure 4 displays the grades for oral proficiency in ESL classes and during Practice Teaching. The table makes it possible to compare these two ratings.



Participants	Grade for oral proficiency in ESL class	Grade for oral proficiency during Practice Teaching
1.	A	B
2.	A	B
3.	B	C
4.	B	B
5.	C	D
6.	C	D
7.	A	B
8.	B	B
9.	B	D
10.	C	C
11.	B	A
12.	C	B
13.	B	C
14.	C	D
15.	C	D
16.	B	C
17.	C	C
18.	B	B
19.	B	C
20.	B	A

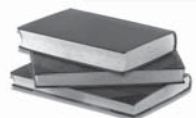
Figure 4 . Grades for oral proficiency in ESL classes and during Practice Teaching.

Teachers' perceptions of teacher trainees' oral proficiency

Another table (figure 5) was used to tabulate the results of the questionnaires. The eight questions used in the questionnaire were typed vertically and next to each question the grades (A to E) that could be obtained by the participants were typed horizontally (See Figure 5).

QUESTIONS	A	B	C	D	
1. Grammar		++++			4A's 5B's 4C's 1D
2. Pronunciation		++++	++++		1A 6B's 7C's
3. Vocabulary		++++			3A's 6B's 4C's 1D
4. Elicitation		++++			2A's 6B's 4C's 2D's
5. Level of English		++++			3A's 6B's 3C's 2D's
6. Instructions		++++ ++++			10B's 2C's 2D's
7. N.V.C.		++++	++++		1A 5B's 6C's 2D's
8. Explanations		++++	++++		1A 7B's 6C's
	15 112 = 13,3%	51 112 = 46%	36 112 = 32%	10 112 = 9%	

Figure 5. Results of the Questionnaires



Analysis of the results

Since the sample size was small, only twenty participants, the use of statistical analysis was unnecessary, because frequency counting could be done (Brown, 1990).

Simple numerical calculations were done to determine which percentage of the participants performed excellently, quite well, just adequately and below acceptable level in the ECS class, during casual conversations.

To ascertain which percentage of the teacher trainees passed or failed in terms of each of the constructs measured during Practice Teaching, frequency counting was done, e.g. eight participants obtained D's (below acceptable level performance) for elicitation skills. In other words 40% of the participants did poorly in this area of oral proficiency. A final grade for oral proficiency during Practice Teaching was arrived at by getting the average of the grades obtained for the eight constructs, e.g. Participant 1 obtained one A, six B's and one C, which gives him/her a final grade of B for oral proficiency. The grades were then recorded against the numbers representing the participants. Thereafter it was clear how to determine the percentages of participants who performed excellently, very well, just adequately and below acceptable level in their oral proficiency during Practice Teaching (See figure 6).

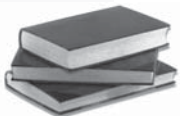
Frequency counting was also done to find out how many participants were awarded A's, B's, C's, D's, and E's for each of the questions in the questionnaires and the percentages were then calculated. Finally, the percentage of teachers awarded A's, B's, C's, D's and E's for oral proficiency by the subject teachers was determined in the same way, by frequency counting and numerical calculation (See figure 6).

Discussion

In figure 7 below the oral performance of teacher trainees in different discourse domains is displayed in a way that makes comparison easy.

Figure 7

Level of proficiency	PRACTICE TEACHING		ESL CLASSROOM
	% of teacher trainees - in observation	% of teacher trainees - questionnaires	% of teacher - ESL rating
A. Excellent	10%	13,3%	15%
B. Good	35%	46%	50%
C. Adequate	30%	32%	35%
D. Inadequate	25%	9%	0%
E. Poor	-	-	-



According to the table, 10% of the teacher trainees performed excellently in the structured observations (Practice Teaching), while 13,3% performed excellently according to the findings of the questionnaires and 15% obtained distinctions during informal discussions in the ESL class.

A good grade (B) was obtained for oral performance by 35%, 46% and 50% in the structured observations (Practice Teaching), according to the questionnaires and in the ESL class respectively. Thirty percent and 32% of the teacher trainees performed at an average level according to the findings of the structured observations and the questionnaires, while 35% performed satisfactorily in the ESL class at the College.

Figure 4.6 shows that 25% and 10% of the teacher trainees performed poorly according to the results of the observations and questionnaires respectively, whereas none of them performed poorly in ESL class discussions.

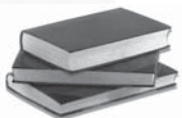
On close examination of the results, one may conclude by saying that a difference of oral proficiency across discourse domains is evident. The teacher trainees' oral performance in the ESL class is always better than their oral performance as rated during Practice Teaching for the grades A to D in the various constructs assessed. With regard to the final grades for oral performance in the ESL class and during Practice Teaching the tendency is the same, i.e. a higher grade for oral performance in the ESL class than in Practice Teaching situations. However, there are a few exceptions. Five participants (25%) obtained similar grades in the different discourse domains and two (10%) actually obtained higher grades in the Practice Teaching observations than during ESL classes.

Nevertheless, an overwhelming 65% of the participants scored better in their oral performance during informal classroom situations in which they were the students than during School-Based-Studies when they did the teaching. It is also significant that 25% of the teacher trainees performed below acceptable level during Practice Teaching while none of them obtained a grade below C in the ESL class at the College. The findings are in accordance with the hypothesis: ESL teacher trainees' oral proficiency is more satisfactory in some discourse domains, e.g. casual conversations than in others, e.g. classroom teaching.

Contributions of the study

The study raises awareness about the problem of unsatisfactory oral proficiency of teacher trainees. The large percentage of teacher trainees (25%) who performed below acceptable level in their oral proficiency during Practice Teaching causes concern, because if the teacher trainees' oral command of English is poor they will not be able to teach effectively.

In terms of accuracy and fluency, the teacher trainees' pronunciation seems to be the biggest problem. Severe problems in pronunciation can affect teaching negatively if it results in miscommunication. With regard to the classroom language of the trainees, the following problems were detected: 40% had underdeveloped elicitation skills and inadequate skills for the use of English to explain and illustrate concepts, while 45% performed below acceptable level for the use of non-verbal communication. Problems in these areas have an adverse effect on teaching because learners will not understand the teacher trainees' explanations and the meaning of their language will not be supported by poor use of non-verbal communication.



In the literature review the nature of the language problem was discussed. The BICS/CALP distinction clarifies why teacher trainees perform quite satisfactorily in the ESL class at the College when their oral skills are assessed in a supportive, context-embedded and more natural setting when they engage in activities that simulate real-life situations, however, when they are the teachers in a more formal and academic setting, their level of achievement drops to the extent that some of them perform poorly. An understanding of part of the problem should make teacher educators, principals and teachers at schools involved with the teacher trainees more tolerant towards them and they should think of ways to assist them in improving their skills for Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP).

The results and findings of the study indicate that more in-depth research about the oral performance of ESL teacher trainees is needed. More studies are needed in order to establish exactly how serious the problem is and identify the specific problematic areas in order to take measures to solve them.

Conclusion and recommendations

The main purpose of the study was to test the hypothesis: ESL teacher trainees' oral proficiency is more satisfactory in some discourse domains, e.g. casual conversations, than in others, e.g. classroom teaching. The sample of the study consisted of twenty ESL student teachers whose oral proficiency was measured during ESL classes at the College and while they taught content area subjects during their School-Based Studies. After the data were analyzed and interpreted, it was clear that the findings supported the hypothesis. The contributions of the study are that it raises awareness of the problem, makes an attempt at clarifying the language problem and indicates that more in-depth research into the problem is needed.

The following recommendations are made on how to address the problem of a poor command of oral proficiency in English among teacher trainees and Namibian teachers:

- More time in the ECS/ESL classes at the College needs to be spent on the teaching and practising of English for teaching at school than on engaging in casual conversations, which the teacher trainees clearly do not have difficulties with. Classroom language could be dealt with in the teacher trainees' second year, in term 1, before they visit schools for Practice Teaching and should be revisited before School-Based-Studies in the third year. In these periods rigorous strategies will have to be employed to enhance the teacher trainees' CALP as they need this to cope in the more formal and academic situation of classroom teaching.
- Both the MBEC Report (2000) and the Report of the Presidential Commission (1999) suggest that the required entry grade for English to a teacher training programme should be raised to a D or C.
- English improvement programmes at universities (and colleges), should be closely related to the demands made on students in their major field of study, and both language and subject specialists should be involved in collaborative teaching (Starfield, 1992).
- Another recommendation is to follow examples of universities that offer intensive courses to upgrade the English of qualified teachers who struggle to teach effectively because of an inadequate command of English. Similar

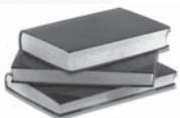


courses could be run by the colleges to give assistance to teachers of content area subjects who teach through the medium of English, to raise the level of competence in English in all areas.

- Advisory teachers should be trained to be of assistance in the area of English across the curriculum so that they can give support to their subject teachers (MBEC 2000).

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