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**AN ANALYSIS OF FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT CHALLENGES FACING
ENGLISH LANGUAGE (L2) SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN THE
MAKONI DISTRICT OF ZIMBABWE: A STUDY OF FIVE SCHOOLS.**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATION

BY

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SUPERVISOR

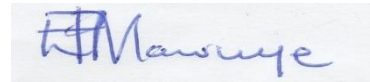
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Declaration

I declare that “An analysis of formative assessment challenges facing English Language (L2) secondary school teachers in the Makoni District of Zimbabwe,” is my own work and all the sources used have been acknowledged.

Name: **MAWUYE ENOCK PANGANAYI**

Signature:.....

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mawuye', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Date: 06/08/2017

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Finally, I remain indebted to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education for allowing me to carry out my study in Secondary schools.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my family and to the memory of my parents.

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to analyse formative assessment challenges facing English Language (L2) Secondary school teachers in the Makoni District of Zimbabwe. Data were collected from 25 English Language secondary school teachers pooled from 5 secondary schools in the Makoni District. The study utilised the pragmatic paradigm which allowed the use of the mixed methods approach. The study used the survey research design. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires while qualitative data were collected through follow-up interviews, documents and non-participant observations. Cross-tabulations were used to present data which were then reported mainly in percentages. While most of the qualitative data were used to buttress findings established through the questionnaires, the other data were categorised into themes and analysed accordingly. Major challenges that were revealed by this study were that teachers used the teacher – centred approach, feedback given to pupils was not detailed, there was less time to assess appropriately and that teachers were not motivated to assess effectively. Remedial activities were not being carried out and that teachers' training in assessment was not thorough. Shortage of teaching and learning resources and high teacher – pupil ratios were some of the challenges that teachers faced. There was lack of coordination of agencies involved in assessment and that assessment was examinations – oriented. Assessment policy formulation did not involve teachers and that most pupils were not motivated to learn. On the basis of these findings, the study recommended the provision of adequate teaching and learning resources, provision of appropriate pre-service and in – service training programs as well as involving the teachers in the formulation of assessment policies.

Acronyms

UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
SDC	School Development Committee
HOD	Head of Department
BSPZ	Better Schools Programme Zimbabwe
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ZIMCHE	Zimbabwe Council of Higher Education
CDU	Curriculum Development Unit

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CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

1.1 Introduction

The study analysed formative assessment challenges faced by secondary school English Language teachers in the Makoni District of Zimbabwe. It was important to study formative assessment challenges faced by English Language teachers to see how these challenges can be reduced. Assessment is the single most powerful influence on learning in formal courses, and if not designed well, can easily undermine the positive features of an important strategy in the repertoire of teaching and learning approaches (Boud, Cohen & Sampson 1999). Since formative assessment is key to the effective monitoring of teaching and learning in schools, it is critical that challenges which teachers are likely to face be assessed and, solutions be suggested. There is great need to curb this development by examining the formative assessment challenges faced by English Language teachers. The current study was motivated by the need to improve classroom assessment to measure learning outcomes. It was important to undertake this study because analysis of classroom assessment practices may direct and guide the quality of future assessment programmes and subsequently improve the standard of education in secondary schools.

The first chapter deals with the problem and its setting. The context of the study was articulated from an international perspective down to a local level, Zimbabwe, where the study was situated. Cases on assessment challenges are cited from Britain, China, Sierra Leone and Zambia. The chapter also presents the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, its objectives, significance and delimitations. Some key terms important to the study are defined contextually and finally, an outline of what each chapter is about is also provided.

1.2 Background to the study

Formative assessment in formal schools developed in Europe around the 6th century (Phelpson, 2012). It was used to screen students for various trades and was a means of certifying competency. In China, formative assessment was used for classifying and

promoting students to the next level of learning (Pandong, 2006). Critics of the assessment system, like Pun (2007), criticised the flaws and inconsistencies that were inherent in the system, like awarding extremely high marks to non-deserving students. During the communist era of the 1950s, formative assessment was mainly used for diagnosing students' difficulties and not for classification purposes. In Africa, formal assessment rose to prominence with the arrival of missionary education. In Sierra Leone, during the late 18th century when missionaries set up schools, assessment was used for screening students so that a few could proceed to higher levels of learning (Phillips, 2011). In Zambia, under colonial rule between 1924 and 1952, formal and professional assessment became more fully developed. It was affected by inadequate staffing levels and constant change in the staffing level. Some English Language teachers did not finish the syllabus and less time was spent on remediation and enrichment (Kapambwe, 2012). In Zimbabwe, missionary and colonial education fully developed the phenomenon of formal formative assessment (Cook, 2011).

In Zimbabwe, formative assessment is carried out at the school level, where students sit for weekly or fortnightly tests, end of term tests, mid-year tests and end of year tests. The tests are set and marked by individual teachers. According to Richards (2010), formative assessment can be carried out at classroom level through teacher- made tests and exercises, demonstrations, self - assessments, pair assessments, group assessments, homework, informal questioning, and observation of classroom activities. Hendrik (2011) argues that school reports are part of classroom assessment activities. The objectives of assessment in English Language classrooms are numerous. Turner (2008) points out that the strategy of formative assessment is to expose weaknesses in learning and monitor teaching. Turner (2008) further states that formative assessment aims to maintain standards, motivate students and teachers, measure specific abilities like reading age, classify students and discriminate between students of different abilities. Formative assessment in English Language is carried out to determine how much is known about a concept and predict the suitability of individual students for particular courses or careers as well as select students for further education. In using formative assessment, secondary school teachers may judge each student's achievement against specific criteria. In principle, no account is taken of how other students have performed in English Language lessons. When using formative assessment, teachers may assess the performance of students relative to others in the class. This type of assessment may demotivate students

by comparing them with others, and unhealthy competition may arise. The social constructivist theory views assessment as a formative process that encourages students to learn continuously. Teachers are engaged more deeply in the assessment process and provide more rigorous and meaningful feedback (Feiman-Neusar, 2005).

Just like teachers everywhere, Zimbabwe school teachers are the key drivers of the education process. Their instructional and classroom assessment practices are a means by which the education system is evaluated and defined (Nenty, 2014). For this reason, it is imperative to understand the challenges they encounter as they attempt to use various assessment methods to evaluate students' learning outcomes. It is also important to understand their challenges as they develop and use assessment methods, grade students' work and interpret assessment results. While various researchers (McMillan 2003; Hamidi 2010; Alkharusi 2007) argue that teachers need to understand and familiarise with a variety of essential assessment concepts, principles, techniques, tools, strategies and procedures, relatively little emphasis continues to be placed on the challenges that they encounter. Teacher assessment practices are vital elements of classroom reform. During the process of educational reform, substantial emphasis was placed on assessment issues, but less emphasis on causes (Kotze, 2012.)

The Assessment Policy from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (Director's Circular Number 36 of 2006) determines the types of assessment and the frequency they are supposed to be administered to pupils. The Director's Circular stipulates that new schemes of work should be drawn up in advance each term and that scheme–cum planning should indicate a breakdown of the lessons taught each term. The circular states that various teaching methods must be used, especially computers and the internet as well as charts, pictures, objects within the schools and outside the school environment, literature from periodicals, magazines, newspapers, computer software and text books. Drama, songs and external resource persons must be made use of and teachers must learn to improvise and organise educational trips. The circular indicates that teachers must supervise all exercises, projects, plays and co-curricular activities. All work given should be recorded. The circular lays minimum work expectations. In 2012, an additional assessment process was designed by the Ministry under the Performance Lag Address Programme (PLAP) where teachers are supposed to provide different assessments to different types of students in a single lesson so as to bridge the gap between fast and slow learners.

English Language heads of Departments derive their Departmental Policies from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education Assessment Policy which must then be adhered to by the English Language teachers. The English Language departmental policy states that 3 language exercises should be given to students per week, 1 comprehension exercise a week, 1 composition exercise every fortnight, 1 summary exercise every fortnight, 1 communication and register exercise every week, 1 library lesson every fortnight and a test monthly. A minimum of 6 to 7; 35 to 40 minute lessons are supposed to be conducted weekly.

In light of the above expectations, this study intends to analyse if English Language teachers in Makoni District secondary schools encounter any formative assessment challenges in terms of meeting the requirements expected of them as dictated by the Director's Circular Number 36 of 2006. English Language secondary school teachers derive syllabus aims, assessment objectives, schemes of assessment and approaches or methodologies from the national syllabus (Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council English Language Ordinary Level 1122, 2013–17 National Syllabus). From the national syllabus, English Language teachers craft the school syllabus (scope and sequence chart). According to the English Language syllabus, the skills approach is highly recommended. The skills approach gives students practice in doing small, simple things correctly before they attempt more difficult things. Students must learn step by step, progressing from the simple to the complex, mastering each step along the way. Each lesson ought to have three stages: presentation of the new idea by the teacher, practice of the new skill by the students in pairs or groups in a classroom activity and finally, production; where students try out the new skill by producing something on their own. The syllabus states that when it comes to marking, more points should be given to the skill that was being taught and that each marking scheme should be tailor – made for each lesson. There is an official assessment policy mandated by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and the implemented assessment that each teacher creates for his /her English Language class. There exists a gap between the new English Language assessment vision as articulated in the Policy and the reality obtaining in the English language classroom.

For meaningful assessment of teaching and learning processes, teachers should be able to conduct continuous formative classroom–based assessment, prepare students for summative assessment in English Language, provide students with regular feedback both

orally and in writing, encourage students to respond to the feedback, as well as mark accurately and constructively. Teachers should also be able to make consistent and comparable judgements of each learner's performance over time, use data to monitor progress, set targets and plan subsequent lessons, monitor assessment programmes for students with special needs. (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2015). There should be evidence of remedial assessment in learners' books as well as inclusive assessment. Teachers should encourage, involve, motivate and reinforce all students through assessment, accurate simplification of English Language assessments while ensuring that they sufficiently challenge students of different ability levels without frustrating them. They should also use appropriate questions to test levels of learners' engagement with content. The workload assignments must be suited to individual students (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2015). Teachers are called upon to provide assessment that meets the needs of all types of learners. This augurs well with Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory which advocates assessing students through logical-mathematical, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, physical, linguistic, spatial and naturalistic forms (Chaton, 2000).

English Language teachers also need to provide remedial assessment (Director's Circular No. 26 of 2008). Intervention programmes are necessary to either prevent or correct learning disabilities. Remediation in English Language is aimed at improving the pass rate. Remedial assessment is sometimes offered when pupils' achievement is two or more years below their capacity level. Once students are selected for clinical remediation, they must further be exposed to diagnostic tests to identify, more specifically, their areas of need. English Language teachers should develop screening instruments that they can use to identify the strengths and weaknesses of those students who refer themselves and those referred by other teachers in the Department or even by parents and guardians. Remedial assessment should be done at least twice a week (Director's Circular No 20. 2008).

According to the Makoni District English Language Panel Newsletter 1 of 2015, the average pass rate in English Language at Ordinary Level in Makoni District stood at between 15% and 20% in the last five years. This is a worrisome trend hence the current study seeks to establish if English Language teachers are encountering any formative assessment challenges since the pass rate is on a downward trend. At national level, the pass rate has been on a downward spiral as well (ZIMSEC Ordinary Level English Language Examiners

Report, 2014). This means only 15% to 20% Ordinary Level students are eligible for Advanced Level education every year and this is a serious waste of prospective human capital or resource. The low pass rate in English Language may result in students having a negative attitude towards the subject; and in low motivation levels for both teachers and students alike. The study focuses on English Language because, in Zimbabwe, studying and passing it is compulsory. It determines progression of children from Ordinary Level to Advanced Level and from high school to tertiary level. English Language is a prerequisite for entry to a training programme. English is also the medium of instruction and the official language. Failing English Language is a disadvantage to a pupil. The importance of assessing this subject is that it prepares students for summative assessment.

Most parents are concerned about the poor English Language skills exhibited by secondary school students (The Manica Post, 2014). The Manica Post goes on to say that, parents complain that most secondary school students can hardly speak fluently and write simple sentences which are error-free. The Makoni District English Language Panel Newsletter 1 of 2015 revealed that most secondary school students do not exhibit satisfactory level of syntax development (correct grammatical sequences and figurative verbal cultures) and semantic development (word power/vocabulary). The report further indicates that most students have not mastered simple basics like correct spelling of specific word regimes and simple subject and verb agreements (tenses), and that their general level of comprehension and verbal communication in speech is heavily compromised. The reading culture amongst the youths and school children has decreased drastically during the past few years (National Rural Libraries Association, 2013). Teachers, being central to formative assessment, may be facing challenges in trying to develop necessary English Language skills in students in order to help them perform well. It is this assumption that triggered the present study.

1.3 Statement of the problem

In Zimbabwe, English Language is a key subject at Ordinary Level if one is to be counted as having a full Ordinary Level Certificate. Disturbing is the fact that many students fail the subject (Makoni District English Language Panel, 2015). The real reasons for the low pass rate are not clear. The Assessment Policy from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and the English Language National Syllabus from ZIMSEC prescribe minimum work expectations that are numerous, broad and diverse which, if followed properly, should

result in good passes. One wonders whether teachers implement the suggested procedures and work expectations correctly in the formative assessment of pupils' work. The researcher assumes that English Language teachers face challenges in their formative assessment of pupils' work, hence, the present study attempted to analyse formative assessment challenges facing English Language secondary school teachers in Makoni District of Zimbabwe with the ultimate aim of suggesting appropriate interventions.

1.4 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to analyse formative assessment challenges facing English Language secondary school teachers in Makoni District of Zimbabwe with the aim of improving formative assessment practices in Zimbabwean secondary schools. The ultimate aim of the study was to improve pass rates in schools.

1.5 Research questions

1.5.1 Main question

1.5.1 What formative assessment challenges do English Language secondary school teachers face in Makoni District?

1.5.2 Sub questions

1.5.2 How is formative assessment done in English Language in Makoni District secondary schools?

1.5.3 What factors influence teachers' formative assessment procedures in English Language?

1.5.4 To what extent do English Language teachers face formative assessment challenges?

1.5.5 What measures can be put in place to reduce formative assessment challenges in English Language?

1.6 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were to establish:

1.6.1 and analyse formative assessment challenges faced by English Language secondary schools teachers in Makoni District.

1.6.2 how English Language formative assessment is done in Makoni District secondary schools.

1.6.3 factors that influence teachers' formative assessment procedures in English Language.

1.6.4 the extent to which English Language teachers face formative assessment challenges.

1.6.5 measures that can be put in place to reduce formative assessment challenges facing English Language secondary school teachers.

1.7 Assumptions of the study

The study assumed that:

1.7.1 English Language secondary school teachers face challenges in their assessment of pupil performance.

1.7.2 English Language formative assessment practices are well streamlined in Zimbabwean secondary schools.

1.8 Significance of the study

The study is of significance to English Language teachers in that they may become more enlightened on formative assessment challenges and how to minimise them. Findings may help English Language teachers to further improve the learning process and meet the needs of students through more meaningful formative assessment methods. The study may be of significance to school heads because it may assist them institute measures to curb formative assessment challenges in English Language as well as develop assessment goals that offset assessment challenges. School heads may then promote contemporary formative assessment methods amongst their staff and provide an all- encompassing environment that promotes child centred assessment techniques. The study may provide lecturers with essential insights into how current practices of formative assessment impact student teachers' learning and may offer guidance for further development of formative

assessment in Zimbabwean higher education. Lecturers may equip student teachers with relevant formative assessment skills if they utilise findings from this study.

The study may be of importance to policy - makers who may institute reforms necessary to improve formative assessment measures in English Language in secondary schools. Findings from the study may also add to the existing body of literature on formative assessment theory and practice within the Zimbabwean education system and act as a framework for developing teacher preparation and professional development in the use of classroom tests. Parents may benefit from the study in that they may be conscientised on the need to create conducive environments for students to carryout homework tasks.

1.9 Delimitations

The study analysed formative assessment challenges English Language (L2) secondary school teachers face when assessing pupil performance. The study was limited to 5 schools in Makoni District, Zimbabwe. The study focused on formative assessment challenges at the classroom and school levels only.

1.10 Definition of terms

Assessment: Petty (2011) defines assessment as a process of gathering and discussing information from multiple and diverse sources in order to develop a deep understanding of what students know, understand and can do with their knowledge as a result of their educational experiences. The process culminates with results being used to improve subsequent learning. Assessment encompasses measurement; for example, 10/10 and evaluation, for example, excellent work. In this study, assessment is the gathering, interpreting, using and communicating of classroom information about a pupil's progress and achievement during the development of knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes in English Language.

Challenges: Deci (2008) defines challenges as impediments to achieving set educational goals. In this study, challenges refer to barriers and constraints that hinder appropriate formative assessment of students by English Language secondary school teachers.

Formative assessment: Newton (2010) defines formative assessment as a series of educational activities undertaken by teachers and / or by students which provide

information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning process in which they are engaged. In this study, formative assessment is the process by which evidence about English Language students and achievement is elicited, interpreted and used by teachers, students or their peers to make decisions about the next steps in instruction that are likely to be better than the decisions they would have taken in the absence of the evidence that was elicited. It typically involves feedback for both the English Language student and teacher, which focuses on the details of content and performance.

Evaluation: Hamilton (2012) defines evaluation as a professional activity that individual educators undertake to continuously review and enhance the assessment they are endeavouring to facilitate. In this study, evaluation refers to the value judgments passed on pupils' work or effort by English Language secondary school teachers, for example, good, neat and excellent. Hence, evaluation is a qualitative process.

Measurement: Kimomen (2011) defines measurement as the assigning of numbers to such traits as interest, attitude, intelligence and performance. In this study, measurement means any device for the general study and practice of testing, scaling and appraising of outcomes of an English Language assessment process. It includes administration and scaling of tests and other assessment instruments, scale construction, validation and standardisation, as well as application of statistical techniques in interpretation of obtained figures or assessment results in English Language. Measurement is therefore, quantitative, for example, when teachers write 10/10 after marking an exercise.

Reliability: Hailey (2012) defines reliability as the accuracy of precision of an instrument, the degree of agreement between two independently derived set of scores, and as the extent to which independent administration of the same instrument yields the same results under comparable conditions. In this study, reliability refers to indication of the consistency of score evaluations by English Language secondary school teachers over time. An assessment is reliable when the same results occur regardless of when that assessment was done or who does the scoring. There should be evidence to show that the results are consistent across raters and across scoring occasions.

Validity: Rubin (2010) defines validity as a process by which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure and yields scores whose differences reflect the variable being measured rather than the random or constant errors. In this study, validity means how well

assessment activities by English Language secondary school teachers measure what they are supposed to measure. Valid tasks reflect actual knowledge or performance, being reviewed by peer subject experts to judge content, quality and authenticity.

1.11 Summary

This chapter provided the background to the study that analysed formative assessment challenges facing English Language secondary school teachers in Makoni District. Historical and contemporary trends in assessment challenges were noted. The low pass rate, decreased reading culture, and poor English Language reading skills displayed by the students were highlighted. Policy Circulars related to assessment were also discussed. The chapter also highlighted the research questions, objectives, purpose and significance of the study and its delimitations. The next chapter reviews literature.

1.12 Chapter outline

The study was organised around five basic chapters as follows:

- **Chapter 1: Introduction** – The chapter provided the background to the study, statement of problem, main research question and sub-research questions, purpose of the study, research objectives, and significance of the study, delimitations and definitions of terms.
- **Chapter 2: Literature review** – This chapter outlines the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study and provides a synthesis of empirical studies that have been carried out on formative assessment challenges facing English Language secondary school teachers.
- **Chapter 3: Research methodology** – In the chapter, the researcher outlines the research paradigm, research approach, research design, population and sampling and data collection instruments. Issues to do with validity and reliability (for quantitative research) and credibility and trustworthiness (for qualitative research), together with data analysis and ethical considerations for the study are also highlighted.
- **Chapter 4: Data presentation and analysis / discussion** - The chapter focuses on presentation of data from the two phases of the study. An analysis / discussion of the results is made in the chapter.

- **Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations** - In this chapter, the study is summarised, conclusions drawn and recommendations made.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews related literature. Specifically, it looks at the conceptual and theoretical frameworks of the study. The chapter also examines literature based on the research questions to see what is known or not known about the questions raised in this study.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

The fundamental concepts that are key to this study are educational assessment and formative assessment. In education, the term, assessment refers to a wide variety of methods or tools that educators use to evaluate, measure and document the academic readiness, learning progress, skills acquisition or educational needs of students (Morrison, 2013). Fred (2014) defines educational assessment as a qualitative and quantitative process of documenting students' knowledge, skills and attitudes. It documents usually in measurable terms; knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs. Townsend (2013) defines assessment as the systematic basic basis for making inferences about the learning and development of students. It is the process of defining, selecting, designing, collecting, analysing, interpreting and using information to increase students' learning and development.

The salient features of educational assessment are that it provides diagnostic feedback. It tells teachers, students and parents about the students' knowledge bases, their performance base, what they need and what has been taught.

Assessment is a process that:

- helps educators set standards, whether the type of performance demonstrates understanding and knowledge as well as mastery,

- evaluates progress; tells educators how the student is performing, what teaching methods or approaches are most effective and what modifications to a lesson are needed to help the students,
- relates to students' progress, tells educators what the student has learnt and analyses whether the student can talk about the new knowledge and whether they can demonstrate and use the skill in other projects / subject areas,
- motivates performance, informs students of the learning progress and areas that need improvement, and
- informs the teacher what they can do to help the students more and about courses of action needed to be taken to improve performance.

(Custon, 2014).

Neador (2015) defines formative assessment as a process that includes all activities that teachers and students undertake to get information that can be used diagnostically to alter teaching and learning. Formative assessment encompasses teacher observations, classroom discussions and analysis of student work, including homework and tests. Feedback given as part of formative assessment helps students become aware of the gaps that exist between their desired goal and their current knowledge and understanding and guides them through actions necessary to obtain the goal. Greenstein (2013), views formative assessment as a student focused, instructionally informative and outcomes-based classroom process. Marshall (2013) sees formative assessment as a programme that uses a wide variety of tools that teachers use to evaluate, measure and document the academic readiness, learning progress, skill acquisition or educational needs of students. Heritage (2007) points out that formative assessment is a process closing the learning gaps and defining the criteria for success of learners. This involves: eliciting evidence of learning, interpreting the evidence and identifying the gaps, as well as providing feedback to learners, planning, learning and teaching.

Formative assessment is created by teachers themselves on the questions of teaching and learning that are important to them. The Canadian Technology Assisted Learner Assessment Institute (2001) is of the view that assessment is a process which follows three

steps:

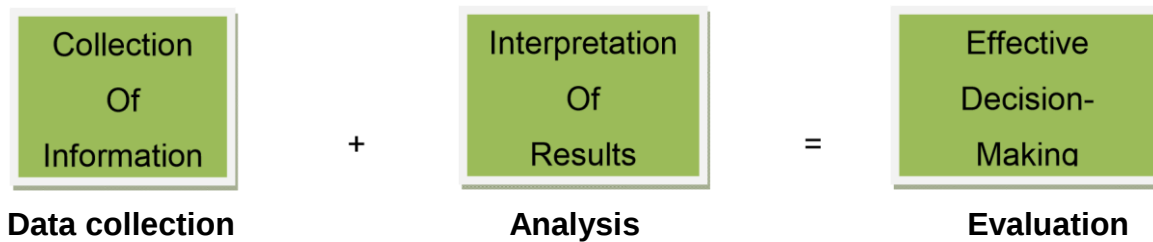


Figure 1: Balanced Model of Assessment, (The Canadian Technology Assisted Learner Assessment Institute, 2001, page106.)

In the first stage, the teacher utilises a variety of measures such as observational techniques, projects, quizzes and teacher - made tests to collect information. After the analysis of results in stage two, the teacher makes decisions in stage three. Decisions may involve a plan for remediation.

Yeh (2005) came up with the following characteristics of classroom assessment:

- **Learner–Centred** : Classroom assessment focuses attention on teachers and learners on observing and improving learning rather than observing and improving teaching. Classroom assessment can provide information to guide teachers and learners in making adjustments to improve learning,
- **Teacher Directed** : Classroom assessment respects the autonomy, academic freedom, and professional judgment of the school. The teacher decides what to assess, how to assess and how to respond to information gained through assessment. The teacher is not obliged to share the results of assessment with anyone,
- **Mutually Beneficial** : Classroom assessment requires the active participation of learners. By cooperation in assessments, learners reinforce their skills at self-assessment and teachers also sharpen their teaching skills,
- **Formative** : The purpose of classroom assessment is to improve the quality of learner learning and not provide evidence for evaluating or grading . Assessment is done during pupils learning in order to provide feedback to the pupils,
- **Content Specific** : Classroom assessments have to respond to particular needs and characteristics of teachers, learners and disciplines to which they are applied ,
- **On-going** : Classroom assessment is continuous,

- Rooted in good teaching practice: Classroom assessment is an attempt to build on existing good practice by making feedback on learners more systematic, more flexible and more effective, in order for teachers to bring about the most productive and beneficial learning.

Drawn from the above definitions, formative assessment has the following characteristics:

- Multi-assessor: teacher assessment, peer assessment and self-assessment are all involved,
- Multi- assessing strategies and tools available: testing and non-testing assessment, formal and informal procedures, numerous non- testing strategies, including classroom observations,
- More comprehensive in assessed content: it not only assesses cognitive process (mastery), it is also concerned about learner feeling, behaviours, interests and attitudes,
- Developmental and personalised: formative assessment is process-focused and is for developmental purposes. It pays more attention to the change in the individual students and respects learner differences and learner potential. It embeds assessment in instruction. It aligns standards, content and assessment. It allows for the purposeful selection of strategies and makes goals and standards transparent to learners, and
- Provides feedback: feedback that is comprehensible, actionable and relevant. Feedback is given to learners, parents, heads of subject departments and the school heads. It provides valuable diagnostic information by generating informative data.

According to Smith (2013), formative assessment in English Language high school classrooms serves the following purposes:

- identifies what students know,
- identifies students' special needs,
- determines appropriate placement,
- selects appropriate curricula to meet students' individual needs,
- refers students for additional services to programs especially those with autism, dyslexia and other non-verbal learning disabilities,
- relates school activities to home activities and experiences,

- makes lesson and activity plans and set goals,
- creates new classroom arrangements,
- selects instructional material,
- makes decisions about how to implement learning activities,
- reports to parents about students' developmental status and achievement,
- monitors and improves the teaching – learning process,
- meets the individual needs of students, and
- groups students in classrooms for instruction.

The two concepts explored here (educational assessment and formative assessment) are central to the present study which seeks to analyse formative assessment challenges facing English Language secondary school teachers.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

The present study was informed by Hargreaves, Earl and Schmidt's Assessment Theoretical Model and Hollingsworth's English Language Classroom Assessment Process Model.

2.3.1 Hargreaves, Earl and Schmidt's Assessment Theoretical Model

This study is informed by the Assessment Theoretical Model by Hargreaves et al. (2002). This model is proffered to comprehend the factors that hinder English Language teachers' assessment practices. It critically scrutinises the "how" and "why" and not only the commonness of use of English Language classroom assessment tools. This model is based on the acknowledgement of the notion of assessment as being reflective of values and epistemological beliefs about teaching and learning of English Language.

The technological perspective of the theory focuses on issues of organisation, structure, strategy and skill in developing formative assessment techniques. Hargreaves et al. (2002) believe that teaching and learning innovations are technologies with predictable solutions that are transferable across different contexts. The technological perspective views formative assessment as a complex technology that requires sophisticated expertise in; for example; devising valid and reliable measures for performance-based assessments in

classrooms which capture the complexities of student performance (Bradely, 2001). Formative assessment, if inappropriately done, may result in “mislabelling” of pupils; thereby reducing the diversity of ability within students and resulting in poor pass rate in teacher-made tests and ultimately, in national examinations (Fonnah, 2011). The challenge of assessment in this view, is not only to develop defensible technologies that are meaningful and fair but for teachers to develop the understanding and skills necessary to integrate assessment techniques; such as performance- based assessment, portfolios, self-assessment, video journals and exhibitions in their practice.

By focusing on organisation, the technological perspective includes all classroom assessment activities required to specify the means to accomplish pupils’ work. The perspective scrutinises whether assessment activities are being systematically designed or whether they are being conducted in a haphazard manner. It looks at whether assessment activities are well paced to meet set targets and whether the sitting arrangements of the students permit them to demonstrate learned concepts in the English Language lesson without hindrance. Aspects like sitting arrangements are analysed to see whether they allow students to fully demonstrate learned concepts without hindrance.

The structure aspect of the technological perspective is the chain of authority along which orders or decisions are passed from school administration to teachers who must carry them out. If the school administration orders mixing students with different abilities, this model analyses the feasibility and practicability of meeting the demands of various types of learners.

The strategy aspect of the technological aspect looks at approaches to achieve assessment goals. Achieving assessment goals comes about in two ways. They are accomplished by better managing what the English Language teacher is presently doing in terms of assessment and/or finding new assessment techniques. An English Language teacher may offer new techniques of assessment to current students. This is likely to present assessment challenges to teachers as the English Language students take time to adjust and embrace the new assessment technique which may lead the teachers to abandon the new technique; hence, failure to meet set objectives.

The second part of Hargreaves et al.’s (2002) model is the cultural perspective. Culture in this context is the integrated system of learned behaviour patterns which are characteristic

of members of the teaching profession, such as values and norms pertaining to classroom assessment (Hargreaves et al., 2002). It has been noted that some English Language teachers believe in conservative methods of assessment as being appropriate. In such a context, assessment challenges develop as teachers assess students using conservative assessment methods with dire effects (Machakanja, 2010). The negative effects include students who behave in a didactic manner, rather than an interactive manner. The students will not be problem- solvers. Another aspect of culture is commitment to practice. If English Language teachers lack commitment to current formative assessment practices, then the formative assessment process will not be fully implemented, thereby bringing out an assessment challenge. Finally, when teachers do not have time or do not employ effective assessment strategies, they generally resort to testing - the way they were assessed, too often, ineffectively (Guskey, 2004).

The third part of Hargreaves et al.'s (2002) perspective is the political perspective. The perspective views negotiation of power, authority and competing interests among groups as issues accounting for English Language teachers' formative assessment practices. In Zimbabwe, English Language teachers have to fulfil the assessment policy demands from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and those from Zimbabwe Schools Examinations Council (ZIMSEC). The competing demands between the assessment policy of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and the English Language syllabus from ZIMSEC exert pressure on the teachers who usually follow the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education Assessment Policy since it originates from the parent ministry. Not following the policy may result in sanction and censure. Assessment challenges in the political perspective are caused by inappropriate use, political and bureaucratic influences or institutional priorities and requirements (Hargreaves et al., 2002). The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education sets the assessment policy that has to be adhered to by the English Language Departments in all secondary schools. Since secondary school teachers are not consulted in the crafting of the Assessment Policy (Zimbabwe Open University Module MDEA504, 2000), they may fail to fully comply with the requirements. The Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (2005) points out that if there is cooperation from the teachers, there is bound to be support for the assessment process. This implies that if English Language teachers are involved in the crafting of assessment policy, they will cooperate, but if they are not involved, they may circumvent the process by conducting superficial assessment since supervision is minimal in the Zimbabwean

education system as the sector is underfunded. Departmental assessment requirements may not be fully adhered to.

The fourth perspective of Hargreaves et al.'s (2002) model is the post-modern perspective. It is based on the view that in today's complex and uncertain world, human beings are not completely knowable. No classroom assessment system can therefore, be fully comprehensive. Not all teachers use a comprehensive assessment system that offers multiple forms of representation of students' learning in ways that give maximum voice and visibility to their diverse activities and accomplishments. In this context, no formative assessment system in English Language comprises multiple forms of representation of student achievement through written, numerical, visual, technological or dramatic media collected in a diverse portfolio of activity and achievement. This situation does not allow students' abilities and identities to be acknowledged more readily, indicating formative assessment challenges for English Language teachers.

2.3.2 Hollingsworth's English Language Classroom Assessment Process Model

Classroom assessments are limited to the formal assessments that go through a cyclical process of planning, designing, implementing, marking, and reporting (See Figure 2). In addition, students and their English Language teachers are simultaneously considered as the participants of the assessment process. Although, typically, classroom teachers are perceived to have control over the assessment process, literature (Black & William, 2002; Watt, 2005) has shown that students also have an important role at different stages of the assessment process.



Figure2: Assessment process (Holingsworth, 2000 page76)

A review of literature (An, 2004; Black & William, 2004) indicates that a shift in the assessment paradigm has been advocated globally. This advocacy has led to modifications in classroom assessment practices from traditional testing to assessment alternatives that are integrated within teaching and learning processes. An example of such alternatives is the project-based learning. However, there are also reports indicating that in reality, English Language classroom assessment has remained, for the most part, unchanged (Kaur, 2005; Watt, 2005). The question to ask then is; “Is there an assessment culture that has been so deeply rooted within English Language tradition of teaching and learning that hampers the reform of the assessment practice?” Owing to the general resistance to change amongst teachers, some teachers are bound not to accept progressive forms of assessment. There is much emphasis on traditional paper and pencil tests than on mostly learner-centred approaches, owing to the fact that teachers tend to teach students for examination success than for English Language proficiency.

2.3.2.1 First Stage: Planning

Planning is key to effective assessment in the English Language classroom. It ensures teachers stick to the government’s expectations in terms of what must be assessed. Assessment plans form the basis upon which the students are assessed. The planning begins with syllabus interpretation which forms the basis of an assessment plan. English Language teachers should plan their assessment programme, taking into account the nature of their students. Teachers are called upon to be inclusive and assess the same content to different students (Hollingsworth, 2000).

In addition, formative purposes can also be achieved when assessments are planned and designed to be used as learning (Earl, 2003) and for learning (Black & William, 2002). Teachers are called upon to thoroughly plan their English Language assessment. They have to come up with learner - centred approaches to assessment. All assessment activities have to be planned for, and marking guides made available for all assessment activities. Assessment challenges manifest when thorough planning has not been done owing to a host of reasons, like shortage of teaching and learning material, which hamper effective formative assessment in English Language classrooms.

2.3.2.2 Second Stage: Designing

At this stage, there are at least two dimensions that one can investigate regarding the design of an assessment. These are criteria and standards, as well as contents of assessment. The former relates to communication between teachers and their students, while the latter concerns the quality of assessment design (Hollingsworth, 2000).

Setting up relevant criteria and establishing assessment standards (Natriello, 2007) has to begin with teachers considering what was decided in the planning stage. According to Sadler (2008), highly competent teachers bring deep knowledge and appropriate standards to the assessment task. However, this knowledge may exist in an unarticulated form due to factors like lack of contemporary reading materials and related teaching-learning resources (Sadler, 2008). Stiggins (2002) argues that informing students of those learning goals has to start early in the teaching and learning process. He also stresses that teachers' understanding and ability to articulate the achievement targets (criteria and standards) that their students are expected to aim for during instruction is crucial in preparing for assessment (Stiggins, 2002). In other words, hidden or arbitrary assessment criteria and standards are not acceptable as part of the new assessment culture. Clear communication between teachers and students on the appropriate criteria and standards is crucial (McMillan, 2000). This communication also indicates the intertwined nature of assessment, pedagogy and curriculum.

Lack of communication of these criteria and standards to students may hamper students from recognising the value inherent in the assessment task which will hinder them from becoming engaged in the assessment process (Van Manen, 1999). Students' disengagement, typically manifested in the passivity of students (See Black & William, 1998b), will not enable the assessment to serve formative purposes effectively (Hargreaves et al., 2002; William, 2007b). In addition, ambiguous assessment criteria can negatively influence students on what is learnt (Wiggins, 1998), as students may focus on learning areas that are not necessarily important, or of value, to teachers and/or students.

Second, with regard to assessment content, in the form of questions or assessment tasks (Natriello, 2007), teachers communicate the kind of activities and learning outcomes that they value (Clarke, 2007). Unfortunately, it seems that there is a deep-rooted culture of designing assessment which values low order thinking skills. In an extensive review of the trends of English Language teaching and learning research, Niss (2007) found that

assessment instruments generally hold limited scope of the content and assess low level competencies. In a comparative study on English Language assessment and Teaching Practice among 14- year- old students in the USA, England and Wales, Firestone, Winter and Fitz (2000) found that many of the tests were not well-written, and typically focused on repetition of learned procedures using small sets of problems. In a professional development study conducted in New South Wales by Pegg and Panizzon (2004), participating teachers became aware of how limiting many of their questions were in providing insight into the degree of understanding held by students. The case also holds true of current formative practices in English Language in Zimbabwean secondary schools where some teachers focus more on rote learning which they find easy to handle (Kangai, 2012).

In short, the teachers who are responsible for this assessment design stage, have to become aware of the two- fold culture adjustments in the assessment process. First, teachers are expected to communicate the criteria and standards of assessment to their students clearly. This communication is expected to be intertwined throughout the teaching and learning process. This step should ease students' engagement, especially in the next three stages of the assessment process. Students' engagement is among the conventions of the new assessment. Second, teachers are expected to design assessment content that assesses relational understanding, which is about knowing what to do and why (Skemp, 2006). Relational understanding is evident when students are being successful in English Language learning. Challenges manifest when teachers do not communicate the assessment process. Nsofwa (2012) states that in many instances students are not given the national syllabus so that they know the assessment process that has to be given adequate emphasis.

2.3.2.3 Third Stage: Implementing

According to Clarke (2007), successful English Language students are able to devise problem-solving strategies, to identify conceptual similarities in different situations, to assess the relevance of different procedures to applied contexts, to work productively with others and co-ordinating individual efforts to achieve a group goal. Based on Clarke's observation, varied forms of assessment methods necessarily need to be implemented in the new assessment culture. It has been argued that traditional tests alone, have a limited capacity to inculcate and assess the above criteria of linguistically successful students

(McMillan, 2000; Pegg & Panizzon, 2004; Volante, 2004). However many studies (Firestone, Winter, & Fitz, 2000; Watt, 2005; Ohlsen, 2007) show that English Language teachers often rely more heavily, or exclusively, on the written approaches, which typically amounts to testing.

In traditional assessment practice, the convention is that teachers are invigilators at the implementation stage of assessment, while students sit quietly responding to written questions or tasks individually. However, literature (Hollingsworth, 2000) advocates utilisation of alternative assessment methods that change the role of teacher-student and student-student. For example, an oral assessment approach, such as project presentation or group work, necessitates dialogues during the implementation stage of assessment. Clarke (2007) claims that meaningful dialogues encourage reflection on learning which recognises students' contributions as valuable. An extensive study on small-group discussions in English Language classrooms of over 1000 high school students conducted by Fiori and colleagues (2004) found that student discussions frequently emulate discussions among professional linguists, thus, creating authentic engagement experiences for the students. Such group discussions can be used to assess students' understanding and can, at least, serve formative purposes (Stiggins, 2007).

When using traditional approaches, there is a concentration on written exercises since written exercises provide evidence of pupil learning as opposed to oral exercises. For English Language teachers to provide proof that they have assessed pupils, they must give written exercises. When Education inspectors visit secondary schools for routine inspections, they inspect pupils' exercise books to check whether departmental guidelines on quantity and frequency of exercises is being adhered to. It is through written exercises that Education inspectors judge whether or not effective teaching and learning is taking place. In order for English Language teachers to be judged favourably, they give a lot of individual written exercises at the expense of peer and oral exercises which promote effective interactional learning.

In short, there are two significant changes in the classroom assessment culture during the implementation stage. First, the new assessment culture recognises the various assessment methods that can, and should, be implemented as opposed to conducting traditional testing alone (Clarke, Goos & Morony, 2007). However, it is not about implementing more assessments or tests, but rather about varying the assessment

techniques (Watt, 2005). Second, the implementation of various assessment strategies suggests modified roles for teachers and students. Assessments are no longer presented as the teacher's prerogative; students' active participation in assessment is expected (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2006b). Challenges emanate when teachers rely heavily on traditional forms of assessment which are teacher- centred and do not promote authentic learning.

2.3.2.4 Fourth Stage: Marking

The change in the role of teachers and students is evident in the new assessment culture at the marking stage (Hollingsworth, 2000). In the past, teachers did the marking of tests (Earl, 2003) and eventually provided students with their grades (Clarke, 2007). The traditional view of teacher as the expert in the subject matter justifies the unidirectional practice of teacher-as-assessor. Natriello (2007) proposed that, instead of teachers directly marking the work, they could sample work and appraise the performance based on the pre-determined criteria and standards. The collected samples can become valuable exemplars for analysis.

During the marking stage, teachers have two major roles in the new assessment culture. First, there is the teacher's role in analysing students' work (Chapuis & Stiggins, 2002) and providing feedback to the students. According to Stiggins (2002), teachers' frequent descriptive feedback as opposed to judgmental feedback for students, is useful to provide students with specific insights on how to improve. In agreement with Stiggins (2002), William (2007a) posits that feedback must contain implicit or explicit recipe for future actions, where feedback can show what the student has learned, which areas are still weak, and how to go about improving those weaknesses. The second role for teachers in the new assessment culture is that of reflecting on students' work to help them improve their future teaching approaches. Teachers' reflections are necessary catalysts for teachers' professional growth (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002) and for the development of skills in self-assessment to improve their practice (Ross & Bruce, 2007).

In the traditional assessment culture, students are generally not expected to participate in the marking process. In fact, this stage is generally considered alien to the students. The traditional method is usually prevalent in the English Language subject as compositions are beyond the scope of students to mark (Kangai, 2012). However, in the new assessment

culture, students have two major roles during the marking stage. Both roles are known as peer- assessor and self-assessor in their learning process (Elwood & Klenowski, 2002). According to Stiggins (2002), students who are engaged in regular self-assessment during the marking stage of assessment, with criteria and standards held constant, will be able to watch their progress over time, and thus feel in charge of their own success.

At the same time, an awareness of the positive and negative kinds of feedback is also crucial. In his review, William (2007) discusses some issues with respect to feedback providing examples of positive and negative impact of feedback. For instance, the positive effect of feedback is when it is used to encourage students to be engaged in meaningful activity which can be profound in their learning. An example of the negative effect of feedback can occur when there is miscommunication, such as when there is the existence of inconsistencies between students' and teachers' use and understanding of grammatical constructions (Gard, 2013).

The above description depicts the view of the new English Language assessment culture. Both teachers and students are expected to take an active role to mark, analyse, and reflect on the assessment to improve the teaching and learning process. The marking stage is no longer limited to the teachers' prerogative, especially when assessment is meant to serve formative purposes. Thus, in order for assessment to serve formative purposes, it is necessary for students and teachers to provide and receive feedback (Elwood & Klenowski, 2002). It must be noted that owing to extenuating circumstances like large class size, English Language secondary school teachers may fail to provide effective feedback in the form of informative comments.

2.3.2.5 Fifth Stage: Reporting

In the final stage of the assessment process, it is generally expected that teachers will report on students' achievements (Hollingsworth, 2000). In doing so, Shepard (2000), points out that teachers need to be able to make a systematic analysis and appropriate inference on the available evidence or data. As Natriello (2007) proposes, the final stage of this process is to monitor the outcomes of students' performance, which helps teachers to establish or re-establish purposes of assessment at the first stage for the next cycle. Teachers are to assess if the purpose of assessment has been satisfactorily reached in the last cycle, as well as to inform what needs to be done for the next cycle. Although marking

is usually conscientious, the outcome of this process is rarely reported and used to guide how work can be improved (Black & Wiliam, 2007).

Watson (2006) stresses the importance of teachers' ability to interpret evidence based on the informal assessments to make 'professional judgment'. She questions the implications for students when teachers' awareness and assessment practices lack appropriate judgments.

In addition, the new culture of assessment practice encourages students' involvement in interpreting and communicating with their teacher and their families about their achievement status and improvement (Stiggins, 2002). Some reports are just summaries; they do not give in-depth information about the performance of learners. A segment of teachers only report negative aspects of pupil performance, totally ignoring the positive aspects (Kangai, 2012). Students' engagement in reporting their own achievement allows them to monitor their own learning progress. They use tools such as developmental achievement maps (Griffin, 2000) which can be utilised as a guide for teachers and students to seek ways to enhance the teaching and learning process. This observation is backed by literature (Earl, 2003; Clarke, 2006) and acknowledged by educational authorities and professional bodies such as the National Council for Measurement.

The two theoretical frameworks discussed gave impetus to the study under discussion. Hargreaves et al.'s (2002) model analysed factors that affect formative assessment. The first factor is the technological perspective which looks at the skills that teachers do not possess when it comes to formative assessment. The second factor encompasses the cultural perspective which looks at learned behaviours inherent in teachers which culminate in formative assessment challenges. The third factor encompasses the political perspective which analyses how competing interests among key stakeholders in the education sector pose formative assessment challenges. The fourth factor deals with the post-modern perspective which states that the assessment process is never compromised and that teachers do not use all available methods, hence bringing out assessment challenges. Hollingsworth's (2000) English Language assessment model consists of five processes; namely planning, designing, implementing marking and reporting. Assessment challenges emanate when teachers do not plan owing to shortage of teaching and learning resources. English Language teachers face challenges in designing formative assessment when they do not communicate assessment criteria and standards to students. Since students are not

given the syllabi for reference purposes. It was also found out that teachers used low order thinking questions. At the implementing stage, most English Language teachers face formative assessment challenges when they use traditional assessment methods which are usually teacher-centred because these are the methods that were used on them when they were still high school students. At the marking stage, most English Language teachers actually do the marking since students cannot assess their own work owing to low competency in English Language. In the reporting stage, most teachers face formative assessment challenges in that they teach too many students that they fail to remember the minute details of all their students' performance.

2.4 Review of literature based on research questions

This section reviews literature based on the research questions in order to see what is known/not known about the questions raised in this study investigating formative assessment challenges facing English Language secondary school teachers.

2.4.1 How formative assessment is done in English Language

The first sub-research question intended to establish how formative assessment is done in English Language.

In conducting formative assessment, one of the ways used in many countries, including Zimbabwe is group assessment. According to Lewiss (2004), many teachers encounter problems when using group work. The workgroup may be noisy, yet the students enjoy the situation and are not disturbed by the noise. The teacher cannot join the students to help them and it is a difficult task for him/her to correct each pupil individually. The teacher may find it difficult to control all the members of the group. He/she can give instructions and determine the starting and ending of the task. Assessment of group work in English Language is particularly difficult because some students may lean heavily on other pupils' ideas without contributing theirs. Individual accountability is low and it is difficult for the teacher to know what each pupil has contributed (Bennet & Dunn, 2002).

There are also other ways in which formative assessment is carried out. Self-assessment is a key component of formative assessment. This may involve students marking their own work while the teacher revises the work with them. Its main purpose is for students to identify their own strengths and weaknesses and to work to make improvements to meet

specific criteria (Andrade & Valtcheva, 2009). Furthermore, it is used to promote self-regulation, to help students reflect on their progress and to inform revisions and improvements on work done (Andrade & Valtcheva, 2009). Research (Denks, 2007) shows that when students take an active role in monitoring, the rate of learning is dramatically increased. Wedicombe (2012), however, points out that most English Language students usually feel anxious when they are faced with complex self-assessment tasks. They tend to doubt and worry whether they will succeed. Most students are anxious students who are nervous about every task, be it speaking, reading or writing. Anxious students try very hard to avoid embarrassment, humiliation, criticism and to preserve their self – esteem. This poses a challenge to teachers in that students fail to control their own assessment as anxiety would have crept in. Cheng (2004) argues that low achievement by some students hampers self-assessment in that the students themselves lack knowledge; and cannot figure out what is right and wrong in the English Language exercises.

English Language teachers also assess their students using the oral questioning technique. Ellis (2008) claims that many English Language teachers in secondary schools make use of simple, clear and low level oral questions since the English Language levels of many students is below standard given that it is a second language (L2) to them, as is the context of the present study. A study by Mukurungi in Rwanda (2012) describes the oral questions in higher secondary schools as either rhetoric or low cognitive level. This can also be true of Zimbabwe where the standard of speaking of English is low (The Manica Post, 7 October 2016). The situation leads to teachers facing assessment challenges since students cannot comprehend questions; compelling teachers to use low order questioning techniques.

Questioning underpins all classroom assessment methods. There are many different types of oral questions. These range from closed questions in which the teacher anticipates a single, factual answer to open-questions which encourage more critical, analytical responses, and which facilitate multiple solution paths (Bater, 2007). Open ended formative questions challenge common misconceptions to create some conflict that requires discussion which encourages learners to think of a response or an idea from different angles (Chaton, 2000). Teachers' questions can assess children's depth of learning by encouraging them to elaborate on an answer, whether it is their own or another child's. Research on teacher questioning behaviours and patterns indicate that teachers today ask between 300-400 questions each day (Smith, 2006). Teachers ask questions for several reasons (Lomay, 2011):

- the act of asking questions helps teachers keep learners actively involved in lessons,
- while answering questions, learners have the opportunity to openly express their ideas and thoughts,
- questioning learners enables other learners to hear different explanations of the material by their peers,
- asking questions helps teachers to pace their lessons and moderate learner behaviour; and
- questioning learners helps teachers to evaluate learner learning and revise their lessons as necessary.

In order to assess effectively, the teachers' skills and proficiency are instrumental in creating conditions for assessment (Lindon, 2013). The teachers' skills are dependent on two factors, their own proficiency in the language and their expertise in methods and techniques of assessment. Lindon (2013) argues that teachers themselves have been ill-taught in settings where resources are lacking. Coupled with this, teachers lack practical information to carry out formative assessment effectively (Weig, 2010). This is evidenced by the poor pass rate and failure of students to follow simple instructions (Bakasa, 2012).

Moris (2015) claims that he has staggering evidence that many secondary school teachers of English Language in Sub-Saharan Africa, most of whom are examiners themselves, do not have adequate mastery of the English Language to be competent assessors of students. Though mastery was high enough, the degree of competence was not equal. Matis (2013) conducted mock tests on common errors on teachers at workshops and consultancy meetings in Uganda. Out of ten teachers, he found one or two getting five out of ten given answers correct. The rest would settle for two or three out of ten. There is serious need to improve the language level of English Language teachers if marking is to be seen as a democratic and fair process of assessment. Machakanja (2010) argues that English Language teachers do not have equal knowledge and mastery of English Language. Some ignore off topic errors or wrong spelling so long as the word is phonetically correct.

According to a report published by Chen and Goh (2011) about difficulties that teachers encounter in assessing oral English Language in the English as a foreign language context, teachers themselves are frustrated by their low proficiency with regard to oral English and inadequate pedagogical knowledge. Hargreaves et al. (2002) report that most teachers do

not have sufficient knowledge of most current learning theories and associated practices that these theories demand. Crimson (2010) weighs in when he argues that, assessing pronunciation presents particular difficulties and does not permit progressive treatment since all phonetic / phonological features are potentially present from the very first lesson of English Language at secondary school. Ahmed (2013) also posits that teachers face difficulties in assessing pronunciation. The stressed and unstressed syllables create confusion among students of English. Homophones are difficult to identify and understand. All these are challenges that English Language teachers face.

Teachers also have challenges in assessing as there is inadequate educational preparation of teachers who graduate from English Departments and the existence of a gap between pre - service preparation of English Second Language and the actual teaching practice in the English Language classroom (Cheng, 2004). Such teachers will not be effective assessors using the oral questioning techniques.

Apart from assessing their students using oral questioning techniques, teachers also use written questioning techniques. This comes in the form of essays and comprehension exercises. Teachers face problems in that there is lack of practice among students (Pande, 2013). The rural surroundings where most schools are situated do not provide students with a conducive environment to practise the four English Language skills of reading writing, speaking and listening. As a result, teachers spent a long time on remediation and excessive enrichment and fail to complete the syllabus on time (Kapambwe, 2011). The remediation offered by most general teaching practitioners is found to be defective. Kapambwe (2011), says with no detailed knowledge in Special Education, general teachers of English Language fail to offer meaningful assistance to students who need remedial help. Kangai (2012) points out that it is a big responsibility for English teachers to address the individual needs of diverse students as the type of training received by secondary school teachers did not place much emphasis on special education whose main thrust is on those students who have learning challenges.

Dzenzi (2014) posits that the difference between spelling and pronunciation brings a lot of problems to teachers. Many English words are not spelt as they are spoken. Also English vocabulary is a mixture of various languages. It creates confusion for teachers using English as a second language. They struggle to assess this area as students will be continuing to make the same mistake frequently. Some students speak in the home

language at school. Their pronunciation is affected by their phonics in writing (Ahmed, 2013). Students have difficulties expressing themselves and understanding instructions which contributes to a lack of confidence. Aifunwa (2013) argues that such students are obstacles to assessment. How to arouse students' interest, increase English Language fluency and get maximum participation has been a challenge for teachers who want to get students involved in class activities and keep the class lively and dynamic.

The issue of communication looms large for teachers of English Language students. A 2004 survey of California High School teachers in English Language found poor communication among students, teachers, parents and the community to be a huge issue (Gandara, Maxwell & Driscoll, 2005). The statement is possibly true in Zimbabwe where, due to poor communication among students, there may be ineffective peer assessment among students themselves. Students may fail to understand each other. Davis (2015) argues that most students are unclear about what to do in peer assessment and end up doing the wrong activities. This happens when assessing in English as a second Language. Very often, it is the fault of the teacher. If the instructions on peer assignments produce looks of confusion and self-whispers among students, it is an indication that the teacher will be facing an assessment challenge (Davies, 2015).

When assessing individual pupils, Quashie (2011) states that most teachers lack effectiveness in assessing oral English. The majority of teachers still use reading aloud in comprehension exercises as their main weapon in the battle to improve their pupils' oral English. They largely take the material to be read from the textbook. They then listen for mistakes and correct them as they arise by interrupting the reader and requiring him/her to repeat a word or phrase in accordance with the model they provide. Quarshie (2011) argues that this procedure is objectionable on a number of reasons which include the fact that:

- it interferes with the proper business of the reading lesson, which is to create an imaginative response,
- where it is frequently used, it slows down reading speed whereas the objective is to increase it,
- it provides a small amount of practice for a few individuals and bores the other pupils,

- it causes embarrassment to the reader. It is not unusual for a large number of corrections to lead to a deterioration of performance,
- the students practice, is random and not specific. None among the students knows who among them will be called upon to read so that an error of pronunciation, stress and intonation will be identified. After many interruptions in a paragraph, teachers have been known to complain about lack of fluency and urge students to read with more expression and
- the exercise of reading unprepared literary material aloud is too difficult for all but the best pupils. Unless students are going to be announcers, the ability to read aloud is of little practical value compared with the ability to play an affective part in conversations and discussions.

Quarshie (2011) is of the opinion that reading aloud is not a solution but a problem to the affective assessment of oral English. He points out that it could interfere with the reading process, slow down the reading speed, and bore the students.

Denzin (2014) observes that teachers found it difficult to translate the assessment criteria into a language their students could understand and also to communicate their levels of achievement. Some English Language teachers ended up translating assessment into the students' language for students to understand. There are problems in translating in order to administer assessment in English Language learning. There are several issues when translating assessment items. One issue is that translation can frequently suggest a correct or expected response, changing the difficulty of the assessment item. Additionally, the translation of assessment items can somewhat disrupt the original meaning of the item. In the same vein, O'Conner (2010) states that students lose their first language vocabulary by replacing some words with English equivalents. This could be the effect of English Language second language students not using their first language for high level cognition.

When conducting whole class assessment, English Language teachers have a problem of concretising the abstract ideas. The teachers in extreme situations fail to effectively concretise the abstractness of passages or words. They face difficulty in creating live pictures in the minds of the students (July, 2011). The students find it difficult to understand these abstract ideas and so they are unable to comprehend what is being assessed. Accommodating local needs; for example, creating or experiencing real purposes for

writing, may be a reasonable goal where English is the medium of daily communication in the classroom. There, students can be asked to write real letters to the local newspaper and in this way, perhaps work towards developing a sense of their broader English speaking audience. These goals may be more difficult to achieve with less access to the target language in the surrounding environment, where there may be no English Language newspapers to send news to. It has been noted that the materials used in English Language assessment are not mainly suited to local possibilities (July, 2014).

Assessing through writing brings with it another challenge, which is marking. Since the classes are overcrowded, many English Language teachers do not mark essays thoroughly, and comments are not informative (Machakanja, 2010). Xu (2003) states that marking in second language learning is not regular and specific. Since feedback is not regular, it is not helpful to students because the specific comments about errors and specific suggestions do not give any encouragement. Students are therefore, not encouraged to focus attention thoughtfully on the task, but rather on simply the right answer. Such a situation results in lack of motivation in pupils. In learning a second language, motivation is the crucial force which determines whether the student will embark on the task again, how much energy he/she will devote to it and how long he/she will persevere. Motivation is a complex phenomenon and includes many components such as the individual's drive, need for achievement and success, curiosity, desire for stimulation, and new experience (Pande, 2013). Since assessment has more to do with helping students grow, if feedback is not done properly, students will not grow.

Herbert and Hauser (1999) observe that feedback may or may not be harmful. Such feedback as giving grades, granting or withholding special rewards, may be ineffective or even harmful to fostering students' self-esteem, which he/she may find difficult to shrug off, irrespective of the quality of his or her work. Tom (2012) argues that some students become retaliatory once privileges are withdrawn for poor performance. They end up exhibiting continuous tendencies associated with misbehaviour.

According to Ahmed (2013), most marking is poor quality. Teachers only indicate errors and do not make an effort to correct errors students will have made in individual exercises. Such type of marking does not help identify students' misconceptions. Ahmed (2013) further argues that English Language teachers rarely use detailed marking schemes when grading students' essays. Marking schemes guide teachers when marking.

It has been noted that formative assessment involves a lot of paperwork (Lumadi, 2013). Teachers draw up lesson plans, enter marks, write students' exercises on the board, evaluate lessons and mark the attendance register among a host of other documents.

Another way in which teachers assess is through homework. It provides feedback concerning how well a student can perform, at least theoretically unaided. Ellias (2013) points out that there is a challenge in giving homework exercises as other siblings or parents can just write the exercise on behalf of the students without students providing any input. Cheating and plagiarism remain significant problems when assessing through homework. A study of academic dishonesty in doing homework found that 83% of the students surveyed admitted to cheating more than once (Stevenson, 2013). This could be true in Zimbabwe where many students plagiarise essays written by others if given work to do at home.

Hendrick (2001) observes that teachers do write school reports. There are, however, some challenges which English Language teachers face with reports. It is difficult to summarise performance in different parts of the subject area in a concise form that is adequate and meaningful to readers. It is difficult to know which aspect of a pupil's performance warrants being highlighted in the report. Some teachers may find it difficult to remember adequately every pupil they taught (Hendrick, 2001).

When assessing students, teachers make use of objectives. Some human aspects are difficult to assess (Bruce, 2008). There are challenges assessing objectives in the affective domain in English Language. It is difficult to measure objectives associated with such constructs as attitude, self-concepts and motivation. Attitudes and feelings which are measured in the Communication and Register segment of the syllabus tend to be changeable, unpredictable and sensitive to many factors, both inside and outside the learning situation. Cause and effect relationships between attitudes and feelings on one hand, and performance and achievement on the other hand, are little understood and seldom straight forward (Bruce, 2008).

English Language teachers in secondary schools assess through observations. Disadvantages teachers encounter through observation of classroom activities include the fact that there are limits to what teachers can mentally categorise and store, considering the large mass of information gathered. If observations are structured, there is the danger that

some students and some content areas will be concentrated upon unintentionally as a consequence of the teacher's likes and interests (Elis, 2008). Teachers also over-emphasise trivial or ephemeral details in their assessments to the neglect of understanding of basic principles and the ability to make practical applications (Kyriacou, 2000).

Teachers of English Language carry out norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessment when conducting formative assessment activities. Criterion-referenced assessment does not tell the student's performance in relation to peers (Warren, 2011). It has been further noted by Warren (2011) that knowledge and understanding do not lend themselves to clear definition, and hence, it is extremely difficult to establish adequate criteria of achievement. Another problem is that criterion-referenced assessment discourages right and wrong solutions. (Seton, 2013). Norm-referenced assessment is also used by teachers to assess English Language students. Assessment in Zimbabwe is largely norm-referenced. Seton (2013) argues that over a period of time, some students who are continuously exposed to norm-referenced assessment will suffer a diminishing level of motivation and that exercises constructed to provide norm-referenced measures will not adequately sample the subject's objectives. The setting of frequency limits in failure and pass rates is an administrative necessity which overrides individual educational and statistical considerations. Portfolio-based assessments are used by English Language teachers in secondary schools. Portfolio-based assessments are collections of academic work, for example; assignments, speeches, student-created films, writing samples compiled by students and assessed by teachers in consistent ways (Smith, 2013). Portfolio-based assessments are often used to evaluate a body of knowledge and skills over a period of time. Due to the large time frame taken to assess, some records are misplaced and not all activities are recorded (Rugayi, 2013).

One of the most important elements in applying formative assessment is project work. According to Titus (2012) project work is any exercise or investigation in which time constraints have been relaxed. According Magan (2012), a project in the teaching process is an activity which centres around the completion of a task, and which usually requires an extended amount of independent work either by an individual student or by a group of students. The national syllabus provides for the carrying out of project work during the course of study. The teacher, in a real classroom situation, may direct his students to research outside the classroom about some topics related to what they have learnt. After

completing their projects, the students will be called upon to discuss them with the teacher as well as their peers.

Project work is practical and useful, it is more understandable than other tasks and it relates to what students have learnt. Project work collects a wide range of competencies and knowledge that will be assessed (Kayler, 2009). Project work is time-consuming in terms of preparation and marking. Students spend a long time doing a project such that they do not concentrate on other aspects of the subject (Mtshweni, 2008).

There are many ways in which teachers can score written assignments. One such type of scoring is holistic scoring. Holistic scoring is used in many programs in the English Language classroom. The holistic scoring scale is defined as the assigning of single score to a script based on overall impression (Obanya, 2009). It means that when a teacher reads the text or script for the first time, he/she can evaluate it since this kind of rating scale depends on the first impression. The process of scoring under holistic scoring depends on quick reading of the text and the criteria is never stated.

The advantages of holistic scoring are that, this kind of scoring scale facilitates quick evaluation because the teacher needs to read the script only once. In this type of scoring scale, the teacher looks at the points of strength in the piece of writing instead of its' weakness. Holistic scoring is more valid since it reflects the authentic reaction of the teacher against the text (Burke, 2000). Holistic scoring, however, has some disadvantages. This type of scoring scale depends on a single score which does not explain all the views related to the students' writing abilities. It does not give importance to all aspects of writing ability such as, syntax, vocabulary and organisation because each aspect develops in isolation as compared to other aspects. For example, a student may have a wide range of vocabulary but lacks knowledge in grammar (Searl, 2003). Holistic scoring emphasises superficial features such as length and handwriting (Magan, 2010).

Analytical scoring is another method employed by teachers during the process of assessing. Analytically scored scripts are rated on several aspects of writing or criteria rather than on a given single score (Khan, 2010). With this kind of scoring scale, the rater sets a group of criteria according to his/her objective of evaluation, for example, (content; organisation, and vocabulary). This type of scoring is considered useful. The well-known analytic scale in English Second Language Learning was created by Jacobs (1981) who set

the following criteria: content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics. The written exercise is evaluated through these criteria. Analytical scoring is a relevant way of scoring students' work because it allows the teacher to assess effectively and to know the weakness and strengths of his/her students.

There are some advantages of analytical scoring. It gives teachers a diagnostic view about the writing abilities of their students. Analytical scoring is useful, especially to the inexperienced teachers, because they find it easy to recognise its application. It is useful for second language learners who have different language levels, and it is considered reliable then holistic scoring (Chaton, 2000).

Despite its effectiveness in assessing students, there are some drawbacks with this kind of scoring. It is a very long type of scoring and needs much time. The analytic scoring scale is a subjective way of scoring. It relies on the teacher's selection of the criteria necessary for evaluation (Chaton, 2000).

According to Lucas (2004), there are some efficient ways of correcting students' pieces of writing instead of the known way which includes underlining, crossing out, and inserting question mark to students' work. Teachers use the selective method as a way of correcting students' work. The teacher selects one criterion and corrects students' work according to it for example, punctuation; spelling, grammar. The teacher seeks agreement with his students about one criterion in order to get beneficial results. If students focus on the criterion, they do their best to elaborate on it. Khan (2010) considers this way of correction as a good tool of enhancing learning. Teachers can also score students by dividing the marks into parts that correspond to the set of criteria. English Language teachers also use correction symbols to correct students' errors when they write. The symbol (T) is used for wrong verb tense or the symbols (WW) for wrong word. The teacher writes these symbols above or next to the error committed by the students. When the students are used to use these kinds of symbols, they will be able to recognise their faults and they will also be able to correct them easily (Lucas, 2009)

Quality assessment should also observe the three characteristics of tests namely: validity, reliability and usability. The information resulting from classroom assessments must be meaningful and accurate; that is, the information must be valid and reliable (Sanchez, 2010).

Delay (2014) defines validity as the extent to which an assessment measures what it purports to measure .If an assessment does not measure what it is designed to measure then its use is misleading. Validity of classroom assessment depends on:

- analysing the intended learning and all its embedded elements,
- having a good match among the assessment approaches ,the intended learning, and the decisions that teachers and learners make about learning, ensuring that the assessment adequately covers the targeted learning outcomes including content, thinking processes, skills and attitudes, and
- providing learners with opportunities to show their knowledge of concepts in many different ways and with multiple measures, to establish a composite picture of learner learning (Christopher, 2011).

There are three different types of validity evidence namely, criterion validity, construct validity and content validity. Denks (2007) also adds face validity to the list. Face validity is the most common criterion which addresses the question;” Does the test look as if it does the job it is intended to do?” (Denks, 2007). July (2011) defines face validity as making common sense and being persuasive and seeming right to the reader. That is validity is taken at face value. Face validity is essential in ensuring that test takers persevere and try their best on the test (Tom, 2012). It also convinces the teachers to use the test regardless of the availability of scientific means. Face validity is the first step in the validation process.

Content validity refers to the extent to which a learner’s response to a given assessment reflects the learners’ knowledge on the content of interest (Hattie, 2009). Content validity is also concerned with the extent to which the assessment instrument samples the content domain. This requires affirmation from the expert. The expert should look into whether the content is representative of the skills that are supposed to be measured, that is, test objectives, syllabus content, and the test contents (Spandel, 2008). Content covered and the cognitive skill level should confirm to a set syllabus (Gillis, 2004). Classroom teachers need the requisite skills in assessment for them to be experts. Lack of these might result in assessment challenges.

Criterion validity is the extent to which the scores on a test are in agreement with an external criteria (Butt, 2010). This type of evidence supports the extent to which the results of an assessment correlate with a current or future event. Another way to think of criterion -

related evidence is to consider the extent to which the learners' performance on the given task may be generalised to other, more relevant activities (Searl, 2003). The ability of a measure to predict performance on a second measure of the same construct, computed as a correlation is criterion validity. Predictive validity relates to whether the test predicts accurately or well some future performance. Predictive validity is important for tests which are meant to classify or to select pupils.

Construct validity is the degree to which a test measures an intended hypothetical construct (Volante, 2004). Kayler (2009) also defines construct validity as the extent to which an assessment corresponds with other variables as predicted by some rationale theory. When construct validity is emphasised, inferences are drawn from test scores to a psychological construct). Constructs are processes that are internal to an individual. Although reasoning occurs inside a person, it may be partially displayed through results and explanations. According to Volante (2004), a construct is a non-observable trait such as intelligence anxiety, creativity, and curiosity, which explains behaviour. Decisions based on the measurement of constructs are only valid to the extent that the measure of construct involved is valid (Kayler, 2009). Construct-related evidence is the evidence that supports that an assessment instrument is completely and only measuring the intended construct. Problem solving, creativity, writing process, self-esteem, and attitudes are other constructs that a teacher may wish to examine (Ohlsen, 2007).

Formative assessment should be consistent. However, unless assessment has validity there is little point in even considering its reliability because it would have failed to measure what it was supposed to measure (Tom, 2012). A reliable assessment is one that consistently achieves the same results with the same (or similar) cohort of learners. Hendrick (2001) defines reliability as, the degree to which a test (or qualitative research data) consistently measures whatever it measures. If the assessment process is reliable, the inferences about a learner's learning should be similar when they are made by different teachers, when learning is measured using various methods or when learners demonstrate their learning at different times (Sanchez, 2010). According to William (2008), a reliable test is one in which scores that a learner gets on different occasions or with a slightly different set of questions on the test, or when someone else does the marking, does not change very much. Various factors affect reliability including ambiguous questions, too many

options within a question paper, vague marking instructions and poorly trained markers. Reliability operates at two levels as follows:

- that of the individual assessed, and
- that of a number of assessors (Pitty,2008).

Reliable assessors make the same decision on a particular assessment whenever they mark it. When more than one assessor is concerned reliability is achieved if presented with work of the same standard, all assessors make the same judgment. Reliable assessment ensures accurate and consistent comparisons, whether between the performances of different pupils or between a learner's performance and the criteria for success (Kolly, 2013). Ahlstrom (2009) contends that there are three types of reliability that are most relevant to classroom tests which include internal consistency, inter-scorer and intra-scorer reliability. In the view of Ross (2008,) internal consistency refers to the consistency of objectives among the items of a test while, inter-score reliability refers to the consistency between marks given by different teachers .On the other hand intra-scorer reliability refers to marks given by the same teacher on different occasions. According to Bater (2007), the major threat to reliability is the lack of consistency of an individual marker. However intra-rater reliability might not in fact be a major concern when raters are supported by rubrics (Smith, 2000). Consistent grading is essential in order to ensure reliability of test scores.

According to the Lomay (2011) there are many ways to promote reliability which are as follows:

- Teachers can use a variety of assessment tasks to provide a range of information,
- Learners can show their learning in many different ways, and
- Teachers can work with other teachers to review learner work, bringing a collective insight about what is expected to the exercise in more reliable denomination of what learners understand.

If classroom teacher assessment is to have more robust reliability, then practising teachers require ongoing professional development opportunities to develop their expertise in a context that values judgment (Walker, 2009). Teachers need to have the correct conception of the terms validity and reliability so that the meaning they construct from assessment information is accurate and useful. Valid and reliable assessment provides a sound

instrument from which to gauge learners' attainments. According to Keystone (2012), the quality of instruction in any classroom turns on the quality of the assessments used there. For these reasons, information garnered from classroom assessments must be meaningful and accurate; the information must be valid and reliable (Brodin, 2007).

It is another pragmatic matter for reflection as to how feasible the assessment is in terms of cost and time available for assessment. Other practical considerations include the ease of administration, ease of interpretation, ease of scoring and application (Lancey, 2009). High quality assessments are considered as those with a high level of validity; reliability and usability come up with quality tests.

Black & William (1998), contend that daily classroom assessment must be of high quality or they would not be effective. Poor quality daily assessment can even be detrimental to learner learning and motivation. Proficiency with appropriate assessment and evaluation would therefore be a requisite skill for improving quality teaching.

In short, English Language secondary school teachers use peer assessment, self-assessment, questioning, school reports, project work and observation of class activities. Teachers use norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessment to formatively assess student's speaking, reading, listening and writing activities as well as portfolio-based assessments.

2.4.2 Factors that influence English Language teachers' formative assessment procedures

The second sub-research question intended to establish factors that influence English Language teachers' formative assessment procedures.

A number of factors influence teachers' formative assessment procedures in English Language at secondary school level. Motivational factors influence how teachers formatively assess in English Language. In most countries in sub-Saharan Africa, teachers are poorly remunerated (Matjila, 2014). This includes English Language teachers. Matjila (2014) notes that teachers in rural areas are more frustrated than those in urban areas because of their working conditions and relatively poor living standards. The United Nations (2012) reports that thousands of teachers in Zimbabwe are unmotivated due to low salaries and poor working conditions. The poor motivation of English Language teachers leads to poor commitment to service delivery and they may end up assessing in improper ways

owing to frustration. Such factors considerably reduce the time for instructional delivery for teachers may end up doing other things to supplement their meagre salaries.

School-based factors influence how teachers assess (Kerry, 2012). The physical environment of many schools in Zimbabwe, especially in the newly resettled areas, is not conducive to learning (Gunwisi, 2012). The pupil-textbook ratio is high. The high teacher-pupil ratio makes it difficult for teachers to carry out assessment activities. Due to the high teacher–pupil ratio, some students distract others' attention. Classroom management becomes, compromised thereby impacting negatively on assessment practices as some students end up not participating in group activities. Textbooks get torn when students are sharing during comprehension exercises as they will be trying to open different pages at the same time. This leaves the teacher with very few textbooks to use during the next lesson.

Bukaliya (2012) also points out that libraries in most schools are poorly stocked and contain many out-dated books. English Language teachers thus encounter challenges of assessing students without supplementary reading material. Since there are few resources like text books and computers to properly assess, the teacher ends up as one of the few sources of knowledge available to students (Davis, 2015). In such a situation, students become overly dependent on the teacher for correct answers instead of trying themselves. If a teacher provides them with the answer each time, it can become a detrimental problem as students will be incapable of independent study (Davis, 2015).

The language environment can affect assessment. Delay (2014) defines a language environment as one in which second language students hear and see in the new language; through for example, conversations with friends. The language environment does not promote the assessment of English and the situation is more difficult in rural areas (Rugoyi, 2013). The absence of English in everyday encounters reduces rural students' chances of being assessed by teachers effectively in a language they are not comfortable with.

In many schools, there is no support staff (Okeyo, 2011). Adequate support staff can facilitate teachers' work. The administrative support staff can assist teachers with duties like typing and duplicating learning materials. Okeyo (2011) points out that there are a few language enrichment teachers to provide language support and facilitate acquisition of English for English second language students in a functional and enjoyable environment. These teachers can provide practical assistance to educators in the classroom. There is

lack of support service, for example; bilingual school psychologists to address student needs and options while evaluating and before identifying the student as cognitively challenged, thus preventing the misplacement of a student into a restrictive learning environment.

In coming up with formative assessment in English Language, teachers are affected by the students themselves. According to Adejumo (2011), students' psychological perceptions cause problems in assessment. Some students presume that English Language is difficult to learn and so do not take their assessment activities seriously. Students do not have the mental anxiety to enhance English Language competence. Adejumo (2010) argues that some English Language students have a negative attitude towards English teachers not trained in modern technology. Such students do not co-operate with teachers when they assess them using traditional methods. Teachers therefore, face challenges when assessing since there is no co-operation from students.

Mparutsa (2006) notes that the liberation war radicalised African policies and most Zimbabweans in resettled and rural areas became increasingly aware of language as a symbol of culture and nationalism. Students in rural areas who would have heard about the war and would have seen its scars and effects would most likely perceive efforts to perform well in English as a betrayal and a sign of giving in to the colonial master. Mparutsa (2006) notes an increasingly positive attitude towards the use of Shona. Such attitudes make it difficult for teachers to stress the importance of English—hence, the assessment challenges in English. Classes with fast students require more formative assessment practices while those with slow students need to employ few assessment practices within a single lesson (Murray, 2011). It will be of no use giving many exercises to slow students as they will fail to accomplish the given tasks.

Finding time to study a language can be quite a challenge in the majority of cases (Nelson, 2012). Students have problems in trying to study English Language as a subject and it is not studied in-depth but practised. Ultimately, teachers end up assessing students who lack necessary skills for self-assessment. Nelson (2012) also argues that formative assessment can be ambiguous to some students, who not used to taking control of their own learning. Students' unreadiness to accept learner-centred approaches to assessment depends on their orientation from primary school levels. Assessment becomes difficult where they have to adjust primary school assessment procedures to secondary school levels.

Parents affect the way teachers assess when they actively support their children by making sure that there is a quiet place for them to do homework in the family home (Rugayi, 2013). Where parents' role of engaging and collaborating with the school in setting educational standards, is done in a meaningful way, teachers are likely to find it easy to do assessment.

Apart from teachers, heads of Departments determine the English Language teachers' assessment practices (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2015). If heads of Departments fail to monitor formative assessment practices and students' profiles, then teachers may deviate from laid down procedures. If heads of Departments do not support school-based in-service training and mentoring as a means of improving the assessment skills of staff by combining theoretical and practical aspects in real life school situations, English Language teachers are bound to face challenges in coming up with substantive assessment (Chitaba & Fiwale, 2013).

Simasiku (2006) stresses that most parents cannot afford to purchase the required learning materials such as textbooks, dictionaries and other educational resources that the schools cannot provide. Wellington (2014) argues that children who are poor and live by themselves may not have access to English Language materials like textbooks, radios and magazines. The United Nations (2012) reports that economic factors have also hindered the education progress of students in Zimbabwe. This suggests that children from some households in the country tend to live in poverty with little access to English Language learning material. In such situations, teachers face challenges as they assess students using inadequate resources. Wellington (2014) observes that students who are hungry, depressed, stressed and those living in hostile environments, usually fail to be assessed to their best levels. This is because the student will not be taking an active role owing to depression.

The generality of the teachers influence English Language perceptions in assessment. The teachers are interested in progress and formative assessment with a view to providing guidance, counselling, monitoring, motivation and support to students (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2015). Gimson (2010) argues that teachers of content subject areas, are poor models of English speaking. They normally use the mother tongue when teaching, since grammatical accuracy is not important in their subjects. The teachers in content subject areas do not complement the English Language teachers so that students can use English grammar correctly. Had this support been available, English Language teachers would not have been facing a lot of challenges in assessing students as they

would assess students with high grammatical skills who are competent in assisting fellow students through peer assessment.

Professional associations influence how teachers assess. They represent teachers in the setting and maintenance of educational standards. They contribute in the formulation of policies including assessment policies, as well as provide guidelines in education. They influence implementation of standards or best practices in schools as well as participation in the professionalisation of education and teaching (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2015). Chitaba and Fiwale, (2013) argue that some of the professional advice given by professional associations in conferences is rather theoretical and not practical in nature.

English Language teachers in secondary schools are influenced by their personal philosophy to formative assessment (Kalua, 2011). Some English Language teachers are conservative, meaning they resist changes taking place in formative assessment. They continue assessing the way they have been assessing, however improper their formative assessment practices may be. Other teachers are progressive. They embrace and engage new formative assessment practices in English Language. Most teachers, however, are conservatives (Kalua, 2011). They have a low tolerance for change because they fear they will not be able to develop and acquit themselves well to the best practices in formative assessment. Individual teachers fear the loss of freedom to assess the way they want, that is, traditionally. Vandeyar (2005) conducted a study with a sample of South African teachers to establish how they cope with conflicting demands on their assessment practices, values and beliefs about student assessment. What came out of this study was that teachers continue to give attention to their beliefs and personal interests, regardless of the professional requirements to adopt changes in assessment policy meant to serve the interests of students.

The complexity of teacher beliefs has led to ways of understanding assessment practices adopted by different groups of teachers. Based on their beliefs about classroom assessments, teachers can be classified into three main sub-categories. The first group is made up of realists. Realist teachers believe in the use of paper and pencil types of assessments where students are expected to recognise and generate their own answers (Sageby, 2014). These types of assessment are focused on improving the cognitive side of

instruction, that is, the skills and knowledge that students are expected to develop within a short period of time.

The second group of teachers is made up of contextual teachers who are more likely to use alternative assessments such as group work assessments and performance-based assessments. They assess knowledge, skills and abilities that students need beyond class environments. They advocate the increased use of performance testing that seem better suited for testing complex mental abilities like extended writing and problem-solving skills (Rodriguez, 2012).

The third group of teachers is made up of relativists. They base their assessment practices on developmental theory. They take into account students' developmental levels which vary. Relativist teachers believe that children have opportunities to learn and can be assessed in different ways to address the learning mode that is most appropriate for each pupil's unique developmental level (Rodriguez, 2012). Relativist teachers religiously follow theories of social constructivism and meta-cognition. Keystone (2015) argues that giving fast and slow students different types of activities may be seen as supportive and helpful, but on the contrary it has been noted that the slow students actually regress in progress more as they would be used to less and simpler exercises.

Teachers are likely to hold beliefs about assessment on students before assessment (provide a focus of learning) knowledge about assessment effects on students during assessment (provide a sense) of accomplishment, challenge, failure, or inadequacy and knowledge about assessment effects on students after assessment (as fair, meaningful, useful, providing information for continuing development or lack of it). Teachers may also have beliefs about the effects of assessment on teachers themselves. These beliefs may include the need for instruction on particular topics or problems or useful information for practice (Title, 1994).

According to Chikwuka (2010), teacher integrity also determines the quality of assessment. The teacher is the major cornerstone of formative assessment. This implies that the teachers' integrity is fundamental in the successful implementation of any programme. Society is expected to trust and be rest-assured that that teacher will teach and effectively assess the students in English Language. The attitudes, conduct and behaviour of some

teachers have demonstrated that they cannot perform these essential functions expected of them (Chikwuka, 2010).

School Development Committees (SDC) work in collaboration with the school heads and teachers to adopt complementary strategies to develop assessment programmes like the provision of libraries to develop students' reading abilities so that quality formative assessment is enhanced. According to the social-cognitive theory by Bandura, most children's problem-solving comes through adult help (Kyriacou, 2000). If parents assist pupils, teachers would face less assessment challenges in English Language as they will be collaborating with parents in the improvement of formative assessment. The School Development Committees play a fundamental role of supporting the development and promotion of strategies of the school, formative assessment included. The SDCs provide resources for schools' assessment programmes. English Language teachers can assess, in a more orderly way, if all resources dealing with efficient assessment are available for (Kangai, 2012).

In short, motivational factors, school-based factors, the skill of the teachers, teachers of other subjects, the socio-economic environment, the SDCs, parents, students themselves and the teachers' philosophy to assessment are some of the factors that affect how teachers of English Language formatively assess.

2.4.3 Extent to which English Language secondary school teachers face formative assessment challenges

The third sub-research question intended to establish the extent to which English Language secondary school teachers faced formative assessment challenges.

Wise and Lulkin (2003) found in Ife State, Nigeria, that 60% of the sampled teachers feel that education on measurement and evaluation was inadequate. A study conducted by Impara, Place and Fage (2003) on teachers' assessment background in Romania, revealed that 70% of the surveyed teachers had some little knowledge in measurement while the rest had inadequate training. According to the Civil Service Commission Skills Audit (2015) of Zimbabwe, some teachers who did not train to teach English Language are manning this subject. The figure is around 15%. The interpretation from these findings is that these teachers may under-assess or over-assess formatively. They lack proper skills due to the fact that they did not specialise in the teaching of English Language. In addition, some

holders of degrees did not study the professional courses in Education. The same study revealed that about 25% of the teachers did not have either a Graduate Certificate in Education or a Post Graduate Diploma in Education. In the context of English Language teachers, this is a problem as the said teachers lack assessment skills since they have not been professionally trained. Given the dynamic nature and complexity of teaching the subject, such semi-skilled personnel is likely to face challenges when it comes to assessing students formatively in the English Language subject. Machakanja (2010) states that some English Language teachers have problems interpreting the syllabus which encompasses assessment objectives. This ultimately leads them assessing poorly. They cannot simplify assessment so that it sufficiently challenges students without frustrating them.

Chalwe (2010) points out that newly graduated teachers face problems when assessing English language. He states that most teachers have low workloads when they are student teachers but when they qualify, they have higher work-loads. This means that they have more to assess when they qualify. A significant portion of these teachers have the transition difficulty, causing them to end up not assessing properly. Chalwe (2010) points out that most teachers in secondary school classrooms sparingly use audio visual aids like charts and work cards for their students so as to improve their assessment. On the other hand, English Language teachers also feel that it is too cumbersome and laborious to prepare these. They feel that work cards and charts are suitable for primary school students and are not appropriate for secondary school students.

Automatic promotion to Form Four affects the performance of students as students who have failed Grade Seven are allowed to proceed to Form One and ultimately to Form Four. According to Machakanja (2010), a pupil who would have failed the subject at a lower level is automatically promoted to a higher level which is more demanding. The students will be proceeding without understanding the basic concepts of English Language—reading and writing. This proves a challenge to the teachers who will have to assess students on more advanced and complex concepts without them having mastered the basic ones. Such a situation forces teachers to concentrate on assessing low level skills at the expense of the skills which match the pupils' achievement level. Teachers engage in assessment which does not promote language proficiency. Research (Dresden, 2011) shows that this has been the cause of a high number of poor readers who are in older forms because some

teachers simply ignored authentic assessment. Dresden (2011) further notes that few secondary schools check the reading ability of students who are making slow progress in other areas like writing. Reading is an area in which early diagnosis of difficulties is important since lack of reading proficiency is a general cause of poor academic achievement.

English Language teachers lack opportunities for professional growth owing to the lack of refresher courses (Kangai, 2012). In Zimbabwe, English Language teachers do not get the chance to upgrade their qualifications through facilities provided by the Civil Service Commission. Teachers are no longer paid when they embark on Manpower Development Studies with effect from 2016 (Teacher in Zimbabwe Magazine, 2016). Given the meagre salaries teachers are given, they rarely find money to fund their studies. Given the freeze on promotions and salary increments, teachers have found the upgrading of professional skills not a cost-effective process (Teachers' Voice Magazine, 2016). English Language teachers are not getting a chance to sharpen their formative assessment skills in a highly dynamic education system.

English Language teachers are provided with very limited opportunities to research on general education issues as well as on formative assessment in particular (Teachers' Voice Magazine, 2016). They have no opportunity to critically reflect on their work to improve assessment practice, adopt change as informed by research and modern trends in assessment, conduct research, publish and share best practices on formative assessment, as well as familiarise with modern trends in education and formative assessment in particular (Chitaba & Fiwale, 2013). This constitutes a challenge in that English Language teachers are not abreast with best practices. Vendeyar and Killen (2006) document on the unwillingness of many South African English Language teachers to adapt their assessment practices to the changing demands of the country's education system.

Adamu (2013) posits that providing differentiated tasks, especially for higher achieving students, is largely a problem. Differentiation is defined as planned intention to enable students with different learning needs to achieve their highest levels. Formative assessment does not promote differentiation. Adamu (2013) found that it was easier for teachers in English Language classrooms to provide differentiated tasks for students at low ability levels. He further argued that teachers found it difficult to articulate progression or what

might be meant as increasing depth in pupils' understanding if formative assessment was used.

In many situations, formative assessment in English Language involves too much data tracking in speaking, reading, writing and listening activities. Data needs to be collected about the students diligently. The challenge is to analyse the data and summarise results into information that is useful for decision-making (Evermay, 2015). It was observed by Sanchez (2010) that assessment instruments, such as observations, have their limitations owing to their subjectivity and the voluminous information that has been collected.

Nelson (2012) states that the grading criteria in formative assessment should be consistently applied and should include examples of earlier grading; showing exemplary work and that which is less exemplary. In most cases, Nelson found that some English Language teachers in secondary schools had variations in their grading owing to the influence of extraneous factors. Work that was exemplary and not exemplary was not shown and some documents pertaining to grading were not available. Nelson (2012) also argues that the goal of formative assessment is to improve learning, but in actual sense, learning is not improving owing to a multitude of factors like assessment not being done properly.

Iyamu (2012) argues that it is at the secondary school level that the potential undergraduate is given inadequate foundation in the use of English Language. A mastery of spoken and written English Language is highly desirable, yet its teaching and learning, including, assessment, is beset by myriad problems like ineffective application at the secondary school level. Nelson (2012) points out that in most cases, there are unrealistic assumptions about formative assessment that the goal is to improve learning yet improvements are not taking place.

From the literature based on the research questions raised in this study, to a greater extent English Language teachers find formative assessment challenges which include inadequate preparation of teachers, automatic promotion of students, few opportunities for professional growth and research, too much data tracking and the giving of differentiated tasks for higher achieving pupils. Because of this, English Language teachers face challenges when conducting formative assessment.

2.5 Summary

The chapter outlined the conceptual and theoretical framework which informed the study. The chapter further reviewed literature based on the research questions in order to see what is known or not known about the questions raised. The next chapter discusses the methodology used in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology used in the study. The chapter also provides justification for the research methodology chosen by the researcher. It begins with a description and justification of the research paradigm, then moves on to discuss the research approach and research design, population, sample and sampling procedures, data collecting instruments, validation of research instruments, data collection and data analysis. The chapter ends with a discussion of ethical issues pertinent to the study.

3.2 Research paradigm

According to Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2004), a paradigm may be viewed as a set of basic beliefs that deal with ultimate or first principles. A paradigm is a way of looking at the world. It is composed of certain philosophical assumptions that guide and direct thinking and action. For the present study, the pragmatic paradigm was adopted. Tushakkori and Teddlie (2008) identify pragmatism as one of the paradigms that provide an underlying philosophical framework for mixed methods research. In this research, the pragmatic paradigm provides an underlying philosophical framework for the mixed methods approach that was used to analyse formative assessment challenges facing English Language secondary school teachers. The pragmatic paradigm points out that individuals have their own interpretations of the world. Teachers provided their own interpretations of formative assessment challenges. Formative assessment challenges, as they are perceived by various English Language teachers were exposed through the pragmatic paradigm. The pragmatic paradigm allowed the researcher to collect data simultaneously using methods from both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The researcher took the best elements from each approach in a complementary manner when investigating the formative assessment challenges facing English Language secondary school teachers. According to Morgan (2014), the pragmatic paradigm is based on the belief that our perceptions of the world are the product of our social experiences since infancy.

Pragmatism has intuitive appeal to study areas that are of interest, embracing methods that are appropriate and using findings in a positive manner in harmony with the value system held by the researcher (Creswell, 2007). Pragmatism is appropriate in social and management research. The researcher found pragmatism relevant to this study which is social in nature as it focuses on assessment challenges facing English Language secondary school teachers. The pragmatic paradigm was selected because it enabled the researcher to mix quantitative and qualitative data to address research questions on assessment challenges facing English Language secondary school teachers. The researcher got a greater understanding on the complex issues to do with assessment challenges facing English Language secondary school teachers. Pragmatism has found popularity amongst contemporary researchers in the last few years as it is user-friendly and robust (Gorard, 2004).

The researcher used the pragmatic paradigm because it provided illustrations of context for trends and captured a macro-picture of the education system, especially formative assessment challenges faced by English Language teachers. The paradigm allowed the researcher to examine experiences along with the outcomes of formative assessment challenges facing English Language teachers in secondary schools. The pragmatic paradigm allowed the researcher to focus on what was the truth regarding formative assessment challenges facing English Language teachers in secondary schools.

3.3 Research approach

This study followed a mixed methods approach which allowed for the use of multiple data sources in the analysis of formative assessment challenges faced by English Language secondary school teachers. According to Creswell (2007), the mixed methods approach focuses on collecting, analysing and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. The researcher used quantitative and qualitative data collection procedures. Semi-structured questionnaires generated quantitative and qualitative data. Follow-up interviews, non-participant observations and documents generated qualitative data. The researcher generated qualitative data through follow-up interviews with some of the English Language teachers probing into subtle issues and unexpected responses raised in their questionnaire responses. Semi-structured questionnaires were first administered, after which the researcher made classroom observations and then analysed documents. The researcher also analysed teachers' records on English Language teaching

and learning. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analysed separately but concurrently and the findings were integrated. The approach enabled the researcher to generalise findings from quantitative research. The mixed methods research enabled the researcher to bring more meaningful interpretation and generate more complete data.

Various reasons justified using mixed methods in this study. One reason was, for triangulation, which refers to the use of different data collection techniques in one study (Miller, 2006). Another reason for mixed methods was complementarity. Results from one analysis type were interpreted to elaborate on findings from another type. A third reason that was identified was developmental. The data were collected sequentially and the findings from one analysis type was used to inform data collected and analysed using the other analysis type. The fourth reason was initiation. Inconsistencies that reshaped the research questions were identified. The fifth reason was expansion. The qualitative and quantitative analyses were used to elaborate the study's foci.

Mixed methods ensured that researcher took a holistic view of systems. In the context of this study, mixed methods ensured that the researcher obtained a holistic view of formative assessment challenges affecting English Language Secondary Schools in Makoni District as two different approaches were adopted.

3.4 Research design

A research design is a detailed description of the proposed study aimed at investigating a given problem (Gay, Mills & Airsian 2009). A research design provides the overall structure for procedures the researcher follows. A research design guides the researcher as he/she collects, analyses and interprets data; in this case, pertaining to formative assessment challenges facing English Language secondary school teachers.

The study adopted the survey design. Survey studies are typically concerned with the understanding of people's attitudes, opinions, demographic information, conditions, and procedures (Anderson, 1998; Gay, 2002). Johnson and Christensen (2008) emphasise that survey research focuses on providing an accurate description or picture of the status or characteristics of a situation or phenomenon. Therefore, this study used survey research as its aim was to analyse formative assessment challenges facing English Language teachers in secondary school to learn about the attitudes, opinions and beliefs of teachers. This

design was adopted to establish the participants' opinions or beliefs about what they perceive to be formative assessment challenges in current assessment.

The survey design was chosen because it allowed the researcher to collect data from a relatively large sample (n=40); thus making the results more representative. The survey research design was used in this study to answer the “who, what, where, how much and how many” questions on formative assessment challenges facing English Language secondary school teachers. The study employed the survey research design for exploratory, explanatory and descriptive aspects of the study. It explored and analysed the perceptions of teachers on formative assessment challenges facing English Language secondary school teachers in Makoni District. The survey design allowed the use of a questionnaire which could reach many people, making the results more representative.

According to Raimond (2004), the survey research design allows researchers to collect quantitative data analysed and reported in percentages. Robson (2006) states that the data collected from surveys are used to suggest possible reasons for particular links; for example, between formative assessment and class size. The survey design allowed the use of follow-up interviews. These interviews were carried out after analysing results from the questionnaire, to fill gaps that the researcher observed in the responses. The survey design was particularly relevant in that it allowed the use of different data collection instruments such as observations and documents.

The survey design collects original data for the purpose of describing a population too large to be observed directly (Cohen & Manion, 1994). Since Makoni District is an area too large to be observed directly, the researcher used the survey method to describe English Language secondary school teachers' challenges with formative assessment. Thornhill (2004) argues that the survey method is probably the most complex of all the research methodologies. For this reason, the researcher applied the survey design with caution so as to reduce the hazards and limitations of the survey design. The use of standardised questions limits the extent to which a survey addresses individual circumstances and contexts. To offset this challenge, the researcher included an “other” category where respondents freely formulated answers. This allowed the researcher to discover opinions regarding formative assessment challenges that he would not have thought about before.

In order to offset deficiencies of the survey method, the researcher ensured the questionnaire was not too long. This is because lengthy questionnaires annoy respondents, leading to higher levels of non-response or to respondents getting bored and not completing the questionnaire accurately. Questions were phrased in a way that they were understandable to respondents. The researcher made sure that the sample was unbiased by using probability sampling.

3.5 Population

Population is the entire group of people to which the researcher wishes to generalise the study findings (Gay et al., 2009). The population of the study comprised 40 secondary schools in Makoni District with 125 English Language secondary school teachers.

3.6 Sample and sampling procedures

The purpose of an effective sampling design is to enable the research process to collect data that are descriptive of the parameters of the large body using the minimum number of samples, yet maintaining the variability low (Herek, 2012). In addition, this enabled the research, as a process of scientific enquiry, to obtain unbiased estimates of population parameters of the phenomena under study from the main population. These estimates are based on samples or units drawn from the population. In a statistical sense, sampling involves unbiased units (samples). It is obtained as a basis on which quantitative aspects of the phenomenon can be measured. In this study, a number of English Language teachers who face formative assessment challenges in Makoni District were obtained from the total. Several types of sampling strategies can be used to achieve the objective of unbiased identification of units on which quantitative methods employed out (Pitty, 2008).

Sampling designs involve making important decisions about the strategy to carry out data collection that yield data that meet the statistical requirements of the overall objectives of the assessment challenges facing English Language secondary school teachers. Decisions were made about the intensity of sampling, the total number of English Language teachers in the District and sites from which the samples were drawn as these affected the precision of results. Decisions were made about the on-the-field location at which sampling units were located, placed and marked for the data to be statistically representative of the main population.

Further, sampling design decisions extended to making decisions about the selection of the optimal size and shape of the sampling units ensure that the sampling units needed to captured all English Language teachers present in the District. The use of very large samples does not necessarily maximise quality of data, but increases costs of data collection (Herek, 2012).

Henry (2010) argues that sampling makes possible a higher overall accuracy than a census, hence its, use. The smaller number of cases which the researcher needs to collect data means that more time can be spent designing and piloting the means of collecting these data. Collecting data from fewer cases means the researcher can collect information that is more detailed (Henry, 2010). Once the data had been collected, more time was devoted to checking and testing the data for accuracy prior to analysis.

Sampling saves time (Thornhill, 2004). This was important to this research as the researcher had tight deadlines. The organisation of data collection is more manageable in samples as few teachers are involved. As the researcher had fewer data to enter, the results were quickly available. Random sampling was adopted for the study. It involved choosing a sub-set of schools from a larger set of schools.

The researcher used a computer programme, the spreadsheet, to generate random numbers. The researcher obtained a list of all the secondary schools in Makoni District from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education at the District Office. Since the details of the population were stored on the computer, it was possible to generate a sample of randomly selected cases. Random numbers allowed the researcher to select the sample without bias. The sample selected could therefore, be said to be representative of the whole population. Simple random sampling was used because the researcher had an accurate and easily accessible sampling frame that listed the entire population, stored on a computer. Since the population covered a large geographical area, random selection meant that selected cases were dispersed through the area.

English Language secondary school teachers from the randomly selected secondary schools took part in the study. Brown and Brown (2013) point out that in order to arrive at an acceptable sample statistically; a researcher takes from 10% to 20% from the entire population of the study. Out of 40 secondary schools in Makoni District, the researcher randomly selected 5 schools, which represented 20% of the entire population of secondary

schools in the District. Random sampling ensured that all schools in Makoni District had an equal chance of being selected to participate in the study. The researcher took 20% of teachers in these 5 schools and this translated to 25 teachers. It is these 25 teachers who responded to the questionnaire.

Follow-up interviews were done to seek elaboration on issues raised in the semi – structured questionnaire. The researcher analysed professional documents from the 25 randomly selected teachers. The researcher observed the 25 randomly selected English Language teachers while they carried out their assessment duties. The researcher observed the teachers teaching to check whether they were appropriately employing the recommended assessment strategies as enunciated in the Assessment Policy Circular 36 of 2006 as well as using the Skills–based Approach as advocated by ZIMSEC. Results were generalised to the whole District.

Random sampling involves unbiased identification of sampling units from which data are to be collected. (Greenwood, 2008). It does not imply haphazard identification of units for study.

The strength of random sampling is that the samples so drawn can be relied upon as estimators of the main population (sampling estimation principles) which arise from the fact that such sampling yield high sampling proportions. (Cohen , Manion & Morrison 2011). This implies that, using random sampling strategy, the variance in measures of a parameter in a sample and the large population is maintained low. Random sampling was used because it could be concluded in a short time space of time. This saved time used for analysis and interpretation. Random sampling was used because it did not involve any lengthy, complex and crucial process. It was an easier way for sampling as there is no need to divide the population into sub-groups.

3.7 Research instruments

Semi–structured questionnaires, follow-up interviews, non-participant observations and document analysis were used in the collection of data pertaining to formative assessment challenges facing English Language secondary school teachers.

3.7.1 Semi-structured questionnaires

Semi-structured questionnaires generated both quantitative and qualitative data. The questionnaire was appropriate because it collected large quantities of data from a considerable number of people (n=125), over a relatively short period of time. Large quantities of data about formative assessment challenges facing English Language secondary school teachers were collected from 25 teachers in two weeks' time. The researcher personally delivered the questionnaires. Questionnaires are cheap to administer and user-friendly (Miller, 2006), thus the researcher employed them.

Hand-delivered questionnaires allowed respondents to complete them in their own time and then the researcher collected them after two days to allow participants enough time to complete the questionnaires. The return rate was 100%.

3.7.2 Follow-up interviews

Follow-up interviews, with a randomly selected sub-sample of the participants (n=25) were conducted to check not only on the truthfulness and trustworthiness of the data, but also to explore subtle, obscure and unexpected results. Thus, through the interviews, the researcher was able to probe beyond initial responses and this allowed for a deeper and more meaningful analysis of the results (Mushoriwa, 2013).

3.7.3 Document analysis

The researcher analysed students' exercise books, students report books, scheme-cum plan books, teacher-made tests, and teachers' record of marks books, English Language Departmental Files, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education assessment policies, the ZIMSEC syllabus and reports. From the documents, the researcher analysed the formative assessment challenges facing English Language secondary school teachers. Records included a record of students reading, comments in students' exercise books that identified areas for improvement and the quality of exercises given, as well as finding out whether the work covered met the national assessment policy.

Teachers' record of marks books, teacher-made tests and students' exercise books provided insights into the frequency and quality of classroom assessment. Furthermore, national and school policies pertaining to assessment were analysed.

Schram (2013) identifies advantages of using documents. First, documents can be accessed at a time convenient to the researcher at a minimum cost. Second, documents tend to contain data that are thoughtful because adequate time and care is given to compile them. In spite of this, the researcher was aware of the limitations associated with document analysis. Triangulation of data collection techniques enabled the researcher to verify the data collected from documents.

The researcher used two sets of documents; instructional and administrative documents for document analysis. These documents proved to be powerful in terms of helping the researcher recognise patterns and understand how the content of the textbooks, teachers' lesson plans and assessments indicated whether English Language teachers encountered any formative assessment challenges. The analysis of these documents also enabled the researcher to determine how well teachers' assessments aligned with the purposes of the prominent national syllabus documents. Furthermore, they helped the researcher to determine whether English Language teachers' assessment practices reflected the fundamental characteristics of the types of formative assessment advocated by the national English Language education documents on assessment.

The second set of document analysis involved a critical examination of teachers' handbooks, administrative announcements, correspondences from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education concerning assessment, newspaper articles pertaining to assessment, state standards and policy initiatives that aim to bring about improvements in the education system. Document analysis in this domain involved interpreting these documents, seeking for purposes, patterns, nuances of meaning and contradictions pertinent to the purpose of the current research. Furthermore, examining documents that are not produced specifically provided an opportunity to gather data whose source has not been altered.

3.7.4 Non-participant observation

In this study, non-participant observation collected first-hand information on the assessment process. Observation gave the researcher an opportunity to collect data on a wide variety of interactions related the study. By directly observing operations, the researcher developed a holistic picture, regarding the context in which assessment takes

place. In this study, the researcher visited secondary schools and checked if teachers had assessment policies and how they implemented them. Furthermore, it was important to observe when and how teachers carried out formative assessments in their classrooms. This augmented data from questionnaires, follow-up interviews and documents.

Unlike researchers who gather information on the basis of, for example, a questionnaire only, non-participant researchers themselves obtain first-hand information on human interactions; in this case about formative assessment challenges facing English Language secondary schools. Non-participant observation is especially appropriate to social behaviours that are best understood within their natural settings (Haree, 2011). Formative assessment challenges facing English Language teachers were best studied and understood while watching the teachers' as they went about their teaching. Although such behaviour can, under certain circumstances, be studied by such methods as questionnaires, the settings would be somewhat artificial as these methods do not apply well to natural settings.

3.8 Validity and reliability of the semi-structured questionnaire

The researcher ensured that the questionnaire was valid by using the inter-rater method where the questionnaire was given to 8 experts from universities to scrutinise it for validity and reliability before it was administered to the teachers. The experts were asked to check the questionnaire for suitability (validity) and to rate the questionnaire (out of 10) as a measure of how assessment should be done. The ratings were correlated to see the extent to which the raters agreed on the reliability of the questionnaire. All the experts agreed that the questionnaire was suitable (valid). An inter-rater reliability coefficient of 0.6 was yielded, indicating that to a large extent, the raters agreed that the questionnaire was reliable. To further ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, the questionnaire was test-run with a group of teachers who were not involved in the main study. The analysis provided information about items that needed re-wording or even needed removal from the instrument. As Creswell (2005) says, a piloting questionnaire attempts to determine the participants' capability in the sample with regard to the completion of surveys and to check participants' understanding of questions. Piloting questionnaires resulted in increased reliability, validity, and practicability of the questionnaire (Cohen et al., 2011).

3.9 Trustworthiness of qualitative data

There are two fundamental components of trustworthiness criteria; credibility and transferability (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). According to Guba and Lincoln (1989), credibility criteria corresponds to the term internal validity utilised in conventional research. The main premise of credibility criteria is to establish the match between the constructed realities of participants and those realities as represented by the evaluator.

There are several techniques that were used to ensure credibility of a qualitative inquiry. Prolonged engagement, member-checks and peer de-briefing were used in this study to ensure that the data collected were credible.

3.9.1 Prolonged Engagement

Walker (2009) defines prolonged engagement as substantial involvement at the site of inquiry, in order to overcome the effects of misinformation, to build trust necessary to uncover constructions and engage oneself in the understanding of the context. The researcher was actively engaged in the context of this study for 6 months.

In order to meet the criteria of prolonged engagement, the researcher stayed in the context of the study from the planning stage of the study through the end of data analysis period and constantly communicating with the stakeholders for 6 months. These interactions with the participants allowed him to construct and re-construct his understanding of the teachers' realities while interpreting data from the same context. The researcher's involvement in this study, both as a researcher and as an English Language teacher, allowed him to satisfy the criteria of prolonged engagement.

3.9.2 Member- Checking

Walker (2009) argues that appropriate data collection methods constitute a prominent role in what meaning a social researcher attempts to produce. They argue that for authentic interpretations, one must fairly honour different constructions and values underlying participants' meaning-making and treat those constructions as invaluable sources of information. One may be able to capture such constructions through interview data, however; participants must verify the researcher's

understanding of such constructions. The researcher can achieve that through the member-checking process. The researcher used member checking to strengthen the authenticity of the findings. The researcher was often in contact with the participants, both during data collection process and data analysis stage because he taught in the same District as them.

After the researcher analysed teachers' interviews and received feedback from the research supervisor, he gave the participants a hard copy of their cases and asked them to comment on the findings. If one of the participants did not agree with the researcher's interpretations of his understanding of formative assessment challenges, he/she would make changes to the researcher's argument and present cases to the participants for further authenticity.

3.9.3 Peer debriefing

Kolly (2013) maintains that the nature of interpretive inquiry allows biased interpretations. Although interpretive research honours researchers' biases as long as they are supported by evidence, this bias is likely to limit the comprehensiveness of findings. Comprehensiveness means that there is enough evidence supporting the researcher's assertions that he/she assumes to describe the reality of teachers' experiences. To reduce such influence and ensure comprehensiveness, the researcher collaborated with the research supervisor and peers who were writing their dissertations at the same time. This collaboration and sharing process ensured collective support and insight throughout the writing process.

The researcher frequently communicated with the research supervisor through e-mail, and shared his findings and interpretations with him. The feedback from the conversations substantiated the researcher's understanding of collected data by bringing in a critical perspective. This dialogue raised important questions and helped the researcher to identify some important themes that he had not considered initially. The researcher evaluated the research supervisor's and peers' feedback to revisit his initial interpretations and reflected on them, thus, developing robust interpretations.

3.9.4 Credibility

Credibility is an evaluation of whether or not the research findings present a 'credible' conceptual interpretation of the data drawn from the participants' original data (Walker, 2009). Credibility was enhanced through triangulation. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), triangulation has raised important methodological issues in naturalistic and qualitative approaches to evaluation in order to control bias and establishing valid propositions because traditional scientific techniques are incompatible with this alternate epistemology.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) state that the use of multiple methods or triangulation reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question. It adds rigour, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry. The trustworthiness of the conclusions established by triangulation were superior because they had been verified through the use of multiple data sources (Gay, 2008). Triangulation is viewed by Luter (2011) as essentially a means of cross checking multiple data collection sources to establish validity.

In this study, triangulation was undertaken; and data were collected through multiple sources including questionnaires, observations, interviews and document analysis. Triangulation provided both reliability and validity checks by permitting the comparison of themes in the different data groups. Furthermore, interviews, observations, and document analysis were particularly useful in identifying issues and included the participants' perspectives on assessment challenges in the classroom with some depth.

Triangulation was achieved by the participation of teachers from different secondary schools to reduce the effect of the study to a single institution. Different secondary schools including urban secondary schools, rural secondary schools, day and boarding secondary schools, mission secondary schools and resettlement schools were involved in the study. Similar results emerged from different sites, thereby enhancing the credibility of the findings.

To further enhance credibility in this study, it was made clear that the participants had the right to participate or withdraw from the research. Participants who participated in individual interviews and observation sessions were those who were genuinely willing to take part. These participants were prepared to offer data freely. During observations and follow-up

interviews, the researcher probed some responses in order to elicit detailed data. All this was done in order to produce credible data pertaining to formative assessment challenges facing English Language teachers.

3.10 Data collection procedure

The researcher acquired an ethical clearance certificate from the University of Fort Hare and a covering letter from the Faculty of Education. Permission was sought from the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Zimbabwe, the Provincial Education Director (Manicaland) and the District Schools Inspector (Makoni) as well as school heads of the secondary schools where the study was conducted. Letters seeking permission to carry out the study in the secondary schools of Makoni District were sent to these authorities. The letters explained the intention and purpose of the study.

The researcher personally travelled to each school to collect the data. Prior arrangements were made with the school heads either telephonically or through letters. Semi-structured questionnaires for teachers were collected after one week. The researcher conducted follow-up interviews on selected English Language secondary school teachers after going through the questionnaire responses. The aim was to probe into subtle and unexpected responses observed in the questionnaire. The researcher went through professional documents of teachers like records of marks, teacher-made tests, scheme-cum-plan books, students' exercise books, students' report books, departmental files and reports. The researcher then carried out observations to get first-hand information on the actual formative assessment challenges English Language teachers were facing.

3.11 Data analysis

According to Merriam (2009), data analysis is the process that enables the researcher to make sense of the data by consolidating, reducing and interpreting what research would have said and what the researcher would have observed and recorded. This is in agreement to what Neuman (2006) says that data analysis is the process whereby the researcher brings structure and order to the vast amount of data collected and looks for patterns in the data in order to make sense of them, leading to interpretation and meaning-making. Cohen et al. (2011) also hold the same view when they say data analysis involves organising raw data into a system that reveals the basic results from the research.

Since this study was a concurrent triangulation, mixed methods research, it involved conducting a separate initial data analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data comparing the findings from both sets of data during the discussion and interpretation stage.

Quantitative data from questionnaires were coded and presented using cross-tabs. The results were reported mainly in percentages. Some of the qualitative data from follow-up interviews, observations and document analysis were used to buttress findings from the quantitative data. Most of the qualitative data was categorised into themes and analysed/discussed accordingly.

3.12 Ethical Issues

Research ethics is an essential component of a study. According to Thornhill (2004), research ethics are the principles and guidelines that help researchers to uphold the educational aspects that they value. Research ethics are established guidelines that encourage responsible research practices and assure the protection of human research participants. In this study, the researcher had the responsibility to conduct the investigations and report findings without harming research participants. In this research, informed consent was sought from English Language teachers who participated in the research. Furthermore, consent was sought from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education Schools Inspectors. Johnson and Christensen (2004) note that informed consent refers to procedures in which individuals choose whether or not to participate in an investigation after being informed of the purpose of the study, procedures of the study, risks and the right to ask questions, the benefits of the study that would accrue to the participants, alternative procedures and limits of confidentiality prior to participation and non- participation. This was done verbally and in writing by providing information about the study, the research aims and questions, instruments, research procedures for informed consent by all study participants. Participation at every stage was voluntary, and confidentiality and anonymity were assured, wherever possible. The overall purpose of the study, duration, benefits and risks of the study were also stated. All participants could discontinue their participation at any time as they wished. Participants made the choice to be part of the research or to withdraw from the research after some explanations pertaining to the study. Borg and Gall (2002) observe that, researchers should respect the individual freedom to decline to participate or to withdraw from the research study at any time.

By the nature of qualitative research, ensuring anonymity would be difficult because of its use of observation, and interviews. Clearly, observation participants could not be assured of anonymity from the other group members, however, their data were protected from external scrutiny. Furthermore, when making write-ups about observation, pseudonyms were used. The research results from all participants were summarised and given as a research report with no names. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) assert that, informant identities should be protected to avoid embarrassment and any form of harm on participants. Any material that was collected through document analysis, interviews and observations was kept away from the data collection site to further enhance confidentiality. Participants were not deceived in taking part in the research. The true nature of the research, including procedures, was spelt out.

3.13 Summary

This chapter focused on the research methodology that was used in the study. Specifically, the chapter looked at the research paradigm, research approach, research design, population, sample and data collection, sampling procedures instruments, validity and reliability/data trustworthiness, data analysis procedures and finally ethical considerations. The chapter has also justified the researcher's choice of the research methodology. The next chapter presents, analyses and discusses the data.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents, analyses and discusses the findings of the study generated from the data gathered through questionnaires, interviews, observations and documents. The researcher decided to present the data and to immediately discuss and analyse them in order to avoid the unnecessary repetition that often characterises work where data presentation, analysis and discussion are separated into two chapters. The data were presented, analysed and discussed in line with the questionnaire. Data from the interviews, observations and documents were used to buttress findings from the questionnaire. The questionnaire addressed the objectives of the study which were to establish:

- and analyse formative assessment challenges faced by English Language secondary school teachers in Makoni District,
- how English Language formative assessment is done in Makoni District secondary schools,
- factors that influence teachers' formative assessment procedures in English language,
- the extent to which English Language teachers face formative assessment challenges, and
- measures that can be put in place to reduce formative assessment challenges facing English Language secondary school teachers.

These objectives reflect the main research question and sub-research questions below. In the process of presenting, analysing and discussing these, triangulation of different forms of data that were collected ensured trustworthiness and credibility of data and reduced chances of reaching false conclusions.

The major research question was about what formative assessment challenges English Language secondary school teachers faced in Makoni District.

The sub-research questions were:

- How is formative assessment done in English Language in Makoni District secondary schools?
- What factors influence teachers' formative assessment procedures in English Language?
- To what extent do English Language teachers encounter formative assessment challenges?
- What measures can be put in place to reduce formative assessment challenges in English Language?

The respondents are defined as follows:

T₁₋₅ English Language teachers in school A

T₆₋₁₀ English Language teachers in school B

T₁₁₋₁₅ English Language teachers in school C

T₁₆₋₂₀ English Language teachers in school D

T₂₁₋₂₅ English Language teachers in school E

With these objectives and research questions in mind, the questionnaire provided quantitative data about formative assessment challenges facing English Language teachers in three parts. Part I presented, analysed and discussed general information pertaining to the questionnaires completed and returned, nature of schools and demographic data of the participants; such as; gender, age, qualification and experience. Part 2 comprised 26 statements designed to establish how formative assessment is carried out, factors that influence teachers' formative assessment procedures, extent to which teachers faced formative assessment challenges and measures that can be put in place to reduce formative assessment challenges.

Part I was considered necessary as some trends in certain variables in the analysis of formative assessment challenges facing English Language teachers can better be explained through reference to the demographic information of the respondents. Part 2 looks at whether or not the research questions and objectives were addressed.

PART 1

4.2 GENERAL INFORMATION

This part of the chapter sought to establish the number of respondents who responded to the questionnaire as well as the nature of school from which the respondents operated. Table 4.1 shows the results of the data collected.

Table 4-1: Number of questionnaires returned and nature of the school

Pseudo name of the school	Nature of the school	Number of questionnaires returned
School A	Rural Day	5
School B	Urban Day	5
School C	Resettlement Day	5
School D	Rural Day	5
School E	Resettlement Day	5
Total 5		25

Table 4.1 shows that of the five schools, two are rural day secondary schools which are government owned, falling under the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. Two are Resettlement day schools which are owned by the Makoni Rural District Council which falls under the Ministry of Local Government. One school is an urban day secondary school administered by the Roman Catholic Church. All schools are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. The results in Table 4.1 also show that twenty-five teachers (100%) completed and returned the questionnaires.

It was important for the researcher to establish the location of the schools as structural issues such as classrooms and availability of resources are in some cases determined by the nature and location of the school. A study by Jobert (2011) found that assessment challenges can be exacerbated by the location of the school. The study by Jorbert (2011)

found that schools in urban areas were better resourced than semi-urban and rural schools. Thus, environmental factors triggered formative assessment challenges for teachers.

It is the State and the Responsible Authorities that facilitate the construction and maintenance of schools and the provision of furniture and textbooks. Parents contribute to the education of their children through payment of school levies, purchase of stationery, text books, uniforms and maintaining the general well-being of their children. Formative assessment challenges are triggered by these schools' different environmental settings, hence, the need to establish the nature of schools under study.

4.3 Demographic data

The demographic data related to variables pertaining to the respondents' gender, age qualifications and experience. Below are the data for each of the variables.

The researcher established the gender of the English Language teachers in the study to ensure that different opinions across gender are represented. Table 4.2 below shows the gender of respondents, data which were collected through the teachers' questionnaire.

Table 4-2: Gender of teachers (n=25)

Name of school	Category	Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
School A	Teacher	3	2	5
School B	Teacher	2	3	5
School C	Teacher	1	4	5
School D	Teacher	3	2	5
School E	Teacher	3	2	5
Total		12	13	25

Results in Table 4.2 show that there were 12 male teachers and 13 female teachers. These results show a slight gender imbalance among English Language teachers which favours females (n = 13) over males (n = 12). Delroy (2009) has established that gender has an influence on teachers who faced assessment and instructional problems. In the study, female teachers could not cope with the rigours of formative assessment and instruction.

According to Turner (2006), people's attitudes, opinions and values are also influenced by their gender. Similarly, Delroy (2009) argues that gender has a bearing on how events are interpreted. Interview data further established that male teachers were more comfortable teaching in the senior classes. In the present study, the respondents' views were that gender had an influence particularly on the level one taught. In particular, female teachers encountered many formative assessment challenges in English Language.

T₃ commented:

We women have more social responsibilities than men at home and thus cannot cope with the demands of formative assessment. The work that we carry home is rarely accomplished.

The researcher also established, through District Office documents, that 60% of the English Language teachers in schools under the present study were female teachers. On evaluating variables related to assessment problems across the state of Kano, Adende (2010) found that female teachers out-numbered male teachers in secondary schools.

The presence of more female teachers in the present study was not uncommon as the European Commission (2009) found that there were more female teachers in most secondary schools in different countries. At Advanced Level however, there were more male teachers. The younger the children, the greater the female teachers, was a result confirmed by this study.

The Government of Zimbabwe established the Affirmative Action Policy in 1990 which stipulated that girls or women would be admitted into tertiary institutions with grades/ passes lower than those of boys or men. The implementation of the policy came about as a result of gender disparities in employment and training institutions. This policy explains why there are more women teachers in secondary schools.

The researcher on item 2 of the teachers' questionnaire, required the respondents to indicate their ages. Respondents were given age ranges from which to select. The age of respondents was sought to find out if any trends could be established as a result. Alhassan (2012) cited in Muguwe (2015) commented that the passage of time was considered an important factor in learning from experience. Table 4.3 illustrates the age ranges of teacher respondents to the questionnaire.

Table 4-3: Age range of teachers (n=25)

Category	Age Range				
	20-29 years	30-39 years	40-49 years	50-59 years	60 years and above
Teachers	11	8	3	2	1
Total					25

As can be seen from Table 4.2, the present study's participants had ages ranging from 20 years to beyond 60 years. The distribution of respondents by age range revealed that 11 respondents were in the 20-29 years age bracket, 8 respondents were in the 30-39 years bracket, 3 in the 40–49 years bracket, 2 in the 50-59 years bracket and 1 in the 60 and above years bracket. Similarly, follow-up interviews were held with teachers across all age groups. Only 11 of the 25 respondents were in the 20–29 years group, which could be described by Carey's (2006) model as being in the practising stage. It can be inferred that the respondents were mature enough for the teaching profession and indeed mature to comprehend formative assessment issues.

Teaching, as a profession requires mature minds as it is assumed they have the ability to comprehend and discern what is involved in the teaching process, including issues of formative assessment (Lipton, 2009). In a study on continuous professional development of teachers, Muguwe (2015) found that age and experience were related. Thus, the researcher sought to establish if age was one of the indicators of readiness for the teaching profession, especially for formative assessment.

The minimum entry age for primary school in Zimbabwe is 7 years. Following is 7 years of primary schooling with 4 years of secondary schools plus an optional 2 years of high

schooling. For one to enrol at any teacher training institution, they should be of a minimum age of 18 years. The teacher training programme lasts over two to three years or even four years in some cases. It can be roughly established that the minimum age at which a person qualifies as a teacher in the Zimbabwean context is 22 years.

It has been established through studies (Stevenson, 2004; Brodin, 2007) that most secondary schools have mature adults. According to Brodin (2007), a person is said to be mature if he/she has a lot of experience and knowledge from which to draw. The Secretary of Education's Report of 2015 states that the majority of the teaching body in Zimbabwe consists of mature educators. The current study found that 14 out of the 25 respondents were 30 years old and above, an age that could be considered mature. The current study found that 11 out of the 25 respondents were below 30 years. An educator with less years of experience is more likely to experience formative assessment challenges (Stalker, 2009).

Brodin (2007) further points out that with experience and knowledge, a mature person is thus well equipped to have new experiences from which to learn. The description and qualities of a mature person, as given by Brodin (2007), indicates that in the schools in the present study, the majority of participants were well equipped with knowledge from which to develop new experiences from.

In order to find out if English Language teachers possessed requisite skills and training to enable them to meet the formative assessment needs of learners, participants were asked to indicate their qualifications (Item 3 in the questionnaire) as well as their subject specialisation. Table 4.4 below shows the higher professional qualifications of teachers.

Table 4-4: Professional qualifications of teachers (n=25)

Question	Category	Response						Total
Highest Professional	Teachers	M.ED	BA.Ed	B.Ed.	Dip. Ed	Cert. Ed	Other	25(100%)
Qualification	(n = 25)	0 (0%)	2(8%)	3(23%)	3 (2%)	4 (16%)	11(44%)	

Table 4.4 shows that of the 25 teachers who completed the questionnaire correctly and returned them, 2 (8%) had a Bachelor of Arts with Education specialising in English Language, 3(12%) had a Bachelor of Education (English Language), 7(35%) had a Diploma in Education (English Language), 4(16%) had a Certificate in Education (English Language) while 11(44%) had other qualifications. From those who had other qualifications, 5 (25%) did not specialise in English Language, but specialised in other subjects, 1(4%) had a Bachelor of Arts in English Language and a Post Graduate Certificate in English Language while 5(25%) only had a Bachelor of Arts in English without a teaching qualification.

According to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (2015), to be considered professionally qualified, a teacher must be at least a holder of a Certificate or Diploma in Education so as to teach from Form 1 to Form 4. A significant number of teachers did not have degrees, probably pointing out that they were not highly skilled. Some teachers were not English Language specialists, hence, faced formative assessment challenges. Some teachers who did not have a teaching qualification were bound to encounter formative assessment challenges. A sizeable fraction of teachers held the Certificate in Education, a qualification phased out in the 1990s. The Certificate in Education was phased out in the 1990s in line with changing trends (Ministry of Higher Education, 2013). Teachers who acquired this qualification could have faced more formative assessment challenges since the training they received may not have considered current trends in assessment.

According to the Department of Higher Education and Training, South Africa (2011), quality education is determined by the teacher. In this light, Asikhia (2010) concedes that paying particular attention in the design of training programmes is thus critical to the level of a teacher's knowledge of relevant subject areas and teaching experience. Thus, implementation of a formative assessment programme might be hampered if, and when, courses failed to take the teacher's level of knowledge into account (Verspoor, 2005). From the information above, one could deduce that the classroom teacher is one of the key variables in the implementation of assessment programmes. Teachers then, as curriculum implementers, must be knowledgeable on issues such as content adaptation when faced with students such as those with learning difficulties. From the information in Table 4.4, it can be inferred that there are many professionally qualified teachers in the schools under study, while a small number (7) are under-qualified to carry out effective assessment.

Research by Waton (2009) confirms that the failure of an assessment programme in the ordinary schools is often seen to lie in the quality of teaching provided. Where schools have a good number of professionally qualified teachers, the provision of quality education may be guaranteed.

It is worth noting that the Bachelor of Education degree is awarded after successful completion of four years of training while a Diploma in Education is awarded after successful completion of 2 years of training. At each level, the prospective teacher undertakes a variety of courses and sits for an examination administered by the institution at which training is being undertaken. All this, however, is under the supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education. The current position of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education is that teachers holding a Diploma of Education and below are encouraged to upgrade so that they obtain a Bachelor of Education (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2015).

A study in Nigeria, conducted by Asikhia (2010), revealed that for teachers, learners' performance has nothing to do with teacher qualification. Walton (2006) hypothesised that in instances where teachers perceive their training and / or knowledge to be inadequate, they tend to see themselves in a position where they are unable to manage formative assessment.

The next section (Table 4.5) related to how formative assessment is carried out in Makoni District as per the views of teachers involved in the study.

4.4 Discussion of- Sub Research questions

Table 4-5: How formative assessment is carried out

Item	Statement	Response					Total
		SA	A	UN	D	SD	
1.	Learner-centred assessment is carried out regularly.	8(32%)	5(20%)	0(0%)	6(24%)	6(24%)	25(100%)
2.	Teachers mostly assess	5(20%)	15(60%)	0(0%)	2(8%)	3(12%)	25(100%)

	reading skills.						
3.	Teacher- made tests are aligned to instructional objectives.	3(25%)	12(48%)	0(0%)	4(16%)	1(4%)	25(100%)
4.	Teachers calculate variability (standard deviation) for classroom exercises.	9(36%)	12(48%)	0(0%)	3(12%)	2(8%)	25(100%)
5.	Teachers provide detailed feedback to learners.	11(44%)	7(28%)	0(0%)	4(16%)	3(12%)	25(100%)
6.	All domains are assessed equally.	17(68%)	7(28%)	0(0%)	3(12%)	3(12%)	25(100%)
7.	Criterion-referenced assessment is more used than norm – referenced assessment	4(16%)	4(16%)	0(0%)	5(20%)	12(48%)	25(100%)
8.	Higher-order questions are mostly used in lessons.	8(32%)	8(32%)	0(0%)	4(16%)	5(20%)	25(100%)
9.	Remediation is carried out by teachers.	2(8%)	3(12%)	0(%)	8(32%)	12(48%)	25(100%)

Item 1 shows that 13(52%) agreed that they do not employ the learner-centred approach to assessment. Of the 25 teachers who responded to the questionnaire, 12 (48%) disagreed to regularly carrying out learner-centred assessment activities. It is the finding of this present study that most of those who disagreed did not have a teaching qualification. According to Lewiss (2004), teachers mostly use self-assessment, peer assessment and group assessment. Findings from the present study confirm this. Learner-centred assessment is effective because students are in charge of their own learning and

assessment. Follow-up interviews indicated that teachers used teacher-centred methods at times because learner-centred methods were too time-consuming.

In an interview, T₈ said:

We use teacher-centred methods because they are easy to use and that they are not too time - consuming. We were also taught using the teacher-centred methods and we passed English Language at secondary school. We use peer assessment and self - assessment most of the time.

The observations made showed that a significant number of teachers (48%) used the teacher-centred approach. Documents, especially the scheme-cum-plans, showed that teachers planned lessons which were learner-centred though they deviated in practice. Guskey (2004) states that when teachers do not have time or do not use effective strategies, they generally resort to testing—the way they were assessed, too often ineffectively. Some teachers have difficulties in using learner-centred approaches as they are not familiar with how they are conducted. On one hand, assessment of students learning under the learner-centred approach is interwoven with teaching and occurs through teacher observation of students' exhibitions and portfolios (Stanslas, 2008). On the other hand, assessment of learning in a teacher-centred approach is viewed as separate from teaching and occurs entirely through testing. According to Stanslas (2008), teachers in a learner-centred environment generally behave in an interactive manner, mediating the environment for students. Findings from this study, especially from interviews, proved that, assessment is teacher-centred.

According to T₁₂:

When assessing, every pupil moves at the same rate and gets the same assignment since the hectic schedule has no room for students to be assessed differently.

Jones (2009) states that many teachers are tempted to use the learner-centred approach since assessment activities rely heavily on textbooks and workbooks. In Zimbabwe, teachers generally use the textbook and workbooks when assessing pupils. From

documents, the researcher noted that in the scheme-cum-plan book, teachers indicated the textbook where they got the source of material from, as well as the page number. On the contrary, in the learner-centred approach, assessment activities rely heavily on primary sources of data and manipulative materials (Jones, 2009). In some cases, manipulative material may not be available; let alone generation of primary sources of data, thereby creating a formative assessment challenges for English Language teachers.

Findings from the current study show that a significant number of teachers (48%) use the whole-class formative assessment approach. The whole-class formative assessment approach is mostly used in Malawian secondary schools (Msoro, 2004). Included in this approach are whole class interactive activities like question and answer, students explaining or demonstrating a concept to the whole class and around-the-class, or reading to cover content in texts. While the whole class formative assessment approach may appear to be efficient in terms of time and content coverage, it has some drawbacks. Research, (Msoro, 2004; Alfasi, 2007) suggests that teachers who use the approach tend to have discipline problems such as students physically interacting with others and students quietly talking with each other during the lesson. The teacher, as a result, spends more time on monitoring students. The teacher spends time endeavouring to maintain order, circulating to check if students are on task and probing students for understanding. The researcher, in the current study, observed students fidgeting during lesson time when the whole-class formative assessment was being employed. The teacher had a hectic day trying to quieten the overcrowded students.

Teachers who use whole-class formative assessment activities tend to motivate their students by constantly reminding them of coming tests and examinations. The teaching style tends to focus on content to be tested. Students are therefore, constantly watching out for clues on what content might be in the test. Content is thus, prioritised so that what is likely not to be tested is ignored. As a consequence of these methods, learning for the test, note copying from textbooks and the chalkboard, especially on Communication and Register exercises, have the highest status. The teacher who uses whole-class formative assessment activities is likely to prefer sitting his\her students in formal rows of desks and chairs. This is what the researcher observed in most schools in the current study. The whole-class formative approach is mostly used in resource-constrained situations such as the ones covered by the present study. If schools have the resources, then there may be a

reduction in the use of the whole-class formative assessment approach, hence; a reduction of formative assessment challenges. An inference can be made that teachers tend to shift to the teacher-centred approaches because of shortage of resources.

If English Language teachers in a secondary school setting consider formative assessment as seeking evidence that provides indications for the kind and level of understanding attained by the learner at that particular point in time, then they are more likely to design and use formative assessment procedures innovatively and appropriately to enhance the learning and teaching process and reduce formative assessment challenges in English Language for secondary school level teachers. Findings from this study point out that most teachers use learner-centred approaches. However, they need to strike a balance between learner-centred approaches and teacher-centred approaches so that they enhance the quality of education.

In Table 4.5 responses to item 2, 5(20%) indicated that teachers assess reading skills. There are various strategies that teachers can use, especially during the course of instruction. Apart from the typical pen and paper tests, quizzes or exercises, there are other forms of assessing understanding such as visual depictions or oral renditions of English Language ideas (Alfasi, 2007). If conducted properly, interviews give the teacher the opportunity to hear the learner thinking aloud and to more accurately judge the quality of the student's understanding. From observations made by the researcher in the current study, teachers did not plan the questions to be asked in advance and as a result some of the questions were not focused. Demonstrations could include requiring the learner to translate English Language into action models. Visual depictions could indicate ability to translate concepts into representations such as pictorial, diagrammatic or symbolic. From the findings of the current study, no concepts were translated into diagrammatic form. Oral renditions could provide an opportunity to assess the learner's ability to formulate and to re-formulate tasks and concepts and explain them in their own words. Through oral renditions, students can be more easily assessed for their ability to discuss concepts and procedures, to apply them in different contexts and judge their adequacy and limitations, and to connect the concepts and procedures to related concepts. Under the current study, on average one oral lesson was planned for by the teachers. Students' confidence in their mastery of concepts and critical thinking skills can also be easily assessed through discussions. Writing skills were assessed more than any other skills. The remaining 20(80%) teachers

stated that they did not assess reading skills that often. In the follow-up interviews, teachers indicated that they assessed writing because it provides evidence that the students actually did the work.

T₁₁ had to say:

The supervisors are only interested in the number of written exercises you give and the best way to show them is to give a lot of written work to pupils. Written work gives a clear picture of what happened. Quality is, however, compromised.

T₁₇ added:

At times we assess all the four language skills but the syllabus emphasises written assessment and we concentrate on that.

The researcher noted, from observations, that there was an over-emphasis on written assessment at the expense of speaking, reading and listening skills. The researcher noted that in the scheme-cum-plans, more written work was planned for at the expense of other skills. Harris (2010) argues that most teachers in secondary schools assessed reading sparingly as they felt that it was the duty of primary school teachers to assess reading. Harris (2010) further argues that secondary school teachers assume that by the time students reach secondary school, they would have mastered all the basic tenets of reading. Such assumptions may be untrue as some students reach secondary school not having mastered the basic reading skills. By not focusing on other skills apart from writing, there is a danger that reading, speaking and listening skills would not complement writing skills, resulting in teachers failing to make effective formative assessment in writing. Hosni (2008) postulates that some teachers have even become specialists in assessing writing while lacking in assessing reading and speaking. There is evidence of teachers focusing on one concept, that is, writing at the expense of the other three, speaking, reading and writing, resulting in an unbalanced form of assessment.

According to the interview data in the current study, at times teachers assess all skills and give guidance to students where possible. This reduces problems they face as students will be taking an active part in assessment. Inferences are that teachers face formative assessment challenges as they emphasise assessment of one skill, an indication that they are not familiar with assessment of other skills. Assessment needs to be holistic.

Assessment consists of documenting expressions of learning from multiple (potentially unlimited numbers) authentic learning situations. Scela (2003) points out that central to this practice, is the involvement of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Students are involved in the whole English Language curriculum and get authentic learning and assessment. Specific activities include the analysis of students' writing. Students are encouraged to write short stories in journals and these are analysed. Teachers and students try to make sense of these stories and corrections are made in a non-threatening manner. Spelling stages are ascertained and help is provided where possible.

In one of the schools, the researcher noted that two teachers conducted miscue analysis. Miscue analysis, is an assessment of a child's reading. It targeted readers facing reading failure. Reading recovery provides an extra programme for students who are not experiencing success in a good classroom programme. By not using miscue analysis most teachers were not concentrating on reading skills and not assisting students with reading problems (Scela, 2003).

Three teachers in the urban day school in the current study used portfolio assessment. Portfolio assessment is a strategy employed in whole language assessment (Gillis, 2004). It is a multi-dimensional process of collecting evidence that illustrates a student's accomplishments, efforts and progress using a wide variety of authentic evidence over time. It is an overview of effort, progress or performance in English Language (Spandel, 2008). Portfolios, if carried out in an appropriate manner, reduce formative assessment challenges because of their emphasis on the collection of evidence from a wide variety of English Language skills over time. Emphasis is on the visual, auditory, tactual, kinaesthetic, olfactory and cerebral learning and assessment-based styles. It may be inferred that teachers do not like to use the portfolio-based assessment because it is too demanding. Many records have to be kept in situations which are not conducive to keep records since there is a shortage of office space for teachers.

T₂₀ said:

Portfolio assessment is taxing in terms of collecting different types of work and activities for the students over a long period of time. Some of the documents may get lost, there are also complications when teachers transfer or are moved to other

classes or departments. We have many documents to keep. There is not much office space and storage facilities. Remember portfolios function like a photo album containing a variety of photos taken at different times and different contexts.

Assessment of learning should be a continuous process throughout instruction. The English Language teacher should be able to get a good sense of the quality of student thinking through careful listening and observation of student performance in both oral responses and written records. In this way, formative assessment challenges are reduced (Harris, 2010).

It emerged from Table 4.5 Item 3, that most teacher-made tests, as seen by 19 (76%) of the teachers, are aligned to instructional objectives while a few were not aligned to instructional objectives. Information obtained from documents, especially the scheme-cum- plans, show that teacher-made tests are in tandem with instructional objectives. Observations made by the researcher revealed that instructional objectives are synchronised with teacher-made tests. Alphas (2007) states that the harmonisation of teacher-made tests and instructional objectives can be problematic in some instances since set objectives and set questions do not match.

T₁₂ commented during a follow-up interview:

Some of us just state objectives which are not clear and may fail to fit with the requirements of the test. We may just state that the objectives at the end of the lesson students should recall facts learnt yet test items may be requiring students to evaluate or analyse given concepts.

T₁₉ said:

We link our instructional objectives to teacher-made tests so as to improve instruction and assessment.

Such a situation may be an assessment challenge as set objectives and the content of the test may be demanding different aspects. As has been alluded to by Alphas (2007), teachers are faced with challenges in terms of aligning teacher-made tests with instructional objectives. It is an area that has been constantly over-looked by most English language teachers. Alphas further states that it is difficult to compare data with behaviourally- stated

objectives if there is no link between instructional objectives and assessment items. Fairfield (2008) points out that if there is no link between instructional objectives and assessment items, objectives could be arbitrary, restrictive and dysfunctional. Objectives should have a rationale if they are to have value. The rationale is the synchronisation of instructional objectives and formative assessment items.

Stiggins (2002) points out other effective types of planning activities that teachers can choose to improve their assessment practices. Stiggins argues that teachers can use a table of specifications, a two-way table that matches the objectives or content teachers taught with the level at which they expect students to perform. It contains an estimate of the percentage of the test to be allocated to each topic at each level at which it is to be measured. Teachers can also rely on a list of instructional objectives with assessment tasks (tests, assignments and projects).

All these steps are essential for planning assessment tasks. However, the single most important test planning and construction process that must be understood is how to design appropriate learning objectives, also known as outcomes, which specify what the teachers want students to know or be able to do at the end of the unit, topic, term or class activity. Everything that goes on in the subject, including instructional methods used, assessment methods used (tests, assignments, projects) are driven by learning objectives. For this reason, teachers must have a good understanding of how to construct specific, measurable, realistic and student-centred instructional objectives (Reynolds, Livingstone & Wilson, 2009).

Table 4.5 Item 4 shows that 4(16%) of the teachers calculate variability for formative assessment while 21(84%) of the teachers do not calculate variability for formative assessment. Analysis conducted by the researcher from documents, especially their record marks books, show that teachers calculate measures of central tendency that is, the mode, mean and median. Teachers did not determine how scores in a distribution differed from one another from their central tendency.

In the follow-up interview, T₆ had to say:

Calculating variability will bring us more work. Even when I was doing my first degree, that module on statistics was a mammoth task. We actually have that statistical phobia or whatever you might call it.

Another teacher T₈ had this to say:

We don't use these statistics partly due to attitudes. I think there is need for attitude change to appreciate that besides percentages and averages, these other statistics are also necessary. We need to know how scores in a distribution differ from one another from the central tendency.

In summary, teachers lacked the requisite competence to analyse assessment data using other statistics besides percentages and averages. Lack of correct interpretation and appropriate use of the range of assessment data is a problem among English Language teachers (Rajmal, 2009).

According to Lambert (2006), measures of dispersion enable teachers to judge the reliability of any central tendency. Widely dispersed scores also raise a lot of questions and programmes that seek to address this may have to be developed. Measures of dispersion allow teachers to derive meaning from test scores, and improve their assessment items so that they do not set difficult items in assessments that follow. Teachers' negative attitudes as well as lack of knowledge of statistics became an impediment to effective analysis of assessment data. This concurs Zindi's (2001) findings that, the lack of interest in statistics has been fostered by poor mathematical background and that most courses available on assessment are often statistical or mathematical in nature.

Table 4.5 item 5 shows that 10(40%) of the teachers provided detailed feedback to students while 15(60%) of the teachers stated that they do not provide detailed feedback.

T₁₃ commented:

There is no time to provide detailed feedback due to time and workload constraints.

Observations made by the researcher in pupils' exercise books revealed that detailed feedback was not given to pupils. Marking was not thorough. Comments were not playing a motivational role. A breakdown of mark allocation was not given. Some grammatical errors were not indicated in compositions. Marking codes varied from school to school.

Corrections were not being done in composition writing. Teachers only indicated the error without correcting the sentences for the pupils.

According to Black (2002), the effect of feedback is to teach the weaker students that they lack ability, so that they are de-motivated and lose confidence in their own capacity to learn. The above statement by Black (2002) may be another reason why English Language teachers fail to provide detailed feedback. English Language teachers may come to the conclusion that by providing feedback they are playing a role in de-motivating their students. Herbert (2009) observes that feedback in the classroom may or may not be harmful. Such feedback as giving grades, granting or withholding special rewards, or fostering self-esteem, irrespective of the quality of his or her work may be ineffective or even harmful to students as they may feel discriminated against. Torrance (2006) argues that many teachers focus on praise as a form of feedback because of the efficacy of behaviourist reinforcement systems. When feedback is used effectively, it is "... the most powerful single moderator that enhances achievement." (Hattie, 2009:9). Observations made by the researcher in the current study proved that feedback played a key role in motivating students. Students who were given feedback had a sustained interest in the subject.

The quality of an assessment is as good as the communication value of results. Quality assessment necessitates providing good feedback to students, using assessment data to improve instruction and using a variety of assessment methods (McMunn, 2011). The purpose of feedback is to provide constructive guidance, and to accelerate and improve learner achievement of student outcomes (Hounsell, 2003). Assessment always has more to do with cataloguing students' mistakes (Tomlison, 2009). Gibbs and Simpson (2004) argue that, feedback is the single most powerful influence on learner achievement.

Feedback is most effective when it is timely, perceived as relevant, meaningful and encouraging and offers suggestions for improvement which are within a learner's grasp. According to Shute (2008), formative or descriptive feedback is information communicated to the learner that is intended to modify his or her thinking or behaviour for the purpose of improving learning.

Feedback assists students to take constructive criticism and makes learning interactive. Feedback ensures quality assurance in assessment and it affords the teacher a chance to

explain assessment criteria. Some students have difficulty in interpreting feedback in English Language and end up confronting teachers when they have low marks. Such students present their concerns poorly (Alfasi, 2007). According to Stiggins (2002), teachers use oral and non-verbal feedback. This includes feedback in forms of written comments, feedback in the form of performance assessment, feedback in the form of test scores, and feedback in the form of grades. Commenting on a research project in Nigeria initiated to investigate assessment for learning in English Language, Ijefi and Utsere (2008) note that teachers added comments on their students' written work that did not really help them identify what they had achieved and what the next steps in their learning should be. The following was expressed:

Most comments we saw ... either stated a general evaluation which indicated either what had been achieved or what steps to take next, or were geared to improving presentation or merely completing work. Examples included, Good, Well done, Title, Date, Space out question on the page, Please finish and Answer all questions (page44).

Weeden, (2002) notes that teachers have challenges in feedback and marking owing to the fact that most assessments in English Language are not fit for purpose and that marking was not linked to clear learning objectives. Some of the marking did not help identify students' misconceptions and it was not focused and prioritised. Most work and feedback did not take place quickly so that students remembered the context.

Table 4.6 item 6 pointed out that 19(76%) of the teachers did not assess all domains while 6(24%) of the teachers assessed all domains. Observations revealed that teachers mostly assessed the cognitive domain. Documents, especially the scheme-cum-plans, revealed that teachers usually assessed the cognitive domain.

In the follow-up interview T₁₁ had to say:

It is difficult to measure objectives associated with such constructs as attitudes, self-concepts and motivation. There is a problem about the reliability and validity of objectives of tests in the affective domain.

Rajmal (2009) argues that it is difficult for teachers to demonstrate activities that they expect students to exhibit. It also becomes difficult for teachers to assess activities in the psychomotor domain when they themselves cannot demonstrate these activities. This means that holistic formative assessment is not being carried out as there is an over-emphasis on the cognitive domain, at the expense of the affective and psychomotor domains. Complex behaviours are difficult to define, comprehend and/or analyse in an observable way. They omit reference to the student himself/herself, his/her attitudes, motivations and feelings. Some human aspects cannot be evaluated correctly even by a computer (Rajmal, 2009). English Language teachers do not normally focus on the affective domain because the syllabus has a bias towards the cognitive domain. According to the English Language Ordinary Level Syllabus 1122 there are only 10 marks in the Paper Two Section B of the Communication and Registers part, which has focus on the affective domain. In any of the two English Language Papers, there are no questions dealing specifically with the psychomotor domain. Teachers focus on the areas with more marks.

Table 4.5 item 7, teachers indicated that they mostly used norm-referenced assessment. The majority (88%) stated that they mostly used norm-referenced assessment while 12% stated they mostly used criterion-referenced assessment. Documents, especially the scheme-cum-plans, revealed that norm-referenced assessment was mainly used. Observations by the researcher revealed that there was an over-reliance on norm-referenced tests.

Norm-referenced assessment is used to select and make decision as to how much a student has learnt in comparison with others and it enables students to be classified according to ability (Basildon, 2007). This explains why many teachers prefer to use norm-referenced assessment. Many schools under the present study streamed their students, an indication that they relied on norm-referenced assessment. Assessment constructed to provide norm-referenced assessment will not adequately sample the subject objectives since there will be many topics to draw the assessment from. Basildon (2007) also states that over a period of time, some students who are continually exposed to norm-referenced assessment and fail will suffer a diminishing level of motivation due to repeated failure. The setting of frequency limits in failure rates and pass rates is an administrative necessity which overrides individual, educational and statistical considerations (Tomlison, 2009).

Criterion-referenced assessment assists English Language teachers to evaluate individualised learning programmes, diagnose students' difficulties and measure what students have learnt. Lancey (2009) argues that criterion-referenced assessment discourages the use of problem-solving questions and instead encourages right and wrong solutions with a tendency towards teachers determining various answers while the student is constrained to choose from the teacher's selections. It is unrealistic to expect teachers to provide the degree of detail necessary for writing instructional objectives for reliable criterion-referenced measures to be obtained. Knowledge and understanding do not lead themselves to clear definition hence, it is extremely difficult to establish adequate criteria of their achievement (Lancey, 2009). This may be the reason why teachers face challenges with the criterion-referenced type of assessment. To arrest the deficiencies of both criterion and norm-referenced assessment, there is need to use both methods concurrently so that students benefit from the strengths of both, thereby reducing formative assessment challenges on the part of the teachers.

Table 4.5 item8 shows that 12(44%) of the teachers use higher-order questions in their lessons while 13(56%) mainly focused on low order thinking skills. Observations by the researcher pointed to the fact that most teachers relied on low order questions.

In a follow-up interview T₁₄ remarked:

The low level English Language skills of the students hinder us from asking high order thinking skills. If you ask high order thinking questions you end up talking to yourself. At times we ask higher order thinking questions though.

Data gathered from textbooks indicated the prevalence of higher order questions but teachers preferred to give only low order thinking questions. Data gathered from students' exercise books showed that low order questions were used frequently.

The first two levels of Bloom's Taxonomy involve the accumulation and understanding of information while the other four levels, which are often classified as higher order thinking, involve application of such information for finding solutions to real life problems, for creativity and for critical thinking. Higher level cognitive questions can be defined as questions that require students to use higher order thinking and reasoning skills. By using these skills, students do not only remember factual knowledge. Instead, they use knowledge to solve problems, analyse, create and evaluate their learning. There should

therefore, be alignment between the teacher's educational objectives, methods of instruction and forms of assessment (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). If English Language teachers spend time asking low-level cognitive questions when assessing students, these questions limit students by not helping them to acquire a deep, elaborate understanding of the subject matter. This is because factual information can be memorised.

Tellis (2003) claims that many English Language teachers rely on low-level cognitive questions in order to avoid a slow-paced lesson, keep the attention of the students, and maintain control of the classroom. Examinations, even at national level, are made of items that predominantly call for lower order skills (Nenty, 2007) and a combination of low-level and high level cognitive questions. Piaget's cognitive development theory's, formal operations stage, emphasises that teachers should promote the use of imagination as well as trial and error in their assessment which is not what a significant number of teachers in the present study were doing. Christopher (2011) is of the opinion that most problems used in assessment of the formal operations in English Language are quite complex and seem to reflect what occurs in technological occupations, scientific research and related areas more than the day to day experiences of most students .Christopher's opinion explains why teachers in the current study did not use higher level thinking questions that often. Though higher order thinking skills are difficult to assess, teachers should go an extra mile to assess these. Networking with other teachers is a way many teachers may get help to arrest the challenge. Inviting external resource persons to assist teachers assess higher order level thinking skills is a way of mitigating the formative assessment challenges, as is engaging in action research. Demonstration lessons by more experienced peers assist teachers to overcome the challenges of assessing higher order thinking questions.

Table 4.5 item 9 indicates that 5(25%) carried out remediation while 20(75%) did not carry out remediation. Follow-up interviews revealed why most teachers did not carry out remedial activities.

T₂₃ said:

We did not study special education in detail and we do not know how to carry out remediation. We cannot even develop screening instruments that we can use to identify the strengths and weaknesses of students who require remediation. We can't remediate owing to the taxing demands of the syllabus.

T₁₃ stated that:

In Makoni District, we have only one remedial officer who is primary school trained who has to assist with the assessment process and provision of instruments that are standardised so that there is uniformity in the system. There is no in- service training for teachers in remedial matters. I believe remediation is conducive to primary schools as teachers there spent more time with students unlike in secondary schools where there is no regular contact.

During observations, the researcher noted that in-class remediation was not carried out in most lessons. Very few teachers possessed the remedial record book, and those who had it, did not update it regularly as proof that they had carried remedial activities. For the few who possessed the remedial record, there was no evidence of remediation for oral lessons. Most schools did not even have the Director's Circular No. 26 of 2008 (Guidelines on the Implementation of remedial work at Secondary school level). The absence of Circular Number 26 was an impediment to the implementation of remedial work; since teachers did not have proper guidelines on how to assess students with learning difficulties in an era where inclusivity is being given pre-eminence in school systems.

Simms (2008) argues that most remedial programmes in Africa raffle the learners' ego systems since they are mostly carried out by non-specialists and because of the absence of screening tools to assist teachers as they engage in their assessment activities. Peresuh (2000) pointed out that the training of teachers does not include special education which makes it difficult for teachers to provide for effective remediation in their classrooms. This situation is not unique to Zimbabwe as Berihum, Tesera and Desta (2006), in a study of schools in Ethiopia, found that the problem of quality of remedial teaching is related to teacher qualifications. There are no material resources in the form of tests, specialised books, apparatus and games to be used during remedial interventions. Proper assessment of learning difficulties equips teachers with enough tests and strategies to identify what children with learning difficulties would be experiencing so as to provide an appropriate intervention. Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, Kenya and South Africa have similar problems in identifying children with learning difficulties because of their shared colonial legacy (European Agency for Development in Special Needs, 2000; Abosi, 2007). Abosi (2007) says that the increase in children with learning difficulties in African schools is becoming alarming owing to a shortage of specialist teachers and sub-standard facilities. Most

children who are in the school system find the environment, unfriendly, resulting in truancy, absenteeism, dropping out and school failure (Omar, 2007). In Zimbabwe, remedial assessment has not been clearly explained by experts (Tambara, 2001). Tambara explains that the tests used to identify students for remediation and those with learning difficulties tend to be British in origin, for example, Kent Reading Test or American in origin, such as the Wide Range Assessment Test.

According to Kaputa (2012), implementation of the remediation programme in secondary schools faces numerous problems; like large classes, poor remuneration and poor supervision culture since school heads do not know what to look for. Any supervision reports made do not go into the teacher's promotion file. Above all, it faces negative attitudes from administrators who have challenges supervising it. Attitudes play a big role in either promoting a programme or destroying it. In South Africa, the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (EADSNE) (2005), reports that authorities, through the consultative paper on assessment, are beginning to question the validity of many tests prescribed by the provincial departments of Education. This policy guides the direction of the identification of students with learning difficulties in South Africa. They are recommending that only tests that have been proven useful in identifying learning difficulties should become part of the identification process in South Africa.

In Zimbabwe, the Nziramasanga Commission (1999) observed that there was no specific policy on Special Education provision. Instead, Special Education is provided for through Ministry circulars such as the one on remediation. Chataika, McKenzie, Swart and Lyner – Cleophas (2012) point out that gaps exist between intention and the actual practice. Choruma (2007) notes that this lack of specific policy has resulted in fragmentation and lack of coordination of special education programmes in Zimbabwe. A critical look at the Chief Education Officer's Minute No 12 of 1987 on learning difficulties shows that it is silent on what should be done by schools in order to identify the children with special needs. It only states that remediation should be carried out but does not explain how it should be done. A critical look at circular 26 of 2008 on implementation of remedial work at secondary school level is silent on the types of tests that should be used to identify students who need remediation. Another observation is that the Chief Education Officer's Minutes and the circular on remediation are overdue considering that they were promulgated in 1987 and 2008 respectively. The situation has changed significantly in the school system.

Basing on the findings of the current study, the researcher can infer that remediation may not be taking place frequently in most schools because the supervision instruments are silent about it. District Education inspectors from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education do not supervise that area when they visit schools. This explains why little emphasis is placed on this area. Under the results-based management performance appraisal system, remediation is not a key result area under consideration, hence; teachers do not place a lot of emphasis on it though it is an integral part of formative assessment. According to Kaputa (2012), remediation in some schools is regarded as an extramural activity.

Table 4-6: Factors that influence teachers' formative assessment procedures in English Language

Item	Statement	Responses				Total	
		Yes	%	No	%		%
1	Motivational factors affect how teachers assess.	20	80	5	20	25	100
2	There is adequate support in schools to assist English Language teachers.	2	4	23	92	25	100
3	Parental support to students influence how teachers assess.	16	64	9	36	25	100
4	The School Development Committees influence the way teachers assess.	17	68	8	32	25	100
5	Teachers of other	11	10	3	1	25	100

	subjects influence the way English Language teachers assess.						
6	The teachers' personal beliefs towards assessment affects the way teachers assess.	18	72	7	28	25	100
7	Education partners affect the way teachers assess.	22	88	3	12	25	100
8	The nature of students affects how teachers assess.	21	84	4	16	25	100
9	There is sufficient time to assess at the school.	19	76	6	24	25	100
10	Curriculum policy documents influence how teachers assess.	24	98	1	4	25	100
11	Any other factors that influence the way teachers assess.						

Table 4.6, item 1 sought to find out whether motivational factors influence how teachers assess. In the study, 20 (80%) of the teachers argued that motivational factors influence how teachers assess. Information from follow-up interviews suggests that a great portion of teachers are of the view that motivational issues are the core of influencing how they assess.

T₂₁ said:

The salaries are low and the working conditions are appalling. There are no overtime and special responsibility allowances. Incentives were scrapped some time ago.

T₁₅ added:

On top of poor working conditions, we are subjected to harassment, intimidation and threats of dismissal if we do not implement imposed policy directives. Education inspectors visit schools for fault-finding, we assess what is proportionate with what we earn.

T₅ had this to say:

Classes are too big. Teachers here are overworked. In the end we circumvent the assessment process.

T₁₉ added on by saying:

Vacation leave was cancelled last year and some of us who were due for going for leave were barred from doing so. The December holiday which comprised 39 days has been reduced to 32 days. We do not know when we get paid. We only hear our pay days in the media. Our pay days may even stretch into the following month.

Observations made by the researcher show that teachers were not fully motivated and they engaged in teaching in a lackadaisical approach. There was no urgency when they undertook their assessment tasks. Documents in this case, attendance registers showed that there was over-enrolment.

Ojerinde – Dibu (2000) highlights that assessment presented problems to Nigerian teachers due to many responsibilities on the teacher. The teachers had too many students to teach which means they had many scripts to mark. Furthermore, a teacher had to perform the roles of surrogate parent, liaise with students' homes where necessary, and perform other duties as counsellor.

A research study carried out by the Kenya National Examinations Council (2000) on teacher assessment to improve teaching, found that even where teachers used tests, many of the tests they developed were found wanting in originality of style, clarity of language and abilities to be tested due to a seemingly lack of motivation. The teachers did not bother to

develop their own assessment. Instead, they simply lifted questions from commercial publications.

The issue of high enrolment compromises marking. Willian (2009) states that though marking is usually conscientious, it fails to offer guidance on how work can be improved due to many books that have to be marked. In a minority of cases, marking reinforces under-achievement and under-expectations by being too generous or unfocused. Information about pupil performance received by the teacher is insufficiently used to inform subsequent work (Ugandan inspection Report on English Language teaching in Secondary Schools, 2009).

Basing on the theories of motivation, through wages or salaries individuals are able to satisfy their psychological needs as well as those of their families. If salaries are low, morale among the workers will be low. According to the Teacher in Zimbabwe Magazine (2014), remuneration of Zimbabwean teachers is amongst the lowest in the Southern African Development Community Region and this explains why there has been an exodus of qualified teachers to neighbouring countries. Malabo (2010) argues that in Rwanda, the state has responded to motivation problems by paying more money, through increased fringe benefits and improved working conditions to improve the teaching and learning process. If the teaching and learning process improves, then the level of formative assessment also improves considerably. Salka (2007) posits that if a teacher's work effort is adequately rewarded, there will be motivated effort or a choice will be made to work harder so that a preferred reward is received.

It is often noted in Mozambique that poor performance of English Second Language students is caused by their teachers' failure to conduct formative assessment owing to their lack of motivation (Deuz, 2007). English Language teachers are poorly motivated to do their work because their needs are not met. Conteh- Morgan (2002) notes that if teachers are poorly motivated, their service delivery, in this case, formative assessment, may be compromised. According to Martjila (2004), teachers in rural areas are more frustrated than those in urban areas because of their working conditions and their poor living standards. That frustration consequently leads to poor assessment of students as has been revealed by the current study. Most teachers in the study work in rural areas where there are transport and electricity problems.

Conte- Morgan (2002) argues that positive motivation of English Language teachers depends on the effective management of schools by school heads. Legotle (2005) argues that the lack of educator discipline, commitment and morale were some of the reasons for teachers' shortcomings on formative assessment. Conte–Morgan (2002) credits this to poor working conditions. Teachers need to be well motivated if they are to be disciplined, committed and have high morale.

Gabriel (2010) notes that the equity theory is based on the assumption that a major factor in job motivation is the individual's evaluation of the equity or fairness of the reward received. Equity can be defined as a ratio between the teacher's job inputs (such as effort or skill) and job rewards (such as pay or promotion). According to the equity theory, teachers are motivated when they experience satisfaction with what they receive from an effort in proportion to the effort they apply. People judge the equity of their rewards by comparing them either to the rewards others are receiving elsewhere for similar input, or to some other effort / reward ratios that occur to them. There is another equity comparison, a comparison between people's situations. There is another equity comparison; judging against some standard which one prefers. Most decisions and research on equity theory focus on money as the most significant reward in the workplace. Teachers compare what they are being paid for their effort with what others in similar situations receive for theirs. When they feel inequity exists, a state of tension develops within them, which they try to resolve by appropriately adjusting their behaviours, in this case not assessing properly. A teacher who perceives that he/she is being underpaid, for example may try to reduce the inequity by exerting less effort in his/her assessment activities. Recent studies (Jagrati, 2010; Davina 2011) have shown that an individual's reaction to equity is dependent on that person's history of inequality.

Randika (2009) states that schools have no support staff, for example, therapists who should come and attend to students with special needs. It therefore, suggests that in such instances, students with special educational needs do not receive the support they need and eventually this role falls on the teachers who will have to make assessment in an area in which they are not familiar.

Table 4-6 item 2 shows 2(4%) of the teachers in the schools under study said that their schools had support staff while 23(96%) said that their schools did not have support staff. Follow-up interviews also revealed that there is no support in most schools to assist

teachers. Observations made by the researcher indicated that most schools did not have support staff. There was no check-in-check-out register for the support staff meaning that support staff was not available in these schools. In fact, the researcher did not see any support staff in most schools.

Okeyo (2011) points out that there were no support staff in most schools, which brought a big burden on teachers, as this meant more responsibilities. Okeyo (2011) says that in most secondary schools, there were no enrichment teachers to provide language support and facilitate acquisition of English for English Second Language learners. Such a situation led to teachers being overwhelmed by responsibilities and consequently engaging in superficial assessment. According to Atuli (2012), because English Language teachers lack support staff, they eventually ensure that the collection of marks to fill records is given higher priority than the analysis of pupils' work to discern learning needs.

It emerged from the study, through item 3 on Table 4.6 that parents influence how teachers assess. A significant number of teachers, 16(64%), indicated that parental support influences how teachers assess, while 9(36%) indicated that parental support did not influence how teachers assess formatively. School Development Committee minute books indicated that most parents were not assisting children with homework, let alone coming for School Development Committee general meetings at schools and that some were not even paying school fees. In follow-up interviews,

T₁ remarked:

Parents do not help their kids with homework and some parents actually absented them so that they could help with farming activities.

T₇ responded:

They do not pay fees and buy books and other supplementary reading material. In the end we are forced to work with what we have and our assessment becomes compromised.

According to Moon (2009), parental involvement in their children's education is multi-dimensional. It can range from parents directly helping their children with English Language homework to parents establishing higher expectations for their children's English Second

Language learning in schools. Moon (2004) further notes that the quality of parental involvement in the education of their children is an important factor when determining the learners' performance in English Second Language learning and how the teacher will assess. This is consistent with the observation by Putz (2008) that parental involvement is rooted in the belief that in order for teachers to assess effectively, parents and families should become fully involved in the process. Knapp (2009) argues that English Language teachers cannot do their assessment effectively without the support of parents. Knapp further adds that parents need to know how teachers are assessing in order to complement their efforts.

At times, some parents believe in the importance of vernacular language. They want their children to be educated in the mother tongue because they view this as part of their cultural identity. (Nkandi, 2015). Even though some parents send their children to English–medium schools, they believe it is necessary for their children to maintain their mother tongue. These parents, at home, try hard to develop their children's first language by means of communicating with them without code-switching into English. English Language teachers thus, cannot assess appropriately as the students' language level may be below the required standard because of this code-switching.

Rodermund and Vondracek (2002) note that a student whose parents are supportive and have positive attitudes towards his/her education is encouraged to perform well. Once he/she performs well, the teachers will encounter less assessment challenges. Parental involvement, according to Rodermund and Vondracek (2002), could mean among other things, helping teachers and the school to improve their assessment programmes. Rondermund and Vondracek further note that parental involvement builds strong communication between the school and home, and helps teachers to assess effectively since they will each be complementing each another's efforts. Kizilbash (2010) argues that parental involvement in their assessment programmes diminishes the gap between school and home and maintains healthy child intellectual development. Kizilbash indicates that it is essential for parents to have an opportunity to collaborate with teachers on assessment issues so that teachers' challenges are eased. Cummins (2009) states that parents must assist their children with homework so as to increase the language level of the children with a view to offsetting assessment challenges. This enables teachers to engage in assessment that is not compromised.

Nkandi (2015) argues that if parents show that they are interested in their children's assessment, the children will see the value of collaborating with teachers with a view of improving the assessment process. Without parental involvement, the children's desire to collaborate with teachers might wane, leading to the teachers facing assessment challenges owing to lack of cooperation from learners.

Table 4.6 item 4 reveals that SDCs influence how teachers assess, 22 (88%) agreed that the SDCs influence assessment while 3(6%) did not think so. Follow-up interviews revealed that teachers were influenced by the activities of the SDCs.

T₂₂ said:

They do not supply us with teaching and learning material, making it difficult for us to assess. The SDC has got misplaced priorities, they procure non-essential items. They expect us to assess when we have no readers, electricity, furniture, inadequate classrooms, inadequate furniture and other audio-visual aids.

Observations made by the researcher pointed out to a shortage of buildings, furniture, absence of electricity, supplementary reading materials, libraries, language laboratories and insufficient audio visual aids. Documents in the form of inventory lists showed shortage of books, furniture, computers, printers and generators.

If SDCs do not supply teaching and learning resources to English Language teachers, there are high chances that their assessment activities will be compromised as they will be lacking tools that they need for assessing pupils. UNESCO (2004) points out that schools should provide teachers with materials to meet their needs. It can therefore, be inferred that teachers in the current study are not adequately supported and that the assessment they conducted was ineffective.

Jani (2009) noted that there was a shortage of classrooms in most sub-Saharan African countries. Most classrooms in this study had an average number of 63 students yet the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education recommends a class size of 40. The researcher observed that classrooms in the schools under study were over-crowded.

Large classes negatively affect the proper assessment of pupils. A study by Khan (2010) in Cambodia revealed that class size was an issue that affected how teachers assessed.

Class size is of paramount importance in formative assessment as students who are at adolescence require more teacher attention (Delvin, 2007). Engelbrecht and Green (2007) state that students are given more learner-centred assessment when classes are small and the teacher has an opportunity for one-to-one interaction with students. Besides, teacher attention, they may also have to receive adequate equipment or tools which may otherwise be impossible if the classes were large. Research (Charema, 2010, Chireshe, 2011) has shown that the number of students in a class has an effect on interactions between teacher and students, on frequency and quality of homework given to students and on the opportunities available to students for peer assessment and / or discussions and exchange of ideas.

Delvin (2007) argues that quality assessment is a function of the number of students in a class. Where classes are big, it becomes difficult for teachers to effectively use classroom assessments that tap into individual learner needs. For instance, in one of the observed classrooms, it was difficult for the teacher to move around the tables supervising group and individual learners. The groups were too large for the attention of an individual teacher. The researcher could clearly see what the teacher was going through on a day-to-day basis.

Large classes full of adolescents are difficult to manage as they need close and personalised supervision (Jani, 2009). Sall, Ndiaye, Danra and Seck (2009) point out that when there are many students for the available space, teachers tend to be reluctant to use active and participatory methods as well as to divide students into small groups. The researcher observed that students were sitting in groups of 6 and there appeared to be effective peer assessment. Madinka (2008), in his studies in Malawi, found that too small classes and too large classes both had a negative effect on formative assessment. Where classes were small, slow students were socially excluded. Peer assessment was minimal, while in large classes, the teacher was not able to plan for each learner's assessment according to his/her (the learner) individual needs. There is a likelihood that since SDCs are not providing classrooms to ease the burden of large classes, by and large that will affect how teachers assess. Teachers cannot assess effectively in overcrowded classrooms since they cannot move around freely to monitor peer or self-assessment.

In school quality debates, class size remains a key topic (Darling-Harmond, 2008). According to Darling-Harmond (2008), there is evidence to suggest that quality assessment is associated with small class size. Teachers who teach adolescents or young adults in

secondary schools can become de-motivated by teaching them in large classes since they will be in a period of experimentation with mischief. UNESCO (2009) found that teachers are motivated by assessing small classes.

Each school had an average of 63 students per class and it became difficult for all students to get the teacher's attention as required by their individual needs. According to Mtsweni, (2008), the destiny of the individuals in space is an important factor of the physical environment which influences the nature and extent to which an assessment programme is implemented. Students in overcrowded situations, populate the limited amount of space and this provokes stress-related factors and results in the teacher's inability to manage diversity in the classroom in assessment terms.

The findings of this present study also correspond with the results of Msoro's (2004) study in Tyolo District, Malawi, which revealed that overcrowding due to shortage of classrooms made it difficult for secondary schools to implement formative assessment strategies in English Language. The results of the present study confirm Bandura's (1977) cognitive social learning theory which suggests that behaviour determines aspects of the environment to which an individual is exposed, and behaviour is, in turn, modified by environment (Ahlstrom, 2009). Thus, if English Language students are exposed to an overcrowded environment where there is limited space for them to be active participants in assessment, in most cases their ability to display their expertise in assessment will be influenced negatively. The concurrence of the findings of the present study and others suggests that schools are experiencing high enrolments which result in English Language teachers facing formative assessment challenges. Basically, enforcing the principles of formative assessment in such situations becomes a nightmare because of large numbers of students in classes.

Most teachers in the present study found it difficult to administer appropriate formative assessment frequently as a result of large classes. Assessment is an important factor in education. In as much as teachers may have assessment skills, actual implementation becomes a challenge due to learner numbers in class. Government and stakeholders in education have a mandate to direct their efforts to ensuring that the recommended 1:40 teacher-pupil ratio is adhered to. This will result in less congested classrooms and teachers will also be able to attend to individual learner needs. Ross (2008) points out that English Language teachers usually face the problems of assessing fundamental skills in a situation

where there are small spaces and inadequate facilities but large class size. Sometimes the situation becomes so untenable; that teachers abandon desirable activities and resort to informal assessment with undesirable results. Ross (2008) states that problems related to large class size may even get worse, especially when teachers follow the subjective mode of assessment because the students are expected to demonstrate or show their work.

The Kenya National Examinations Council (2000) reports that teachers face formative assessment challenges like high enrolment which makes it difficult for them to effectively carry out assessment. This makes it difficult for the teachers to observe students on a one-to-one basis. As a consequence of this, teacher reports on learners' progress is less than wholesome, as it is pre-dominantly based on classroom tests.

Besides the shortage of classrooms, teachers also pointed out that school Development Committees did not supply them with material resources. Shortage of material resources to enhance assessment was also noted in Dubai by Goanand and Eman (2007). Studies in Tunisia, Chile and India by UNESCO (2009) revealed that the size and organisation of the classroom influenced the teacher's assessment and instructional methods. Where the space was small, the teacher was found to use teacher-centred methods as they appeared more suitable than learner-centred methods. That students were crowded, created an atmosphere which was not conducive to appropriate formative assessment. According to Husselmann and Kitze (2009), lack of other resources such as dictionaries, study rooms, audio tapes, computers, internet and television, also negatively affect formative assessment in that the students do not get language enrichment material which will make them responsible for their own assessment. Teachers cannot assess listening skills of the students since there are no audio tapes where they can play stories and summarise them in their own words. Some schools observed in the present study had facilities which were poorly maintained; and compromised teachers from carrying out their mandate of providing quality assessment. Teachers could not assess students through drama since schools involved in the study did not have school halls and amphitheatres. There were no language laboratories where students could experiment the various tenets of English Language, hence, teachers could not monitor self-assessment which is key element of formative assessment.

Kemp (2010) states that instructional media makes assessment more effective in the classroom through stimulating students interest, capturing student's attention, evoking

responses, clarifying abstract concepts, providing variety, encouraging discussion and showing displays that improve the classroom environment. Instructional media invokes co-operation and inquiry skills. The researcher observed that in the absence of computers in most schools teachers resorted to teacher-centred methods and directed the assessment process. Where there was only one computer in the lesson, the teacher operated it and directed the assessment process. Types of instructional media include print media, projected media, computers, teacher-produced material and resource persons. Media absence has serious repercussions for assessment and teaching.

The present study confirmed this, when, in the absence of instructional media, the attention of the students could not be adequately captivated; rendering assessment ineffective. Information Communication Technologies can be used for researching school projects and homework as well as accessing things like audio and digital books as well as reading these books and listening to them. Computers promote learner-centred methodologies and allow for individual management and completion of learning assignments. Without computers, learner-centred learning is not reinforced as indicated by findings from the current study.

To offset the challenges of resources which impact directly on formative assessment, SDCs are encouraged to build more classrooms, buy more books, computers, ensure there is electricity at schools, buy generators, construct libraries, study rooms and amphitheatres, ensure internet connectivity, as well as partner government in the procurement of teaching and learning materials.

Data from Table 4.6 item 5 show that 21(84%) of the teachers believed that teachers of other subjects influence the way English Language teachers assess while 4(16%) did not believe that teachers of other subjects influence the way English Language teachers assess. Follow-up interviews yielded some of the following comments:

T₁₄ remarked:

If other teachers are translating assessment in their content subjects into the vernacular, when the students come to the English Language lesson they carry the same perception.

T₃ also said:

If English is spoken throughout all subjects, the language levels of the students rises, hence it becomes easier to assess students with higher English Language levels.

From document analysis, there were no English Language speaking policies in schools. Most teachers of other subjects gave instructions in the vernacular and students gave their responses in the vernacular, which was acceptable to the teachers.

According to Goshen (2009), all teachers at school should be consistent in their demand for students to present their responses in good English Language, otherwise; they would create challenges for English Language teachers. If teachers accept responses that lack grammatical accuracy, then students will not work hard with a view to correcting themselves; thereby leaving the sole responsibility to the English Language teachers. The language development of the students remains low; and they will fail to comprehend assessment instructions, hence, creating challenges for English Language teachers.

Subject teachers often become very involved in their own areas of responsibility. They tend to develop their own vocabulary (Sinjeki, 2008). In the process of developing their own language, they may create language that goes against the rules of English Language grammar, hence students may carry this faulty language to the English language where it will not get acceptance, thereby impacting negatively on the English Language teachers' ability to formatively assess.

If there is uniformity in the use of learner-centred assessment by all teachers at a school, students will get used to that type of assessment, the result will be that they will be in a position to control own learning and assessment thereby; reducing the assessment burden on the English Language teachers. Uniform learner-centred assessment at a particular institution leads to more highly motivated students (Sinjeki, 2008). Such motivated students have been known to have good relationship with teachers (Goshen, 2009). When assessment is not uniform, in terms of it not being learner-centred across all subjects, students find it difficult to adjust from a non-learner-centred one to a teacher-directed one. Students' levels of motivation may be low since they will have been exposed to two assessment approaches with different foci. An assessment policy must provide for compilation of the various subject departments whose actions are inter-related. Without direction provided by policies, each department is tempted to pursue its own objectives to the detriment of effective formative assessment.

It has been noted by Sinjeki (2008) that in most situations, other English Language teachers may end up dropping the use of learner-centred assessment because teachers of other subjects are using teacher-centred assessment. This normally happens when the learner-centred methods are bringing out good results in public examinations for the school. They imitate such methods with the hope of achieving good results in public examinations as has been done by peers. Such English Language teachers may succumb to peer pressure. They end up accepting group norms which lead to improper assessment.

The teachers of other subjects are interested in progress and formative assessment with a view to providing guidance, counselling, monitoring, motivation and support to students (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2015). They monitor the study periods so that students study English Language and other subjects in a quiet and tranquil environment.

In order to reduce formative assessment challenges, there should be a learner-centred assessment policy at schools so that all teachers adopt it for use. Goshen (2009) suggests that there should be an English Language speaking policy at each school that should be adhered to so there is English Language proficiency at schools. This will improve to reduce assessment challenges faced by teachers, as they will be assessing students who easily follow and understand given instructions.

Table 4.7 item 6 reveals that 20(80%) of the teachers stated that their own personal belief systems affects the way they assess, while 5(20%) said their own personal beliefs did not affect the way they assess.

From follow-up interviews T₁₃ said:

My beliefs shape my assessment. I follow assessment procedures that I find easy to use.

Teacher beliefs play an important role in teaching, learning and assessment practices that teachers adopt (Fang, 2006). Based on their beliefs about classroom assessment teachers can be classified into three main categories. The first group is made up of realists. They believe in the use of pencil and paper types of assessments where students are expected to recognise rather than generate their own answers. Realists believe in norm-referenced testing that can be scored easily. The second group of teachers is made up of contextual

teachers who use student portfolios, group–work assessment, and performance-based assessment. They use criterion-based tests and test complex mental abilities. The third group of teachers is made up of relativists. They believe that students' development levels vary. They believe children have opportunities to be assessed in different ways to address that learning mode which is appropriate for each child's unique development (Title, 1994). The present study noted, through follow-up interviews and observations that most teachers were relativists who wanted to dominate the assessment process owing to issues like shortage of teaching and learning material as well as time.

A significant number of teachers reported in follow-up interviews that they believed English Language is a difficult subject to assess. Nsofwa (2012) points out that English Language was one of the most difficult subjects to assess because it has numerous technical aspects that have to be assessed which include grammar, punctuation and spelling that other subjects do not pay particular attention to. Reading, writing, speaking and listening are skills that have to be tested. With the proliferation of inclusivity, teachers have to assess Braille to accommodate the visually–impaired students (English Language Ordinary Level Syllabus; 1122, 2015-2022). There are many rules of grammar that have to be assessed and various forms of compositions that have to be assessed as well. Teachers, therefore, face formative assessment challenges in English Language because there are many facets they have to scrutinise in their assessment. Nsofwa (2012) posits that the problems of assessing English Language are compounded by the fact that it is an exotic language that few Africans are totally proficient in. The concepts and terminologies are too abstract. Many students fall further behind because their level of mastering the English Language is rudimentary and this does not allow for easy assessment by the teacher.

McMillan and Nash (2000) studied reasons teachers give for their assessment and grading practices and the factors that influence such practices. In this study, interviews with teachers revealed that decision making about grading was influenced by the desire to use grading practices that encourage students' engagement, motivation and understanding. Most teachers in McMillan and Nash's study viewed grading as a large part of the philosophy of teaching and learning to accommodate individual differences. Teachers saw the use of non-achievement practices, such as effort, as a way to judge motivation and engagement, while ability and improvement were consistent with broader beliefs about the importance of individual differences amongst students. From the present study, some

beliefs on assessment practices which do not encourage student engagement, motivation and understanding are entrenched in teachers such that they encounter formative assessment challenges as they do not take into account the needs of slow learners, thus not adapting to current assessment practices which promote inclusivity.

Teachers need re-training if their perceptions on assessment are to change. Monitoring and evaluation need to be strengthened on teachers so that they adhere to the principles of formative assessment.

Teachers are of the view that education partners influence the way they assess. According to the responses from the questionnaire 22 (88%) of the teachers were of the view that educational partners influence how they assess while 3 (12%) did not believe so. In the follow-up interview,

T₄ said:

I have a conviction that textbooks donated to us by UNICEF influence how I assess as they are our only source of obtaining assessment exercises.

Documents, in the form of the scheme-cum-plan books show that teachers plan their assessment using textbooks supplied by UNICEF. The researcher observed teachers giving out the textbooks to students and noted that exercises which were given to students were from these textbooks. The textbooks had labels and a UNICEF logo indicating that they had been donated by UNICEF. All schools in the study had these textbooks.

Education partners collaborate with the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in the provision of recommended textbooks. Text books in use at Ordinary Level were supplied by UNICEF in 2010. Most of the assessment that takes place in schools is in line with such textbooks. This shows how such organisations played a crucial role in curriculum issues and in formative assessment. Resources at teachers' disposal like textbooks influence their assessment. If teachers' guides are available, challenges in implementing assessment are reduced. The current study revealed that there were few teachers' guides. Education partners provide financial and technical support for the development of education (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2015). This implies that, since they provided technical support, they also provide support in formative assessment as it is the cornerstone of any curriculum programme. Education partners perform joint monitoring exercises with the

Ministry (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2015). In this way, they monitor whether the recommended formative assessment strategies are being implemented. On the Acknowledgements Page of the national English Language Syllabus, UNICEF and UNESCO are thanked for the support and contribution in the production of the syllabus meaning they have an influence in formative assessment issues.

As noted by the participants in the present study some of the textbooks procured by UNICEF included some outdated material.

In follow-up interviews, T₂₄ said that:

Some textbooks supplied by UNICEF are now outdated, ZIMSEC has brought about changes that these books now lack relevance. In Summary writing, UNICEF textbooks recommend students to use their own words while ZIMSEC recommends that they lift words directly from the passage.

The researcher observed the anomaly through comparing “Step Ahead Book Four” and the ZIMSEC 2009 English Language Ordinary Level Examiners’ Report. The Makoni District English Language Panel (2015) also noted that in summary writing, one of the textbooks supplied by UNICEF specified that students were supposed to use their own words yet according to ZIMSEC standards students are supposed to extract points from the passage and not use their own words. This is a challenge in that teachers may fail to assess appropriately. The researcher observed that there were no teachers’ guides that supplemented the textbooks. Teachers’ guides help teachers plan and initiate their formative assessment.

An overwhelming majority of teachers 22(88%) in item 7 agreed that the nature of students influences how English language teachers assess while 3(12%) disagreed that the nature of students influences how English Language teachers assess. Follow-up interviews confirmed that most teachers believe that the nature of students influenced how teachers assess.

T₄ said:

Some students do not cooperate with teachers they do not write assigned work. Some disrupt the assessment process and some have negative attitudes towards

assessment in English Language. Some of them cannot just cope with the assessment demands of the subject. A good number need special education help which we cannot give. We have made referrals but no action has been taken by those who we referred to.

Documents, especially the record of marks book, indicated that the performance of the students was far from convincing. Evaluations of lessons in the scheme–cum-plan books indicated that students were not performing well and that others had attitude problems. They were not taking part in group work activities and yet still others had disciplinary issues. From the observations, the researcher noted that some students could hardly utter a grammatically correct sentence and some could not write with accuracy, let alone read. Some could not understand simple instructions.

Shinn (2011) argues that nothing can prevent a person with the right attitude towards achieving his/her goals in life to become successful. The right attitude and right perception can help a person to use his/her abilities to achieve success. Positive attitude towards English Language makes a difference on learner performance. It makes the difference between success and failure in the subject. A positive attitude towards English Language as a subject will help the learner acquire skills from the English Language teacher and cooperate with him/her in assessment activities. A positive attitude can generate coordination between the teacher and the learner and ultimately inspire other students to do likewise. Good learner performance in English Language cannot be expected without a positive attitude to learning as well as the assessment programme (Titus, 2012). Positive attitudes also create interest in students towards formative assessment of the subject. A positive attitude opens the mind and expands it to explore new opportunities and growth through cooperation with the teacher in formative assessment.

According to Swan and Fisch (2010), attitude is the particular way in which a learner responds to teachers' formative assessment techniques. Attitudes usually lead to positive, negative or neutral behaviour. The attitude of students towards English Language formative assessment is important in determining the level of performance. Tylor (2008) indicates that some students in secondary schools lack respect and discipline and when asked to do assessment tasks, they protest and passively refuse to carry out instructions. Under the current study, the researcher witnessed misdemeanour when students were not taking part

in assessment activities, an indication that some teachers faced formative assessment challenges because of lack of cooperation by the students.

Musonda (2009) carried out a study on how poor formative assessment led to poor performance of Grade 12 students in Ndola, Zambia. He noted that the levels of disruptive behaviour increased when inappropriate formative assessment was being implemented. This had a negative impact on the students towards the subject; English Language. This type of behaviour leads to students that are uncontrollable in English Language classrooms. This can lead to minimal learning of the English Language content, resulting in poor performance. Students claim that their behaviour is mainly due to unclear teacher-centred assessment (Musonda, 2009).

Follow-up interviews revealed that absenteeism, truancy and lateness amongst students led to assessment challenges.

T₁₆ said that:

Students do not come to school regularly, especially during the tobacco harvesting seasons, and as such they miss out on important topics as well as assessment. They cannot move on to the next level of assessment before they accomplish the lower levels. Some abscond from school and others always come to school late as they have to travel long distances.

Documents, in the form of the attendance registers showed that school attendance by students was erratic. The researcher observed students coming late to school or doing punishment during lessons for lateness.

The long distance from school also contributed to lateness and absenteeism leading to missing of lessons, and ultimately to teachers' assessment challenges. Some concepts are interrelated that if a student misses the first concept then he/she cannot grasp the subsequent concept. When assessing, if a pupil is not given proper guidance because of absenteeism, there will be no room for improvement in the following assessment exercise. The subsequent assessment will be more difficult for the teacher since he/she will not have diagnosed the students' earlier deficiencies. Lateness and absenteeism also leads to students not to take an active role in assessment issues as they become frustrated with problems beyond their control (Musonda, 2009).

Observations made in the present study were that students experience several problems when engaging in formative assessment activities. Some of the problems include the students' inability to understand basic instructions contained in assessment questions, failure to recognise the demands of English Language items used in formative assessment, difficulty in the interpretation of questions, inadequate English Language proficiency and communication skills, limited knowledge of subject matter, and difficulties associated with imaginative skills. The identified problems pose formative assessment problems to the teacher as he/she has to grapple with unmotivated learners. Titus(2011) states that unmotivated students present a special challenge to the teachers who must find effective means to educate, let alone assess students who do not speak or understand English which is the medium of instruction and the language of formative assessment in schools.

In order for a secondary school to improve students' performance in formative assessment, there should be strategies implemented by teachers and students themselves. Magan (2010) indicates that if a school is to improve learners' and teachers' performance in English Language, then attention should be given to their level of motivation and the support they receive. He further notes that motivated students are higher achievers than unmotivated ones. For a student to achieve a desired goal and succeed, he/she has to be intrinsically motivated (Pottas, 2011). High achievers cause less formative assessment challenges to teachers because they easily collaborate with teachers in promoting holistic formative assessment. As revealed by follow-up interviews, most students are not motivated to learn, and they bring formative assessment challenges to the teachers owing to their lack of collaboration .Without learner involvement, it ceases to be typical formative assessment (Magan 2010).

In follow-up interviews T₁₇ said that:

Most of these students lack interest in learning and subsequently, assessment. There are few educated role models they can emulate. Most dream of being successful tobacco farmers.

The researcher observed that most students were not motivated to learn. They took a casual approach to assessment. Homework was not being done as indicated by "Did not write" in the record of marks book. Due to the fact that not all English Language students are intrinsically motivated to learn, some students need extrinsic motivation (Krashen,

2005). They need to be rewarded either with words or with tokens. Therefore, English Language teachers have to develop means to make English Language teaching and assessment interesting, to motivate students to want to learn and engage in formative assessment. Moreover, Krashen (2005) emphasises the need to motivate students with immediate feedback given in every lesson to ensure students are on the right path Krashen (2005) warns English Language teachers to reduce pressure on students that can result in their de-motivation, consequently reducing their desire to be assessed.

The influence of peer pressure on learning outcomes cannot be over emphasised because it is a form of motivation and support for students (Krashen, 2005). It is therefore, advisable that students with similar interests form social groups or coach and support each other in learning and assessment (Fourie & Smit, 2010). In order to reduce negative perceptions students need to be strongly motivated by teachers so that they take a positive perception towards the subject and its related assessment programmes (Nsofwa, 2012). Teachers must follow holistic formative assessment to make assessment more stimulating and must also consider the intellectual levels of their students before embarking on any formative assessment (Chalwe, 2010). This is in line with reducing formative assessment challenges that English Language teachers will be encountering.

Item 9 revealed that 19 (76%) of the teachers were of the opinion that there was insufficient time to assess, while 8 (32%) believed that there was sufficient time to assess. Teachers interviewed, pointed out that there was not enough time to properly assess.

T₁₇ said:

There are few lessons on the school timetable for English teachers to assess effectively. There are many concepts to be assessed and the time allocated is insufficient.

This confirms the fact that owing to time constraints, a lot of under-assessment is taking place in English Language classrooms. The researcher observed that most schools' timetables are packed and that there is no time for supplementary assessment as well as for prescribed assessment tasks. Instead of having the required 7x35 minute lessons a week, there were only 5x35 minute lessons a week in most schools. Students have no time for practising what they would have been taught with a view to controlling their own learning and assessment. Metler (2005) points out that due to the constraint of time, teachers are

not in a position to satisfy the assessment needs of their learners. Chun (2009) also states that English Language teachers do not give much attention to formative assessment as they believed that it is too time-consuming. A study conducted by Kleinert, Kennedy and Kearus (2009) revealed that teachers expressed levels of frustration in the use of alternative assessments. One major issue that teachers have against their use is that they require more time for students to complete and for teachers to supervise and assess.

In an attempt to explore grading practices, issues of judgement, communication and character development in grading, through a framework which exposes the underlying moral issues in grading, (Zoeckler, 2007) examined how teachers arrive at a fair grade while weighing both achievement and non-achievement factors. That role of teachers' expectations was also examined using a theoretical framework which considers the grading process in terms of truth, worth-whileness, trust and intellectual and moral attentiveness. Zoeckler (2007) interviewed rural high school teachers in upstate Bangladesh. What emerged in this study was that teachers continue to struggle with issues of fairness as they grade students' work. The main argument that Zoeckler made was that the teachers' grading and feedback to students is influenced by teachers' value and feedback. Zoeckler argued that even though teachers' moral issues in assessment often go unexplained, they play a major role in the assessment practices they adopt. The researcher in the current study also observed that some of the grading done by the teachers lacked fairness. Students were not involved in grading and that some of them found it difficult to interpret feedback. Teachers interviewed stated that grading was too time-consuming and that if they involved students in grading they would be less in control of the assessment process. They felt that involving students much in the assessment process generates a number of questions which may take time to be responded to.

Most teachers in item 9, 24(98%) pointed out that curriculum policy documents influenced the way they assessed. Teachers who participated in this study pointed out that the national syllabus development by the Curriculum Development Unit of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education determines the way by which teachers tackle formative assessment. Interviewed teachers pointed out that they are influenced to assess by the national syllabus.

T₂₀ said that:

The national syllabus strongly influences how we assess. It forms the basis upon which the students are assessed and evaluated. The syllabus ensures that we stick to the government's expectations in terms of what is to be learnt and assessed in schools.

Documents, in the form of the scheme-cum-plans reveal that teachers derive what to teach from the national syllabus. The researcher noted what teachers taught, and subsequently assessed, was derived from the national syllabus. Kapambwe (2012) found that the national English Language syllabus is too broad, diverse and long. The researcher observed that not all material was taught, especially argumentative compositions. Mosha (2012) points out that too much emphasis is placed on reading and writing while listening and speaking were neglected owing to time constraints. Rea and McPillimy (2006) point out that oral assessment is time consuming and needs tape recording. Most schools in the study did not have tape recorders, thereby hindering effective assessment. In language teaching, all four skills are essential and need to be assessed. It has been noted by Rugayi (2013) that in most cases, teachers end up rushing to complete the syllabus, ignoring appropriate formative assessment in the process. The researcher observed that it was also a challenge to cover the syllabus within the stipulated 2 years because of the students' low linguistic ability. Otaala (2001) conducted a study in seven education regions in Namibia and established that many teachers could not interpret the national syllabus. Musonda (2011) states that failure to interpret the syllabus on the part of newly trained teachers is caused by the fact that many concepts in the syllabus are alien to them and as a result, they may engage in faulty assessment. Poor syllabus interpretation does not prepare the teacher for effective syllabus implementation as well as assessment. Poor syllabus interpretation indicates that the developer and the teacher do not share the same meaning and that the document is just being imposed on the teacher. Teachers may not have had the opportunities to contribute to the development of the curriculum as the present study revealed.

The current research revealed that English Language Department Policy in secondary schools affects how teachers assess.

In follow-up interviews, T₁₇ said:

The English Language Departmental Policy is the source document for the teacher in terms of assessment. It specifies the English Language evaluation criteria. Our assessment comes from the Departmental Policy. It is a problem implementing the policy because it is just an imposed document from above.

It was observed by the researcher that English Language teachers had copies of the Departmental Policy but they did not follow it. Rugayi (2013) notes that it is a document designed by the Directors in the Ministry of Education without prior consultation with the teachers. There is bound to be a form of passive resistance to its implementation since the teachers were not consulted before implementation. Many English Language teachers emphasise quantity and presentation of work and neglect quality in relation to learning. Policy Circular 36 of 2008 gives guidance on the quantity of work coverage. For English Language, it stipulates 3 language exercises a week, a comprehension every fortnight, a summary exercise once a month, a test once a month and a comprehension exercise every week.

The Policy Circular is silent on reading, speaking and listening exercises that are to be given. English Language teachers tend to concentrate on areas specified by the policy circular leaving out the ones which have not been given emphasis. Gaye (2008) notes that teachers are more likely to embrace policy that was formulated using their input rather than one which did not. Lucas (2009) states that teachers do not implement the assessment policy because it may be based upon inadequate understanding of a problem to be solved, its causes and solutions. Teachers do not implement assessment policy because there is no understanding and agreement of objectives. Assessment policies are at times not implemented because a combination of resources is not available. A combination of money, manpower and equipment to carry out assessment may not be available. The current research also revealed that the assessment policy was not implemented owing to a shortage of teaching and learning material. English Language teachers felt disempowered to meet the needs of the assessment policy. They believed they quietly relinquished the

responsibility for assessment to the needs of policy makers (Nsofwa 2012). As a result teachers end up not taking an active role in assessment that meets the requirements of the policy circular on assessment.

The researcher observed that some teachers planned their lessons using the school syllabus. Copies of the school syllabus were found with the teachers, an indication that they made use of them. Some lesson plans quoted; used the local environment as their learning aids.

In follow-up interviews, T₁₀ said:

The school syllabus influences how we assess as it allows us to take the local environment into account. We assess concepts that are familiar with the pupils. At the end of the day what we assess and the summative assessment differ.

From documents, in the form of teacher-made tests and national examinations, the researcher noted disparities in the questioning techniques. Teacher-made tests were narrowly focused.

The school syllabus affects how teachers assess. Teachers have a belief that because it is a document that is present at their schools, it has to be adhered to. The school syllabus takes into account the local environment. According to Sprail (2013), educators should be able to use all their surroundings, both, physical and social, to pull experiences useful for learning and assessment. Once this is done, teachers are able to assess easily in an environment familiar to pupils. An experience is what it is because of the interactions occurring between the individual and the environment. At the same time, in Dewey's (1944) approach to education, a person's past experience and present environment must be recognised in order for learning and familiar assessment to take place. If there is no familiar environment espoused through the crafting of a school-based syllabus, teachers are likely to assess concepts alien to students which they find confusing. If the school syllabus is not properly crafted, as was the case among schools under study, formative assessment challenges will remain. A well-crafted and inclusive school syllabus which is well implemented by the teachers will ensure ample time to coordinate teachers' teaching with that of the Literature in English teachers as they study in literary genres improves the reading levels of the pupils. Where shared material between schools is to be used, coordination allows for planning. It ensures that teachers have enough time to discuss their

own schedule or if necessary change things around to facilitate borrowing of equipment. Where film and video materials are used there is sufficient advance time to place orders and make sure materials arrive and are there when needed. In the event the teacher transfers to another school, the next teacher will find it easy to follow the school syllabus. The school syllabus ensures related areas of the syllabus are covered in sequence if it is well crafted. This will help students learn by using related experiences to bridge gaps and to web concepts.

The school syllabus takes into account the levels of the students and makes supervision and management of teacher performance and development in terms of assessment easier. It strengthens strategic planning making sure expected work is covered in terms of assessment. The school syllabus enables the standardisation of work covered at a school (Rugayi, 2013). The researcher observed, in some few schools, that the school syllabus was not available. The inference drawn is that the teachers were assessing without taking into consideration the environment which was familiar to the pupils.

When the researcher asked the respondents whether they had other factors which influenced how they assessed, apart from the ones covered in the other items, most of them cited influence from external examinations and the Makoni District English Language Panel. They also pointed out that they got insufficient professional support from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education as well as from the heads of department.

The current study revealed ZIMSEC influences how teachers formatively assess.

From follow-up interviews T3 said:

We are forced to drill students so that they pass external examinations. We have no leeway in assessing in a way which meets the levels of our students as they have to ultimately sit for external examinations which certify their competence.

Assessment in Nigerian schools is tailored towards examinations, especially public examinations (William & Black, 2002). This is because Nigerian society like any other developing country, places premium on certificates. In Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Schools Examinations Council (ZIMSEC) influences teachers in formative assessment. It engages in assessment of learner performance in the school system, monitors and researches into

continuous, practical and summative assessment as well as provides the template for the learner profile (ZIMSEC, 2014).

ZIMSEC informs English Language teachers by coming with best practices in formative assessment and providing guidelines on effective assessment. Instead of developing their tests, teachers were found to be using materials from examination boards (Machakanja, 2010). The reasoning behind this was that they wanted to give students practice on the type of questions they were likely to encounter at Ordinary Level summative examinations. In the process, they ignore individual differences between learners. If students do not get a lot of practice from ZIMSEC past examination papers, they are likely to face challenges come summative assessment as they would not have been acclimatised to ZIMSEC standards. Teachers in the classroom assess students on what ZIMSEC typically sets in summative examinations (Machakanja, 2010).

Kellegham and Gleany (2003) observed worrying issues about teachers being influenced to assess by examination boards. They reported that:

- Teachers align teaching with examinations in their instruction and yet only a sub-set or sample of an entire achievement domain is assessed in an examination. Teachers will strive to increase the overlap between instructional and test content leading to a narrowing of the curriculum and to a situation in which examinations become the manifest of the domain (LeMahieu & Leinhardt, 2005),
- High stakes tend to affect teaching as well as assessment strategies, learning strategies, learner involvement in learning and their attitudes to learning. Teachers will tend to drill and may expect students to engage in learning strategies that are superficial or short term such as memorising, rehearsing and rote learning. It has been found out that when high stakes are attached to performance, students tend to be less successful in acquiring higher order transferable skills. Learning tasks are perceived as not inherently interesting and if a reward is removed, students are less likely to engage in a task,
- A further problem that is associated with high stakes examination is that considerable effort and time will be put into drill dominated test preparation by teachers and students (e.g. in sitting mock examinations). This focus on test preparation skills may also serve to make students direct their efforts towards

mastering strategies to help them over the examination hurdle, rather than towards developing mastery of subject matter and gaining lasting competencies,

- The mock examination was also criticised for limiting the scope of instruction to what the teacher thought would be examined, and therefore, leading to incoherent lessons (Kellaghan & Gleaney (2004:48).

In the same vein, Herrera (2007) states that standardised tests limit and negatively affect the quality of content-area instruction and prompt the teacher to narrow the English Language curriculum taught in the classrooms. Standardised tests encourage teaching to the test, divert classroom instruction to an emphasis on low level cognitive and basic skills. Standardised tests increase the redundancy of instruction and formative assessment.

Yeh (2005) argued that if examination boards continue to influence formative assessment practices, there will be narrowing of the curriculum by excluding subject matter not tested. For example, with a significant focus on writing, there are concerns that reading and speaking are being neglected because they are not tested. Some teachers exclude teaching and assessing topics not tested or not likely to appear on the test. Aligning examination board assessment to formative assessment reduces learning and assessment to memorisation of easily recalled facts and that teachers will be developing too much classroom time on test preparation rather proper learner-centred assessment. From this literature, it is clear that if Zimbabwean English Language teachers are influenced by high stakes examinations in terms of formative assessment, it is to the detriment of proper assessment.

The quality of effectiveness of schools and teachers is judged by the performance of their students in public examinations and as such, their formative assessments are influenced by public examinations. This results in teachers sacrificing appropriate formative assessment for drilling students so that they will not be held accountable for their failure (Kantolomba, 2007). Additionally, an important barrier to wider practice of formative assessment and has been identified (OECD, 2005). This is related to perceive tensions between classroom-based formative assessments and high visibility summative tests (National assessments). This kind of highly visible assessments is intended to hold schools accountable for student achievement in the classrooms. Teachers are often cautious of developing or implementing new approaches and techniques to use with their students for fear of failure (including poor

results on external test or school inspections, upset parents, or other bad results). According to Popham (2001), teachers drill their students relentlessly on types of test items contained in the particular high stakes test their students must pass. Such repetition of instructional activities tends to deaden learner genuine interest in learning. All the excitement and intellectual vibrancy that students may encounter during a really interesting lesson are compromised by tedious, test-fostering series of drills. Often teachers can predict their learners' likely performance on external tests because their own assessment regimes closely imitate these but are less aware of learners' needs (Butt, 2010).

The negative influence of high stakes tests has also been noted by Greaney (2004) who observed that students were taught through drill recitation, and exercises of fill-in-the missing types, all of which were desired to impart factual information and techniques that students would need in public examinations. If this situation is also obtaining in the Zimbabwean education system, the teachers are likely to be compelled to diminish any curricular attention towards any area that is not included on high-stakes tests. Furthermore, this competitive culture of schools may be an obstacle to learning, especially when linked to beliefs in the fixed nature of ability. Gaye (2008) posits that in countries like Liberia, educational practices are narrow and the methods used generate limited data. The assumptions and theories are implicit; and examinees submit to the process without active and equal participation, for example; critique, reflection, self-reflection and secrecy, reward and punishment remain key concepts. Teachers are comfortable with test methods as shown by their widespread use.

In sub-Saharan Africa people believe that schools with high scoring students are successful and schools with low scoring students are the opposite (Gaye,2008). Equally bad in Gaye's view is the idea that low performing schools receive a label such as "failing schools." Staff members at a negatively labelled school are certain to feel awful about the way they have been identified (Gaye, 2008).

According to the findings of this study specifically the follow-up interview, the Makoni District English Language Panel influences how teachers assess.

T₂ said:

The English Language panel assist us as we go about our assessment activities by supplying us with material.

T₁₈ argued:

The material that we get from the English Language panel is at times not helpful as some of the teachers are not well versed in formative assessment activities. Some of the assessment activities are just lifted from textbooks.

English Language question papers, marking schemes and notes were observed by the researcher in the Departmental files. During lesson time the researcher observed students tackling questions from panel question papers and teachers were referring to panel lesson notes.

In follow-up interviews T₉ said:

The Makoni District English Language Panel influences how we assess. They give us tips on assessment, however, we feel the material they give us is insufficient. Not all teachers who sit in the Panel Executive are experts in the subject.

The Makoni District English Language Panel which is a forum for English Language teachers in Makoni District provides guidance to English language teachers on how to improve instruction and assessment. It provides guidance on how to assess effectively in the classroom. Some teachers who attend these workshops are given guidance on how to carry out effective formative assessment. Gaye (2008) argues that subject workshops are ineffective. They are only held once termly hence do not equip teachers with the necessary skills of assessment. It must be noted that inadequate District conducted workshops provided teachers with assessment skills, though not adequate. Adejumo (2010) believes that once a term is too short a time to impart assessment skills to teachers and argues that such workshops are essential to the promotion of formative assessment practices as well as clearing some grey areas. Adejumo (2010) argues that without further intensive professional assistance that builds deep understanding of formative assessment theory and practice, secondary school teachers end up adopting the national syllabus as their school syllabus. Such a situation compromises assessment because teachers end up assessing alien concepts to students, which will be difficult to understand.

The current study revealed that the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education through the Provincial and District Officers, affects how teachers assess.

In follow-up interviews T₁₃ commented:

Since visits by inspectors are not frequent as they should be; and even if they visit, no professional guidance is provided. I assess in a way that I am comfortable with.

The researcher observed that at the District offices of the Ministry of Education, there are no specific subject inspectors who are readily available to provide professional support on assessment and other curriculum related issues. The subject inspectors are only housed at the Provincial offices and there is one Inspector for each subject and they have to provide guidance to the thousands of teachers under their jurisdiction. This then, means that many secondary schools spend years without being visited by these officers. Observations from the current research have concluded that there is a lack of monitoring. Teachers are engaging in forms of assessment that are irrelevant to the needs of the students as they will be having the belief that a laissez-faire policy of assessment is suitable under the prevailing circumstances.

According to Machakanja (2010) the District Education Officers are under-staffed and officials are mostly not present as they would be busy monitoring primary schools and attending workshops. The researcher observed from the staff list that Makoni District has 8 Education inspectors including, the District Schools Inspector. Two of these are secondary school trained, one specialised in Shona and the other one in Science (Makoni District English Language Panel 2015). Colclough (2009) points out that many Education officers were primary school trained hence could not assist secondary school teachers in curriculum matters.

The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education re-introduced the inspection system where Education officers have assumed the title of Education inspectors (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2015). Daniels (2012) argues that the inspection system is a precept of autocratic management which focuses on fault-finding. He further argues that it is a process which threatens the teachers' professional autonomy as they will be expected to fully adhere to set regulations. The inspection system stifles teachers' innovative principles in assessment. Inspection involves telling, judging and directing teachers. It involves statutory requirements and assessing the teachers and making

recommendations. The Inspector is assumed to be the source of all knowledge (Velmer, 2010). In the context of this study, English Language teachers get very little professional support from their superiors hence face assessment challenges. The researcher observed that District officers and Provincial officers have a single vehicle each, hampers their efforts to provide monitoring and evaluation to teachers. Documents, like the inventory lists proved that Makoni District had one double-cab vehicle donated by UNICEF. The researcher observed that a good number of teachers were not being effectively supervised as shown by few supervision reports on their performance.

In follow-up interviews, T₁ said:

The fact that we get minimal supervision implies that there is room for us to assess in the way that we are comfortable with. Both internal and external supervision are grossly insufficient.

T₁₆ argued:

The head of department himself is less experienced as compared to me, he does not really scrutinise when supervising. Books are inspected for formality's sake without thorough scrutiny. Actually, I was supposed to be the head of department as I am more experienced and qualified but I declined owing to lack of incentives and too much work. We do not carry out frequent departmental meetings. I am of the opinion that head of department has problems with the subject. I believe he has challenges in assessing it as well.

Teachers have the belief that if they are not supervised, they should undertake assessment that they feel appropriate (Kantolomba, 2007). This point is buttressed by McGregor's Theory X which is premised on the assumption that employees must be coerced, directed and closely supervised to get them to put forth the effort to achieved stated goals (Jacobs, 2011). Most employees avoid taking on responsibilities. In the context of the present study, teachers indicated that because there is no external supervision, they are bound to assess the way they feel appropriate. It was observed by Fang (2006) that teachers assess the way they were assessed when they were still school children. In the same view, post-independent Zimbabwe's assessment procedures may be influenced by the pre-colonial assessment methods, which also emphasised content and high stake summative assessment. It should therefore, be noted that the way teachers perceive assessment impacts on the manner in which they carry out assessment in the classroom. Some

researchers (Brown, 2003) argue that educators' conceptions of assessment are strongly interwoven with their views on broader issues of learning / teaching. To embrace new assessment practices, it is of paramount importance for teachers to align their perceptions with emerging models of formative assessment.

The researcher observed that heads of department were less qualified and experienced than ordinary teachers. Documents through staff lists confirmed the situation.

From observations, the researcher noted that English Language teachers were comfortable with teacher-centred assessment. Documents in the form of the visitors log book, indicated that Education inspectors had last visited two of the schools the previous two years. In some schools, book inspections had not been done for quite some time. Some supervision instruments were too sketchy and very brief comments were made. Supervision instruments were not uniform in all schools. The researcher observed in three schools that the master timetable had less lessons than the recommended number. They had 5x 35 minute lessons instead of 7x 35minute lessons per week. The researcher noted the syllabus was too broad, and content was of immense depth. At some schools visited the head of department was the only one with a copy of the syllabus. The department policy was not adhered to and very few exercises were given. Teachers could not cope. They fell far short of the requirements. They did not have marking guides for the exercises they marked and most did not have social records. Those who had them, they were not detailed. From documents analysed, the departmental minute book at one of the schools indicated that at least one meeting was carried out and this was normally feedback from panel workshops. Very few staff development meetings were held for the English Language department in most schools.

According to findings of this study heads of department of English Language did not provide the required professional support to teachers in their departments hence, teachers used inappropriate methods. Evidence from interviewed teachers revealed that there were very few frequent class visits from the heads of departments. In Zimbabwean secondary schools, 80% of supervision is conducted by heads of department who in turn report to the deputy head and subsequently to the school head (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2015). This is a Ministry rule and regulation on monitoring. Heads of schools, as school managers, hold the organisational authority while the heads of departments are assumed to be experts of subject specific matters. The study established that some heads

of departments were under-qualified and as such, could not lend adequate professional support to English Language teachers, support such as emotional, professional and social needs to be given to teachers due to the nature and roles they assume as a result of formative assessment. Eventually teachers were left to themselves in terms of assessment. According to Hargreaves (2008) support systems for teachers include supportive material, out of school learning committees, learning area panels and professional organisations.

It emerged from the study that teachers did not have adequate professional development through class visits, teachers' and learners' book inspection followed by feedback. If teachers are not afforded the opportunity for a discussion after a class visit or book inspection, they may find it difficult to implement the desired programmes such as effective formative assessment (Fang, 2006). This observation is in accordance with the view of Bush, Jourbert, Kiggundu and Reyen (2009) that monitoring involves visiting classes, observing students at work and giving feedback. It has been noted that though monitoring may take place at times, it may be superficial without any improvements in the assessment process. In addition, Bush et al. (2009) that monitoring is a widely distributed role which sees the working together of subject head, deputy school heads and school heads. In school observed, such coordination is absent, leaving teachers without anyone to consult should they need professional help in terms of formative assessment.

Although heads of the English department may assume many roles, Shinkfield (2009) concedes that evaluation of teacher's performance is one of their most important responsibility. Evaluation of teacher performance is particularly important in establishing the nature and extent to which appropriate formative evaluation is carried out in classrooms. This is with reference to issues pertaining to curriculum matters such as adaptation of context, assessment, and the general attitude teachers may have towards assessment. According to Shinkfield (2009), evaluating teacher performance is particularly important to improve instructional programmes, ensuring teachers improve their teaching practices, ensuring context is adapted and tailored to individual learner needs, and ensuring the improvement of staff development and opportunities for teachers. Findings from follow-up interviews and observations showed that inadequate support was being given to teachers on assessment issues, and that teachers ended up engaging in assessment that was not truly formative in nature.

The feedback teachers get as a result of the book inspections conducted by heads of departments if not consistently and correctly executed, gives teachers the impression that even if they carry out inappropriate assessment, there is no accountability. If teachers get feedback from book inspections which is timeous, correct and consistent, they benefit in their execution of their assessment duties. Bush et al. (2009) found that a strong link exists between monitoring, teaching as well as assessment. Under-qualified teachers and teachers with less experience could benefit from supervision visits, for in the process of being given feedback, their short-comings are corrected. This confirms Carey's model (2006) that teachers at practising stage be assisted if they are to be effective, aware and conversant with the developments in the field. It can be inferred that under-qualified and less experienced teachers need more class visits as well as timeous, correct and consistent feedback as this helps them improve their assessment. From the findings of this study, the teachers are not getting adequate assistance and so engage in assessment they deem fit with disastrous consequences.

Research (Pillay & Terlizzi, 2009) has shown that teachers generally value support from colleagues and key personnel such as heads of departments. Data from the present research especially follow-up interviews and documents indicated that heads of departments did not encourage and facilitate departmental meetings. It is during these meetings that teachers in the schools share ideas and plan together. The sharing of ideas facilitates best practices of the few expert teachers to reach beyond their individual classrooms. From the information drawn from teachers, one could deduce that insignificant interactions were practised in schools. Pillay and Terlizzi (2009) point out that as teachers meet, they share experiences and perceptions. In so doing, assessment policy is holistically informed and teachers are in a position to provide assessment that meets the needs of students in their classrooms. It can be noted that as the Ecological systems framework suggests, teachers in secondary schools should work in partnership with other stakeholders in the education system in the effective and efficient inclusion and implementation of contemporary formative assessment techniques. Nsofwa (2012) stresses that heads of department have to equip teachers so as to increase their knowledge on positive assessment issues. Nsofwa (2012) adds that in English Language, heads of departments should ensure that sufficient advice is provided to English Language teachers so that the schools implement the appropriate formative assessment policies effectively.

In some of the schools in the study, the researcher observed that formative assessment was not being done appropriately because of lack of proper guidance. In some schools the researcher observed that there were no social records and that teachers rarely used marking schemes when they marked. Through social records which are up to date, the teacher knows the background of the learner with a view to aligning his social background to the type of assessment that he/she needs. Most social records seen in this study were not detailed meaning teachers did not know much about their learners, hence could not provide assessment that is in tandem with their background. Teachers rarely used marking guides when they were marking pupils' work. The assumption was that they were too tedious to make. Chalwe (2010) states that marking undertaken by most English Language teachers is usually not undertaken against explicit criteria as they believe that it involves a lot of paperwork. Detailed marking criteria were not given in assignments. It has been noted by Chalwe (2010) that some English Language teachers mark students' work against implicit criteria. They just give comments and the total mark.

Table 4-7: The extent to which teachers face formative assessment challenges

Item	Statement	Response					TOTAL
		SA	A	U	D	SD	
1	Teachers received adequate training in formative assessment	7(28%)	8(32%)	0(0%)	5(25%)	5(25%)	25(100%)
2	Automatic promotion promotes formative assessment	2(4%)	4(16%)	0(0%)	10(40%)	9(36%)	25(100%)
3	There are opportunities available for engaging in formative	2(8%)	1(4%)	0(0%)	5(20%)	17(68%)	25(100%)

	assessment research.						
4	There is little data required in formative assessment.	3(12%)	4(16%)	00%	7(28%)	11(44%)	25(100%)
5	Any other issues relating to the extent to which teachers face formative assessment challenges.						

Table 4.7, item 1 shows that 15(60%) of the teachers opined that the training they received in formative assessment was adequate while 10(40%) of the teachers believed the training they received was inadequate. Follow-up interviews indicate that most teachers believed that they were not adequately trained.

T8 said:

What I trained in and what I find in the classroom do not tally. We did not do registers at college in the early 1980s yet I am now expected to teach and assess them. When I trained, it was a crash programme. We were too many and most courses were not covered in depth. We were not monitored closely at Teaching Practice.

T9 remarked:

We find new concepts in the classroom. Most of them are alien. Colleges did not equip us fully. We are struggling to meet the demands of the syllabus. We cannot even operate computers and use overhead projectors, and we were not trained to

use them to assist in assessment activities to overcome challenges we are encountering.

T25 responded:

A lot of emphasis was on content. Assessment was not given the attention it deserves. I trained in the 1980s even without a pass in English Language but I managed to specialise in English Language. A pass in Shona or Ndebele was the Language requirement needed plus, any other four subjects. Mathematics was not a requirement. I have problems with statistical analysis.

Since teachers noted that they did not receive adequate assessment training, their competence is thrown into doubt. Burke (2000) defines competence as the ability to perform activities within a teaching area to the level of performance required in practice. Chaton (2000) also interprets competence as the exhibition of specific behaviour and attitude being demonstrated and distinguishable from the potential to perform. Teachers need to be competent in order to perform their duties effectively. Incompetent teachers are likely to cause problems in assessment. Competent teachers are assessment literate.

Assessment literacy has been defined as the possession of knowledge about the basic principles of sound assessment practice, including terminology, techniques, familiarity with standards of quality in assessment, and familiarity with alternatives to traditional measurements of learning (Paterno, 2000). Assessment literacy has also been defined as an understanding of the principles of sound assessment (Popham, 2004). Assessment literacy equips teachers with the competencies to carry out measurement. Teachers with a professional background in this area are well positioned to integrate assessment with instruction to utilise appropriate forms of teaching (McMillan, 2000). Assessment literate teachers recognise the need for sound assessment, evaluation, and communication practices. They also:

- understand which assessment methods to use to gather dependable information and learner achievement,
- communicate assessment results effectively whether using report card grades, test scores and portfolios, and

- can use assessment to maximise learner motivation and learning by involving students as full partners in assessment, record keeping and communication (Metler, 2005).

If during teacher training, teachers did not receive these skills, then it means that the training did not adequately prepare them for formative assessment.

Stiggins (2002) states that assessment literate teachers know the difference between sound and unsound assessment. They are not intimidated by the sometimes mysterious and always daunting technical world of assessment. Stiggins (2001) describes assessment as comprising two skills; the ability to gather dependable and quality information about learner achievement, and the ability to use that information effectively to maximise learner achievement. According to MacDonald (2000), standards for teachers' competence in educational assessment of learners, consist of the following principles:

- Teachers should be skilled in developing assessment methods appropriate for instructional decisions,
- Teachers should be skilled in administering, scoring and interpreting the results of both externally produced and teacher-produced assessment methods,
- Teachers should be skilled in developing students regarding procedures that use pupils' assessment,
- Teachers should be skilled in communicating assessment results to learners, parents, other lay audiences, and other educators, and
- Teachers should be skilled in recognising unethical, illegal and otherwise inappropriate methods and uses of assessment information.

Poor knowledge of the outlined principles of formative assessment constitutes a gap for teachers. It is an indication that teachers will not have been thoroughly trained for effective assessment, and will face challenges in implementing formative assessment.

Stiggins (2002) reports that teachers spend a third to half of their professional time on assessment- related activities. Next to the teacher's skill on how to teach (method), and what to teach (content) is his /her skill on how to assess in order to maximise learning. Assessment is a part and parcel of every teaching method. It is essential that teachers coming out of teacher education institutions and those in the field are given adequate

information on how to use proper methods of assessment and how to use results for whatever purposes. Gullickson (2004), in a study in Liberia, reports that the average teacher did not perceive college measurement courses to be pertinent to his/her classroom testing needs and that most teachers learned how to test their students through their on-job experiences. English Language teachers with a solid background in assessment are well positioned to integrate assessment with instruction so that they utilise appropriate forms of teaching.

Most research (Searl, 2003, Shinn, 2004, Smith, 2006) says that English Language teachers in general are not proficient in learner assessment practices in sub-Saharan Africa. Research (Metler, 2003) continues to characterise teacher assessment and evaluation as largely incongruent with recommended best practice. Many English Language teachers believe that they need strong measurement skills (Boothroyd, 2008). The teachers also believe that their teacher education was inadequate (Wise, 2001). Some teachers also report a level of discomfort with the quality of their own tests (Bridgeford, 2005).

In most sub-Saharan African jurisdictions, there continues to be relatively little emphasis on formative assessment in the professional development of teachers. A study by Obioma (2004) on gaps, and challenges of formative assessment, revealed that in general English Language teachers demonstrated poor knowledge of the elementary concept of formative assessment. Many teachers mistook the formative assessment instruments for continuous testing. According to Musonda (2009), general conclusions have been drawn by researchers like Gaye, (2002) who have collected evidence through observations, interviews and questionnaires from schools. Musonda (2009) notes that the tests used by teachers encourage rote and superficial learning even when teachers say they want to develop understanding. Many seem to be unaware of that inconsistency. Consequently, teachers often omit important curriculum outcomes and in their place, test trivial aspects instead of using items that reveal depth of understanding (Pophan, 2002).

Knowledge of assessment is a real issue with teachers. (Lucas, 2009). High quality formative assessment is relatively rare in classrooms because some teachers do not know how well to engage in such assessment. Nole (2006), in his research on practical assessment, posits that few teacher preparation programmes provide adequate teacher education for a wide array of assessment strategies. In the same vein, assessment courses done by teachers lack depth and breadth resulting in practicing teachers feeling unprepared

for formative assessment demands (Lomay, 2011) when teachers are likely to spend one third to one half of their professional time on activities linked to formative assessment, in which they possess inadequate skills (Shinn, 2011). The observation is supported by Titus (2011) who states that many English Language personnel are certified to teach with little or no basic assessment skills.

Bridgeford (2005) points out that teacher training institution courses focus on large scale test administration and standardised test score interpretation, rather than on test construction strategies or on item-writing rules. Research carried out by Sithole (2006) yielded results that indicated that student supervision and assessment at Teachers' Colleges tends to focus on assessment at the expense of supervision, a process associated with student support, guidance, and counselling. It is associated with transformation of the student thinking and not with the transmission of information associated with learner-centred approaches. Research studies (Shumbayawonda, 2006; Sithole, 2006) seem to indicate that teachers and lecturers should make use of methods that are learner-centred, participatory, collaborative and problem-solving. These current trends and developments enhance student learning and have to be encouraged. Findings from this research point out that colleges did not prepare teachers fully for formative assessment as they placed emphasis on teacher-centred assessment. Bridgeford (2005) further posits that teachers do not perceive the information learned in traditional test and measurement courses relevant to their tasks as classroom teachers. Gullkson (2003) found that teachers do not believe that they have adequate training. Colleges, schools and departments of education need to prepare their graduates in the areas of assessment literacy thoroughly.

English Language teachers who are ill-trained engage in inappropriate formative assessment. The quality of assessment is determined by the quality of training teachers receive. Ill-trained do not even know how to explain some English words and have difficulties in explaining English concepts let alone engaging in appropriate formative assessment (Ellis, 2009). Van Avemaet (2006) concurs with the above observation and adds that students are taught by teachers who lack those skills necessary for quality formative assessment in English Language. Knapp (2006) also adds that quality improvement in formative assessment depends upon the proper training of English second

language teachers. Students will take formative assessment seriously if their teachers are properly trained as they would be receiving quality formative assessment.

To many students, English is a second language and it may pose problems of comprehension in English Language lessons. Some teachers contribute to this because they themselves were not well trained to assist learners. According to Simasiku (2006), the English Language teachers may use code-switching in students' first language, when such students experience problems regarding certain concepts. This should only be done for the purpose of explanation as too much code-switching may deprive student's exposure to the target language. Due to the training some teachers received, they have difficulties in expressing themselves in English. Otaola (2001) notes that Namibian teachers of English Language found it difficult to develop lessons and assessment based on communication and interaction when they themselves, lacked theory in English Language. In the present study, the researcher observed that, quite a sizeable number of teachers were not fluent in English Language and that at times they resorted to the vernacular. In one observation made by the researcher, one teacher felt so uncomfortable about her own English proficiency that she refused to read a listening comprehension as part of the assessment. Bater (2007) emphasises the point that where neither a student nor a teacher feels comfortable and competent enough to use a second language as medium of instruction, it can have a negative influence on the quality of teaching and assessment.

Teachers in Zimbabwe, to some extent, can be said to be thoroughly trained. The Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE), a statutory body that monitors quality standards in Zimbabwe's tertiary institutions, commended the quality of teacher training programmes (ZIMCHE, 2012). This means that the level of training is high, and it may be that the teachers themselves may not be implementing the methods inculcated to them while at college. According to the Progressive Teachers' Union of Zimbabwe (2011), the level of teacher training is high and the Union cites the high demand of Zimbabwean teachers regionally as evidence of how skilled they are. Failure to implement quality assessment may not be related to the nature of inadequate training they received. However, it should be noted that there is no training programme that is totally perfect, some with evident shortcomings.

Various programmes such as the Better Schools Programme Zimbabwe (BSPZ) were established to improve the teaching and the administration of education in Zimbabwe.

There is no way teaching can ever be improved without understanding first what is going on in the English Language classrooms .This calls for the teacher to become active in classroom research; that is, to deliberately gather data that enables him/her to make decisions about various aspects of teaching and ultimately, of formative assessment. The information is in in-service fora, that is; the meeting of teachers where pedagogical and professional issues are discussed and resolutions undertaken. The BSPZ has a resource centre where teachers can research on various topics including assessment.

Salmon and Chodrami (2011) evaluated assessment practices of in-service teachers who had just completed a course in educational management in Philippines. The authors reviewed 207 in-service student teachers' lesson plans, and found out that none contained all of the criteria established as necessary for evaluating students' learning. Teachers failed to use test planning practices such as a table of specifications which is necessary to make a direct link between instructional goals and test items. The researcher believed that by omitting test planning practices, in-service teachers were unable to explicitly document the association between English Language curriculum goals, instruction and student achievement. Some teachers in the present study, as the researcher observed, were not using a table of specifications to link instructional goals to test items.

The National Council on Measurement in Education in Bangladesh (2011) designed a set of standards that training institutions could incorporate in the teacher training programmes. It recommended that teachers be given skills in (a) choosing effective assessment methods appropriate for making instructional decisions, (b) holistically developing all types of assessments, (c) thoroughly administering, scoring, analysing and interpreting assessment results developed from teacher-made assessment procedures (d) developing justifiable and fair assessment procedures for grading students work, (f) effectively communicating assessment results to students, parents and other relevant stakeholders, (g) strictly recognising and exercising of ethical standards when assessing students.

Barsdale-Ladd and Thomas (2000) conducted a study with in-service teachers in Nigeria and they identified some essential aspects of classroom assessment competences that teachers should adopt as they assess English Language students. They indicate that teachers should; (a) provide students with detailed feedback for the purposes of improving students' learning (b) take assessment as part of a students' work; (c) exercise some level of flexibility in formative assessment so as to ensure that assessment does not dominate

the English Language curriculum; (d) ensure that assessment informs instruction to improve teachers' instructional methods, and (e) use multiple assessment methods to evaluate students' learning.

Vandeyar and Killen (2003) argue that regardless of educational setting, high quality formative assessment practices should satisfy essential principles such as validity, reliability, fairness, non-discrimination and meaningfulness. For Vandeyar and Killen (2003), if teachers have a clear understanding of these principles, they can have an informed framework for using assessment results or make better informed decisions. When English language teachers misunderstand these principles, their assessment practices are more likely to generate worthless information, an indication of the presence of formative assessment challenges. Teachers must be willing to explore knowledge and experiment with ideas and thoughts through interacting with students during assessment. A positive academic performance comes from assessment proficiency on the part of the teachers and how comfortable the teacher is in using English as a medium of instruction.

Results pertaining to Table 4.7 item 2 show that 19(76%) disagreed that automatic promotion promotes formative assessment while 6(24%) agreed that it promoted formative assessment. Data from follow-up interviews show that most teachers are of the opinion that automatic promotion of students from one form to another does not promote formative assessment.

T14 commented that:

Students actually carry over their grammatical errors to another Form. The end result is failure at Ordinary Level English Language. However, the automatic promotion system is not an issue in itself but the primary school teachers who are not equipping students for secondary school English Language. We hope the introduction of the Early Reading Initiative at primary school, the students will come to secondary school with a solid foundation. With a solid foundation we cannot blame the automatic promotion system.

T25 added by saying:

Some students have had grammatical problems since Primary school and these have not been rectified and the students continue to proceed to the next level. The policy of inclusivity has also been abused by heads who enrol students who would have been expelled from other schools or drop-outs who left school with language problems and when they returned back to school their problems would have compounded due to inactivity. Also the calibre of students who enrol for form one is atrocious, some would have failed dismally in Grade seven English Language. It is difficult to assess such a person.

Documents, in the form of the admission register showed that some students had failed dismally in Grade seven English Language and that some had re-enrolled after having dropped out earlier in the years.

Kangai (2012) argues that because of automatic promotion of students from Grade seven to Form one, the performance of the students is affected. A student who failed Grade seven is allowed to proceed. The student would have failed to master the subject at a lower level but is automatically promoted to a higher level which is more demanding. The student will be proceeding without understanding the basic concepts. For boarding schools, it is better, because they screen students at Grade seven, and the standards are very high but rural day secondary schools are not allowed by policy. The findings of the present study in the form of observations, confirm that teachers face formative assessment challenges because of automatic promotion. Teachers faced challenges in assessing a class full of low achievers, a situation further compounded by shortage of resources as well. In order to arrest the issue of automatic promotion, there is need to have remedial tutors at school so that they provide enrichment exercises to students so that their intellectual level does not differ greatly with the norm. It should be noted that automatic promotion promotes inclusivity in that, those with learning problems and those without are given an equal opportunity to learn. There is no discrimination of students and this resonates with the government's policy of Education for All and No child left behind. This increases the literacy levels of the country and provides a better life for citizens. It has been noted by Kangai (2012) that re-enrolling dropouts has challenges for assessment in that performances of students who had dropped out of school actually regressed in English Language. The challenge for the teacher is that he/she will need to give such a student, assessment activities that are lower

than expected. Consequently, such a student hardly achieves in norm-based end of year tests.

Research (Lesbury, 2011; Clare, 2012) shows that the transition from one grade level to another brings excitement to some students and stress to others. In either case, challenges of emotional and/or social maladjustment may result and these challenges are followed by learning difficulties. Those students who will not be ready for the new challenge of meeting new demands may have learning difficulties. English Language teachers face challenges regarding how they are going to assess such students as they are not specialists in special needs education. Such a situation results in formative assessment inadequacies on the part of the secondary school English Language teachers.

One interviewed teacher argued that automatic promotion did not worsen formative assessment challenges. He argued that the poor foundational skills in English Language of the students were actually promoting formative assessment challenges in secondary schools. He argued that if students had well developed English Language skills during the foundation phase, there would be no way they would progress to secondary school with these problems. The interviewed teacher further argued that the introduction of the Early Reading Initiative programme (ERI) in 2012 by the government was in response to the poor development of English Language at infant level; that is; from Early Childhood level to Grade 2 level. The programme aims to select relevant pre-reading activities for children in an inclusive environment, improve strategies for developing a reading culture, create an inclusive teaching and learning environment that promotes the development of pre-reading skills, apply Information Communication Technologies in pre-reading activities and enhance skills on monitoring and assessment of pre-reading skills. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education has also increased lessons for English Language at infant level and encouraged the use of Diamond supplementary readers which are to be read at school and as a part of homework. Instruments to monitor early reading have been developed for each infant level (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2013).

To offset the effects of automatic progression, teachers should engage in forecasting (Clare, 2012). They must determine as accurately as is possible, the probable course of future events of the students who they will be teaching who will be having grammatical problems but continue to progress to the next form. The more accurate the forecasting of their performance in future, the lower will be the degree of uncertainty and the greater the

possibilities of formal reliable plans to deal with these grammatical problems by the time the students reach form four. Teachers will then formulate assessment strategies to deal with the recurrent grammatical problems that will be facing students who get promoted to the next form while exhibiting signs of difficulty.

Table 4.7 item 3 shows that 3(12%) of the respondents agreed that there are opportunities for doing research in schools to promote formative assessment while 22(88%) disagreed. In the follow-up interviews there was agreement that there were no opportunities for conducting research.

T₉ remarked:

There are no research opportunities we do not know where to send our findings though we know there is the Research Council of Zimbabwe. Their activities are not publicised and we do not know what to do without our research studies. Some of us have Diplomas in Education and we did not receive further training on how to go about research issues. The government has since ceased financially assisting teachers who got to study for research degrees or any other programmes. After you conduct a research, there are no incentives, monetary or non- monetary. You actually waste your personal resources when researching. We hear there is the department of Research in the Ministry of Education at head office but we do not know how it operates. Those who have tried to contact it have had little success.

The researcher noted that in schools, action research was not being done even that which is not related to formative assessment. Some of the teachers had practical solutions but their solutions needed to be tested through research which was not being carried out. There were no documents that showed that research was taking place.

Wolley (2006) gives the following reasons for justifying research:

- research leads or generates new information or knowledge on assessment that assist planners to initiate new development or to update information in circulation,
- research opens the way to innovative assessment methods or strategies that are aimed at improving assessment practice,

- research can encourage the development of new formative assessment methodologies that challenge prevailing ones. This can result in injecting currency to existing formative assessment thought and practice. For instance, the shift from teacher-centred to learner-centred approaches being encouraged in education was born out of research, and
- Knowledge is not static, thus new knowledge on formative assessment can be licensed or developed through research. This can lead to new paradigms leading to progressing shifts of mind-sets.

The importance of research is thus seen in the increase in the number of new effective assessment methods now in circulation born out of research. These changes affect teachers. Obanya (2009) asserts that research can expose the strengths and weaknesses of assessment programmes. The weaknesses that emerge from an assessment, based on research findings, can be diagnosed leading to appropriate strategies and remedies to correct the situation in a secondary school setting. Research can expose the strengths and weakness of operations and programmes. The weakness that emerges from a programme, for example, on formative assessment, can be diagnosed, leading to appropriate strategies and remedies to correct the situation. Rectifying weaknesses enhances effectiveness and quality of operations in a secondary school.

Table 4.7 item 4 reveals that 7(28%) of the teachers agreed that there were less data required in formative assessment while 18(72%) revealed that much data were required in formative assessment. Information from follow-up interviews elaborated the notion that there were much data needed in formative assessment.

T22 said:

Formative assessment requires a lot of information that I need to obtain. I need information about the subject, etc., above the pupils, the books, the syllabus and the resources that are available. Without these, I cannot assess effectively. I need that information before and after I conduct formative assessment. For one to assess effectively, there is a lot of “red-tape.”

Observations showed that the teachers had collected a lot of information about the pupils, the books they are using and teaching resources. Documents showed that teachers had scheme-cum- plans, record of mark books, remedial records, performance lag address programme record book, attendance registers, social record book, national syllabus, School-based syllabus, English Language Departmental Policy, Policy Circular 36 of 2006, personal timetables, school timetable and past examination question papers, among a host of documents. These were meant to collect information that could aid them in formative assessment.

In order to grapple with what seems to be an overuse of testing, educators should frame their views of testing as assessment and appreciate that assessment is information. The more the information teachers have about students, the clearer the picture they have about their achievement or where gaps may occur. According to Hanna and Dettmer (2004), formative assessment is the way in which teachers gather data about their teaching and their students' learning. The data provide a picture of a range of activities using different forms of assessment such as pre-tests, observations and examinations. Once these data are gathered, the teacher can evaluate the students' performance. Evaluation, therefore, draws on the teacher's judgment to determine the overall value of an outcome based on the assessment data. It is in the decision-making process where teachers design ways to improve the recognised weaknesses, gaps or deficiencies (Hanna & Deltmer, 2004).

Formative assessment entails a broad spectrum of activities that include collection of information for decision-making. The responsibility of English Language teachers is to collect information for decision-making. The responsibility of teachers is to collect information through various assessment methods that can be used to make informed decisions about students' learning progress. Kayler (2010) argues that, to be able to communicate assessment results more effectively, teachers must possess a clear understanding about the limitations and strengths of various assessment methods. Most teachers in the present study could discern the strengths and weaknesses of various assessment methods. Teachers must observe proper terminology as they use assessment results to inform people about the decision about student learning. Some schools use assessment results to sort students from the lowest to the highest and for classification purposes, as was the case even in the present study. The appropriate way would be for teachers to use information to identify students' learning needs. As teachers diagnose

student needs, design and implement instructional interventions, evaluate student work, and assign grades, they need continuous access to evidence of student learning arising from high-quality classroom assessment practices (Stiggins, 2004). Formative assessment needs to be detailed, on-going and informative (Evans, 2007). According to Obanya (2010) formative assessment involves collection of data on all aspects of an educational endeavour. This means large volumes of data collected about students' academic achievement and related factors are used on continuous basis in a systematic way, to take meaningful decisions on what should happen assessment-wise. According to Omuka (2008), there is need to use a variety of assessments to effectively measure the students' traits and the results should be used to assist the students to improve themselves. Information about students in their non-scholastic areas is also needed.

Teachers depend on the classroom assessment information to improve their instructional methods, and as such, that information plays an important role in student learning. Assessment information is fundamental as it can help teachers understand how they construct classroom assessments for evaluating students' learning (Mc Millan, Myran & Workman, 2002). What should be realised is that formative assessment information that teachers collect does not benefit students alone, but also helps teachers to evaluate teaching practices by finding out if they taught well and what they need to modify subsequent lessons. Some researchers (Guskey, 2004; Omuka, 2008) argue that the process of collecting, analysing and interpreting assessment information does not necessary require sophisticated statistical analyses of assessment results. They instead, argue that what teachers need is to make simple tallies of how many students missed each assessment item or failed to meet a specific criterion.

Chifwepa (2001) defines a record as a documented proof of transaction. In secondary school, English Language teachers consistently document learner work progress to ensure teachers will have evidence of learner growth. Chifwepa (2001) further says that the evidence becomes vitally important for communication with learners, parents and administrators as the year goes on. Record keeping is critical in ensuring quality informative assessment (Northern Canadian Protocol in Education, 2009). The Canadian Protocol in Education notes that, the records that teachers and students keep are evidence that support decisions that are made about students learning. These records should include

detailed and descriptive information about the nature of the expected learning as well as evidence of students' learning. They should be collected from a range of assessments.

According to Heaney (2011), information that is recorded may take a variety of formats. They may include an observation schedule, a record of students' reading, comments on students' workbooks that identify areas for improvement and the reading of results from monthly tests. The information provides a valuable resource for the teacher when considering and reporting each student's progress. The records that are maintained help schools furnish parents with a report about the progress and achievement of individual students' and enable teachers to give examples of how a child has developed specific knowledge, skills and understanding in various areas of the English Language curriculum at parent interviews.

Records also provide useful and relevant information to clarify the progress a child has made and they identify areas that need to be addressed to other teachers. Alausa (2011) identifies record keeping as a cardinal problem of formative assessment implementation, as records have to be accurately and meticulously kept over a long period of time, in a form that will enhance easy retrieval, if assessment techniques are to be effective. However, reviews of secondary school practices in Liberia have reported that records tend to emphasise the quantity of students' work rather than quality, and that while tasks are often framed in cognitive terms, the assessments are in affective terms, with emphasis on social and managerial functions (Wolley, 2008). The present study observed that there is an emphasis on quantity at the expense of quality. Quality information needs to be emphasised upon.

According to the findings of the present study, very few teachers argued that there is little data required in formative assessment. Lencin (2007) observes that though teachers complain that there is too much data required in formative assessment, for the committed and highly competent teacher, the data are not that much, and if they are well stored, retrieval is easy. This means that to a teacher who is not devoted to his/her work, he/she will find the data overwhelming for him/her to collect, thereby facing assessment challenges due to lack of information to base his/her decisions upon.

Teachers therefore, should have a wide array of information about the pupils, curriculum, policy and resources so that they can tackle formative assessment with ease.

The researcher asked teachers the extent to which they faced other formative assessment challenges. In the interviews, a lot of respondents pointed out that there was no co-ordination of the various agencies involved in assessment.

T20 remarked:

The Ministry of Higher Education where teachers are trained have their own standards while the Ministry of Education where we are employed to teach have their standards while ZIMSEC have their own way of assessing. We are caught between a rock and hard place on who to follow. The Civil Service Commission has its Result –Based Management System which measures whether we have met the quantity of work expected to be given to students in any given term.

T 18 said:

Circulars from different agencies are just flying waiting to be implemented without us being given the proper guidelines. Conflicting statements are being given. I think the formation of a Teaching Professions Council will be a solution to this situation as it will coordinate members from all agencies. Communication with the bureaucrats in these agencies takes time. The associated bureaucratic related problems hinder improvements in formative assessment. Centralisation of activities is the only way out of this problem.

Nsofwa, (2012) pointed out that there was little co-ordination between the various bodies involved in assessment activities. Teachers in Zimbabwe are trained at Teachers' Colleges and Universities which are under the auspices of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology Development. The Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology Development trains teachers and imparts skills to them, including formative assessment skills using strategies which they find appropriate. Upon completion of their training, teachers are deployed by the Civil Service Commission to teach in schools under the auspices of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and are expected to assess in line with the requirements of this Ministry. The same teachers are expected to prepare students for summative assessment under the auspices of the Zimbabwe Schools Examinations Council (ZIMSEC), a semi - autonomous body created by an Act of Parliament to administer public examinations in all schools in Zimbabwe. It also monitors and researches into summative assessment. The demands of the Ministry of Higher Education and Science and Technology Development, Ministry of Primary and Secondary

Education, the Civil Service Commission and ZIMSEC exert considerable pressure on the teachers as they have to fulfil the demands of each. Basing on the findings of the present study, this means that, not all demands can be met, resulting in formative assessment challenges or failure to implement given policies of assessment. What a teacher is taught and what he/she is expected to do may be different. How teachers assess may be different from ZIMSEC expectations. Expectations from these agencies differ. The pressure exerted on teachers, which is sometimes conflicting, can usher in formative assessment challenges as the teachers will fail to know which assessment information to follow.

Policy Circulars from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education are generated by the different officials which may lead to the issuance of policy directives that may be at variance with overall assessment policy. In Literature in English, there was issuance of policy documents in 2008 from different directors in the then Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture which gave different set books to be studied at Ordinary Level (Makoni District English Literature Panel, 2009). The Director's Circular Number 26 of 2008, Guidelines on the Implementation of Remedial Work at Secondary School Level, was issued by the Director; Schools Psychological Services and Special Needs Education while Director's Circular Number 36 of 2006, Guidelines on Work Coverage in Primary and Secondary Schools was issued by the Director; Quality Assurance. Nsofwa (2012) notes that though different Directors issued policy circulars, they did not have mechanisms for follow-up adherence at the classroom level. ZIMSEC produced syllabi for Ordinary and Advanced Levels (ZIMSEC, 2008) while the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) in the Ministry of Education was also producing syllabi. However, it must be noted that the ZIMSEC syllabi were more detailed. The situation where syllabi were produced by two different organisations led to confusion on the part of the teachers regarding whose syllabi to subscribe to, thereby creating an assessment challenge on what to assess as the syllabi may contain conflicting information.

According to Chalwe (2010), the services of different agencies should be unified in order to attain the desirable objectives, that of providing professional development in assessment. In order for the system of formative assessment to achieve its objects, the activities of various agencies must be coordinated from the very beginning. Coordination is the result of reciprocal understanding of all the agencies involved in the development of formative assessment. This means that all agencies should share in the development of formative

assessment so as to reduce the challenges placed on the teachers due to disjointed activities of the agencies. Once there is coordination, assessment challenges will be reduced as activities would be carried out in a systematic manner where there is no confusion as to what course of action to follow. Coordination is a continuous process (Chalwe, 2010). The sharing of ideas and working together between the various agencies involved in developing formative assessment if improved, brings less challenges of formative assessment to secondary schools.

Gaye, (2008) argues that if there is less coordination between various bodies involved in education and formative assessment in particular, there is bound to be conflict. This usually occurs when the different departments resist or do not implement certain agreed upon practices. This lack of acceptance leads to conflict. If one body, like the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology Education does not implement practices about formative assessment from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, in the end, the teachers will not benefit from appropriate training, resulting in them failing to adhere to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education requirements. By so doing, they will face formative assessment challenges, because they cannot assess to acceptable standards. Lack of coordination results in goal incompatibility (Gaye, 2008). This is the lack of agreement concerning the direction which formative assessment must take and the criteria for evaluating task accomplishment. Goal incompatibility is caused by different orientations which create a state of high differentiation amongst the various bodies dealing with assessment and the criteria for evaluating task accomplishment. Judging by the findings of the present study, there is evidence of goal incompatibility among the various agencies responsible for developing formative assessment, since what teachers were taught and what they are expected to teach are not in sync.

Decision-making is slow where various organisations have to deal with assessment (Gaye, 2008). To bring change in how assessment has to be carried out is difficult because the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education has to follow rigid procedures and rules so that they take their recommendations to the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology Development. Such a situation stifles initiative and creativity in terms of assessment in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. Creating a lot of agencies that deal with assessment leads to fragmentation of work into smaller tasks that can divide workers and remove any connections that they may have (Argenti, 2009). Such work

arrangement produces extreme alienation from the surrounding society. An official dealing with assessment issues in the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology Development may fail to interact freely with an official dealing with assessment from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education because they rarely carry out joint operations since they will be operating from different physical locations. Recommendations from each party may not be taken on board leading to teachers not benefiting from comprehensive assessment information. Quarshie, (2007) also points out that it is difficult to bring together organisations responsible for formative assessment as it will be a gigantic task of bringing the bureaucrats to achieve a common purpose of promoting quality formative policies during training and post-training.

There is coordination among the various agencies involved in assessment activities, though this is being done on a small scale according to the findings of the current study.

In follow-up interviews T14 said:

The organisations that deal with assessment are loosely coordinated.

Documents analysed by the researcher showed that workshops were held infrequently by the various entities dealing with assessment. According to Chavunduka, (2000), classroom practitioners are involved in the production and revision of syllabus at two stages, needs analysis stage and national syllabus panel stage. Local universities and industry and commerce are included as major stakeholders. These two stakeholders have a considerable input into syllabus production. The universities consider incoming students in terms of adequate preparation for undergraduate study whilst industry and commerce looks at preparation of citizens for the world of work. Teachers are represented directly as well, via subject associations. This panel carries out research to establish needs of various stakeholders, suggests curriculum content, and then brainstorms on the draft syllabus. Once a draft syllabus has been produced after comments from the national syllabus panel have been incorporated, a copy is sent to the publishers, who in turn, identify writers. The Makoni District English Language Panel (2015) argued that it was not consulted in the crafting of the new English Language Ordinary Level syllabus 2017-2022 version. The idea was that, by the time the syllabus is ready, support materials would also be ready. The finished syllabus document is distributed by ZIMSEC or the CDU (Chavhunduka, 2000). There is role confusion about who distributes the syllabus between CDU and ZIMSEC.

Resources being available, the CDU may mount workshops for syllabus interpretation and implementing. If resources are not available, it means there are no sensitisation programmes for syllabus interpretation and implementation. This results in an assessment challenge in that teachers will be deprived of knowledge that assists them to assess effectively.

Another area where there is coordination between ZIMSEC and teachers is where ZIMSEC collects comments from examiners (those are teachers who mark examinations) at the end of each examining period. From these comments, ZIMSEC produces examiners' reports (Chavhunduka, 2000). These are documents that are produced in booklet form which discuss issues such as the level of difficulty of the test items in a particular examination, nature of student responses in a particular test item, and level of performance in particular area of the syllabus. The comments found in examiners' report originate from the examiners, that is, the classroom teachers. Together with the CDU and ZIMSEC, one of the most important roles of a teacher is assessing student work (Chavunduka, 2000). The Makoni District English Panel (2015) argues that ZIMSEC ceased to produce the examiners' reports in 2009 and that teachers have not been able to access these for feedback purposes. This means that teachers do not know their weaknesses in assessment and the interventions they may need to institute for the benefit of students.

4.5 Summary

In this chapter, both quantitative and quantitative data that were collected for this study were presented, analysed and discussed. The main objective of the study was to analyse formative assessment challenges facing English Language teachers in Makoni District. The objectives reflected the main research question and its sub- research questions. In the process, data from the interviews, observations and documents were used to buttress findings from the questionnaire.

Generally, the findings of the present study indicated that although teachers were doing their best to assess, they were beset by a number of formative assessment challenges in English Language at secondary school level. This has confirmed the basic assumptions of the present study that English Language teachers face challenges when assessing students' performance formatively.

The next chapter provides a summary of the study, draws conclusions and makes recommendations based on the findings of the study and recommendations for further (future) research.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the whole study (Chapters 1-4), draws conclusions and makes recommendations. The chapter has been divided into five sections. The first section highlights key ideas from each of the four preceding chapters. The second section summarises the major findings of the study, taking into consideration the research objectives, research questions and assumptions of the study. The third section draws conclusions based on the findings of the study while the fourth offers recommendations based on the major findings. The fifth and final section suggests areas for future research.

5.2 Summary of the study

Chapter 1 highlighted the problem and its setting. The chapter began by highlighting background information on challenges in formative assessment on the international scene and then moved into Africa and finally, into the Zimbabwean situation as this is where the present study was conducted. The chapter highlighted the statement of the problem, presented the purpose of the study, the main research question that guided the study and its sub-research questions, the research objectives and assumptions of the study. The chapter further discussed the significance of the study, presented delimitations of the study and defined the key terms as used in the study. Finally, the chapter outlined the organisation of the study.

Chapter 2 reviewed related literature. The chapter focused on the concept of formative assessment, the theoretical framework as well as models of formative assessment and how assessment challenges in English Language permeate these. The review mainly centred on two different models of formative assessment in English Language which have a bearing on the present study. The first is Hargreaves, Earl and Schmidt's Assessment theoretical model which was proffered as an attempt to comprehend the factors that challenge English Language teachers' assessment practices. The theoretical model postulates that the technological perspective, cultural perspective, political perspective and the post-modern perspective exert undue influence on the formative assessment process. The second is Hollingsworth's English Language Classroom Assessment Process model. The model states that classroom assessment undergoes the process of planning, designing, implementing, marking and reporting. This model calls for a collaborative effort of teachers and students in the assessment process though there are challenges to bear on the process by both internal and external factors.

The review of literature based on research questions first discussed how assessment is carried out in Makoni District and factors that influence teachers' formative assessment procedures. Internal and external factors were analysed. The review of literature also focused on the extent to which teachers faced formative assessment challenges. School-based assessment techniques were highlighted. The chapter also discussed findings from other studies (Empirical studies) on the formative assessment challenges facing English Language secondary school teachers and identified the gap in the literature, which the topic under the present study addressed.

Chapter 3 was a discussion on the methodological aspects that guided the research process. These included the research paradigm, the research approach, research design, population, sample and sampling techniques, data collection instruments, issues of validity, reliability/ trustworthiness, data collection procedures, data analysis and ethical considerations that the study attended to. The researcher, in this study, intended to get a holistic picture of formative assessment challenges facing English Language teachers in Makoni District. To this end, the researcher was objective enough to minimise any researcher biases, but at the same time subjective enough to allow for deeper insights into issues surrounding formative assessment challenges facing English Language teachers in Makoni District. Thus, the paradigm, that seemed ideal to capture both positivist and interpretivist ideas was considered, and the paradigm and mixed methods approach guided the present study. The pragmatic paradigm and mixed methods approach were considered for their flexibility in the use of both qualitative and quantitative techniques.

Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires that were administered to the English Language teachers while qualitative data were collected through follow-up interviews, non-participant classroom observations and analysing documents. Frequency counts and percentages were used to sum up indicators in quantitative data. Integration of qualitative data from questionnaires, interview data and document analyses was made in the presentation and discussion of findings.

Chapter four focused on data presentation and analysis/discussion. The researcher decided to present the data and immediately analyse/discuss them in order to avoid the unnecessary repetition that often characterises work where data presentation and data analysis/discussion are separated into two chapters. The data were presented and analysed/discussed in line with the questionnaire. Data from the follow-up interviews, non-participant observations and documents were used to buttress findings from questionnaires. The questionnaire addressed the objectives of the study which reflected the main research question and sub-research questions. In the process, triangulation of different forms of data was applied to ensure trustworthiness and credibility of data, and eventually reduce chances of false conclusions.

The chapter was divided into three sections. The first section examined demographic information of respondents. The variables included were the number of respondents who responded to the questionnaires, the schools from which they came , the gender of the

respondents, the age of the respondents, the qualifications of the respondents and their years of teaching experience. The second section presented and analysed/discussed data obtained from 23 questionnaire items to establish the formative assessment challenges facing English Language teachers. The questionnaire items were designed to answer the main research question: "What are the formative assessment challenges facing English Language Secondary school teachers?" as well as the sub-research questions. Examining demographic data was considered necessary as some trends in behaviour of certain variables can better be explained through reference to the demographic data.

The third section responded and answered to whether or not the research questions and objectives had been addressed and achieved. This section is aligned to section two which summarises the major findings in line with the research questions and objectives of the study. The section gives a summary of the findings of the formative assessment challenges facing English Language teachers, how assessment is done in Makoni District, what influences teachers' formative assessment procedures, the extent to which teachers face formative assessment challenges and the measures that can be put in place to reduce formative assessment challenges in English Language in Makoni District.

The study revealed that most teachers (52%) used learner-centred assessment most of the time although some teachers (48%) used the teacher-centred approach. Well-resourced schools used the learner-centred approach more than poorly-resourced schools. The study also found that teachers mostly assessed listening skills as opposed to reading, writing and speaking skills. The study revealed that many teacher-made assessments were aligned to instructional objectives and that teachers did not calculate variability for formative assessments. Measures of central tendency, especially the mean and median were mostly used because they were easy to calculate marks obtained from assessment activities.

The study revealed that most teachers provided feedback that was not detailed owing to workload and time constraints. Feedback was not prompt and thorough because teachers had to mark too many books. The study found that not all domains were assessed equally. The cognitive domain was the one that was given the most attention. It was found out that most teachers were comfortable with norm-referenced assessment. The study revealed that remediation was not being conducted properly because the teachers were not specialised in special education and that there was one District remedial tutor who was primary school-trained. Teachers pointed out that supervision instruments were silent about remediation

and that remediation was not part of their Key Result Area (KRA) under the Results-Based Management Performance Appraisal System. Higher order questions were used sparingly during the process of formative assessment.

The study established that motivational factors such as monetary rewards and working conditions influenced how teachers assessed. Most teachers pointed out that their working conditions were poor that they did not assess appropriately. There were no incentives for those who were exceptional in terms of assessment. A revelation of this study was that there was inadequate support staff to assist teachers carry out holistic assessment. The study also revealed that very few parents gave students the requisite support that enabled them to be competent collaborators during formative assessment. The SDCs did not provide adequate resources to schools so that teachers could effectively assess. There was a high pupil-teacher ratio in most schools and that recommended textbooks were in short supply. Schools had no language laboratories, Wi-Fi connectivity, enough furniture, electricity, readers and audio-visual aids. There was also over-utilisation of teachers in the township school. Teachers therefore, found it difficult to assess in poorly-resourced environments. The study revealed that teachers of other subjects influenced how English Language teachers assessed. Since English Language proficiency was not a major area of concern, most teachers used the vernacular to reinforce their assessment. Owing to lack of uniformity in the emphasis on correct grammar, students and teachers of English Language imitated teachers of other subjects in using the vernacular in assessment leading to students failing to comprehend appropriate assessment instruments and guidelines.

The teachers' personal philosophy affected how teachers carried out formative assessment in English Language. Some teachers pointed out that time and public examinations influenced how they assessed. Teachers believed that if there was no time on the timetable to assess, they would assess inappropriately. Assessment of most teachers was aligned to passing summative examinations rather than holistic assessment. Most teachers, according to the study, were realists. They believed in the use of pencil and paper type of assessment where students are expected to recognise rather than generate their own answers.

The national syllabus influenced how teachers assessed. Since it was too broad, some areas were not completed and as such, teachers could not meet specific requirements. Most teachers pointed out that, because they were not monitored closely, they did not

assess effectively. There were very few staff development programmes for English Language teachers.

The English Language departmental policy as well as the school syllabus, which most teachers said was crafted without their input, affected how teachers assessed. Policy circular 36 of 2006 influenced how teachers assessed, though many complained that the requirements were too excessive given the shortage of teaching and learning resources

Teachers highlighted that education partners influenced how they assessed. Some books supplied by the education partners were irrelevant and out-dated influencing teachers not to assess effectively. Some teachers pointed out that they believed English Language was a difficult subject to assess as there were too many concepts to be assessed.

The study found out that the nature of students affected how teachers assessed. The teachers pointed out that some students did not cooperate with teachers during assessment and some have a negative attitude towards assessment in English Language. Some could not cope with the assessment demands of the subject. A good number of students needed special education assistance which the teachers could not give. Some students did not even write assigned work, when appropriate formative assessment is a two-way process that calls for co-operation between the students and the teachers. Where students did not co-operate formative assessment became ineffective.

The study revealed that teachers (40%) had not received adequate training in assessment. They argued theory and practice of assessment did not match. The study established that to a greater extent, teachers did not have opportunities for engaging in research activities aligned to formative assessment. The study revealed that there is a lot of data required in formative assessment to a greater extent. Information required for formative assessment included observation schedules, records of students reading, comments on students' work books that identify areas for improvement and the reading results from monthly tests. Another revelation of this study was that there was no effective coordination of the various agencies involved in formative assessment.

5.3 Conclusions

The study's findings indicate that most English Language teachers face a number of assessment challenges. These challenges include lack of assessment knowledge due to

poor training, lack of resources, poor working conditions, high teacher-pupil ratios and lack of professional support from Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education officials. It was also observed that most teachers' assessment tends to focus on the cognitive domain in order to ensure that students pass examinations. This results in assessment focusing narrowly, despite the fact that some teachers may have knowledge on how assessment should be done.

5.4 Recommendations based on findings of the study

Based on the above findings and conclusions, the researcher recommends the following:

- given that many teachers face assessment challenges due to poor knowledge of assessment as a poor function of inadequate or poor training, the Government of Zimbabwe, through its Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology Development, should mount workshops, seminars and in-service courses to ensure that teachers get pre-requisite assessment skills. Teachers' colleges should also ensure that teachers in training are equipped with appropriate assessment skills,
- there is need for the Government, the church and community to supply adequate resources and reduce teacher-pupil ratios,
- since teachers are being influenced to conduct assessment that is examination-oriented, formative assessment needs to be introduced in the secondary schools as part of final assessment. It is high time ZIMSEC and schools used both summative and formative assessment, and
- lack of support from different stakeholders including policy-makers that tends to contradict teacher practices, for example, Education inspectors, should be rectified so the teachers get adequate professional assistance. There is need to develop a sustainable partnership between teachers and policy-makers. It is only in partnership that the expertise of policy-maker can be appreciated and where English Language teachers can view themselves as invaluable contributors to the education system. .

5.5 Recommendations for future research

The following recommendations for further research are made:

- a similar study in another district involving a large sample could shed more light on the assessment challenges faced by secondary school teachers,
- an in-depth case study be conducted at one selected rural day secondary school where the researcher will tap into the views of English Language teachers , the head of department, the school head, the school development committee, parents, students, the responsible authority and Education inspectors, among a host of stakeholders, and
- an evaluation of formative assessment activities be carried out in one classroom. This would provide insights into the kinds of assessment that go on, the challenges experienced and the assessment skills of the teachers. Such a study is likely to indicate exactly what should be done.

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List of Appendices

Appendix A: Questionnaire for Teachers

I am Enock Panganayi Mawuye in the Doctor of Philosophy (Education) student with the University of Fort Hare .The questionnaire is part of an investigation I am carrying out to establish formative assessment challenges facing English language teachers in Makoni District. The study is in partial fulfilment of the Doctoral programme.

Information collected is strictly confidential and will be used for this study

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

INSTRUCTION

Please read each statement carefully and tick in the box which express your feeling/ views/opinions towards formative assessment challenges facing English Language secondary school teachers in Makoni District. Please respond to all items in all sections.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1. Type of school

(Tick in the appropriate box)

Boarding school	
Rural day secondary school	
Resettlement day secondary school	
Urban day secondary school	

(Tick in the appropriate box)

2. GENDER

Male

☐	☐
--------------------------	--------------------------

Female

3.

(tick in the appropriate box)

Age range of teachers	
20 – 29 years	
30 – 39 years	
40 – 49 years	
50 – 59 years	
60 years and above	

4.

(Tick appropriate box)

Highest Qualifications	
Master of Education	
Bachelor of Arts (Education)	
Bachelor of Education (English)	
Diploma in Education (English)	
Certificate in Education (English)	
Other (specify)	

SECTION B

How formative assessment is carried out .

Statement		Responses				
Item		SA	A	UN	D	S
1	Learner-centred assessment is carried out regularly					
2	Teachers mostly assess reading skills					
3	Teacher-made tests are aligned to instructional objectives					
4	Teachers calculate variability (standard deviation) for classroom exercises					
5	Teachers provide detailed feedback to learners					
6	All domains are assessed equally					
7	Criterion-referenced assessment is used more than norm-referenced assessment					
8	Higher- order questions are mostly used in lessons					
9	Remediation is carried out by teachers					

Factors that influence teachers' formative assessment procedures in English Language.

Statement		Responses					
Item		Yes	%	No	%	Total	%

1	Motivational factors affecting how teachers assess.						
2	There is adequate support in schools to assist English Language teachers						
3	Parental support to students influence how teachers assess						
4	The School Development Committees influence the way teachers assess						
5	Teachers of other subjects influence the way English Language teachers assess						
6	The teachers' personal beliefs towards assessment affect the way teachers assess						
7	Education partners affect the way teachers assess.						
8	The nature of students affect the way teachers assess.						
9	There is sufficient time to assess at the school						
10	Curriculum policy documents influence how teachers assess						
11	Any other factors that influence the way teachers assess						

The extent to which teachers face formative assessment challenges.

Statement

Responses

Item		SA	A	U	D	S
1	Teachers receive adequate assessment training					
2	Automatic promotion promotes formative assessment					
3	There are opportunities available for engaging in formative assessment research					
4	There is little data required in formative assessment					

5	Any other issues relating to the extent to which teachers face formative assessment challenges					
---	--	--	--	--	--	--

Appendix B: Document analysis schedule

Attribute	Yes	No	Comment
1. Does the record of marks show measures of variability?			
2. Are teacher-made tests aligned to instructional objectives?			
3. Does the scheme-cum-plan show activities for those with learning disabilities?			

4. Are learning activities learner-centred?			
5. Are textbooks current?			
6. Are textbooks sufficient?			
7. Are tasks in the textbooks simple?			
8. Are textbooks in tandem with the national syllabus?			
9. Is the remedial record up-to-date?			
10. Do assessment activities adhere to the departmental policy?			
11. Is the national syllabus broad?			
12. Is the national syllabus easily interpretable?			
13. Does the school syllabus cater for the local environment?			
14. Do teachers use marking guides?			
15. Is written work sufficient?			
16. Are all domains assessed?			
17. Which macro-skill is mostly assessed?			
18. Is marking thorough?			
19. Is detailed feedback given?			
20. Are corrections being written?			
21. How many English Language lessons are on			

the school time table?			
22. Are there study periods on the time table?			
23. Do Heads of departments carry out systematic supervision?			
24. Are staff development meetings held frequently?			
25. Do education inspectors visit the schools frequently?			
26. Do the schools have adequate support staff?			
27. Do the teachers have up-to-date social records?			
28. Do the schools have English Language speaking policies?			
29. Any other documents relating to formative assessment?			

Appendix C: Observation protocol for English Language teachers

Attribute	Yes	No	Comment
1. Is learner centred assessment carried out regularly?			
2. Are writing skills mostly assessed?			
3. Are teacher-made tests aligned to instructional objectives?			
4. What statistical measures do the record of marks show?			

5. Is feedback provided by teachers adequate?			
6. Are all the three domains assessed equally?			
7. Is criterion-referenced assessment used more than norm-referenced assessment?			
8. Higher-order questions are mostly used in lessons.			
9. Is remediation being carried out properly?			
10. Do poor working conditions influence how teachers assess?			
11. Is there adequate support staff to assist English Language teachers?			
12. Parental support to pupils influences how English Language teachers assess.			
13. Does the School Development Committee provide adequate teaching and learning resources?			
14. Do teachers' personal belief systems affect the way teachers assess?			
15. Does the nature of pupils affect the way the teachers assess?			
16. Teachers are thoroughly trained to prepare them for effective formative assessment.			
17. Does automatic promotion facilitate effective formative assessment?			
18. There are opportunities for engaging in formative assessment research.			
19. Is a lot of data required in formative			

assessment?			
20. Any observations related to formative assessment?			

Appendix D: Request for permission to conduct research

House No. BC 854A

Vengere Township

Rusape

03 January 2017

The Permanent Secretary

Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

P.O. Box CY 121

Causeway

Harare

Zimbabwe

Dear Sir/Madam

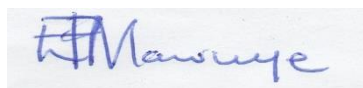
RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am a PhD student studying with the University of Fort Hare, Alice campus, South Africa. I am requesting your permission to conduct my research in your Secondary Schools in Makoni District.

The aim of the study is to analyse formative assessment challenges facing English Language secondary school teachers in Makoni District. I therefore request your permission to administer questionnaires, conduct interviews and non-participant observations and analyse documents. I intend to carry out the study during the first and second terms of 2017.

I hope my request will be considered favourably.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mawuye', with a stylized initial 'E' or 'P' to the left.

Mawuye Enock Panganayi

Email: epmawuye@gmail.com

Cell: 0774 031 721

Supervisor details:

Prof. Taruvinga D. Mushoriwa

Email: T Mushoriwa@ufh.ac.za Cell: +27(0)780830012

Appendix E: Permission to carry out research in Makoni District E. P. Mawuye



Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
Makoni District
P O Box 232
Rusape
19 February 2017

Dear Sir/Madam

Ref: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN MAKONI DISTRICT – E. P. MAWUYE.

This letter serves to inform you that Mr E. P. MAWUYE has been authorised to carry out his PHD research entitled, “An analysis of formative assessment challenges facing English Language (L2) Secondary School teachers in Makoni District.

Kindly assist him.

Sincerely



N. MACHINI (MR)

DISTRICT SCHOOLS INSPECTOR – MAKONI

Cc Provincial Education Director – Manicaland
Secretary of Primary and Secondary Education

Appendix F : Consent by participants

The purpose of the study and the extent to which I will be involved was clearly explained to me. I have understood the essence of the study and the extent of my involvement. As such I voluntarily consent to take part in this study. I understand that I am free to withdraw from participating in the study at any given time without penalty. I further agree to being audio-taped during my participation. In addition, I understand that any information I provide will remain confidential and that upon completion of the study, I will be given feedback on the findings of the study. As a way of showing my willingness to participate in this study I give my name, signature and contact details.

Name.....Signature.....Date.....

Email address.....Cell number.....

Appendix G: Ethical Clearance Certificate



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE **REC-270710-028-RA Level 01**

Certificate Reference Number: MUS141SMAW01

Project title: **An analysis of formative assessment challenges facing English Language (L2) Secondary School teachers in the Makoni District of Zimbabwe: A study of 5 schools.**

Nature of Project PhD in Education

Principal Researcher: Enock Mawuye

Supervisor: Prof T.D Mushoriwa

Co-supervisor: N/A

On behalf of the University of Fort Hare's Research Ethics Committee (UREC) I hereby give ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project and research instrument(s). Should any other instruments be used, these require separate authorization. The Researcher may therefore commence with the research as from the date of this certificate, using the reference number indicated above.

Please note that the UREC must be informed immediately of

- Any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the document

Appendix H: Editor's Certificate

SOL PLAATJE

UNIVERSITY

Dr. J. Sibanda (Senior Lecturer: English)

School of Education

Private Bag X 5008, Kimberley, 8300

North Campus, Chapel Street, Kimberley

E-mail: Jabulani.Sibanda@spu.ac.za

Website: www.spu.ac.za

Tel: 27534910142

Cell: 0845282087

23 May 2017

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I hereby confirm that I have proof read and edited the following PhD Thesis using Windows

'Tracking' System to reflect my comments and suggested corrections for the student to action:

AN ANALYSIS OF FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT CHALLENGES FACING ENGLISH LANGUAGE (L2)

SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN THE MAKONI DISTRICT OF ZIMBABWE: A STUDY OF FIVE SCHOOLS.

BY

MAWUYE ENOCK PANGANAYI

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATION.

Although the greatest care was taken in the editing of this document, the final responsibility for the product rests with the author.

Sincerely



SIGNATURE

23.05.2017

DATE

Appendix I: Guidelines on the implementation of remedial work at secondary schools

HARARE
Zimbabwe

14 April 2008

Director's Circular No. 26 of 2008

DISTRIBUTION

Directors: Head Office
Provincial Education Directors
Deputy Directors: Head Office
Deputy Provincial Education Directors
District Education Officers
Education Officers
Principal Educational Psychologists
Heads: Secondary Schools
Executive Secretary: ZIMTA
Executive Secretary: PTUZ
Executive Secretary: NASH
Responsible Authorities
Church Education Secretaries
Association of Trust Schools

GUIDELINES ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF REMEDIAL WORK AT SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL

1.0 PREAMBLE

The transition from Primary to Secondary schools often brings excitement to some learners and stress to others. In either case, challenges of emotional and/or social maladjustment may result and these challenges are usually followed by learning difficulties.

While research is sketchy and inconclusive as to instructional inadequacies and their importance as causal factors in underachievement at secondary level, there appears to be little doubt that they loom large as factors to be considered.

What is also crystally clear currently is that there are more learners who are struggling in the secondary schools than in the primary schools. Ineffective teaching can be an important causal factor in this instance: whether it is due to inadequate teacher preparation; to misdirected emphasis in the curriculum; to lack of attention to individual differences; or to unsatisfactory teacher-learner relationships.

In the context of the above, intervention programmes are, therefore, necessary to either prevent or correct learning disabilities. Remediation is therefore considered to be very useful as one of those measures aimed at improving the pass rate in public examinations. To this end, there is need to employ scientific approaches such as clinical remediation to ensure effective support to the learners. Such approaches systematically attend to learners' learning challenges.

This circular, therefore, provides guidelines on how secondary schools can set up and operate functional and effective remediation in all subjects in general and in Mathematics and English in particular.

2.0 TARGET GROUP FOR REMEDIATION

As positive and solid foundations need to be established at an early stage, the ideal target group for secondary remediation would be at Form One level. After a term of learning, it should be possible to identify those learners who, for whatever reasons, have not been able to make meaningful adjustments in their new environments and therefore require remediation.

The most important thing to remember at this level is the sensitivity of the teenagers to failure or anything tending to point in that direction. In this regard, a remedial programme should be structured in such a way that it is a part of the greater subject or school motivational strategy and not a source of stigma.

3.0 SCREENING OR SELECTION OF LEARNERS FOR REMEDIATION

At secondary school level, there should be, in the main, two types of remediation, viz: clinical remediation and in-class or corrective remediation. At those schools where Guidance and Counselling programmes are being effectively implemented, learners with learning difficulties in any subject area are not shy to come forward and request for assistance. To this end, self-referral should be activated at all schools as a major starting point for screening and further assessment.

Subject teachers and departments should develop screening instruments that they can use to identify the strengths and weaknesses of those learners who refer themselves and those referred by other teachers or even parents and guardians.

Schools Psychological Services and Special Needs Education officers should be called in regularly to assist with the assessment process and provision of instruments that are standardized so that there is uniformity in the system. Sensitively done, regular class screening, subject by subject, will reduce stigma that can easily be attached to the teenagers and this will assist in making the selected learners drive the programme. As the progress towards the development of national tests gathers momentum, school-based assessment instruments will become the major inputs needed for the programme.

4.0 DISTINCTION BETWEEN CLINICAL AND IN-CLASS REMEDIATION

4.1 Clinical Remediation

Clinical remediation is, essentially, a developmental programme aimed at assisting the learner to achieve near to his or her capacity. This programme is usually provided outside the regular classroom. Narrowly defined, clinical remediation usually implies small-group or individual instruction that is conducted by the class teacher or a special teacher outside the regular classroom.

In practice, learners are sometimes offered remedial instruction when their achievement is two or more years below their capacity level. Obviously, this is an arbitrary criterion, but useful, nonetheless.

4.2 In-Class remediation

In-class instruction can be differentiated from strictly remedial work in two ways. First, in-class remediation is given within the framework of the regular classroom; whereas clinical remediation is offered apart from the classroom set up. Most in-class remediation is typically offered by the classroom teacher or the subject teacher.

5.0 SUBJECTS FOR CLINICAL REMEDIATION

Once learners are selected for clinical remediation, they must be further exposed to diagnostic tests, to identify more specifically areas of need. While this type of remediation is usually restricted to the two "main" subjects, English and Mathematics at primary school level, it is important to target all subjects at secondary school level because learners will now be preparing to follow different pathways of specialization.

Languages become part of the whole remedial programme as they are key to communication while Mathematics is also functional across most subject areas. The sciences, the practicals, and the commercials, for example, all have some component of mathematics.

6.0 SELECTION OF THE REMEDIAL TEACHERS

Heads of departments should, whenever circumstances permit, choose experienced and patient teachers to handle the remedial classes for each subject area. The number of these teachers can be gradually increased in line with sizes of the schools. In-class remediation, on the other hand should be the responsibility of every subject teacher, as an on-going process.

7.0 TIME TABLING

As situations differ from school to school, every school should do what is possible within the following broad guidelines:

- Remediation should be done at least twice a week. (Two periods).
- Avoid situations where learners' interests in other activities are compromised through inappropriate time-tabling which results in conflict of interests.
- Where schools offer study periods, this would be the best time, as it would give the impression that the learners are being assisted during the normal study periods.
- Concessions need to be put in place for the teachers, through considerations such as making remediation part of their workload in terms of the requisite number of periods. This is important.

8.0 IN-SERVICE TRAINING

The remedial teachers will from time to time receive in-service training from Schools Psychological Services and Special Needs Education (SPS/SNE) personnel on the relevant techniques and other requirements. Such training will include investigative and counselling skills, which will complement the academic inputs.

9.0 CONCLUSION

It is the Ministry's expectation that each secondary school will, in an endeavor to provide quality education and improve its learner pass rate in public examinations, set up a viable and effective remedial programme. Equally, it is hoped that remedial programmes will be designed in a manner that does not ruffle the learners' ego systems.

Dr A.C. Ncube

Director: Schools Psychological Services and Special Needs Education

for: **SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE**

Dr A.C. Ncube (2011/12)

Appendix J: Guidelines on work of coverage in primary and secondary schools

100 copies

Ref: D/202/1

Ministry of Education Sport and Culture
P.O Box CY 121
Causeway
Zimbabwe

3 August 2006

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
REGISTRY SUPERVISOR
(MANICALAND)
13 SEP 2006
P.O. BOX 146, MUTARE
ZIMBABWE

all communications should be addressed to
"The Secretary for Education, Sport and Culture"
Telephone: 73 051/59 and 734071
Telegraphic address: "EDUCATION"
Fax: 794505

ZIMBABWE

DIRECTOR'S CIRCULAR NUMBER 36 OF 2006

Distribution

- Directors: Head Office
- Provincial Education Directors
- District Education Officers
- Heads of Schools
- Teachers Associations: ZIMTA, TUZ and PTUZ
- National Association of Primary School Heads
- National Association of Secondary School Heads

RE: GUIDELINES ON WORK COVERAGE IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

1.0 PREAMBLE

Inspection reports from all over the country do indicate that generally, the amount of written work administered by teachers to their classes is inadequate. The purpose of this circular is to lay out minimum work expectations in various subject areas.

It is important to note that this circular gives minimum work expectations that should be exceeded whenever it is found that the situation on the ground warrants increased pupil activity. Heads of Department/TICs should come up with clear and appropriate school work coverage policies in line with the provisions of this circular.

To improve the provisions of this circular where necessary, addressees are required to submit their inputs to Head Office through their Professional Associations.

2.0 SCHEMING AND LESSON DELIVERY

- 2.1 New schemes of work should be drawn up in advance each term.
- 2.2 Scheme-of planning should indicate a breakdown of the lessons taught each term.
- 2.3 Teachers must use a variety of teaching methods and aids in order to make their lessons more vivid and exciting especially the use of computers and the Internet. They should prepare and use charts, pictures, objects within their schools environment, literature from periodicals, magazines, newspapers, computers, etc.

04 JUL 2011
P.O. BOX 100, VAZURA

5.0 SECONDARY SCHOOLS MINIMUM WRITTEN WORK EXPECTATIONS

5.1 ENGLISH AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES (Forms 1-4)

5.1.1 Free/ guided composition	once per fortnight
5.1.2 Summary exercise	once per month
5.1.3 Language usage exercises	thrice per week
5.1.4 Comprehension exercises	once per week
5.1.5 Test	once a month

5.2 LITERATURE IN ENGLISH (FORMS 3-6)

5.2.1 Short answer exercises	once per week
5.2.2 Test	once per month
5.3.3 Essay	once per fortnight

5.3 SHONA/ NDEBELI

5.3.1 Essay (Literature topics inclusive)	once per fortnight
5.3.2 Short Exercises	twice per week
- grammar	once per fortnight
- Comprehension	once a month
5.3.3 Test	

5.4 SCIENCE

5.4.1 Theoretical exercises	once per week
5.4.2 Practical exercises	once per week
5.4.3 Test	once per fortnight

Science lessons should be activity based, student- centred, experimental and a lot of improvisation is called for. The lessons should be double periods

5.5 MATHEMATICS

5.5.1 Written exercise	daily
5.5.2 Test	once per month

- ❖ Pupils may be allowed to mark some of their daily exercises (at most two per week) under the teacher's supervision. The teacher should then put the totals in red to acknowledge the supervision.
- ❖ Pupils are expected to do some written work during the lessons which the teacher should mark while the lesson is in progress. The recommended time for class work is 10-15 minutes
- ❖ Teachers are urged to test pupils on work covered in previous terms in addition to tests per topic.

5.6 HISTORY

5.6.1 Objective type of written work (FORMS 1-4)	once per week
5.6.2 Essay	once per fortnight

5.6.3 Test

once per month

5.7 GEOGRAPHY

5.7.1 Short exercise

once per week

5.7.2 Major written exercise/essay

once per fortnight

5.7.3 Test

once per month

NB In both History and Geography, project work should be encouraged at all levels.

5.8 TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL (TECH/VOC) SUBJECTS

5.8.1 ZJC AND 'O' LEVEL: Building Studies, Woodwork and Metalwork

5.8.1.1 Theory exercise

once per fortnight

5.8.1.2 Theory test

once per month

5.8.1.3 Projects

two per term

5.8.1.4 Practical exercises

once per week

5.8.1.5 Practical tests

once per term

5.8.2 ZJC AND 'O' LEVEL: Technical Graphics

5.8.2.1 Written exercises

twice per week

5.8.2.2 Test

once per month

5.8.2.3 Design project

once per year

5.8.3 'A' LEVEL TECHNICAL GRAPHICS: Geometrical and Mechanical Drawing

5.8.3.1 Assignments

thrice per week

5.8.3.2 Tests

once per month

5.8.3.1 Project

once per year

5.8.4 ZJC AND 'O' LEVEL FASHION AND FABRICS, FOOD AND NUTRITION AND HOME MANAGEMENT

5.8.4.1 Short exercise

once per fortnight

5.8.4.2 Test

once per month

5.8.4.3 Practical project (FF& HM)

once per year

5.8.4.4 Practical (FN)

once per week

5.8.4.5 Practical test

once per term

5.8.5 'A' LEVEL: DRESS AND TEXTILE, ART AND DESIGN, and FOOD SCIENCE

5.8.5.1 Assignment

once per week

5.8.5.2 Test

twice per term

5.8.5.3 Practical test

4-5 per term

5.9 BUSINESS/COMMERCIAL SUBJECTS

5.9.1 Exercises	twice per week
5.9.2 Essay	once per fortnight
5.9.3 Test	once per month

In Accounts, there should be one exercise per lesson, which should be marked by the teacher and pupils.

5.10 AGRICULTURE

5.10.1 Exercise	once per fortnight
5.10.1 Essay	once per fortnight
5.10.2 Practical test	twice per term

5.11 COMPUTER STUDIES

5.11.1 Practical exercises	once per week
5.11.2 Test	once per term
5.11.3 Form Three project	once per year

5.12 ZJC AND 'O' LEVEL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION/ BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

5.12.1 Short exercise	once per week
5.12.2 Essay	once per fortnight
5.12.3 Test	once per month

5.13 'A' LEVEL DIVINITY

5.13.1 Assignments	once per week
5.13.2 Essay	once per fortnight
5.13.3 Test	thrice per term
5.13.4 Research paper	once per term

Pupils' notes should always be checked at least once every month.

The above recommended work coverage does not include requirements for public examinations as prescribed by ZIMSEC and HEXCO.



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Appendix K : Forms 1-4 English syllabus 2015-2022



FORMS 1 - 4 ENGLISH LANGUAGE SYLLABUS
2015 - 2022

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1.0 Preamble

1.1 Introduction

The Forms 1 – 4 English Language Syllabus covers the learning and teaching of the English Language taking into account the importance of English as a vehicle for communication and a tool for cultural, political, religious, social and economic development. It seeks to help **all learners** to ethically and responsibly utilise Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). The syllabus also seeks to prepare **all learners** to use English in studying other learning areas across the curriculum while offering opportunities for lifelong learning. The syllabus promotes the use of the communicative-functional approach to the teaching and learning of the English Language. It recognises the use of the English Language as a tool for inclusivity that encourages learners to cherish diversity and celebrate differences. The teaching and learning of the language aims to produce learners who are not only linguistically competent, but also patriotic, ethical and can function in different roles and situations which they are likely to encounter after leaving school. The syllabus aims to promote Unhu/Ubuntu among learners through selection of appropriate language learning materials.

1.2 Rationale

As a medium of instruction, the English Language assists in the teaching and learning of other areas across the curriculum. Being a global language, it offers **all learners** opportunities to communicate in a wider spectrum. In addition, the skills mastered in the study of the English Language will open up opportunities for employment in various media fields and also enable them to be writers in their own right, who are able to protect their intellectual properties.

The study of the English Language will enhance development of skills in:

- Problem solving
- Critical thinking
- Decision making
- Conflict resolution
- Leadership
- Self-management
- Communication
- Technology and innovation
- Enterprise skills
- Team work

1.3 Summary of Content (Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes)

The Forms 1 – 4 English Language syllabus emphasises the learning and teaching of the four macro-skills, namely: listening, speaking, reading and writing and their sub-skills, as well as other literacy and numeracy skills. The syllabus also promotes the development of positive attitudes and interpersonal communication through proper use of language. The teaching and learning of visual, aural, manual and

tactile skills is emphasised in order to accommodate learners with diverse needs.

1.4 Methodology and Time Allocation

1.4.1 Methodology

In using this syllabus, the functional-communicative, multi-sensory approaches and principles of individualisation, concreteness, totality and wholeness are recommended, operating within the spiral framework. This syllabus encourages the use of learner-centred and interactive activities that enable **all learners** to develop and understand linguistic concepts and their use and usage in everyday life. Through this approach, language forms and structures are to be taught by using them in appropriate contexts rather than as isolated forms.

Within the functional-communicative approach, the following strategies are recommended:

- Debate and discussion
- Individual and group presentation
- Drama
- Role play/ Imitation and simulation
- Poetry and dance
- Educational tours
- E-Learning
- Research/Case studies
- Puppetry
- Diorama
- Models/Resource persons

Time allocation

For effective teaching of English Language at this level, a minimum time allocation of 6 – 7 periods of 35 - 40 minutes per week is recommended.

1.5 Assumptions

It is assumed that learners:

- are literate in English Language
- are motivated to learn English Language
- are capable of learning English Language
- have basic ICT skills

1.6 Cross-cutting Themes

In the teaching and learning of English Language, the following cross-cutting themes should be taken into consideration through the use of texts selected, projects and assignments.

- Gender
- Children's Rights and Responsibilities
- Disaster Risk Management
- Sexuality, HIV and AIDS Education
- Child Protection
- Heritage Studies
- Human Rights
- Collaboration
- Environmental Issues

2.0 Presentation of the syllabus

The English Language syllabus is presented as a single document that emphasises the teaching of the four macro-skills and their sub-skills.

3.0 Aims

The aims of the syllabus are to:

- 3.1 promote in learners an awareness of the usefulness of the English Language as a medium of national and international communication, as well as the value of effective language command and use for personal and national development.
- 3.2 develop in learners a lifelong reading habit for enjoyment and acquisition of knowledge.
- 3.3 develop in learners appropriate techniques for intensive and extensive reading.
- 3.4 further develop and foster writing skills and talent in learners.
- 3.5 extend the learners` skills of listening for different purposes.
- 3.6 help learners communicate effectively in spoken English/Sign Language in different situations.
- 3.7 expand learners` interactive skills using Information Communication Technology.

4.0 Syllabus Objectives

By the end of Form 4, learners should be able to:

- 4.1 construct correct English sentences orally and in writing/braille
- 4.2 use appropriate language (registers) in different situations
- 4.3 read a variety of texts for knowledge and recreation
- 4.4 make appropriate use of cyberspace (social networks)
- 4.5 evaluate information given orally or in writing/**signing**
- 4.6 listen to and understand texts or any form of communication in English

4.7 use writing conventions correctly

4.8 express themselves using appropriate non-verbal communication skills

4.9 write meaningfully on a variety of topics

4.10 use skills acquired for creative writing or career identification

5.0 Topics and Skills

5.1 Topics

- Oral work
- Language structures
- Comprehension
- Composition
- Summary
- Registers

5.2 Skills

The learning and teaching of the English Language will focus on the following macro skills and their sub skills:

- Listening/observing
- Speaking/signing
- Reading/signing
- Writing

6.0 SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

6.1 TOPIC/SKILL 1: LISTENING/OBSERVING

CONCEPTS/ASPECTS	FORM 1	FORM 2	FORM 3	FORM 4
Listening comprehension	• Questions • Stories • Note taking	• Questions • Stories • Note taking	• Narration • Note taking • Summary • Inference • Evaluation	• Inference • Note taking • Summary • Evaluation
Oral instructions	• Simple directions • Announcements • Messages	• Simple directions • Announcements • Messages	• Complex directions • Announcements • Messages	• Complex directions • Announcements • Messages
Conversations	• Dialogues	• Dialogues	• Dialogues • Interviews	• Dialogues • Interviews
Purposeful listening	• Dictation • Directed listening • Tone and intonation • Pronunciation	• Dictation • Directed listening	• Dictation • Directed listening • Selective listening	• Dictation • Directed listening • Selective listening

6.2 TOPIC/ SKILL 2: SPEAKING/SIGNING

CONCEPTS/ASPECTS	FORM 1	FORM 2	FORM 3	FORM 4
Pronunciation	• Eight cardinal vowels • consonant clusters • Diphthongs • Silent consonants	• Weak and strong forms of vowels • Consonant blends and digraphs • Diphthongs	• Intonation and stress patterns • Tone and mood • Triphthongs	• Intonation and stress patterns • Tone and mood • Triphthongs
Registers	• Introductions • Greetings • Requests • Invitations • Apologies and compliments • Telephone conversations	• Telephone conversations • Express gratitude • Advising	• Degree of formality and informality • Express opinion • Complaints • Condolences • Interviews	• Discussing topical issues • Condolences • Complaints • Persuasion • Interviews • Announcements
Descriptions	• Self • Environment • Objects • Processes	• People and scenes • Processes	• Processes • Events	• Events • Processes

CONCEPTS/ASPECTS	FORM 1	FORM 2	FORM 3	FORM 4
	s			
Debates	• Topical issues – local • Selected cross-cutting issues	• Topical issues – local • Selected cross-cutting issues	• Topical issues – national and international • Cross-cutting themes	• Topical issues – national and international • Cross-cutting themes
Speeches	• Impromptu • Prepared	• Impromptu • Prepared	• Impromptu • Prepared	• Impromptu • Prepared

6.3 TOPIC/SKILL 3: READING/SIGNING

CONCEPTS/ASPECTS	FORM 1	FORM 2	FORM 3	FORM 4
Intensive reading	• Recall questions • Skimming • Scanning • Inference • Word meanings • Note taking	• Recall questions • Skimming • Scanning • Inference • Word meanings • Note taking	• Recall questions • Skimming • Scanning • Inference • Word meanings • Note making • Evaluation • Summary • Analysis	• Recall questions • Skimming • Scanning • Inference • Word meanings • Note making • Evaluation • Summary • Analysis

	- making • Evaluation • Summary	- making • Evaluation • Summary	• Synthesis • Paraphrasing	• Synthesis • Paraphrasing
Extensive reading	• Summary • Characters • Setting • Themes • Plot	• Summary • Characters • Setting • Themes • Plot	• Characterisation • Plot • Setting • Style • Themes	• Characterisation • Plot • Setting • Style • Themes
Referencing	• Reference sources • Sections of a book • The Internet	• Reference sources • Sections of a book • The Internet	• Reference sources • Sections of a book • Encyclopaedia • Journals • The Internet	• Reference sources • Sections of a book • Encyclopaedia • Journals • The Internet

6.4 TOPIC/SKILL 4: WRITING

CONCEPTS/ASPECTS	FORM 1	FORM 2	FORM 3	FORM 4
Aspects of composition writing	• Basic sentence construction rules • Types of sentences	• Types of sentences • Elements of a paragraph • Registers	• Types of sentences • Paragraph unity • Registers • Discourse	• Types of sentences • Paragraph unity • Registers • Figurative

CONCEPTS/ASPECTS	FORM 1	FORM 2	FORM 3	FORM 4
	• Elements of a paragraph • Registers • Linking devices	• Linking devices	• markers • Amplification of notes • Figurative language	• language • Amplification of notes • Discourse markers
Free compositions	• Narrative • Descriptive • Creative writing	• Narrative • Descriptive • Informative • Creative writing • Discursive	• Narrative • Descriptive • Informative • Argumentative • Discursive • Creative writing	• Narrative • Descriptive • Informative • Argumentative • Discursive • Creative writing
Guided compositions	• Letters • Reports	• Letters • Reports • Speeches	• Memos • Letters • Articles • Curriculum vitae • Reports • Speeches	• Memos • Letters • Articles • Curriculum vitae • Reports • Speeches

6.5 TOPIC/SKILL 5: SUPPORTING LANGUAGE STRUCTURES

The following supporting language structures should be taught from Form 1 - 4. Teachers are to select what is appropriate to the level of their learners and bear in mind that the structures should be taught in context and spread across all the language skills.

SUB TOPIC	FORM 1	FORM 2	FORM 3	FORM 4
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SUB TOPIC	FORM 1	FORM 2	FORM 3	FORM 4
Nouns	• Types of nouns • Plural forms • Opposites • Prefixes	• Types of nouns • Opposites • Prefixes • Gender	• Noun formation • Prefixes • Suffixes	• Noun formation • Prefixes • Suffixes
Verbs	• Types of tenses • Subject-verb agreement • Sequence of tenses	• Subject-verb agreement • Sequence of tenses • Types of tenses	• Types of tenses • Auxiliaries and modals • Phrasal verbs	• Types of tenses • Auxiliaries and modals • Phrasal verbs • Active and passive forms
Pronouns	• Personal • Relative	• Relative • Possessive • Reflexive	• Relative • Possessive • Reflexive	• Relative • Possessive • Reflexive
Adjectives	• Formation • Comparatives • Superlatives • Opposites • Prefixes and suffixes	• Formation • Comparatives • Superlatives • Opposites • Prefixes and suffixes	• Order when more than one follow each other • Prefixes and suffixes • Non-gradable	• Order when more than one follow each other • Prefixes and suffixes • Non-gradable
Adverbs	• Formation	• Formation	• Adverbials of time, place, manner and reason	• Adverbial phrases and clauses
Spelling and word formation	• Consonant-vowel combinations	• Common prefixes and suffixes in	• Derivative words • Homonyms	• Noun formation • Prefixes and

SUB TOPIC	FORM 1	FORM 2	FORM 3	FORM 4
	- Words with unusual vowel combinations - Spelling rules	- word formation - Homonyms - Homophones - Homographs	- Homophones - Homographs	- suffixes - Homonyms - Homophones - Homographs
Sentence construction	- Simple and compound - Conjunctions - Punctuation - Articles - Determiners - Prepositions - Questions - Commands - Exclamations	- Simple and compound - Conjunctions - Phrases - Articles - Determiners - Prepositions - Punctuation - Questions - Question tags - Commands - Exclamations	- Simple, compound and complex - Clauses - Phrases - Conjunctions - Determiners - Prepositions - Punctuation and meaning - Questions - Question tags - Commands - Exclamations	- Simple, compound and complex - Discourse markers - Sentence modifiers - Conjunctions - Determiners - Prepositions - Punctuation and meaning - Questions - Question tags - Commands - Exclamations
Direct and indirect speech	- Punctuation - Switching	- Punctuation - Switching	- Punctuation - Switching	- Punctuation - Switching

7.0 COMPETENCY MATRIX

7.1 FORM 1

7.1.1 TOPIC/SKILL 1: LISTENING/OBSERVING

CONCEPTS/ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
Listening comprehension	• answer questions • retell stories heard • take notes	• Simple recall • Comprehension • Attentive listening • Note taking	• Listening to oral texts • Responding to questions • Narrating stories listened to • Writing notes from an oral text • Retelling headlines from broadcasts	• Print media • ICT tools • Story books
Oral instructions	• follow directions • respond to instructions • relay messages accurately • repeat announcements	• Directions • Instructions • Messages • Announcements	• Taking appropriate action as directed • Conveying accurate messages • Stating the gist of announcements	• ICT tools
Conversations	• engage in meaningful dialogues	• Dialogues • Registers • Speech	• Role playing • Turn-taking	• Telephone • School

CONCEPTS/ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
		etiquette		calendar of events • Personal diaries
Purposeful listening	• take dictation • select relevant information to answer specific questions • deduce meaning from the tone and intonation of the speaker	• Dictation • Specific questions • Mood and tone	• Writing dictated texts • Answering specific questions • Working out meaning from the tone and intonation of the speaker	• ICT tools • Print media

7.1.2 TOPIC/SKILL 2: SPEAKING/SIGNING

CONCEPTS/ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
Pronunciation	• distinguish pure vowels from other	• Consonant clusters • Diphthongs	• Reading words with various	• ICT tools • Word cards

	- vowels - articulate consonant clusters and diphthongs - reproduce silent consonants	- Silent consonants - Vowels	- combinations of vowels and consonants - Practising articulating the cardinal vowels - Practising pronunciation	
Registers	demonstrate use of appropriate language in given situations	- Introductions - Greetings - Requests - Invitations - Apologies - Compliments - Phone conversations - Phone etiquette	- Introducing oneself or others - Exchanging greetings - Making requests - Giving invitations or turning them down - Apologising or accepting apologies - Conducting phone conversations	- ICT tools - Puppets - Pictures

Descriptions	• Describe self, objects and the environment • explain simple processes	• Self • Objects • Environment • Processes	• Giving details of one self • Producing detailed descriptions of objects and activities • Giving descriptive details about the environment • Discussing simple processes	• ICT tools • Objects within the environment
Debates	• debate on topical and selected cross-cutting issues • express opinions • distinguish facts from opinions	• Debating procedures • HIV and AIDS • Children`s rights and responsibilities • ICT • Environment	• Holding debates on topical and selected cross-cutting issues • Giving pros and cons on given topics • Justifying one`s	• ICT tools • Print media • Local events

			stance on given issues Defending one's opinion(s)	
Speeches	- deliver prepared speeches - present impromptu speeches	- Prepared speech - Impromptu speech - Appropriate register	- Presenting prepared speeches - Delivering impromptu speeches	- ICT tools - Print media

7.1.3 TOPIC/SKILL 3: READING/SIGNING

CONCEPTS/ ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
Intensive reading	- answer a variety of questions - skim and scan a text - draw inferences from written texts - make notes on read texts	- Types of questions - Skimming - Scanning - Contextual meaning - Note making - Summary writing - Evaluation: - Character	- Responding to a variety of questions - Reading texts for general information - Stating information that is not explicitly	- Prescribed textbooks - Newspapers - Magazines - ICT tools - Statistical data

CONCEPTS/ ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
	summarise a text read	- Style - Setting - Tone and mood	- Working out contextual meanings of words and phrases - Compiling notes on texts read - Role playing - Debating on texts read - writing summaries of texts read - evaluating texts read	

Extensive reading	- summarise a text read - identify characters in a book read - outline the setting of a story read - list the themes from	- Plot - Character identification - Setting - Themes	- Giving background information of texts read - Presenting summaries of texts read - Listing characters in a text	- Novels - Magazines - Short stories
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	a read text		• Explaining the setting of a text • Identifying themes in a text read • Maintaining vocabulary note books	
Referencing	• find information from a variety of sources • identify different sections of a book • use the internet ethically	• Reference sources: - Dictionaries - Directories - Maps - Catalogues - The Internet • Sections of a book: - Contents table - Preface - Glossary - Index - Appendices • Cyber ethics	• Locating information from a variety of reference sources • Discussing different sections of books and their purposes • Surfing the internet ethically	• Dictionaries • Directories • Novels • Maps • ICT tools

7.1.4 TOPIC/SKILL 4: WRITING/BRAILLING

CONCEPTS/ ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
Aspects of composition writing	• write sentences with Subject Verb Object combinations • distinguish between a simple and a compound sentence • write a coherent paragraph • use appropriate register in different situations • connect ideas in logical coherent paragraphs	• Simple sentences • Compound sentences • Topic sentences • Developers • Terminators • Appropriate register • Discourse markers	• Constructing grammatically correct simple sentences • Writing a variety of simple and compound sentences • Composing a coherent paragraph • Writing in an appropriate register • Writing paragraphs using markers of coherence and cohesive devices	• ICT tools • Recommended textbooks • Anthologies
Free compositions	• display various narrative techniques • depict	• Paragraphing • Narrative techniques • Varied vocabulary	• Writing narrative compositions • Writing	• Anthologies • ICT tools • Print media • Pictures

CONCEPTS/ ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
	- unique personal traits in descriptive writing - paint vivid images through the use of language - demonstrate creative writing skills	- Atmosphere and observation - Creative writing	- descriptive compositions - Composing poems and short stories	
Guided compositions	- write letters - compile reports - expand pegs	- Friendly letters - Business letters - Paragraphing - Amplification of pegs - Apt register - Instructions	- Writing well-structured compositions - Compiling meaningful reports - Amplifying notes	- ICT tools - Print media - Pictures

7.2 FORM 2

7.2.1 TOPIC/SKILL 1: LISTENING/OBSERVING

CONCEPTS/ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
Listening comprehension	• answer different types of questions • list main ideas from the stories told • take notes	• Factual, interpretive and evaluative questions • Note taking	• Listening to different oral texts • Responding to questions • Identifying the main ideas heard • Writing notes from oral texts	• ICT tools • Oral texts • Resource persons
Oral instructions	• follow directions • react appropriately to instructions given • respond appropriately to announcements	• Directions • Instructions • Messages • Announcements • Explanations	• Taking appropriate actions as directed • Relaying the messages accurately • Reacting to announcements	• ICT tools • Puppets • Print media
Conversations	• converse	• Dialogues	• Dialoguing	• Phone

CONCEPTS/ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
	freely in the correct register		on topical and cross-cutting issues	• School calendar of events • Personal diaries • Talking books
Attentive listening	• take dictation accurately • report on broadcasts	• Dictation • Broadcasts	• Writing dictated texts • Giving feedback on broadcasts	• ICT tools

7.2.2

TOPIC/SKILL 2: SPEAKING/SIGNING

CONCEPTS/ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
Pronunciation	- differentiate weak from strong forms of vowels - pronounce consonant blends, digraphs and diphthongs	- Vowels – weak and strong - Consonant blends, digraphs - Diphthongs	- Distinguishing weak from strong vowels - Articulating consonant blends, digraphs and diphthongs	- ICT tools - Talking books
Registers	use registers appropriate to different situations	- Conversations - Advice - Gratitude	- Conversing in the appropriate register - Giving advice - Accepting advice - Expressing gratitude	- ICT tools - Talking books
Descriptions	demonstrate	Processes	Describing	Objects

CONCEPTS/ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
	• use descriptive skills	• People • Scenes • Adjectives • Adverbs • Adjectival phrases and clauses • Metaphors and similes	• processes, people and scenes within their environment	• within the environment • Pictures
Debates	• argue convincingly on topical or selected cross-cutting issues • respond to ideas presented by either side	• Gender • HIV and AIDS • Children's rights and responsibilities • Environmental issues	• Debating convincingly on topical or selected cross-cutting issues • Reacting appropriately to ideas presented by either side • Defending own position convincingly	• ICT tools • Newspapers • Magazines
Speeches	• present	• Guidelines for	• Delivering	• ICT tools

CONCEPTS/ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
	prepared speeches • deliver meaningful impromptu speeches	prepared speech: - Research - Planning - Organizing - Presentation • Guidelines for impromptu speech: - Quick thinking - Critical thinking - Creativity - Presentation	prepared speeches • Presenting meaningful impromptu speeches	• Print media

7.2.3 TOPIC/SKILL 3: READING/SIGNING

CONCEPTS/ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
Intensive reading	• answer a variety of questions	• Types of questions • Skimming	• Responding to a variety of questions	• Prescribed textbooks • Newspapers

CONCEPTS/ ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
	- skim and scan a text - draw inferences from written texts - make notes on read texts - summarise a text	- Scanning - Contextual meaning - Note making - Summary writing - Evaluation: - Character s - Style - Setting - Tone and mood	- Reading texts for general information - Stating information that is not explicitly given - Working out contextual meanings of words and phrases - Compiling notes on texts - Role playing - Debating on texts - writing summaries of passages - analysing texts	- Magazines - ICT - Statistical data
Extensive reading	- Research on authors - summarise a text - describe	- Research - Plot - Characterisation - Setting	- Carrying out research on different authors - Giving	- Novels - Magazines - Short stories - ICT tools

CONCEPTS/ ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
	characters in a book read • compare and contrast characters in a text • describe the setting of a story • draw relationships among themes in a text	• Themes • Morals/lessons	background information of texts • Presenting summaries of texts • Linking events to their respective characters in a text • Tracing relationships of characters • Identifying relationships among themes in a text • Maintaining vocabulary note books	
Referencing	• find information from a variety of sources • identify different	• Reference sources: - Dictionaries - Directories	• Locating information from a variety of reference sources • Discussing	• Dictionaries • Directories • Novels • Maps • ICT tools

CONCEPTS/ ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
	sections of a book • use the internet ethically	- Maps - Catalogues - The Internet • Sections of a book: - Contents table - Preface - Glossary - Index - Appendices • Cyber ethics	different sections of books and their purposes • Surfing the internet ethically	

7.2.4 TOPIC/SKILL 4: WRITING/WRITING

CONCEPTS/ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
Aspects of composition writing	• distinguish between simple, compound and	• Simple sentence • Compound sentence • Complex	• Writing exercises that cover constructing a	• ICT tools • Anthologies • Magazines

CONCEPTS/ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
	• write complex sentences • write coherent paragraphs • use appropriate register in different situations	• sentence • Characteristics of a paragraph • Appropriate register • Letters • Speeches • Reports • Invitations	• variety of sentences • Writing simple compositions with clear introduction, body and conclusion • Writing in appropriate register	
Free compositions	• display various narrative techniques • distinguish various composition types • depict processes and events • demonstrate creative	• Narrative techniques • Paragraphing • Varied vocabulary • Captivating descriptions • Appropriate register • Creative writing • Discourse markers	• Writing narrative compositions • Writing descriptive compositions • Writing informative compositions	• Anthologies • Print media • ICT tools

CONCEPTS/ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
	- writing skills - discuss given topics	Balance in a discursive composition	- ons - Composin g poems and short stories - Stating pros and cons of a given propositio n	
Guided compositions	- write letters - compile reports - write speeches	- Business/form al letters - Friendly/inform al letters - Speech format - Report format - Paragraphing - Amplification of notes - Appropriate register - Use of grammatically correct sentences	- Writing letters - Amplifyin g notes - Compiling meaningf ul reports - Writing speeches for specific occasions	- Print media - ICT tools

7.3 FORM 3

7.3.1 TOPIC/SKILL 1: LISTENING/OBSERVING

CONCEPTS/SKILLS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
Listening comprehension	• report on news and other events from different media • take notes • summarise broadcasts • draw morals from stories heard	• Broadcasts • Narrations	• Listening to different media • Reporting back • Listening to narrations • Drawing morals from stories • Evaluating narrations	• Print media • ICT tools • Resource persons
Oral instructions	• follow a series of directions and instructions • convey messages correctly • report on announcements	• Complex directions • Messages • Instructions • Broadcasts	• Taking appropriate actions as directed • Relaying messages accurately • Listening to announcements • Giving feedback on announcements	• ICT tools • Oral texts

CONCEPTS/SKILLS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
			ents	
Conversations	engage in dialogues on any cross-cutting themes and other issues	- Cross-cutting themes - Research - Dialogues - Interview procedures	- Role playing - Conducting interviews on cross-cutting themes - Researching on cross-cutting issues - Dialoguing on any issues	- ICT tools - Print media
Purposeful listening	- take dictation accurately - give reports on any presentation listened to	- Dictations - Presentations	- Writing dictated texts - Reporting on any presentation from resource persons	- ICT tools - Print media - Resource person

7.3.2 TOPIC/SKILL 2: SPEAKING/SIGNING

CONCEPTS/ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
Pronunciation	- pronounce words accurately - express emotion using tone	Tone and mood	- Articulating words correctly - Showing emotion through tone	ICT tools
Registers	- express opinions clearly - converse appropriately in different formal and informal interactions - identify personality traits portrayed in different situations	- Condolences - Complaints - Persuasion - Interviews - Announcements - Personality traits: - Manner - Character - Feelings - Reaction	- Stating opinions clearly - Conducting balanced conversations in formal and informal interactions - Role playing formal and informal interactions	- ICT tools - Resource persons

CONCEPTS/ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
Descriptions	- describe processes and procedures - recount events	- Processes - Events - Descriptive words, phrases and clauses	- Explaining processes and procedures - Describing events	ICT tools
Debates	- present opinions on a variety of topics - express ideas for or against given subjects	- Land reform programme - Climate change - Sexuality, HIV and AIDS - Human rights - Environmental issues - Disaster Risk Management - Use of discourse markers	- Discussing convincingly on topical issues - Arguing for or against given subjects	- ICT tools - Print media
Speeches	- use information gathered to present prepared speeches - emphasiz	- Guidelines for prepared speech: - Research - Planning - Organizing - Presentation - Guidelines for impromptu	- Compiling speeches - Presenting speeches logically - Expressing ideas on a topic in an	- ICT tools - Print media

CONCEPTS/ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
	• deliver meaningful impromptu speeches	speech: - Quick thinking - Critical thinking - Creativity - Presentation	impromptu speech • Participating in public speaking competitions	

7.3.3 TOPIC/SKILL 3: READING/SIGNING

CONCEPTS/ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
Intensive reading	• answer a variety of questions • skim and scan a text	• Types of questions: - Simple recall - Comprehension - Application - Analysis	• Responding to a variety of questions • Reading texts for general	• Prescribed textbooks • Newspapers • Magazines

CONCEPTS/ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
	- draw inferences from written texts - Paraphrase given information - make notes on read texts - summarise a text	- Synthesis - Evaluation - Skimming - Scanning - Contextual meaning - Note making - Summary writing - Evaluation: - Characters - Style - Setting - Tone and mood	- information - Stating information that is not explicitly given - Working out contextual meanings of words and phrases - Compiling notes on texts - Role playing - Debating on texts - writing summaries of passages - Analysing	- ICT tools - Statistical data

CONCEPTS/ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
			texts	

Extensive reading	- Research on authors - summarise a text - describe characters in a book read - compare and contrast characters in a text - describe the setting of a story - draw relationships among themes in a text - identify the style	- Research - Plot - Characterisation: - Major and minor - Setting - Themes - Morals/lessons - Language use - Media literacy: - Bias - Stereotype - Stigma - Persuasion	- Carrying out research on different authors - Giving background information of texts - Presenting summaries of texts - Linking events to their respective characters in a text - Tracing relationships of characters - Identifying relationship	- Novels - Short stories - ICT Tools - Advertisements - Access billboards - Print media
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	- in a text • evaluate information from various media sources		- s among themes in a text • Analysing the style in a text • Recognizing bias and stereotyping in texts	
Referencing	• find information from a variety of sources • identify reference sections of a book • use the internet ethically	• Reference sources: - Dictionaries - Directories - Maps - Catalogues - Thesauruses - The Internet • Sections of a book: - Contents table - Preface - Glossary - Index - Appendices • Cyber ethics	• Locating information from a variety of sources • Discussing different sections of books and their purposes • Surfing the internet ethically	• Dictionaries • Directories • Novels • Maps • Catalogues • Thesauruses • ICT Tools • Encyclopaedias • Journals • Anthologies

7.3.4 TOPIC/SKILL 4: WRITING/BRAILLING

CONCEPTS/ ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
Aspects of composition writing	- distinguish types of sentences - write coherent paragraphs - use appropriate register	- Types of sentences - Characteristic s of a paragraph - Appropriate register - Letters - Speeches - Reports - Invitations	- Writing exercises that cover constructing a variety of sentences - Writing simple compositions with clear introduction, body and conclusion - Writing in appropriate register	- ICT tools - Pictures - Anthologies - Graphs - Maps
Free compositions	- write different types of compositions - demonstrate creative writing skills	- Types of compositions: - Narrative - Descriptive - Informative - Discursive - Argumentative - Narrative techniques:	- Writing narrative compositions - Composing descriptive compositions - Writing informative compositions - Arguing logically - Writing projects	- ICT tools - Print media - Anthologies - Diorama

CONCEPTS/ ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
		- Description - Detail - Figurative language - Paragraphing - Atmosphere - Pace - Tone and mood - Flashback • Creative writing	• Composing poems, plays and short stories	
Guided compositions	• write different types of guided compositions • compile a Curriculum Vitae/Resume	• Types of guided compositions: - Letters - Memos - Reports - Speeches - Articles - Forms • Appropriate register • Grammatically correct sentences	• Writing different types of guided compositions • Amplifying pegs • Organising personal information following given instructions • Filling in	• ICT tools • Print media

CONCEPTS/ ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
		• Amplification • Correct formats • Paragraphing	forms	

7.4 FORM 4

7.4.1 TOPIC/SKILL 1: LISTENING/OBSERVING

CONCEPTS/ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
Listening comprehension	• report on news and other events from different media • take notes • summarise broadcasts • draw morals from stories heard	• Broadcasts • Narrations	• Listening to different types of media • Reporting back • Listening to narrations • Drawing morals from stories • Evaluating narrations	• Print media • ICT tools • Resource persons
Oral instructions	• follow a series of	• Complex directions	• Taking appropriate	• ICT tools • Print

CONCEPTS/ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
	- directions and instructions - convey messages correctly - report on announcements	- Messages - Instructions - Broadcasts	- actions as directed - Relaying messages accurately - Listening to announcements - Giving feedback on announcements	media
Conversations	- engage in dialogues on any cross cutting themes and other issues - carry out interviews on cross-cutting issues	- Cross-cutting themes - Research - Dialogues - Interview procedures	- Role playing - Conducting interviews on cross-cutting themes - Researching on cross-cutting issues - Dialoguing on any issues	- ICT tools - Print media
Purposeful listening	take dictation	- Dictations - Presentation	Writing dictated	- ICT tools - Print

CONCEPTS/ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
	accurately • give reports on any presentations listened to	s	texts • Reporting on any presentation from resource persons	media • Resource persons

7.4.2 TOPIC/SKILL 2: SPEAKING/SIGNING

CONCEPTS/SKILLS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
Pronunciation	• pronounce words accurately • express emotion using tone	Tone and mood	• Articulating words correctly • Showing emotion through tone	• ICT tools
Registers	• express opinions clearly	• Condolences • Complaints • Persuasion	• Stating opinions clearly	• ICT tools

CONCEPTS/SKILLS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
	• converse appropriately in different formal and informal interactions • identify personality traits portrayed in different situations	• Interviews • Announcements • Personality traits: - Manner - Mood - Tone - Attitude - Character - Feelings - Reaction	• Conducting balanced conversations in formal and informal interactions • Role playing formal and informal interactions	
Descriptions	• describe processes and procedures • recount events	• Processes • Events • Descriptive words, phrases and clauses	• Explaining processes and procedures • Describing events	• ICT tools • Print media
Debates	• present opinions on a variety of topics	• Land reform programme • Sexuality, HIV and AIDS • Human rights	• Discussing convincingly on topical issues • Arguing for	• ICT tools • Print media • The Constitution

CONCEPTS/SKILLS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
	express ideas for or against given subjects	- Environmental issues - Disaster Risk Management - Use of discourse markers	or against given subjects	on of Zimbabwe
Speeches	- express themselves in prepared speeches - present meaningful impromptu speeches	- Prepared speeches - Impromptu speeches	- Demonstrating the ability to research, plan and present prepared speeches - Delivering meaningful impromptu speeches	- ICT tools - Print media

7.4.3 TOPIC/SKILL 3: READING/SIGNING

CONCEPTS/ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES

CONCEPT S/ ASPECTS	OBJECTIVE S Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
Intensive reading	• answer a variety of questions • skim and scan a text • draw inferences from written texts • Paraphrase given information • make notes on read texts • Describe the feelings, qualities, motives of characters in a text • summarise a text	• Types of questions: - Recall - Comprehension - Application - Analysis - Synthesis - Evaluation • Skimming • Scanning • Contextual meaning • Note making • Summary writing • Evaluation: - Characters - Style - Setting - Tone and mood	• Responding to a variety of questions • Reading texts for general information • Stating information that is not explicitly given • Working out contextual meanings of words and phrases • Compiling notes on texts • Role playing • Debating on texts • writing	• Prescribed textbooks • Newspapers • Magazines • ICT tools • Statistical data

CONCEPTS/ ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
			summaries of passages • Analysing texts	
Extensive reading	- Research on authors - summarise a text - describe characters in a book read - compare and contrast characters in a text - describe the setting of a story - draw relationships among themes in a text - identify	- Research - Plot - Characterisation: - Major and minor - Setting - Themes - Morals/lessons - Language use - Media literacy: - Bias - Stereotype - Stigma - Persuasion	- Carrying out research on different authors - Giving background information of texts - Presenting summaries of texts - Linking events to their respective characters in a text - Tracing relationships of characters	- Novels - Short stories - ICT Tools - Advertisements - Billboards - Print media

CONCEPT S/ ASPECTS	OBJECTIVE S Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
	the style in a text • evaluate information from various media sources		• Identifying relationships among themes in a text • Analysing the style in a text • Recognizing bias and stereotyping in texts	
Referencing	• find information from a variety of sources • identify reference sections of a book • use the internet ethically	• Reference sources: - Dictionaries - Directories - Maps - Catalogues - Thesauruses - The Internet • Sections of a book: - Contents table - Preface - Glossary - Index - Appendices • Cyber ethics	• Locating information from a variety of sources • Discussing different sections of books and their purposes • Surfing the internet ethically	• Dictionaries • Directories • Novels • Maps • Catalogues • Thesauruses • ICT Tools • Encyclopaedias • Journals • Anthologies

7.4.4 TOPIC/SKILL 4: WRITING/BRAILLING

CONCEPTS/ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
Aspects of composition writing	- distinguish types of sentences - write coherent paragraphs - use appropriate register	- Types of sentences - Characteristics of a paragraph - Appropriate register - Letters - Speeches - Reports - Invitations	- Writing exercises that cover constructing a variety of sentences - Writing detailed compositions with clear introduction, body and conclusion - Writing in appropriate register	- ICT tools - Pictures - Anthologies - Graphs - Maps
Free compositions	write different types of compositions	- Types of compositions: - Narrative - Descriptive - Informative	- Writing narrative compositions - Composi	- ICT tools - Print media - Anthologies

CONCEPTS/ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
	demonstrate creative writing skills	- Discursive - Argumentative • Writing techniques: - Description - Detail - Figurative language - Paragraphing - Atmosphere - Pace - Tone and mood - Flashback • Creative writing	- ng descriptive compositions • Writing informative compositions • Arguing logically • Writing projects • Composing poems, plays and short stories	Diorama
Guided compositions	- write different types of guided compositions - compile a Curriculum Vitae/Resume	- Types of guided compositions: - Letters - Memos - Reports - Speeches - Articles - Forms • Appropriate register • Grammatically correct sentences • Amplification • Correct formats	- Writing different types of guided compositions • Amplifying pegs • Organising personal information following	- ICT tools - Print media

CONCEPTS/ASPECTS	OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT (ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE)	SUGGESTED NOTES AND ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED RESOURCES
		Paragraphing	given instructions Filling in forms	

8.0 ASSESSMENT

The scheme of assessment for the Forms 1 - 4 English Language syllabus covers continuous and summative assessments. The four main language skills which are Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing and their sub-skills will be assessed. The assessment is grounded on the principle of inclusivity. Arrangements, accommodations and modifications must be visible in both continuous and summative assessments to enable candidates with special needs to access assessments.

8.1 ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

The English Language syllabus will be assessed through Continuous Assessment and Public Examinations. The following assessment objectives outline the skills which may be assessed during and at the end of the four-year programme:

Writing Skills

During and at the end of the four-year programme, candidates should be able to:

- write continuous narratives, detailed descriptions, persuasive/ argumentative, informative and expository compositions
- write formal and informal letters, speeches, reports, articles, memos, based on notes, diagrams, statistical data, graphs and pictures
- write with grammatical accuracy: spell and punctuate their work correctly
- use different supporting language structures in context
- write in a style and register appropriate to the subject matter
- construct a variety of sentence structures
- use a wide range of vocabulary and idioms appropriate to the subject matter
- organise their work satisfactorily into paragraphs
- use discourse markers correctly to show a sense of cohesion and coherence within paragraphs
- show originality and creativity in their writing

Reading comprehension

Candidates should be able to:

- answer recall questions
- follow the sequence of events in a narrative or descriptive text
- follow the development of an argument or discussion
- recognize how language is used in a text to indicate relationships of ideas
- distinguish main propositions from exemplifying or qualifying details
- infer information that is indirectly stated
- work out the contextual meanings of words and phrases
- paraphrase ideas from a text
- identify the tone and mood of a text
- identify the writer's attitude(s) towards his/her subject
- summarise specific aspects of a text

Speaking and listening

Speaking and listening complement each other and are therefore usually taught together.

Speaking

Candidates should be able to:

- communicate ideas clearly, accurately, and fluently on a variety of topics
- discuss and debate confidently on topical issues
- use appropriate tone, intonation and gestures to emphasise a point
- use appropriate register depending on social situation, audience, subject matter or area being discussed

Listening

Candidates should be able to:

- listen with concentration
- answer recall, interpretive and evaluative questions based on what they have listened to
- react appropriately to different oral text types
- summarise oral texts

8.2 SCHEME OF ASSESSMENT

The scheme of assessment for the Forms 1 - 4 English Language syllabus covers continuous and summative assessments.

Continuous Assessment

Continuous Assessment will be as follows:

LEVEL	ASSESSMENT TASK	FREQUENCY	WEIGHTING
Form 1	Speaking	1 per term	5%
	Listening comprehension	1 per term	
	Writing project	1 per term	
Form 2	Speaking	1 per term	5%
	Reading proficiency	1 per term	
	Writing project	1 per term	
Form 3	Speaking	1 per term	10%
	Reading proficiency	1 per term	
	Writing project	1 per term	
Form 4	Speaking	1 per term	10%
	Listening comprehension	1 per term	
	Writing project	1 per term	
TOTAL			30%

Summative Assessment

The Summative Assessment comprises two components which are:

PAPER	DURATION	MARKS	WEIGHTING
1 Composition	1hr 30 minutes	50	35%
2 Comprehension, Summary and Supporting Language Structures	2hrs	50	35%
TOTAL		100	70%

8.3 PAPER DESCRIPTIONS

Paper 1: The paper will consist of two sections: A and B.

Section A: 30 marks – **Seven** questions on different subjects, embracing cross-cutting themes, will be set. The topics set may be narrative, descriptive, informative, argumentative or discursive. Candidates will be expected to attempt **one** question.

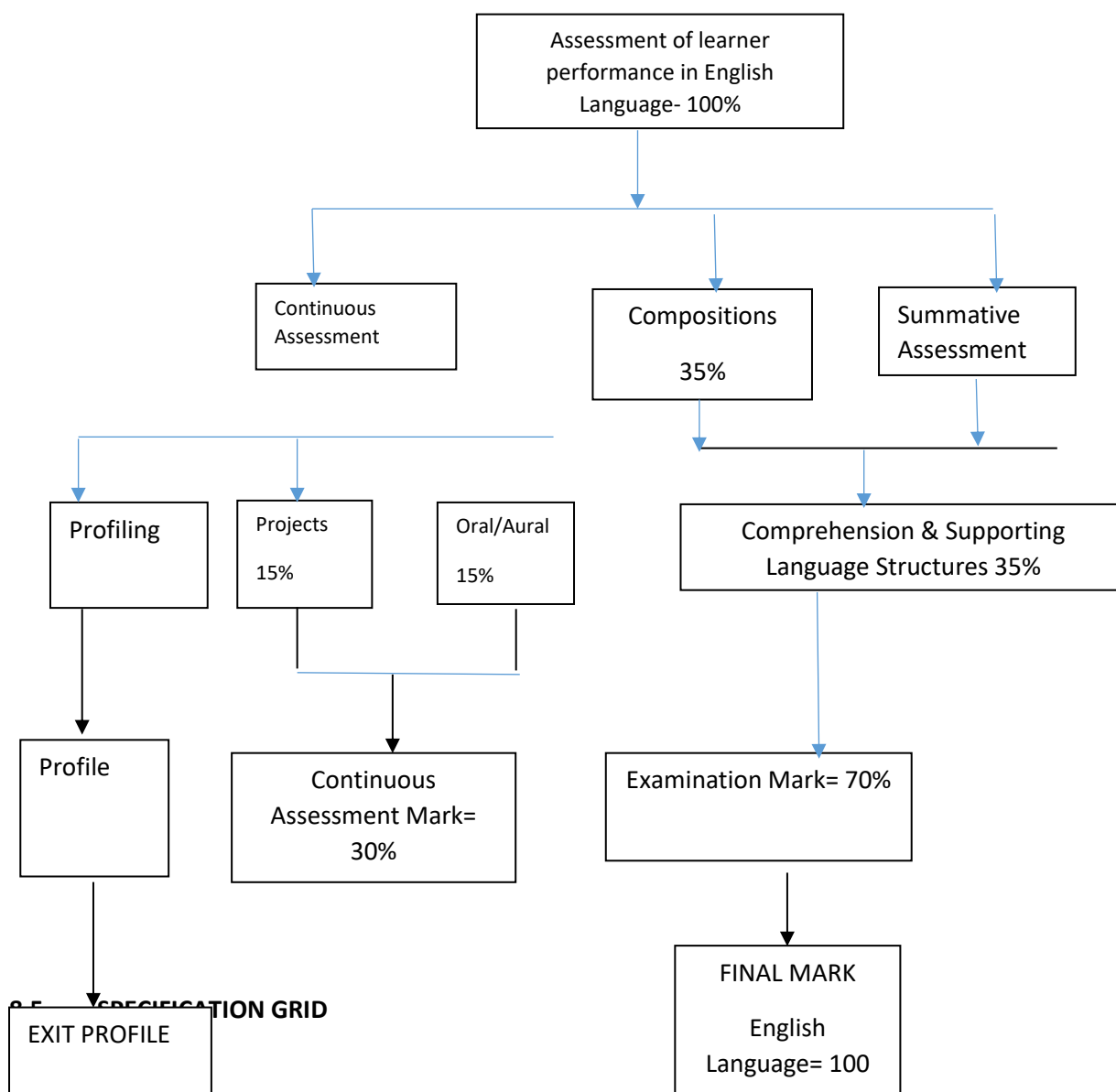
Section B: 20 marks – **One** guided **compulsory** question will be set. Information that will be given may be in the form of notes, text, graphs, statistical data or pictures. The question may be a letter, speech, report, article or memorandum.

Paper 2: The paper will consist of **two** sections: A and B.

Section A: 40 marks – A prose passage will be set from which candidates will be expected to answer comprehension questions and a summary question.

Section B: 10 marks – Context-based questions on different supporting language structures will be set. That is to say, the supporting language structures will not be tested in isolation but in the context of the comprehension passage in Section A.

8.4 ASSESSMENT MODEL



The Forms 1 - 4 English Language Paper 1 examination will give thrust to the candidates' linguistic competence.

The Forms 1 - 4 English Language Paper 2 examination will conform to the following specification grid:

SKILL	WEIGHTING
Simple Recall	12%
Comprehension	80%
Analysis, synthesis and evaluation	8%
TOTAL	100%