

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Writing is regarded as a crucial act in the learning of any foreign language especially English as it is today the language of global communication (Department of Education, 2002). Written language is the language skill that is learned as early as in the foundation phase (Richards, 2001). Without the ability to spell as a broader aspect of writing, a person could be barely referred to as literate in the conventional sense of the word (Adam, 1990; Bryant, Bradley, MacLean & Crossland, 1990; Treiman & Bourassa, 2000). Cook (1997) also says that effective spelling is important for users of a second language because of its social overtones. Furthermore, spelling leads to proficiency in reading and writing the language (Department of education, 2002).

Spelling is one of the most important components of writing at single-word level. It also represents the greatest accomplishment during the early stages because it is the foundation of learning and academic achievement (Pollo, Treiman & Kessler, n.d.). To prove the importance of spelling, one single misspelled letter can change a word and alter the whole meaning of a text. For this reason spelling is regarded as a vital part of written communication and is seen as an important tool in writing (Department of Education, 2001).

According to Browne (1999:96), learning to spell well is a skill that develops over a number of years. De Sousa (2006) also argues that spelling development requires one to consider the development of spelling skills and cognitive processing strategies that are used by the learners to spell individual words. Frith, Kaufman & Young (as cited in De Sousa, 2006) suggest two cognitive processes necessary for children to spell, sequential processing and simultaneous processing. Sequential processing is

necessary for decoding the individual sounds and representing them with their corresponding letters. The simultaneous processing is important for the ability to visually recognise letter shapes and spelling patterns to spell words (ibid:6). For the purpose of this study the researcher investigates the spelling errors made by English second language learners as a result of the interferences of the mother- tongue.

Ellis (1997) stipulates that spelling errors reflect gaps in a learner's knowledge and are created by the learner's lack of knowledge about the correct rule or structure. Unlike mistakes, errors cannot be self-corrected Larsen-Freeman and Long (as cited in Alsulmi, 2010). Errors committed by learners should be viewed as a sign of progress rather than failure since they help learners grasp the rules of the target language (ibid). Also errors contain valuable information on the learning strategies of learners, (Richards, as cited in Al-Khresheh, 2010:108). Errors are unavoidable in learning a second language (Mansor & Muhari, n. d). This is due to the fact that, during the second language acquisition process, learners tend to use their knowledge of first language to cope with the insufficient knowledge of a second language (ibid). Corder (as cited in Alsulmi, 2010) classifies spelling errors into four categories: omission of some required elements, addition of unnecessary elements, selection of an incorrect element and disordering of the elements.

On the other hand, Brown and Connor (as cited in Darus & Ching, 2009:245) group spelling errors into two categories. There are errors that result from L1 interferences which are caused by interlingual transfer and those which result from interferences from L2 system itself. Bhela (1999) stipulates that when features of the two languages correspond exactly, there is a positive transfer from L1 to the new language. Whereas when these features do not correspond, there would be a negative transfer and one could expect a high frequency of errors to occur in L2 (ibid). This indicates an interference of L1 on L2 (Dechert & Ellis, as cited in Bhela, 1999). English spelling errors like /sik/ for /sink/, /bed/ for /bread/, reveal the children's difficulties in apprehending consonant clusters as sequences of individual phonemes (Metsala & Ehri, 1998). Whereas errors such as /br/ for /bar/ suggest a difficulty in analysing

certain vowel+ consonant units, along with a tendency to spell these units with the letters that have the corresponding names (ibid:292).

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

While most African countries are multilingual, language-in-education policies differ from one country to another (DOE, 2002). Furthermore some countries have more than one official language, including local languages (ibid). This is the case in South Africa with 11 official languages, Zambia with 7 and Nigeria with 8 official languages (Garcia, Skutnabb-Kangas & Torres- Guzman, 2006).

Most countries in Southern Africa have introduced bilingual education in the early years of schooling which includes the use of the local languages; these countries include Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia as well as South Africa (Skutnabb-Kangas & Torres-Guzman, 2006). On the other hand, countries such as Malawi and Botswana permit only the use of the National language in education (Chilora, 2000). The language in Education policy in Mozambique permits the use of Portuguese only (Garcia, Skutnabb-Kangas & Torres- Guzman, 2006). Whilst the South African Language in Education Policy stipulates that from Grade 3 onwards, all learners shall be offered their language of learning and teaching and at least one additional approved language as subjects (RSA Language in Education policy, 1997). Therefore, in grade 3 learners start to learn the additional language and at the same time maintain and develop their Home language (Department of Education, 2002). In other words, by the end of grade 3, learners must reach a high level of competence in English and also need to be able to read and write well in English. At this stage, it is possible for learners to acquire complex skills such as reading and writing in their strongest language (ibid). At the same time, it is at this stage where second language learners encounter most problems. They start to transfer the features of their native language to the Additional language (Department of education, 2003). With specific reference to Grade 3 isiXhosa learners of English second language (ESL), this study seeks to investigate interlingual spelling errors and the range of strategies used by teachers to overcome them.

Previous studies emphasise the benefits of mother- tongue in facilitating the acquisition of a second or additional language. For example, Macdonald & Burroughs (1991) stipulate that success in a second language depends on success in the children's first language. Also, Ellis (1997) argues that learners use their L1 knowledge in order to learn a target language. However, very little is known about how the mother tongue could pose a potential barrier to the acquisition of second language literacy skills. Such problems are referred to as interlingual errors. This study, therefore investigates Grade 3 teachers' strategies to help English second language learners overcome interlingual spelling errors that are resultant from the influence of isiXhosa linguistic practices.

Erdogan (2005) classifies interlingual errors into different levels such as transfer of phonological, morphological, grammatical and lexico-semantic elements of the native language into the target language. At phonological level the sounds that do not occur in the first language cause the students to mispronounce some sounds (ibid). For example, because there is no /th/ in Spanish and Turkish, students spell /the/ as /da/ (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton & Johnston, 2000). At morphological level, Turkish students tend to omit the plural suffix at the end of the word (Erdogan, 2005). Another example is the omission of verb conjugation by Russian speakers and Spaniards who do not have this feature in their native language (Oldin as cited in de Villaseñor, 2010).

According to Lott (as cited in Alonso, 1997:10) interlingual errors consist of the grammar or vocabulary errors students make because a word distinction, either lexical or grammatical, which is made in L2 does not exist in their native language. This means students tend to apply the rules of their first language when they do not know the rules of the second language (ibid). Similarly, Arabic L2 learners commit serious interlingual errors because they depend on their first language in acquiring the second language (Al-Jarf, 2008). Also, interlingual errors occur as a result of familiarity with the native language (Brown, 1994). Because of this, there is a transfer effect whether directly or indirectly of the L1 to the new language (ibid).

In response to the spelling problems encountered by L2 learners in English, the National Department of Education launched the Foundation for learning campaign in all South African schools (DoE, 2008). This was a four year campaign that started in 2008 to create a National focus to improve the reading, writing and numeracy abilities of all South African children. Through this campaign the foundation phase teachers were trained through workshops to improve their teaching strategies (DoE, 2008).

Non-governmental organisations like `Break through` and `READ` tried to give support in the improvement of literacy including spelling teaching (Murray, 1998). Also programmes like Teaching Hand writing Reading and spelling Skills (Davies & Ritchie, 2003) and OLSET (Open Learning systems Education Trust) capacitated the teachers in South Africa (Potter, & Liccardo, n.d.). Despite these efforts there are some second language learners who commit interlingual spelling errors in English spelling (Murray, 1998).

Makalela, (1998) stipulates that in the classroom situation teachers used many strategies like correcting the oral and written errors of students to improve their language. They even used different teaching and learning strategies like wall charts and flashcards but students struggle to spell English words (ibid). These errors seem to be resistant to treatment and correction (Makalela, 1998). This problem strikes township and rural schools mostly where the majority of learners speak multiple native languages which in turn interfere with their learning of English (Makalela, 1998). In the Eastern Cape where the majority of learners speak isiXhosa as their native language, learners tend to commit many interlingual errors like /the/ spelt as /da/, [th] as [ta] (Murray,1998).

All these intervention strategies by the government and the non-governmental sectors suggest that there is a big problem around the issue of literacy, which needs to be better understood through systematic action-based research. This study was one such attempt at contributing towards this.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Spelling is becoming a problem for learners who learn to spell in a second language in addition to their home language. Many efforts have been made to improve the standard of teaching spelling from the early grades but the problem prevails. For example, programmes such as READ, Break Through, THRASS and OLSET have tried to assist in resolving this problem. However, second language learners continue to encounter problems in English spelling (Murray, 1998). For instance, grade 3 isiXhosa speaking learners in the Eastern Cape commit errors like writing /they/ as /dey/, /three/ as /khree/ and /thank you/ as /tank you/. Sometimes they omit the plural suffix at the end of the word e.g. two book (Erdogan, 2005).

Apart from the government and NGOs` efforts, teachers too try by all means to help grade 3 L2 learners overcome this problem but learners continue to commit interlingual errors. It is for this reason that the researcher proposed to conduct the study focusing on Grade 3 teachers` strategies to help English L2 learners overcome interlingual spelling errors.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Main research question

What are the strategies used by grade 3 teachers to help English second language learners overcome interlingual spelling errors?

Sub-questions

How do the grade 3 teachers support L2 learners in English spelling?

What are the perceived factors that contribute to grade 3 second language learners` interlingual spelling errors in English?

1.5 THE OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

This study sought to:

- To investigate the grade 3 teachers` strategies to help English L2 learners overcome interlingual spelling errors.

- To know the support given to L2 learners by grade 3 teachers in English spelling to minimise the chances of committing interlingual spelling errors.
- To understand the factors those contribute to L2 learners' interlingual spelling errors in English.

1.6 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.

The anticipated benefit from this study is to provide teachers, specifically those teaching in bilingual classrooms, practical strategies to integrate into the daily instruction of English spelling. Besides the researcher's own personal interests, this study may also benefit English teachers who have learners who fear writing because of their inability to spell. Also, teachers themselves can gain more knowledge about the interlingual spelling errors committed by second language learners in English. At the same time teachers can become more familiar with the concept of interlingual spelling errors. In addition, this study suggests some strategies that can provide second language learners with the needed skills to be the proficient spellers which in turn could improve their communication as well as writing and reading skills. Furthermore, this study may not only be relevant for Eastern Cape but also in South Africa as a whole. Finally, the findings of this study might provide more insight into the acquisition of spelling skills by isiXhosa second language learners.

1.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Geographically this study was carried out in a township of East London in the Eastern Cape. The focus was on one primary school and two grade 3 teachers in this school. The school is an isiXhosa medium and English is taught as a subject in grade three. Two grade three class teachers and their classes participated in this study. Theoretically the researcher investigated only the grade 3 teachers' strategies to help English second language learners overcome interlingual spelling errors.

1.8 MOTIVATION TO THE STUDY

The South African National Curriculum Statement (Department of Education, 2002) states that since the first additional language (FAL) may also be used as language of learning and teaching, its teaching and learning should achieve levels of proficiency that meet the threshold level necessary for effective learning across the curriculum. This is evident even in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy statement which is the curriculum to be introduced in the foundation phase and grade 10 in 2012, where FAL will be taught as from grade one (DoE. 2012). Also, in South Africa many children start using their additional language English as the language of learning and teaching (LOLT) in grade 4. This means that they must reach a high level of competence in English by the end of grade 3 and they need to be able to read and write well in English. For this reason their progress in literacy must be accelerated in Grade 2 and 3 (ibid). Hence the researcher conducts this study.

1.9 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The researcher is an educator who was concerned about the way the learners struggle to spell English words when they reach the Intermediate phase where the LoLT is English. This is also a problem in the senior phase where learners have difficulties in spelling words without committing interlingual errors. Most of the time learners tend to spell English words influenced by their mother tongue. The teachers themselves lack the skills and strategies to teach this aspect. It is against this background that this study seeks to investigate grade 3 teachers' strategies to help L2 learners overcome interlingual spelling errors.

1.10 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Some few concepts defined below have been used in this study;

Interlingual spelling errors

These are the errors that are caused by the interferences of the first language (mother-tongue) to the target language (Al-Jarf, 2008).

An error

Lennon (1991) describes an error as a linguistic form or a combination of forms which in the same context and under similar conditions of production would in all likelihood not be produced by the speaker's native speaker counterparts. On the other hand the Dictionary of language teaching (1992) describes an error as the use of incorrect and unaware linguistic items due to incomplete learning and cannot be self-corrected. According to Ellis (1994), error is an incorrect language form produced in the target language that has been learned incorrectly and leads to misunderstanding of concepts.

Literacy

Literacy involves the integration of speaking, listening and critical thinking with reading and writing (William & Snipper, 1990; Johnston, Holliday, Ljungdahl & March, 2001)

Second language

Mahabeer (2003) stipulates that second language refers to another language used by people who are proficient in their mother-tongue. For the purpose of this study, English second language refers to English that is learnt as a second language by learners whose home language is isiXhosa.

A strategy

A strategy refers to the conscious or unconscious processes which students employ in learning and using a second language. It is the way in which a student attempts to figure out the meanings and uses of words, grammatical or spelling rules. A learning strategy may be applied to simple tasks, such as learning a list of new words, or more complex involving language comprehension and production (Richards, Platt & Platt, 1992). In this study, a spelling strategy refers to the mental processes that second language students use to represent spoken sounds by written symbols.

Home language

This refers to the language spoken at the home where the learner lives. It is usually the mother tongue of the learner. Home Language in the Foundation Phase is supposed to be the mother tongue of the learners. The Home language for the learners and teachers in this study is isiXhosa.

Borrowing

Borrowing (loan word) is a word that is directly taken into one language from another with little or no translation (Lohakart, 2009).

1.11 The Chapter Outline

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

This chapter gives background to the topic being investigated. It also presents a brief discussion about interlingual errors committed by L2 learners. Also it outlines general overview of the study that is statement of the problem, research questions, purpose, motivation to the study and the definition of key words.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

This chapter discusses literature related to the study with regard to:

- The conceptual analysis of spelling.
- The importance of spelling as a component of written language.
- Perspectives on linkages between mother tongue and literacy.
- Stages of spelling development.
- Skills necessary for English spelling development.
- Factors contributing to interlingual spelling errors in English.

- Strategies for helping learners overcome interlingual spelling errors in English
- Strategies of teaching English spelling to second language learners.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter discusses the overall research approach, research paradigm, research design. It also entails data gathering instruments and ethical issues.

Chapter 4: Presentation and discussion of data

Themes and sub-themes that emerged from field work will be discussed as well as the analysis and presentation of findings.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The findings presented in the previous chapter will be discussed in this chapter as themes and how they are related to the literature reviewed.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a theoretical framework to the study on grade 3 teacher's strategies to help second language learners overcome interlingual spelling errors. It also looks at traditional perspectives on linkages between mother tongue and literacy. On the other hand it discusses the alternative views on linkages between mother tongue and second language.

2.2 CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS: SPELLING

What is spelling?

There are so many definitions of spelling according to different writers. For instance, Santoro (2006) defines spelling as the recognition or reproducing of a correct sequence of letters in an oral or written form. Similarly Berninger, Yates, Cartwright, Rutberg, Remy & Abbot (1992) define spelling as a code that uses letter sequences to represent specific words that have an associated pronunciation and meaning within the mental dictionary. Berninger et al. (1992) also states three kinds of codes that contribute to spelling, phonological code (coding and awareness of sounds in spoken words), orthographic code (coding and awareness of letters in written words) and morphological code (word parts that modify meaning at the beginning of words and mark tense or part of speech at the end of words). To confirm this, Steffler (2001) also mentions three types of information used by people when spelling: phonological, orthographic and morphological information.

Hodges (1984) describes spelling as a process of converting oral language to visual form by placing graphic symbols on some writing surface. According to Browne (1999:96) spelling is referred to as a presentation, surface, secretarial, mechanical or transcription skill. On the other hand, Hornby (as cited in Miressa & Dumessa, 2011)

defines spelling as the act of forming words correctly from individual letter. Adding on this, Kress (2000:3) also confirms that spelling involves the knowledge of transcription and how to write down sounds and words correctly. Learning to write well involves learning to spell meaning that writing creates the need to spell (Department of Education and Training, 1998). Also, the purposes of spelling are the purposes of language itself that is, to make meaning and to share meaning in a way that is clearly understood by the readers (ibid).

2.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF SPELLING AS A COMPONENT OF WRITTEN LANGUAGE

Although spelling is the last language skill learned by a child, it is regarded as a tool used in language expression and is usually learned at school (Department of Education, 2001:25). However, learning to spell is a complex developmental task because it requires children to learn the sound-symbol connection as well as more than 2000 rules of the language (Venezky as cited in Joy, 2011). It can become more complex when children are learning to spell in a second language in addition to their first (ibid). Literature says that a reasonably literate person has a vocabulary of at least 50 000 words (Richards, 2001). Therefore, someone should possess a vocabulary of 50 000 words in order to communicate by means of writing (ibid).

There are many reasons why spelling is so important in somebody's life. Firstly, spelling helps a child see patterns in language and understand how word are put together (Department of Education, 2012:20). Also creative writing starts with spelling and reading (ibid). Secondly, in the employment context, employers expect their employees to be able to spell if their job calls for communication in writing (Westwood, 2008). Also entry to tertiary courses of study mostly calls for written application, where the standard of an applicant's spelling could influence the decisions made by the selection panel (ibid). Thirdly, good writing and reading depend on spelling (Jones, 2009). Without this skill written communication would be impossible (DoE, 2001:25).

To paraphrase Miressa and Dumessa (2011) wrong spelling in text seem to mislead the reader. On the other hand, using the correct spelling brings good communication

between the writer and the reader. Also, one who does not know how to spell English words commits spelling errors that can cause communication breakdown (ibid). Literature reveals that spelling become more complex for learners who learn to spell in a second language in addition to their first language (Rhonda, 2011). Several studies (Foshola, Drum, Mayer & Kang, 1996; San Francisco, Mo & Carlo, 2006; Wang & Geva, 2003) reported the impact of both negative and positive language transfer in children learning two languages.

Figuerendo (2006) describes language transfer as the influence of ones language to the target language. Bourassa (2003) confirms by saying that skills taught in one language do transfer to the second language. The focus of this study is on grade three teachers' strategies to help English second language learners overcome interlingual spelling errors. The errors caused by the influence of the mother tongue on the second language. According to Bourassa (2003), poor spelling could impact negatively on children`s self-esteem. For example, students who are poor spellers resist sharing their work with others. Also these students tend to avoid writing longer writing samples with complex-multi-morphemic words (ibid). Multi-morphemic words are words that consist of more than one unit (De Kuthy, 2001). For example words like *reopen*, *cats* and *cried* (to mention but a few) are multi-morphemic words (ibid).

2.4 TYPES OF SPELLING ERRORS

According to Al-Jarf (2010), spelling errors can be either freely produced or elicited by certain tasks. Furthermore any word that does not match the target word in part or in full is marked as a misspelling (ibid). Also faulty grapheme (single vowel, single consonant, vowel digraphs, consonants digraphs, phonogram, suffix, or prefix) within a word is counted as error (Al-Jarf, 2010).

To Botley and Dillah (2007) spelling errors reveal and reflect the influence of the first language on the learner's target language performance. Also the learner's first language spelling rules can and often do get mis-applied by learners when it comes to turning phonemes into graphemes in the target language. On the other hand A-Khreshesh

(2011) stipulates that no one can learn or acquire any language without committing errors. Therefore to commit errors is a process of language learning.

James (1998) distinguished between two types of spelling errors: mechanical errors in writing and misspellings. Both of these errors are classified as 'substance errors' (ibid). According to James (cited in Botley & Dillah, 2007) both mechanical errors and misspellings occur when a learner makes an encoding error while writing. On the other hand, Botley and Dillah (2007) describe 'Mechanical errors' as being divided into: punctuation errors, typographical errors, confusable errors and dyslexic errors. For James (1998), mis-spellings occur when the rules known as phonographic rules (PG) are being broken. These are the rules that determine how a given phoneme is to be represented (ibid). According to Botley and Dillah (2007: 80) mis-spellings are divided into two categories, mispronunciations and 'written misencodings'. For the purpose of this study 'mis-spellings' will be discussed in length.

Mispronunciations are caused by a basic mispronunciation of a target sound in the second language resulting in a learner choosing the wrong grapheme to represent that sound (James, 1998). For example, according to James (1998), Welsh children spell the English word 'blood' as 'blyd' because they substituted the target phoneme [ʌ] for the Welsh [ə] which in Welsh is represented by 'y'.

The second category of mis-spellings as described by James et al. (1993) is written misencodings. Written misencodings are categorised into interlingual and intralingual misencodings. Firstly, interlingual misencodings lead to spelling errors that can be linked back to the learner's first language (ibid). Furthermore, interlingual misencodings are divided into three subtypes (James et al., 1993). The first subtype occurs when a learner tries to use a spelling rule from his or her L1 which does not exist in the target language. Two examples from Malay by James et al. (1993) illustrate this sub-type quite well. Firstly, the English words 'cent' and 'graph' may be rendered <sen> and <graf> as a result of L1 influence. In both examples, the Malay language applied its own PG rules to these borrowed items resulting to students writing the English words retaining the Malay spelling, hence the misencodings.

The second interlingual subtype as stated by James et al. (1993) is where a learner attempts to use a grapheme from his or her L1 which also exists in the target language, but has a different phonetic value in that language. An example of this is the grapheme <c> which exists in English and in Malay but in Malay, this grapheme represents the sound [tʃ] as in 'capak' (neglect) and 'cantik' (beautiful), whereas in English it is used for the [k] and [s] sounds as in 'cap' and 'ceiling' (ibid). IsiXhosa, a home language of the learners who participated in this study, also has the grapheme <c> and it represents the sound [c] as in 'icici' (ear ring).

The final subtype is where a learner uses a grapheme that exists in both the L1 and the target language, but that same grapheme is distributed differently in the target language than it is in the L1. James (ibid: 138) illustrates this with another Welsh example. In Welsh and English, the sound [f] can be spelled <ph>, as in <ei phen> (Welsh for 'her head') and <phone>. However, while English allows the <ph> to appear word-initially, word-medially and word-finally ('phone', 'nephew', 'graph'), in Welsh, <ph> can only occur at the beginning of words. This, according to James (1998:138) results in Welsh learners of English, making spelling errors such as <neffew> and <graff> because they can only apply their own L1 distribution rules for this particular grapheme. Moreover, according to Mpiti (2012), this also results in isiXhosa speaking children making spelling errors such as <graff> for graph, <foun> for phone.

According to Keshavarz' taxonomy of the sources of errors (as cited in Shakhzadeh & Gheichi, 2011), interlingual errors result from the transfer of phonological, morphological, grammatical, lexico-semantic, and stylistic elements of the learner's mother tongue to the learning of the target language. Finally intralingual misencodings, according to James et al. (1993) include a number of different subtypes. For example, overgeneralization of spelling rules, homophone confusion, mis-choice and letter naming.

2.5 SPELLING ERROR SOURCES

Al- Jarf (2010) classified spelling error sources into sources of whole word errors and sources of faulty graphemes. Sources of whole word errors are communication

breakdown, interference from other English words, errors due to the speed of the speakers and errors due to poor short-term auditory memory span. Whereas sources of faulty graphemes and faulty phonemes are errors attributed to ignorance of English spelling rules in which phonics, orthographic and morphological rules are ignored. Also errors due to transfer are those in which the students spelled an English word with a non-phonetic spelling the way it is pronounced. Mispronunciation on the other hand refers to errors in which the student spelled the word the way she/he pronounces it. This strategy of spelling relies heavily on phonemes and works well in Spanish orthography, but leads to spelling errors in English (Nobel, 1982).

Corder (1973) classifies the errors in terms of the difference between the learners' utterance and the reconstructed version. In this way, errors fall into four categories *omission* of some required element; *addition* of some unnecessary or incorrect element; *selection* of an incorrect element; and *disordering* of the elements. Furthermore Muriungi, Mukuthuria and Gatavi (2011) conducted a research in Kiambu, Kenya of which the findings revealed that learners commit spelling errors due to the influence of mother tongue. These errors are tabulated in table 1 below.

Table 1 Spelling errors caused by the influence of mother tongue

Targeted Words	Mother tongue influence
I will never go there	I will neva go there
The teacher read the bible	The teacher read the mbaible
My dress was very smart	My dress was very simati
I could not imagine going there	I could not imagini going there

Table 2 Spelling errors that came about as the result of insertion

Targeted words	Spelling errors
Ceremony	Celemony
Crack.	Clack
Arrive	Alive
Blessed	Bressed
Ready	Leady
Carrying	Calling
Right	Lite
Blowing	Browing
Riding	Liding

Table 2 shows some errors that came about as a result of insertion or deletion in cases where Kiambu does not share sound inventories with English. This table also indicates that Kiambu does not have // in its inventory and some learners deleted the // in words and inserted /r/. At other times, they deleted the /r/ and inserted the // (Massaba 1996). According to Wang and Geva (2003 a), when English L2 learners replace the English phoneme that does not exist in L1 with the other phonemes that exist in their L1 the error occurred.

2.6 First Additional Language in grade 3 in South Africa's schools

In grades R and grade one, children learn to read and write in their Home language; however in grades two and three, focus should be given to developing literacy in the First Additional Language (DoE, 2011). The current curriculum identifies, listening and speaking, reading and phonics, writing and handwriting and thinking and reasoning as

the main skills in the Foundation Phase, First additional Language curriculum (DoE, 2011). Writing is regarded as important because it forces learners to think about grammar and spelling. Furthermore in grade 3 writing become more challenging hence the learners are expected to write a simple set of instructions and personal recount with support. The following table classifies the skills to be taught in the First Additional Language in grades one to three as designed in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS).

Table3: Writing skills to be developed in the FAL Grades 1-3

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade3
Uses handwriting skills taught in HL. Draws and labels pictures with the help of teacher. Reads back what is written. Writes simple lists (e.g. shopping lists).	With help, spells common words correctly. Uses a children's dictionary where necessary.	Spells common words correctly and attempts to spell unfamiliar words using phonic knowledge

Table 3 indicates that as a learner reaches grade 3 should be able to spell common words correctly. At this stage is children begin to read and write in their additional language as they already know how to decode in their home language. It is indicated that what they need in their FAL phonics class is practice in applying this knowledge to learning to decode text in English. Also children need to learn to know where sound-spelling relationships are different in their home and additional languages. For example, 'th' in English represents two different sounds which are different to the sound 'th' represents in African languages (e.g. thank, that, thatha). It is also suggested that teachers should keep in mind that their role is to build awareness over time of sound –

spelling relationships in the additional language not to drill for complete accuracy (DoE, 2001).

Moreover South Africa's curriculum implies that when children begin to read and write in their additional language (DoE, 2011). This means they need to have a considerable prior knowledge of sound-spelling relationships. They should be well equipped to have the ability to identify instances where sound-spelling relationships are different in their home and additional languages. For example "th" in English represents two different sounds (e.g. thank and that), which are different to the sound which 'th' represents in isiXhosa

2.7 GOOD SPELLERS VERSUS STRUGGLING SPELLERS

Different researchers have identified the characteristics common to good spellers as opposed to struggling spellers.

Good spellers

- o Operate under the assumption that the English system of spelling has regularity and that spelling problems can be solved (Gentry, 2004).
- o Are engaged in reading and writing tasks both in and out of school and view correct spelling and proofreading as their responsibility (Hughes & Searle 2000).
- o Know and use a variety of strategies when solving spelling problems and are able to combine knowledge of all levels of orthography: sound, visual, and meaning (Hughes & Searle, 2000).
- o Appear to access an extensive store of words and word specific knowledge from memory (Gentry, 1982; 2004).

Poor spellers

- o View spelling as something completely arbitrary and beyond their control (Hughes & Searle, 2000). This means that according to poor spellers the English

system of spelling irregularities and spelling problems could not be solved (ibid). Carlisle (1994) deduced that poor speller may have difficulty in analysing other aspects of internal structure of words.

- o Demonstrate limited strategies for word solving which rely heavily on sound (Hughes & Searle, 2000). This means that poor spellers were unable to combine knowledge of all levels of orthography: sound, visual, and meaning (Hughes & Searle, 1997; Kosnik, 1998). According to Kamhi & Hinton (2000) poor spellers may follow a different developmental course in learning to spell.
- o Take longer time to learn (Treiman *et al*, 1997); however researchers like Hughes and Searle (1997:61) acknowledged that it takes a long time for anyone to become a good speller.

2.8 ERROR CORRECTION

According to Erdogan (2005) the teacher's job is to point out when something has gone wrong and see whether the student can correct himself, find out if what the student says or writes is just a mistake, or it is global or local. However, the technique of correction is not simply presenting the data repeatedly and going through the same set of drills and exercises to produce the state of over learning. On the contrary, it requires that the teacher understands the source of the errors so that he can provide appropriate remedy, which will resolve the learner's problems and allow him to discover the relevant rules. Thus, the source of the error is an important clue for the teacher to decide on the sort of treatment. Harmer (1998) suggests three steps to be followed by the teacher when errors occur. The teacher first listens to the students, then identifies the problem, and puts it right in the most efficient way. Corder (1973) states that knowledge of being wrong is only a starting point. Skill in correction seems to lie in determining the necessary data to present to the learner and what statements, descriptive or comparative, to make about it.

Ur (1996) stipulates that for correcting written works, it is accepted that the teacher should not correct the students' mistakes directly but instead, should put marks

indicating there is something wrong with that sentence, word, or punctuation. Also there are symbols that can be used by teachers to indicate the kind of error committed by the student. For example, 'sp' for spelling mistake and 'rw' for the sentences need to be written once again (ibid).

2.9 STAGES OF SPELLING DEVELOPMENT

Many researchers recommend that teaching spelling should develop according to various developmental stages. For example Dorn and Soffos (as cited in DuBois *et al.*, 2007); Gentry, 1982; Savage, 2001; Treiman *et al.*, 1997 and Ehri & Metsala,1998 suggested the following stages of spelling development before the learners become skilled spellers: pre-communicative stage, semi-phonetic stage, phonetic stage, transitional spelling stage and conventional spelling stage.

Pre-communicative Spelling Stage

Learners at this stage literally spell what they hear; therefore, sometimes their letter choices do not conform to conventional English spelling. Their writing is not readable to others and there may be random strings of symbols (real or invented). Letters may be in their upper or lower case, some letters are combined and letter symbols are in relatively haphazard fashion, with no apparent knowledge of letter-sound.

Semi-phonetic Spelling Stage

Learners' writing at this stage is simple a collection of scribbles, circles and lines with few random letters being thrown in and they are writing formed letters of alphabet and string the letters together that looked like printed language. Spelling is characterized by first attempts at letter-sound correspondence. It may be abbreviated, with only one or two letters to represent a word, e.g. 'wk' (walk), 'po' (piano), and 's' (saw). Learners spell very systematically, they spell, literally what they hear, they represent a portion of the phonetic information in the word and they recognize the left-to-right directionality of the English language. Within this stage students are consistently writing left to right, top to bottom and are able to copy letter by letter. Their writing shows some awareness of

sound–symbol relationships, and may produce a word with one, two or three letters which represent what the writer hears as obvious sounds within that word. Students may only be using consonants.

Phonetic spelling stage

Learners at this stage are not expected to spell conventionally most of the time because their spelling concepts are not yet fully developed. Spelling is not standard, but writing is meaningful and can be read and understood by others. There may be substitutions of incorrect letters with similar (or even the same) pronunciation. Actually, these substitutions often indicate that the speller is using a great deal of common sense. e.g. 'jrink' (drink) and 'chrain' (train). Nasal consonants may be omitted in English, e.g. 'stap' (stamp) Past tense may be represented in different ways, e.g. 'pild' (peeled), 'lookt' (looked) and 'tradid' (traded). At this stage learners are *six years three months*.

Transitional Spelling Stage

At this stage learners pay attention to what words look like, in addition to what they sound like. They begin to incorporate vowels and endings in their spelling and they demonstrate their growing knowledge of English orthography. Learners may operate within this *stage* of spelling for a long period of time and during this stage, visual and morphemic strategies become more important.

Vowels appear in every syllable e.g. 'elafunt'; nasals appear before consonants e.g. 'combo'. Common English letter sequences are used e.g. 'younited'. Vowel digraphs often appear e.g. 'miaik' and 'mayk'. Inflectional endings (s, 's, ing, ed, est) are spelled conventionally. Correct letters may be used but in an incorrect sequence e.g. 'becuase' (because) and 'plian' (plain). Learned (sight) words appear more often.

Conventional Spelling Stage

The learners at this stage are expected to spell at a higher frequency level. At this stage, most words are spelled appropriately. The speller can often recognize a word that doesn't look right and a large reservoir of words are spelled automatically.

Montgomery (2007) and Browne (1999) name this stage '*the correct stage*' where the learners start to be good spellers. It is at this stage where children use a combination of strategies, including letter sounds, letter names and memory to produce correct spellings of short and multi-syllabic words (Browne, 1999:102).

Wentz (2005) confirms that developmental stages provide a scope and sequence for instruction. According to Nassaji (n.d.), at the first stage words are spelled with no reference to sound-letter correspondence, at the second stage the learners begin to associate the sound to the letter, at the third and fourth stage learners start to make meaning of written words. According to stage account, children progress from unsophisticated forms of phonological analysis through more mature phonological and orthographic strategies to retrieval (Nassaji, n.d.). At this point, the progress is sequential, unidirectional and occurring in a fixed order and it makes use of children's mature knowledge of the structure and rules of the sound- spelling system (ibid).

Contrary to the stage development theory, Siegler (as cited in Nassaji, n.d; Farrington- Flint et al., 1998) suggests the overlapping waves theory as more effective than the sequential stage development. The overlapping wave's theory encourages the use of different strategies when developing the spelling skills and also the consideration of different learning styles in order for the learners to solve any given task and acquire spelling skills (Farrington- Flint, Stash & Stiller, 2008). To add more Nassaji (n.d.) stipulates that, overlapping waves theories predict that the strategy development is not so regular and sequential; instead children oscillate among more and less sophisticated strategies.

2.10 SKILLS NECESSARY FOR THE ENGLISH SPELLING DEVELOPMENT

2.10.1 Phonological awareness skills

Fox (1996:21) defines phonological awareness as the ability to think analytically about the word, syllable, rhyme and sound segments of language and the ability to act on the basis of this analysis. The phonological knowledge is one of the linguistic forms necessary for the learners to spell words correctly (Rubba, 2003). It is also the foundation for the acquisition of spelling skills and also a multilevel skill of breaking

down words into smaller units (ibid). This means that a word can be described in terms of its syllabic structure, onset-rime structure and segmented structure (Gillon, 2007). The syllabic structure of a word is where each word is divided into syllables as in words *re-mem-ber* and *jump-ing*, onset-rime structure where for instance in the word *sit* the *s* is the onset of the syllable and *it* is the rime of the syllable (Gillon, 2007). The segmented structure means the segmenting of words into phonemes (Browne, 1999). According to Wasowicz (2010) the combination of all the phonological awareness skills of segmenting, sequencing, discriminating, and identifying phonemes play a vital role during the encoding process.

Many researcher, (Bruck & Treiman, 1990; Treiman, 1993; Vellutino, Fletcher, Snowling & Scanlon, 2004) stipulate that phonological awareness plays an important role in spelling development. This is because of the fact that children learn and use their phonological knowledge to assist in their spelling of words (Varnhagen, 1995). Phonemic awareness skills sometimes known as deep phonological awareness skills is the understanding that words are made up of individual sounds or morphemes and also enable the learners to segment and identify the sounds in a word in order to spell successfully, for example /mud/ can be segmented as /m/ /u/ /d/ (Rubba: 2003). According to Moats (2006), phoneme awareness training helps children in the early stages of learning to spell and helps remediate the problems of poor spellers at any age. Furthermore a lack of phonemic awareness contributes to poor spelling achievement as is the most detailed level of word structure that is relevant to spelling (Medrano, 1998). Moats (2006) also encourage activities for developing phonemic awareness skill. For example, direct teaching of all consonants and vowel sounds including activities identifying speech sounds. In contrast, Rubba (2003) claims that a child can be phonological aware and still be completely unable to understand letters or the relationship between letters and the sounds. This is due to the fact that children develop phonological awareness skills by consciously attending to how words sound by listening to words, not looking at how they are written (ibid).

Goswami (2002) also confirms that phoneme segmentation is difficult for young children because the application of phoneme grapheme correspondence rule requires sufficient working memory capacity to hold word and segment it into phonemes, while selecting the appropriate graphemes. To add more Bourassa & Treiman (1993) claim that the ability to identify all of the phonemes in a spoken word does not guarantee that the word will be spelled correctly, the reason being that some phonemes have more than one possible spelling, and the correct choice depends on the position of the phoneme in the words. For example *ck* may occur in the middles and at the ends of English words, like in *packet* and *pack*.

2.10.2 Alphabetic Knowledge

Knowledge of letters of alphabet is needed in addition to knowledge of phonological structure in order to spell correctly (Rubba, 2003). To add on this Gillon (2007) stipulates that for the children to understand structures of words they should learn the names of the alphabetic letters and their associate phonemes. Adams (1990), states that the mastery of the letters of the alphabet provides a strong foundation for learning to read and write. Also understanding the alphabetic principle means being consciously aware of the basic logic of our writing system (Rubba, 2003).

2.10.3 Orthographic Knowledge

Orthographic information involves knowledge of how letters go together according to typical English convention. For example, an *e* at the end of a one-syllable word makes the preceding vowel long and double letters do not usually appear at the beginning of a word (Steffler, 2001). According to Wasowicz (2010) orthographic knowledge plays a vital role during the encoding (spelling) and decoding (reading) processes. Orthographic knowledge includes recognising letter- sound relationships (ibid). Furthermore individuals rely upon their knowledge of sound- letter relationships and knowledge of letter patterns and conventional spelling rules to convert spoken language to written form (Wasowicz, 2010). Orthographic knowledge skills are important throughout spelling development as individuals encounter new words (ibid).

2.10.4 Vocabulary Knowledge

Meriem (2010) stipulates that learning a second language involves the learning of a large number of words. This means that mastery of vocabulary is an essential component of second language acquisition (ibid). Also, individuals use vocabulary knowledge to store and retrieve the correct spelling of words (Wasowicz, 2010). This knowledge is important mostly for the correct spelling of words that sound the same but have different meaning and spelling (ibid).

2.10.5 Visual imagery

Nigel (2008) referred to visual mental imagery, as "visualization," "seeing in the mind's eye," and "picturing. This means that we often recall past events, or imagine possible ones, by forming mental images of them. Also mental images are always images of something or other, of some (real or imaginary) "object" (ibid). However, unlike percepts, images occur in the absence of their object (Nigel, 2008:3). Visual imagery enables learners to spell unfamiliar words accurately for a variety of social and academic purposes (Department of Education and Training, 1998). It also focuses on how words look and it includes teaching learners the following (ibid):

- o To recall and compare the appearance of words, particularly those which they have seen or learnt before or those which are commonly used.
- o To recognise what letters look like and how to write them.
- o To recognise that letters can be grouped in particular ways, e.g. endings that frequently occur in words. For example using visual patterns and grouping words with letter patterns such as, **enough, cough, rough**.

In contrast Darch and Sympson (1990) conducted a research on 'effectiveness of visual imagery versus rule- based strategies in teaching spelling' of which the results indicated that the students taught with an explicit rule-based strategy approach outperformed students who were presented with a visual imagery spelling strategy.

2.11 PERSPECTIVES ON LINKAGES BETWEEN MOTHER TONGUE AND LITERACY

According to Harmer (2001:131), students use the mother tongue in the classroom because of some certain reasons. For example mother tongue is used because it is required by the activity, if students are linguistically incapable of activating vocabulary for a chosen task (ibid). Also it is used because translation is a natural thing to do in language learning, and code-switching is regarded as naturally developmental (Harmer, 2001). Using the mother tongue inside the class is useful in order to clarify the instruction or long explanations (Ur, 2000). However it can impact negatively to the development of spelling for learners who learn to spell in a second language.

According to Makalela (1998:15), learners may borrow from their mother tongue consciously to improve their performance in the second language. This means that learners borrow the patterns of L1 from mother tongue to the target language (Miressa & Dumessa, 2011). This is what Oldin (as cited in Gomez & Arcila, 2011) referred to as linguistic transfer. According to Gomez and Arcila (2011), transfer refers to the role that previous linguistic knowledge plays in the acquisition of a second language. Furthermore Wikipedia (2008) differentiates between two types of transfer, positive and negative transfer. Positive transfer occurs when the two languages have in common the grammatical structure. On the other hand, negative transfer is the error committed when transferring in the exact way as the mother tongue structure.

Mother tongue has potentially both positive and negative consequences. On a positive side it may serve social and cognitive functions (Carless, 2008:331). For example it is claimed that students working in groups do not have to speak English all the time, so mother tongue can be used (ibid). Again if learners learn phonics in their home language, they do not need to learn sound-spelling relationships again in English they apply their knowledge in English (DoE, 2011). Use of mother tongue relates to learner identity (Carless, 2008).

According to Brown (2000), transfer can be interlingual or intralingual. Interlingual refers to the fact of transferring concepts from mother tongue to second language. The

intralingual errors are the second category of errors (ibid). These errors may be occurred due to inadequate learning or difficulties inherent in the target language itself, faulty teaching, confused thinking or lack of contrast of both languages (Darus & Hein, 2009). Paradowiski (2007) confirms this by saying that one's first language remains a powerful factor in learning another language. To add more Macdonald and Burroughs (1991) say that success in second language seem to depend in the child's first language. On the other hand, Al-Jarf (2008) stipulates that students' native language has an impact on the second language learning which makes bilingual learners face more challenges than their monolingual peers. Negative impact of mother tongue use is that too much reliance on the L1 may undermine the interaction in English (Kavaliauskiene, 2009).

According to Cummins (2001: 18) the level of development of children's mother tongue is a strong predictor of their second language development. Children, who come to school with a solid foundation in their mother tongue, develop stronger literacy abilities in the school language (ibid). According to Baker, Cummins and Skutnabb - Kangas (2000) when children continue to develop their abilities in two or more languages throughout their primary school years, they gain a deeper understanding of language. They have more practice in processing language, especially when they develop literacy in both.

2.12 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO INTERLINGUAL SPELLING ERRORS IN ENGLISH

In order for the teachers to be able to help learners overcome interlingual spelling errors, they need to know exactly the factors that contribute to interlingual spelling errors. These factors are discussed below:

Pronunciation

Templeton (2004) and Wilde (1992) pointed out that pronunciation can affect spelling. To confirm this Al-Jabri (2006) stipulates that pronunciation-based problems occur when

learners do not know the English sound system and therefore use the wrong letters. Miressa and Dumessa (2011) also believe that learning the spelling rules of English words is very difficult due to the discrepancy between the pronunciations of many words and its spelling system. On the other hand Antrim (2008) stipulates that spelling errors and word choices are also influenced by the students' pronunciation of English words.

Borrowing

Haugen (as cited in Jandova, 2012) defines borrowing as a term for the process of adaptation of a word from the donor language into the recipient language. Also borrowing can be seen as a result of contacts between two nations, cultures, and languages (ibid). One of the initial reasons for borrowing is when one language has a semantic “gap” in its lexicon and needs to borrow a term to express the necessary idea or concept (Trask, 1996; and Poplack et al., 1988). For example, *disini* in Chinese comes from ‘Disney’ in English, a word obviously of United States roots and with no pre-existing synonym in Chinese (Trask, 1996).

According to Jandova (2012) the outcomes of borrowing are loanwords. A loanword is a foreign word that comes as a new word into a recipient language. Very often loanwords function as synonyms of existing words in a recipient language (Cichrová 2005: 6). According to Joy (2011) the words that have been borrowed from English into isiXhosa can result in learners making orthographic errors. Common orthographic errors include consonant doubling errors, capitalization errors, addition or omission of single space word boundary errors and digraph errors (Rimrott & Heift, 2005; Treiman et al. 1997; Fawcett, 2006)

Table 4 below shows some of the words that have been borrowed from English into isiXhosa.

Table 4: Words borrowed from English into isiXhosa

English words	Borrowed words
Cupboard	Ikhabhathi
Glass	Iglasi
Stove	Isitovu
Plate	Ipleyiti

Table 4 above indicates the words that are borrowed from English to isiXhosa which in turn become problematic in English spelling for isiXhosa background learners. Studies that have been conducted suggest that orthographic depth and the similarities of the languages involved affect how easily and whether or not information is transferred from one language to another (Arab-Moghaddam & Senechal; Carlisle & Beeman; Liow & Lau as cited in Joy 2011).

First Language Interference

The native language of learners plays a significant role in learning a second language. However, Clark-Edmands (as cited in DuBois *et al.*, 2007) stipulates that another probable factor for learners' inability to transfer correct spelling may be found within the child's own language area. Dulay et al (as cited in Bhela, 1999) define interference as the automatic transfer due to habit of the surface structure of the first language onto the surface of the target language. Linguistic transfer has to do with linguistic features that language learners incorporate from their native language into the knowledge system of a new language (Guzman Gomez, 2011). In other words, transfer is a borrowing of linguistic features from one's mother tongue and its use in the process of acquisition of a new language (ibid). Studies carried out about transfer have found that transfer is the structural influence of one language on another which facilitates language acquisition (Ferdinand, 1997). There is evidence and studies available that support the relevance of

language transfer in language acquisition. According to Paradowski (2007), somebody's first language (L1) remains a powerful factor in learning another language. Language learners seem to use first language and proceed with the assumption that the linguistic patterns existing in the target language (L2) that they are acquiring are more or less the same than the existent ones in their L1(ibid).

Intrinsic and extrinsic factors

According to Culatta, Tompkins and Werts (2003:53), Landsberg (2005: 152), Weideman (2002:39), Frederickson and Cline (2002:292) there are many reasons why learners commit interlingual spelling errors. Sometimes the problem lies within the learner (intrinsic) and sometimes outside of the learner (extrinsic).

According to Frederickson and Cline (2002:292) learners with speech defects do not pronounce words correctly usually write the words incorrectly too. For example if the learner says *wif* instead of *with* consequently writes *wif* instead of *with*. Those are the effects of the intrinsic factors. On the other hand extrinsic factors are those factors caused by other people or unfavourable conditions like socio- economic status of learners. Raviv, Kessenich & Morrison, (2004) also stipulate that socioeconomic status (SES) is considered as one of many important factors linked to language and literacy development. Confirming this statement, Stipek, Miburn, Clements and Daniels, (1992) state that economically disadvantaged children score lower on word recognition and verbal tasks than their more economically advantaged peers.

Previous research findings demonstrate that SES combined with the home literacy environment remains a primary influence on children's literacy and language acquisition throughout various stages in their development (Hoff-Ginsberg & Tardif, 1995; Raviv et al., 2004; Wilkinson, Burke, & Joy 1984). Higher SES families demonstrated more responsive, more interactive, and less restrictive parenting techniques (Hoff-Ginsberg & Tardif, 1995; Raviv et al., 2004; Risley & Hart, 2006). These findings highlight the notion that children from low-income families are exposed to fewer literacy promoting behaviours than children from middle and high SES families. On the other hand,

Mahabeer (2009) confirms by stating that socio- economic status, the degree of parental involvement in L2 acquisition, resources and curriculum planning are also extrinsic barriers over which L2 foundation phase learners have no control.

Frederickson and Cline (2002:292) stipulate that illiterate parents cannot spell themselves and are not always able to help their children with their homework. Also learners living in a monolingual society (especially in the rural areas) where they hear only their first language find it difficult to communicate with people and experience limited support in learning the second language. According to Okagaki and Diamond (2000:76) a lack of congruence between parents and educators' expectations creates an additional burden on L2 learners who are left on their own to determine the implicit rules and expectations that govern in the classroom. A chasm is formed between the home and the school causing a dissociation of learning from home (ibid).

Also incorrect pronunciation by educators could make learners spell words incorrectly as they merely imitate the teachers' incorrect pronunciation. Stander (as cited in Nel & Muller, 2010) stipulate that where teachers' own L2 knowledge is not on an acceptable standard for the use of English as the LoLT, their poor usage and knowledge of the language are transferred to the learners.

Insufficient resources have a negative impact on spelling development

Effective lessons depend on the availability of resources such as books (readers) audio-visual aids well equipped library, electricity, furniture and resources from surrounding environment (Vakalisa, 2000). The majority of L2 learners entering the foundation phase do not speak English, schooling becomes their only exposure to the language (ibid). This means that the learners must meet the challenge of learning a new language and at the same time learning to read and spell in the absence of any external support (Kreuger & Braun, 1998). The lack of accessibility to relevant resources hinders the learners' acquisition of English as a second language (ibid).

2.13 THE STRATEGIES TO MINIMISE INTERLINGUAL SPELLING ERRORS

2.13.1 Strategies used to minimise interlingual spelling errors caused by pronunciation

Senel (2006) suggested some techniques for eliminating the impact of pronunciation problems in spelling development. These are discussed fully below:

Remedial Teaching Technique

This is a systematic approach that deals with the problems of individual sounds. This strategy could be divided into four parts, imitation, demonstration, association and explanation. For example, teacher draws attention to the 'offending' sound and pronounces it in isolation to be imitated by the learners. The teacher shows the students how the sound is formed by putting his tongue between his teeth to produce /θ/ or /d/ by using demonstration part. However, certain sounds are not easily made visible, so the teacher may adopt the process of association. In this process, sounds must be isolated and attention must be drawn to the similarities between two sounds in terms of whether they are voiced, lateral, dental, etc. (Hubbard et al., 1983). Finally, explanation may help as the teacher explains in the mother tongue if necessary, how the sound is formed. If, despite instant remedial works, the 'offending' sound still causes problems for the learners, then Planned Remedial work is needed where the teacher should make a note of the problem and plan a short remedial drill for the lesson. Some of these drills are explained below:

Drilling Technique

For drilling technique there are many useful drills for purifying and teaching the correct and accurate pronunciation of the utterances and words.

Word - association Drill

This is one of the easiest ways to give the students practice on specific problem sounds while the manifest purpose of the drill appears to be vocabulary study. If for instance the teacher wants to concentrate on the phonemes / a / and / e /, the teacher may ask the

students for antonyms of the following words: *sick, sit, thin, more*. The students would respond with *well, stand, fat, less*. In this type of drill it is useful to call the students' attention to the fact that the words they will select all contain / a / or / e /. For example, bed, bad, but, bears, beer, bag, mail, get, lake and feet.

Comparative Drill

In this type of drill, words almost similar in every respect except the one element to be drilled are placed in juxtaposition. Since we tend to confuse sounds that are similar these drills will stimulate accuracy in hearing, performance, and judgment. For example, a sample comparative drill for /f-v/ and /p-b/ sounds is; fee- bee, feat- peat, freeze-breeze, visa-Pisa, fig-pig, freed- breed, fly-ply, veer-beer, fled-bled, fact-pact, fester-pester. On the other hand sample comparative drill for / a - e/ sounds is; sat-set, band-bend, sand-send, bad-bed, pan-pen.

On the other hand Rippel (2012) suggests the following techniques for preventing spelling errors caused by pronunciation issues:

Let the learners exaggerate the pronunciation of the word. For example the words '*library*' and '*separate*' could be ('li-brar-y', 'sep-ar-ate'). In this instance the learner will be able to hear each sound clearly, making it much easier for him to spell the word.

The teacher should model the word for the learner who is not aware of the correct pronunciation. For example if the learner pronounced 'Febary', the teacher carefully pronounces the word for him 'Feb-ru-a-ry' so that the learner can hear each syllable.

Similarly, Peterson (2000) gathered information regarding pronunciation strategies through interviews and diaries for eleven adult Spanish learners. Her study yielded twelve basic pronunciation strategies: representing sounds in memory, practicing naturalistically, formal practice with sounds, analyzing the sound system, using proximal articulations, finding out about the target language pronunciation, setting goals and objectives, planning for a language task, self-evaluation, using humour to lower anxiety, asking for help, cooperating with peers, representing sounds in memory. While she did not attempt to organize or classify the strategies, she noted that all twelve strategies

were given the same names or similar names to strategies that exist in Oxford's (1990) classification system. Vitanova and Miller (2002) identified two pronunciation strategies used by L2 learners: self-correction of poor pronunciation and active listening to native pronunciation.

2.13.2 Strategies to minimise interlingual spelling errors caused by language transfer

Language transfer can be defined as the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously and perhaps imperfectly acquire (Odlin1993:27).In other words, in terms of second language teaching and learning, transfer is the influence of the learner's native language in a second language. When the linguistic interference results in correct language production, it is called positive transfer. However, if the learner's second language induces to error, it will be referring to negative transfer (Oldin, 1993). In any case, the term could be extended to any situation in which someone that does not have a native-level command of the language translates his or her knowledge to the target language.

According to literature the obvious method of competently dealing with the question of transfer in the intelligent computer assisted language learning (ICALL) environment is to include in a language learning system representations of other languages known by students. This information will then be available for the diagnosis of transfer errors and may also promote learning through positive comparison by indicating similarities between the target and other languages.

On the other hand Wang and Garigliano's (1992) system also includes a model of the native language. This system is based on the belief that translation exercises are one of the most powerful methods of minimising negative language transfer (Bull, 1995). However this approach must be used with caution as it could lead to greater dependency on a general translation strategy, a strategy which is less efficient for communication due to its reliance on the L1 (ibid).

2.13.3 Strategies to minimise interlingual spelling errors caused by language borrowing

According to Jandova (2012) English has become a part of the basic schooling for children all over the world and as such it has naturally become a part of people's lifestyle. As a result, English language has begun to influence other languages and has been enriching their vocabulary. As far back as 1950 Haugen (as cited in Jandova, 2012) defined borrowing as the process of adaptation of a word from the donor language (the language the word originates in) into the recipient language (the language which adapts the word). Borrowing can be seen as a result of contacts between two nations, cultures, and languages (ibid). The results of the borrowing are divided into loanwords, loan blend and loan shifts (Jandova, 2012).

Literature states that English loanwords have been a part of all layers of vocabulary and play an important role both in many specialized fields and also in communication of specific social groups (Janovec, 2007). According to Cichrova (2005:6) a loanword is a foreign word that comes as a new word into a recipient language. Loanwords also function as synonyms of existing words in a recipient language (ibid).

2.14 THE STRATEGIES OF TEACHING ENGLISH SPELLING TO SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS

According to Medrano and Zych (1998) spelling needs to involve many opportunities to develop higher order thinking skills to promote appropriate transfer. Peha (as cited in DuBois, *et al*, 2007) offers many strategies for improving spelling instruction. These strategies include creating spelling lists that are related to learners' writing needs and teaching words based on meaning, spelling patterns or common sounds. However Gentry (1982) continues in arguing that expert spellers are born and cannot be developed in school. On the other hand the Department of Education (1998) states that explicit and systematic teaching of spelling means that teachers need to provide a learning environment that links spelling with all other aspects of language learning particularly reading and writing. The teaching of spelling develops the different skills in learners as it:-

- Teaches phonological, visual, morphemic and etymological spelling knowledge.
- Gives regular opportunities for learners to demonstrate and reflect on their understandings about spelling.
- Teaches dictionary skills and regular model of using dictionaries.
- Monitors, analyses and gives feedback on spelling performance and progress.
- Teaches learners to practise the spelling of words used frequently and those which are essential vocabulary in key learning areas.
- Develops spelling skills and strategies throughout the stages of schooling.
- Develops proof reading and editing skills.

The National Literacy Secretariat of Human Resources Development (1998) categorised learners' spelling strategies as follows:

Some spellings can be remembered by learning a rule, ('l' before 'e' except after 'c' e)

Some spelling can be learned phonetically. If you pronounce the word correctly, you can often spell it correctly.

Some spelling can be learned by breaking the word into syllables or smaller sections.

Some words can be learned by using 'tricks' that are appropriate to your learning style.

(The National Literacy Secretariat of Human Resources Development 1998)

Planning as the first strategy for teaching English spelling

Literature encourages a thorough planning in order for the learners to recognise, learn and use the patterns in English spelling (Joshi, Treiman, Carreker & Moats, 2009). This means that teachers should plan for the resources in order for the spelling to be successful (ibid). Teachers' planning should be a structured and systematic approach to spelling that will support all students to develop skills and knowledge and constantly reflect on what students can do, know and understand (Department of Education and

Children's Services, 2011). The Department of Education and Training (1999) made the following suggestions about lesson planning:

Class plans are designed to meet the specific learning needs of all students in the class. For an individual class the teacher will need to develop a plan far enough ahead to know where to go but for a short enough period to be flexible and responsive. To achieve a cohesive whole-school approach to the teaching of writing, a class plan should take into account the following:-

- The needs of groups or individuals in this class as identified by assessment of their writing knowledge, skills and understanding.
- The areas of the curriculum that will provide authentic purposes for writing.
- The elements of research, editing and publishing.
- The elements of text structure, grammar, spelling, punctuation and handwriting.
- Catering for students requiring specific support
- Modeled, guided and independent teaching strategies to be used and
- The assessment and monitoring of students' writing progress.

Spelling should be integrated across the curriculum

Literature reveals that spelling would be meaningful to learners if integrated across the curriculum and not be taught in isolation. This means that spelling should be infused to other areas of learning other than languages (Medrano, 1998 & Laminack, 1996). This means that teachers should correct learners' spelling in any subject either than languages.

Observing and monitoring learner spelling

This strategy encourages teachers to pay close attention to what children are doing like looking at their spelling, noticing how they struggle or cope with spelling and give some assistance where possible (Farrington-Flint et al, 2008; Laminack, 1999). Teachers

should make efforts in their classrooms to make children understand the significant relationship between the ability to spell words and understand their meaning which in turn could be a beneficial effect on their spelling (Croft, 1983). Laminack and Wood (1996) suggest and urge that teachers should become habitual “kidwatchers” and observe learners as they write; that will help them plan later instruction and they may help a learner with a spelling “bug” as they see it occurring.

Reasoning by analogy

One of the most powerful strategies for determining the spelling of a word about which a student is unfamiliar is to try to think of a word that is similar in terms of sound or meaning. This kind of strategy is known as reasoning by analogy (Gaskins, 1992; Goswami, 1988; Treiman, 1993). Younger students as well as older ones are capable of this type of reasoning about words but should be modelled for students, because many will not discover it on their own (Templeton & Morris, 1999).

Games help learners improve their spelling skills

According to Martinson and Chu (2008: 478) games are effective tools for learning because they offer students a hypothetical environment in which they can explore alternative decisions without the risk of failure. Playing games teaches the learners how to strategise, to consider alternatives, and to think flexibly. The teacher should choose the game relevant to the theme. For example *looking games* as stipulated by Amtmann et al., (2008) are useful when teaching the spelling. This is where the learners are taught to look carefully at brief displayed written words and asked to spell it orally or in writing all the letters in the words without looking at them (Amtmann et al., 2008). Horn (as cited in Templeton & Darrell, 1999) recommends this strategy for learning individual words and is known as the *look, say, write* strategy. Also games like word sort and word hunt are useful strategies to teach spelling (Bear et al., 2000). Learners are given the opportunity to sort examples of words that go together from those that don't (ibid). Games such as Tic Tac Toe, Concentration, Fish, Snap, Snakes and Ladders, Bingo

can be adapted by teachers to facilitate students developing a knowledge of sound–symbol relationships.

Spelling with reading enhance learner spelling development

Researchers have found that there is a relationship between reading and spelling (Ehri, 1997 2000; Hughes and Searle, 2000; Templeton, 2004). Krashen (2002) associates spelling more closely to reading stating that learning to read and learning to spell are one and the same and there is increasing evidence that the relationship is, in fact, a reciprocal one. Reading is the starting point of spelling; words that learners can read provide the basis for word study (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnston, 2004). If learners are not being exposed at home to reading and writing at an early age, they may not be successful as spellers later in life (Cunningham as cited in Medrano & Zych, 1998). This notion is supported by Gentry (2004:11) in stating that “learners learn to read by spelling” and it is the knowledge of the alphabetic principle in spelling that facilitates reading. This phenomenon could be due to the fact that spelling, reading and writing employ the same lexical representations (Templeton, 2004). Hence Gentry (1982) states that teachers do need to teach formal spelling lessons to supplement what learners learn about spelling through reading and writing.

Stories used as spelling strategy

Many researchers confirm that reading and writing are the two sides of the same coin (Hughes and Searle, 2000; Templeton, 2004; Ehri, 1997, 2000). This means that reading and spelling competences share the same several competences (Leppanen, Niemi & Nurmi, 2006). When reading stories and discussing pictures, the learners can identify sounds. The teacher at this time could let the learners identify the focus sounds on the story and build words to reinforce spelling (DoE, 2002).

Creating a Print Rich environment

According to Scher (1999) this refers to a room or an environment that has a variety of print abundantly displayed, that encourages learners to read and write by virtue of the rich literacy environment that surrounds the learners. Print reach environment includes

a variety of learner and adult generated books, writing tools, labels, lists, poems and song charts, samples of adult and learner writing and helping tools for the creation of learner writing, signs, poems, student dictations and original stories. Furthermore a print-rich learning environment sets the tone for ways in which learners can discover the relationships between spoken and written language (Garza & Lira, 2008). One component of a print-rich environment is the word wall; a word wall is an interactive display of words on the classroom wall which can be used to aid in student spelling (DuBois et al., 2007). A print rich environment offers learners many opportunities to explore words and 'play' with them. Hence Medrano & Zych (1998) believed that an absence of the print-rich environment may be another factor contributing to the problem of poor spelling skills for learners.

To add more the Department of education (2011) states that from earliest years, South African children are exposed to a great deal of environmental print in English for example in signage (traffic signs, shop signs, etc.) and packaging. This means that teachers should bring familiar packages or advertisements to class and seeing if the learners can recognise brand names (ibid). These activities support incidental learning (DoE, 2011).

Proof reading and error correction

Teaching learners to reread their own writing and make corrections independently is an important part of teaching learners the importance of correct spelling (Dubois, Erickson & Jacobs, 2007). Proofreading serves to “operationalize the connections between reading, writing, spelling and phonics development” (Turbill, 2000:209). According to Gentry (1982) good teachers teach proofreading skills and stress the value of correct spelling as well, but usually only for the final draft of a composition being read for publication. These skills related to using references, proofreading and checking writing, should be developed from the earliest stages of learning to write (Croft 1983). This helps the learners to be aware of ways in which to edit and correct their own writing and the importance of spelling through proofreading (Dubois et al., 2007).

Krishnalalitha (2010) stipulates that the best way to correct the learners' errors is to let them correct their own errors with the teacher's help and the second best way is to let peers correct each others' errors. This will encourage learners to attempt spelling independently before seeking assistance from an adult (Laminack & Wood, 1996). According to Pressley and Woloshyn (as cited in Medrano & Zych, 1998) in self-correction learners gain metacognitive skills that will apply to their spelling. Hence DuBois, Erickson and Jacobs (2007) state that teaching learners to reread their own writing and make corrections independently is an important part of teaching learners the importance of correct spelling.

Spelling words list strategy

Ideally teachers should make use of word families and spelling lists to meet the unique requirements of their own class. Teaching learners word families is a powerful strategy because it draws their attention to spelling patterns that they can use when they are writing (Medrano & Zych, 1998). According to Davies and Ritchie (as cited in Condry et al., 2010), Teaching Handwriting, Reading and Spelling Skills (THRASS) is a synthetic and analytic phonics programme where young learners learn to spell, read and write by using pictures and keywords. Mead (as cited in Condry et al., 2010:2) claims that "THRASS can be more than double the normal rate of progress for learning reading and spelling for primary and secondary school learners, dyslexics and those for whom English is not their first language". Therefore when investigating grade 3 teachers' strategies to help L2 overcome interlingual spelling errors, THRASS can be adopted to equip learners with spelling skills.

Spelling word lists should be created from a list of high frequency words and words that learners are already using in their writing (DuBois *et al.*, 2007). The spelling lists should be words that learners will use in their own writing and reading (*ibid*). Therefore teachers can select spelling words from variety of sources. For example words can be selected for formal instruction from two sources: the learners' own writing and a list of

high frequency words (Lutz, 1986). However not all teachers are either experienced or confident enough to use this approach and would prefer to use a published spelling list (DuBois et al., 2007). Teachers could also become familiar with this teaching approach while using a pre-formed list and then move on to their own functional spelling approach (Richards, 2001). This needs to be taken into account when compiling a spelling list and only words that have an appropriate level of difficulty should be included in the list.

According to literature teachers can support learners to identify particular sounds as they listen to each other talk and as they listen to the teacher reading. Class lists for each sound can be developed. Teachers and students sort the words according to the placement of the letter sound in words. These lists might be of students' names e.g., Tabatha, Antony, Tania, Steven, Trevor or animals and reptiles (Department of Education and Children's Services, 2011).

Word study as an approach to teaching spelling

According to Zutell (1992) a word study is a cohesive approach that addresses word recognition, vocabulary and phonics as well as spelling. Word study also provides students with opportunities to investigate and understand patterns in words. For example the difference between 'hard C' as in cat and 'soft C' as in cell (Henderson, 1992; Zutell, 1998). According to Bear, et al.,(2000) at the start of word study programme teachers use a spelling inventory to determine which stage of development each student is at the and then group students for instruction. After that the teacher selects a group of words that demonstrate a particular spelling pattern and sequence to match children's development (Templeton, 1991). To paraphrase Barnes (1986) the pace of children's progression through the stages differs so is their list of words.

Rhymes

According to Digby (2000) authentic poems and songs have enormous potential to motivate many students and can be used to help them acquire a greater awareness of the spelling of words that rhyme. Furthermore when students learn rhymes they begin to learn the sequence of letters that are common to rhyming words. As the learners are

often familiar with rhymes when they begin preschool and/or school, they enjoy them and teachers could consider developing rhymes as a way of introducing letter sounds (Department of Education and Children's service). Teachers could make rhymes with a letter name, e.g., *free, see, she*, add rhyming words to a number, e.g., *two, zoo, shoe* and make up rhymes with student names, e.g., */eel/ Kristie, Danny, tree, free* (ibid).

Sight Words and Spelling

Lenski and Nierstheimer (2004) have discovered that when children are taught the spelling patterns of word families, they are empowered to read and spell many more words. Johnston (1999) said earlier that the ability to hear, see, use the rime and spelling words that sound alike, offers students a powerful insight into how English spelling works. It makes sense to start with the words children really want to know by sight when they want both to express themselves in writing and the words that are both common to their speaking vocabulary and most frequently encountered in print (Lenski & Nierstheimer (2004).

2.15 Conclusion

This chapter discussed different types of spelling errors and sources of spelling errors, skills necessary for spelling development, developmental stages and strategies of teaching spelling. The following chapter will discuss the research methodology.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses and explains the type of research paradigm, methodology and methods that were used in the study. Qualitative research method was used to collect record and analyse data. The appropriate strategies that were suitable to collect data for qualitative research will be explained as well as the research design used. The case study design used to unpack the strategies of teaching English spelling to second language isiXhosa speaking learners is also discussed in this chapter. Documents were analysed to explore and gain more insight on the nature of Interlingual spelling errors committed by learners. Also, the strategies used by teachers to correct these errors are part of the discussion provided in this chapter.

This chapter will be structured as follows:

3.2 Research paradigm

3.3 Overall research approach

3.4 Research design

3.5 Data collection methods

3.6 Targeted population

3.7 Sampling

3.7.1 Sample size

3.7.2 Sampling of the research sites

3.7.3 Negotiation of entry

3.8 Ethical consideration

3.9 Data analysis

3.10 Phases of data collection

Phase one: Pilot study

Phase two: Semi- structured interviews

Phase three: Classroom observations

Phase four: Document analyses

3.11 Conclusion

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM: INTERPRETIVE RESEARCH PARADIGM

According to Denzin and Lincoln, (2000); Lincoln and Guba, (1985) the term paradigm is defined as a systematic set of beliefs and methods that provide a view of the nature of reality. Birley and Moreland (1998) point out that a paradigm is a theoretical model within which the research is being conducted and also a paradigm organises the researchers' view of reality (though they may not be aware of it). This study is situated in an interpretive research paradigm as its purpose is to understand the way in which people make meaning in their lives (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 1999). In other words, interpretive studies aim to capture the lives of participants in order to understand and interpret the meaning (Henning, 2005:19). According to Greetz (as cited in Terre Blanche et al. 1999:43) "Interpretive is a way to gain insights through discovering meaning by improving on comprehension of the whole". This means that interpretive research is exploratory and descriptive in purpose, designed to discover what can be learned about the area of interest (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). An interpretive approach sees people as primary data source and also seeks their perceptions (Mason, 2002). In other words, interpretive approach allows the researcher to share the feelings

and the interpretations of the people involved in the research and to see things through eyes.

This study sought to explore and gain a better understanding about the teachers' strategies to help L2 learners to be proficient in English spelling. In order for this to be possible the researcher visited the sites to gain a better understanding about the research topic (Cohen, 2000). This means that the respondents were observed whilst they were hands on with spelling activities. At the same time they were given freedom to express their views without the interference of the researcher (ibid).

The interpretive paradigm advocates that the world should be studied in its natural state rather than in controlled laboratory type experiments and with minimum intervention by a researcher (Cohen et al, 2000). This means that the interpretive paradigm created a situation that was not controlled by the researcher. For instance, the interviewees were free to express their views on the question without the intervention of the researcher (ibid). Interpretive paradigm was relevant to this study which investigated grade three teacher's strategies to help second language learners overcome interlingual spelling errors. The interpretive paradigm enabled the researcher to share the feelings and the interpretations of the people under study and to see things through their eyes.

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

This study adopted a qualitative research approach. The reason is that it is an in-depth study using face to face techniques to collect data from teachers in their schools (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). Furthermore qualitative research studies are exploratory to understand peoples' views of their world (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). For example, this study aims at exploring teacher's strategies to help second language learners overcome interlingual spelling errors.

The term qualitative research, according to Denzin & Lincoln (2000), implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured. A qualitative researcher stresses the socially

constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) also argue that qualitative research is a field of inquiry in its own right. This means that qualitative researchers interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them as they depend on respondents to gain information (Henning et al., 2004). For this study the researcher interpreted data according to what have been said by the teachers. This information was in the form of written and spoken language and also in the form of observations recorded in language and analysed by identifying and categorising themes (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). All in all, the researcher used face to face techniques to collect data from teachers.

On the other hand Denscombe (2003) states that qualitative research is an umbrella term that covers a variety of styles of social research drawing on a variety of disciplines. This means that qualitative research is concerned with meanings and the way people understand things, a concern with patterns of behaviour. Characteristically, qualitative studies attempt to describe events or discern pattern of behaviour exhibited by an individual or group. To add more, qualitative researchers have to build a holistic picture with detailed descriptions of informants' perspectives (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). This means that, the researcher have to understand the whole phenomenon under study as a complex system that is more than the sum of its parts and focuses on more complex interdependencies (Terre Blanche & Kevin, 1999:43). Furthermore, qualitative methods allowed the researcher to study the teachers' strategies in-depth and provided a detailed description of these strategies. For this reason qualitative approach was the useful means to gain in-depth understanding about the researched phenomenon (Henning, 2005), as the researcher was looking for rich information about the grade 3 teachers' strategies to help English second language learners overcome interlingual spelling errors.

The particular methods of qualitative research vary, depending on the disciplines within which the research occurs. Nevertheless, all qualitative studies share the common goal of presenting findings in the form of written, verbal descriptions rather than in terms of

statistical analysis which is a characteristic of quantitative studies (Crowl, 1993). Although the qualitative research is advantageous, however there are also disadvantages that the researcher should be aware of. Both the advantages and disadvantage as suggested by Key (as cited in Adams, 2010:56) are discussed below:

(a) Advantages

Qualitative research produces more in-depth, comprehensive information. The study attempted to use a case study method to investigate

It uses subjective information and participant observation to describe the context or natural setting, of the variables under consideration as well as the interactions of the different variables in the context. The researcher's method of gathering data was the use of interviews which required a setting where the respondents are free to talk openly about their views on the strategies used by grade three teachers to help L2 learners overcome interlingual spelling errors.

(b) Disadvantages

One of the major disadvantages of qualitative research is that the very subjectivity of the inquiry leads to difficulties in establishing the reliability and validity of the approaches and information (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001). The researcher at all times avoided a situation where leading suggestions for respondents were given. In order to ensure validity and avoid subjectivity the researcher remained non-judgemental throughout the study process and reported what was found in a balanced way. McMillan and Schumacher (2001), state that qualitative method follows no strict rules. However researchers are cautioned that the research is not allowed to be mindlessly inventive. Qualitative research should be done artfully but it also demands a great amount of methodological knowledge and intellectual competence (ibid).

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN: A CASE STUDY

Research design is described in different ways by many authors. For instance, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2006:22), a research design describes how the study should be conducted. On the other hand, Devos (2005) states that a

research design is a logical strategy for gathering evidence about knowledge desired. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) describe a research design as a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of the research. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006:22) a research design describes how the study should be conducted. They further indicate that it summarises the procedures for conducting the study, including when, from whom, and under what conditions the data will be obtained. For this study the researcher intends to use a case study as the ideal research design. The design of this research was a “single case study” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994), as it considered a single grade (grade 3) in one school with two teachers as participants. Furthermore, qualitative researches characteristically take the form of case studies (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).

A case study can be described as an empirical enquiry that “investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin 1994: 13). This means that a case study deliberately considers the contextual conditions (in this case the classroom culture and surrounding socio-political environment), because it believes they may be highly significant to the phenomenon under study (ibid).

The advantage of the case study research design is that the researcher can focus on a specific topic, cases of interest and is applicable to real life (Shuttleworth, 2008). Also in a case study approach people and settings are explored in depth (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). In line with the above statement, Cohen et al, (2007) states that a case study is an approach that uses in-depth investigation of one or more examples of a current social phenomenon. This means that a case study provides rich information about individuals or a particular situation (Terre Blanche et al. 1999).

Also an important element of case studies is that they rely on multiple sources of evidence, such as interviews, observations and physical artifacts (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight 1996; Gillham 2000a and Yin 1994). All of these sources are available in the school environment and all help construct the classroom culture and so need to be

considered. Furthermore, case studies are most suitable when the researcher desires to understand complex social phenomena such as classroom interaction within a real-life context and is interested in answering 'how' and 'why' questions (Yin 1994). As a result of their robustness, case studies combine data collection methods such as archives, interviews, questionnaires and observation (Huberman & Miles, 2002).

For the purpose of this study, the case study design provided the researcher with much more detailed information about the strategies used by the grade 3 teachers when teaching English spelling to L2 and also to know why these learners commit interlingual spelling errors (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Directed by protocol of case study design, the researcher used the following methods to collect data:

Semi- structured interviews

Classroom observation and

Document analysis

3.5 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Data collection is an essential component to conducting research and is a complicated and hard task (Kajornboon, 2005). It is also very difficult to say which the best method of data collection is (ibid). O'Leary (2004, p. 150) remarks "Collecting credible data is a tough task, and it is worth remembering that one method of data collection is not inherently better than another." Therefore, which data collection method to use would depend upon the research goals and the advantages and disadvantages of each method (Ibid.). In order to collect data, the researcher should be able to access the data that needs to be collected for the study (Kajornboon, 2005). Also data can be gathered from a number of sources including written documents, records, workplaces, the Internet, surveys or interviews (ibid). For this study the researcher collected data through interviews, observations and document analysis.

Most of the time data collection in qualitative inquiry is people's words (language) and actions instead of numbers (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). This means that data collection methods should allow the researcher to capture language and behaviour

(ibid). Different data gathering methods seemed to be ideal for this study were used. These methods are interviews, observation and document analysis. They are discussed underneath as follows:

Interviews

An interview is an interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee with the aim of gaining information on a topic of mutual interest (Cohen et. al., 2000). On the other hand research interview has been defined as a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information and focused by the researcher on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction or explanation (ibid). According to Gray (2004:214) an interview could be used for some different reasons as listed below. An interview is used if there is a need to attain highly personalised data, there are opportunities required for probing, respondents are not fluent in the native language of the country, or where they have difficulties with written language.

Kajornboon (2005) stipulates that the researcher ought to have some skills and abilities in order for the interview to be effective. The skills and abilities as suggested by Kajornboon (2005) are an ability to listen, an ability to be non-judgmental, a good memory and the ability to think constructively.

Also the list of questions, topics, and issues that the researcher wants to cover during the interview should be compiled as an interview guide that should be clear and avoid ambiguity (ibid).

Cohen (2007) identified the advantages of using interviews as the research instrument.

-People are more easily engaged in an interview than in completing a questionnaire. Thus there are fewer problems in failing to respond.

-The interviewer can clarify questions and probe the answers of the respondent providing more complete information than would be available in written form.

- Interviewing enables the interviewer to pick up non-verbal interviews, including facial expressions, tones of voice and cues from the surroundings and context.

As much as interviews allow respondents narrate on issues, however, they have some disadvantages.

- It is difficult to record responses, particularly if the interviewer is also responsible for writing them down. The quality of responses, that is, their reliability and validity is dependent on the interviewer (Cohen, 2000).

- If the interviewers are not competent they may introduce many biases.

- Recording the comments of participants is a delicate matter because of the great variety of answers and their complexity.

- Moreover, interviews are time consuming and thus expensive (Bless & Higson-Smith 1995).

Types of Interviews

Literature reveals many types of interviews. For example Bryman (2001); Corbetta (2003); David and Sutton (2004); Gray (2004); Kajornboon (2005) discuss the following types of interviews.

Structured interviews,

Unstructured interviews,

Non-directive interview

Semi- structured

Structured Interviews

Structured interviews can be defined as a professional discussion between two persons or one person and a group of persons (Hitchcock & Hughes as cited in Adam, 2010).

Corbetta (2003, p.269) states structured interviews are "... interviews in which all respondents are asked the same questions *with the same wording and in the same sequence.*" Gray (2004:215) suggested that questions be read out in the same tone of voice so that the respondents would not be influenced by the tone of the interviewer. According to Bryman (2001:107) structured interviews entail: ... the administration of an interview schedule by an interviewer. The aim is for all interviewees to be given exactly the same context of questioning. This means that each respondent receives exactly the same interview stimulus as any other (Ibid). This type of interview introduces some rigidity to the interview (Corbetta, 2003). For example, probing can be a problem area for structured interviews. Therefore respondents may not understand the question and unable to answer it (ibid). Moreover, respondents may not have received sufficient information to answer the question (Corbetta, 2003).

The strengths of structured interviews are that the researcher has control over the topics and the format of the interview because a detailed interview guide is used (Bryman, 2001). On the contrary, a drawback of structured interviews is that they adhere too closely to the interview guide and may be the cause of not probing for relevant information. Also, since there is a set interview guide, the respondents may hear and interpret or understand the questions in a different manner (ibid). To add more, Mishler (as cited in Murphy et. al., 1998) states that structured interviews are essentially faulty and cannot therefore serve as the ideal methodological model against which to assess other approaches. Structured interviews were not the suitable method for this study as the researcher wished to probe the answers of the respondent for in - depth information.

Unstructured interviews

This type of interview is non-directed and is a flexible method. It is more casual than the aforementioned interviews and there is no need to follow a detailed interview guide (Kajornboon, 2005). This means that there is no specific set of questions employed and questions are not asked in any particular order (Murphy et al., 1998). Unstructured interviews allow the interviewer to introduce new material into the discussion which the

researcher had not thought of beforehand but only arose during the course of the interview (Hitchcock & Hughes as cited in Adam, 2010).

The strengths of unstructured interviews are that there no restrictions are placed on questions (Kajornboon, 2005). Also unstructured interviews are flexible and the researcher can investigate underlying motives. They provide a greater and freer flow of information between researcher and the subject (Hitchcock & Hughes (as cited in Adam, 2010). The drawbacks of unstructured interviews as stipulated by Kajornboon (2005) are that the interviewers may be bias and ask inappropriate questions. Also, respondents may talk about irrelevant and inconsequential issues and it may be difficult to code and analyze the data (ibid). Unstructured interviews were not the suitable method of collecting data for this research as the researcher prepared a detailed interview guide to investigate grade 3 teachers' strategies to help L2 learners overcome interlingual spelling errors.

Non-directive interviews

In non-directive interviews there is no preset topic to pursue and questions are usually not pre-planned (Kajornboon, 2005). In this kind of interview the interviewer follows what the interviewee has to say and the interviewee leads the conversation (ibid). This means that the interviewee is allowed to talk freely about the subject (ibid). However the interviewer has the objectives of the research in mind and what issues to cover during the interview (Kajornboon, 2005). The interviewer's role is to check on unclear points and to rephrase the answer to check for accuracy and understanding (Gray, 2004 p. 217).

Non-directive interviews were not the ideal method of collecting data for this study as the researcher had to follow a certain direction to explore teachers' strategies to help L2 learners overcome interlingual spelling errors. Moreover, non- directive interviews have the objective to help patients reveal their deep-seated and subconscious feelings (Corbetta, 2002, p. 275). This is not in line with what the researcher intended to achieve

for this study, *grade 3 teachers strategies to help L2 learners overcome intralingual spelling errors*.

Semi-structured interviews

According to David and Sutton (2004:87) semi-structured interviews are non-standardized and are frequently used in qualitative analysis. Also the interviewer does not do the research to test a specific hypothesis (ibid). The researcher has a list of key themes, issues, and questions to be covered (Kajornboon, 2005). Furthermore in this type of interview the order of the questions can be changed depending on the direction of the interview. Therefore an interview guide is also used, but additional questions can be asked (ibid). Corbetta (2003 p. 270) confirms this and says additional questions can be asked and some may be questions that have not been anticipated in the beginning of the interview.

This type of interview gives the researcher opportunities to probe for views and opinions of the interviewee (Corbetta, 2003). According to Gray (2004:217) probing is a way for the interview to explore new paths which were not initially considered. The strengths of semi-structured interviews are that the researcher can prompt and probe deeper into the given situation (Patton, 2002). In addition, the researcher can explain or rephrase the questions if respondents are unclear about the questions (Patton, 2002). On the other hand the drawbacks are that inexperienced interviewers may not be able to ask prompt questions and some relevant data may not be gathered (ibid).

For the purpose of this study the semi- structured interviews were suitable as they produce a qualitative understanding of the topic under study (Ellison et.al, 1996:117). Furthermore, semi- structured interviews allow depth to be achieved by providing the opportunity on the part of the interviewer to probe and expand interviewee's responses (Patton, 2002). This atmosphere enables the researcher to clarify points and raise fresh questions so as to gain a deeper meaning on the phenomenon (ibid). Semi-structured

interviews do not offer a limited, pre-set range of answers for a respondent to choose, but rather listen to how each individual responds to the question (Cohen et al, 2000).

Classroom observations

Observations simply involve “watching what people do; listening to what they say; and sometimes asking them clarifying questions” (Gillham 2000a: 45). In this case, the researchers observed the ways in which the teachers developed the culture in their classrooms, through their interaction with the learners and the posters and pictures on their walls, the seating arrangements, the available books and their choice of readers. Consequently, this was the major method used to describe the situation and to paint a cultural picture of the classrooms. Observation, in conjunction with the interview data, is important in this research because there is a common discrepancy between what people say about themselves and what they actually do (Gillham 2000a).

The main advantage of direct observation is that the event can be studied in its natural settings thereby providing a richer understanding of the subject (Kumar, 2005). There are two types of observation, participant observation and non-participant observation (ibid). “In participant observation a researcher participates in the activities of the group being observed in the same manner as its members” (Kumar, 2005:120). On the other hand in non-participant observation the researcher does not get involved in the activities of the group (ibid). For this study the researcher used a non-participant observation. This type of observation was preferred because the researcher wished to gather all necessary information from teachers without influencing or interrupting them.

For the purpose of the study, observations were conducted in English/language classes. The researcher observed the teachers whilst they were engaged in their classroom practice. Teachers were assured that the observations were being conducted solely for the purpose of research and that the observers were not there to evaluate them. Although the researcher was targeting English teaching periods, the main focus was on spelling teaching and the strategies that teachers used to correct learners` spelling

errors. During this time the researcher intended to observe and take notes at the same time without interrupting the class (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994).

Document analysis

The document analysis process is describes as a detailed and systematic examination of documents on a particular organisation for a purpose of identifying pattern or themes Leeds (2001). The documents analysed for this study were the learner's English class work books, with the aim of checking whether the spelling activities were included in their tasks. Also the government policy documents on spelling and literacy were analysed.

3.6 TARGET POPULATION

Two grade 3 teachers and their classrooms in one school where English is taught as a second language were the targeted population.

3.7 Sampling

According to Patton (1990) sampling is the technique of selecting a suitable sample for the purpose of determining characteristics of the whole population with the purpose of drawing conclusions about populations from samples. Maxwell (1996) defines sampling as decisions about where to conduct the research and whom to involve, an essential part of the research process. According to Walliman (2006) sampling is done whenever one gathers information from only a fraction of the population of a group or a phenomenon under study. Curtis, Gesler, Smith and Washburn (2000) suggested some key features of qualitative samples as follows:

- The method of drawing samples is not based on theories of the statistical probability of selection, but on other, purposive or theoretical sampling criteria;
- Samples are small, are studied intensively, and each one typically generates a large amount of information;
- Samples are not usually wholly pre-specified, and instead selection is sequential (by a rolling process, inter-leafed with coding and analysis);

- Sample selection is conceptually driven, either by the theoretical framework which underpins the research question from the outset, or by an evolving theory which is derived inductively from the data as the research proceeds. On the other hand Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 34) stipulate the criteria to evaluate sampling strategies which will be discussed below as follows:

-The sample should be likely to generate rich information on the type of phenomena which need to be studied.

-The sample should enhance the 'generalisability' of the findings.

-The sample should produce believable descriptions/explanations (in the sense of being true to real life). This means that validity of qualitative research relates to whether it provides a really convincing account and explanation of what is observed (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This criterion may also raise issues of 'reliability' of the sources of information, in the sense of whether they are complete, and whether they are subject to important biases which will influence the type of explanation which can be based upon them (ibid).

Miles and Huberman (1994) also suggest that the researcher may consider whether the method of selection permits informed consent; whether there are benefits or risks associated with selection for and participation in the study, and the ethical nature of the relationship between researcher and informants. Also the researcher should consider feasibility in terms of the resource costs of money and time, the practical issues of accessibility and whether the sampling strategy is compatible with the researcher's work style (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Apart from what has been discussed above competencies of the researcher may also be important for feasibility, for example, in terms of linguistic and communication skills, ability to relate to informants and their experiences, or the researcher's (or informant's) capacity to cope with the circumstances under which data collection may take place (Curtis, et. al., 2000).

Different types of sampling methods

There are three most common sampling methods used in qualitative research: snowball sampling, quota sampling, and purposive sampling (Department of System Management, 2003; Mack et al., 2005; Marshall, 1996). The sampling methods and the relevant tool for this study are discussed below as follows:

Snowball samples

Snowball sampling is often used to find and recruit “hidden populations,” that is, groups not easily accessible to researchers through other sampling strategies (Patton, 2002). This means that the only feasible way to find participants is by asking other members. The first step in this procedure is to find a few members of the population using any method. This step is denoted as the first round. Then you ask each of these first-round members if they know of any others. The names given will form the second round (Elder, 2009). Snowball sampling was not suitable for this study because the participants were grade three teachers which were accessible to the researcher.

Quota samples

Quota sampling refers to selection with controls, ensuring that specified numbers (quotas) are obtained from each specified population subgroup (e.g. households or persons classified by relevant characteristics), but with essentially no randomization of unit selection within the subgroups (Elder, 2009). The researcher did not choose quota sampling because this research was based only on two grade 3 teachers and their classes in one particular school.

Purposive sample

According to Elder (2009) a purposive sample refers to selection of units based on personal judgment rather than randomization. On the other hand Patton (2002) and Trochim & Donnelly (2006) define purposeful sampling as the process of selecting samples that are rich with information needed as for the research and are fit for the

study. One of the commonest uses of purposive sampling is in studies based on very small numbers of areas or sites. In these studies, variability with random selection is expected (Elder, 2009). Confirming this Maykut and Morehouse (2000:45) stipulate that purposive sampling increases the likelihood that variability common in any social phenomenon will be represented in the data.

According to Strydom and Delport (2005:328), purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling. Non-probability sampling is the most common type in educational research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:125). Furthermore, in non-probability sampling the researcher uses participants who happen to represent certain type of characteristics (ibid). Cohen, et.al, (2007) state that in purposive sampling which is often a feature of qualitative research, the researcher handpicks the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgment of their typicality or possession of the particular characteristics being sought. In this way they build up a sample that is satisfactory to their specific needs. As the name suggests, the sample has been chosen for a specific purpose (ibid). In selecting the site and the participants the study applied purposive sampling because they were seen as instances that were likely to produce valuable data.

For the reasons stated above, purposive sampling was chosen as the ideal sampling method for this research. This means that the participants were carefully selected for inclusion Maykut & Morehouse (2000). Hence the researcher selected two grade 3 teachers to make up the sample. Furthermore, in purposive sampling the researcher selects particular elements from the population that will be informative about the topic of interest (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:126).

3.7.1 Sample size

The number of respondents from whom the researcher obtains the required information is called the sample size and is usually denoted by the letter n (Kumar, 2005). Also a sample is defined as a set of respondents selected from a larger population for the purpose of collecting data (Webster, 1985). Sampling has advantages and disadvantages (Kumar, 2005). The advantages being that it saves time as well as

financial and human resources and the disadvantages is that through sampling the researchers only make an estimate about the actual situation prevalent in the total population from which the sample is drawn (Kumar, 2005:165). In qualitative research, researchers view sampling process as dynamic, ad hoc rather than static parameters of population (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). Also what matters in qualitative research is quality not quantity and information richness than information volume, (Erlandson et al. 1993). Furthermore while there are statistical rule for probability sample size, there are only guidelines for purposive sample size (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). Purposive samples can range from an $n = 1$ to $n = 40$ or more, typically a qualitative sample seems small compared to with sample size needed for generalisation to a larger population (ibid). For this study the researcher chose the third grade isiXhosa speaking learners who learn English as a subject and two grade 3 teachers.

3.7.2 Sampling the research sites

The researcher selected one primary school in the township of East London to make up the sample. It is a school where the language of teaching and learning (LOLT) is isiXhosa in the Foundation Phase and English is taught as the second additional language.

3.7.3 Negotiation of entry

Negotiation of entry was done formally through the provincial district Education Officer by submitting research form with a research proposal, also a letter from the supervisor containing the information about the topic under study, was handed in to the principal of the school (Saunders et al., 2003). The principal was willing to cooperate and referred the researcher to the teachers concerned, the grade 3 teachers.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2006), the term *ethics* refers to what is right and what is wrong. They claim that researchers should ask themselves if it is *right* to conduct the particular research. The researcher believes that this research complies to the standards of conduct of the teaching profession as it doesn't violate any ethical practice. In the first place, no physical or psychological harm would come to any of

those who participated in this study because the research was carried out with respect and concern for the participants.

Furthermore this study was conducted according to appropriate individual and institutional ethical considerations. The researcher tried by all means to make sure that no individual suffers adverse consequences as a result of the study (Kumar, 2005). Also the researcher was attentive to maximise positive outcomes of the research process (ibid). Prior to recruitment, informed consent, voluntary participation, anonymity and confidentiality were ensured.

Informed consent

According to Kumar (2005) it is unethical to collect information without the knowledge of the participants and their expressed willingness and informed consent. Furthermore informed consent implies that the participants are made aware of the type of information the researcher want from them (ibid). Hence the researcher provided the respondents with written information about the personal details, the course, purpose of the study, name of the institution where the researcher studies, the name of the supervisor and how the data would be used (Maykut& Morehouse, 2000). Collecting data was not an easy task as the respondents were reluctant to participate. They thought that the researcher was working for the department of education. Ultimately they were convinced after the principal had a short meeting with them.

To ensure informed consent the participants were made aware of the type of information the researcher wanted from them to lessen their reluctance (Kumar, 2005). Also the researcher issued the consent forms describing what was expected of them as participants and also to certify that they allow the researcher to collect data from them (Kumar, 2005).

Voluntary participation

It is important that the consent should be voluntary and without pressure of any kind Schinke & Gilchrist (as cited in Kumar, 2005). To honour this, the participants were told

that the participation is voluntary and they were free to withdraw at any time but they were willing to continue.

Anonymity and confidentiality

Anonymity means that the identity of those taking part not being known outside the research site and confidentiality means avoiding the attribution of comments in reports or presentation (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2001). The researcher assured the respondents that their identity would remain unknown by using pseudonyms for people and places and also any other identifying information be changed to ensure confidentiality. Meaning that, what have been discussed with the participants would not be revealed (ibid). Also the information obtained on the research participants during the course of the study was kept confidential and the names of the participants were removed from all data collection sheets. Therefore, under no circumstances would the researcher be able to link the data to a particular participant.

Trustworthiness

To ensure trustworthiness in this study the instrument was piloted before undertaking the main study. According to De Vos (1998) pilot study is the pretesting of a measuring instrument consisting of trying it out on a small number of persons having characteristics similar to those of the target group of respondents.

Confirming data with the respondents

After data collection the researcher gave feedback about the data collection process to the respondents by reading through their responses recorded in the field notebook as a way of confirmation (Kumar, 2005).

3.9 DATA ANALYSIS

According to Terre Blanche & Durrheim, (1999: 47) data analysis procedures should be carefully considered when designing a study since the aim of data analysis is to transform information into an answer to the research questions. On the other hand McMillan and Schumacher (2006:364) emphasise that there is no set of standard procedures for qualitative data analysis or for keeping track of analytical strategies.

However, these authors claim that qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organising data into categories and identifying patterns among the categories. For this study qualitative techniques were used; identifying themes in the data and relationship between these themes (ibid). Data were analysed and handled manually (Kumar, 2005). The researcher followed the following steps discussed by Henry, van Ransburg and Smith (2004).

Step 1 Familiarisation and immersion

In the first step the researcher familiarised herself with the data by reading and transcribing it to gain a clear understanding of the meaning and what interpretations could be sought out of it. It is the stage where the researcher took all the material and immersed in it again (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).

Step 2 Coding

The researcher coded the data through a process called content analysis; analysis of the contents of an interview in order to identify the themes that emerged from the responses given by the respondents (Kumar, 2005).

Step 3 Identification of themes

In the final step the researcher identified the themes in the data collected and defined conceptual similarities to discover patterns. Here the researcher compared sections of text that appear to belong together more closely and grouped them into sub-issues.

Validity and reliability

McKay (2006:11) emphasises two qualities that are essential for sound research. They are validity and reliability. These terms are defined differently in qualitative research because there is far less control and structure in qualitative research (ibid).

Validity

Validity in qualitative research is the degree to which the interpretations have mutual meanings between the participants and the researcher (McMillan & Schumacher

2006:324). Thus the researcher and participants agree on the description or composition of events, and especially the meanings of these events. On the other hand Fraenkel and Wallen (as cited in Maponya, 2010) validity refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness and usefulness of the inference the researchers make based on the data they collect. Although some qualitative researchers have argued that the term validity is not applicable to qualitative research, they have realised the need for some kind of qualifying check or measure for their research (Golafshani, 2003). For example, Creswell (1994) suggests that validity is affected by the researcher's perception of validity in the study and his/her choice of paradigm assumption.

In order to minimize the threats to validity Cohen, *et al* (2007) stipulate the following:

- Choosing an appropriate time scale.
- Selecting an appropriate methodology for answering research questions.
- Selecting appropriate instrumentation for gathering the type of data required.

To ensure validity the researcher drew conclusions supported by data collected from a number of different instruments which were; document analysis, direct observation and interviews.

Reliability

Devos (2000:85) defines reliability as the accuracy or precision of instrument as the degree of consistency between two independently derived sets of scores. According to LeCompte and Preissle (1993) reliability is the extent to which a researcher is using the same methods and obtain the same results as those of a prior study. McKay (2006:14) defines dependability as the degree to which the results reported in the study can be trusted or are reliable. The reliability of qualitative research depends on what is termed dependability (McKay 2006:14). LeCompte and Preissle (1993) defines dependability as assessment of the quality of the integrated process of data collection, data analysis and

theory generation. To be specific with the term of reliability in qualitative research, Lincoln & Guba (1985) use “dependability”, which closely corresponds to the notion of “reliability” in quantitative research. Dependability is assessment of the quality of the integrated process of data collection, data analysis and theory generation (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). Dependability can be used to examine both the process and the product of the research for consistency (Hoepfl, 1997). In the same vein, Seale (1999) endorses the concept of dependability with the concept of consistency or reliability in qualitative research. In order to maintain reliability in this study, the researcher asked the same type of questions to individual respondents as possible (Bryman & Burgess as cited in Maponya, 2010). Also in reporting the research findings, the researcher has provided a rich description of the respondents, the context for the study, and all the steps taken to carry out the study.

3.10 PHASES OF DATA COLLECTION

The data for the main study was conducted in four phases as follows:

- Phase one: Conducting a Pilot study
- Phase two: Conducting Semi- structured interviews
- Phase three: Conducting Classroom observation
- Phase four: Document analysis

Phase one: Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted before the main investigation commenced for purposes of checking whether the instruments were suitable for quality use during the actual investigation and to make modification where possible (Strydom & Delport, 2005). Meriwether (2001) defines a pilot study as a pre- study of your fuller study. Also, a pilot study is usually informal using few respondents possessing the same characteristics as those of the main investigation that are involved in the study (Strydom & Delport, 2005). However, access was negotiated with the management of the school where the pilot

study was to be conducted, the principal and heads of departments (Adams, 2010:75). According to McLean (1994) piloting involves testing to check the following:

- o The clarity of the interview questions.
- o Eliminating or minimizing ambiguity and difficulties in wording.
- o Gaining feedback on the type of questions asked.

For the purpose of this study, the pilot work was undertaken at the neighbouring school with a large number of isiXhosa- speaking foundation phase learners. The school is located at Lubambo Village, in East London. The location of the school is within the district where the study was done and this ensured that the similarity of conditions is maintained. According to Meriwether (2001) the pilot study is advantageous as it provides the researcher with ideas, approaches and clues not foreseen before conducting the pilot study. Also it can reduce the number of unanticipated problems as the researcher will have an opportunity to redesign parts of the main study to overcome difficulties that the pilot study reveals (ibid).

Instrument piloted: Semi-structured interview schedule

Pilot work was conducted to test the semi-structured interview questions on a few respondents. The aim was to discover possible challenges on the instrument and to focus on specific areas that could be unclear (Strydom & Delport 2005:331). Two pilot interviews were conducted prior to interviewing participants. The researcher was able to evaluate the interview questions based on suggestions made by Pola and Lampard (2002). These suggestions are listed below as follows:

- The questions asked should be clear, specific and unambiguous.
- The questions asked should be in a linear and incremental manner so that questions follow a logical order.
- The questions should provide latitude for a range of different views.
- The interviewer should probe and seek clarification on responses where necessary.

- Any loose ends should be tied up before the interview come to a conclusion.
- The recording process should be effective and unobtrusive.
- The researcher should specify the time required to answer all questions with sufficient room for conversation.

Challenges encountered when piloting were that:

The school was engaged with other programmes and most teachers were involved in those programmes especially grade three teachers. For example there were meetings for CSTL (Care and Support for Teaching and Learning) and HAC (Health Advisory Committee). This challenge was avoided in the main study as the researcher phoned the school in the morning to confirm the coming and the presence of the teachers.

Questions in the pilot instrument were prepared in English but the respondents answered in isiXhosa. This was time consuming hence the researcher decided to do translation at a later stage. This challenge was unavoidable as the researcher had to respect the rights of the respondents. Even in the main study this challenge prevailed.

Outcomes of the pilot study

The researcher benefited from the pilot study. For example it helped the researcher to be acquainted with the environment where the investigation will take place (Adams: 2010). Also the researcher was able to modify the interview guide with a view to quality interviewing during the main investigation (Govender, 2009). For example the order of questions was restructured, some questions were eliminated because of ambiguity and others were rephrased to avoid redundancy. Through the pilot study the researcher was able to assess the feasibility of the steps that need to take place as part of the main study.

Phase Two: Conducting Semi-structured interviews

The researcher gathered data using semi-structured interviews as the initial instrument to address the following research questions:

- o What are the strategies used by grade 3 teachers to help English second language learners overcome interlingual spelling errors?
- o How do the grade 3 teachers support L2 learners in English spelling?
- o What are the perceived factors that contribute to second language learners' interlingual spelling errors in English?

The school where the interviews were conducted is a Government school managed by a Governing Body comprising parents, teachers and non-teaching staff. The school teaches from grade 0 up to grade 4 and has approximately 300 learners. As indicated earlier, the researcher negotiated entry for conducting interviews in good time. The meeting was positive with all the parties involved that is the management and grade 3 teachers. The researcher explained fully the reasons why the school was chosen as was the challenging question asked by most attendants. The proposed date for conducting interviews was during the first week of April 2012. Due to the congested schedule this was not honoured by the respondents and interviews took place on the third week of April.

The interview was conducted in a semi-quiet environment as the school was under construction. Because of the huge numbers the school was granted three classrooms. The researcher intended to interview two grade three teachers. The researcher selected the respondents through the purposive sampling. The researcher gave the teachers a brief explanation about the purpose of the research; they were willing to participate in the study. There were three grade three teachers in this school and the two teachers just volunteered to participate. As the researcher indicated earlier the first interview was conducted in April 2012, the second interview was conducted on the third week of July 2012.

Both teachers were females and are simply referred to as Teacher A (TA) and Teacher B (TB) for the sake of anonymity. TA has a Diploma in Education for Junior Primary. She has been teaching grade 3 for 19 years and has been at this particular school for 20 years. T2 also has a Diploma in Education for Junior Primary. She has also been teaching for approximately 5 years in foundation phase and has been at this school for 5 years. Both respondents have been on numerous training workshops and conferences, predominantly concerning Outcomes Based Education and Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement.

An individual interview was conducted with the researcher guided by the interview schedule (the prepared questions for this study, appendix A). One interview schedule was used for both respondents. While the interview was in progress the researcher had to probe for more information where possible. Sometimes the researcher asked probing questions that were not on the protocol but were relevant to the study. The questions were designed in such a way that the respondents gave out their thoughts and feelings about the topic in question. Where there was too brief response, the researcher requested the respondent to explain a little more.

The interview sessions were not tape- recorded hence the researcher had to rely on note taking. The researcher was denied the opportunity to use any recording machine this means that the tape recording was not approved by both respondents. This was not a big deal for the researcher. The researcher was attentive to the responses from the respondents to be able to identify new emerging information that is related to the phenomenon being studied. Also the researcher listened closely to the respondents in order to determine whether the questions were being answered and follow up was needed (Morgan, 2006). The researcher whilst taking notes was also noting the nonverbal behaviours like gestures, changes in tone and so on. Sometimes the researcher had to repeat the question to give the respondent more time to think about the answer and there after the researcher asked for some more clarity. Because there was a natural flow of conversation especially with TA, some questions were asked out of order but every question was addressed. The interviews ended up on a positive note,

the interviewees enjoyed the experience and found it beneficial (Clarke, 2006). To prove this TB was motivated to further her studies the following year. The researcher thanked the participants including the principal and acknowledged their value.

Phase Three: Conducting Classroom observations

Observation, in conjunction with the interview data, is important in this research because there is a common discrepancy between what people say about themselves and what they actually do (Gillham 2000a). The classroom observation mainly focused on the following questions of the main study:

- o What are the strategies used by grade 3 teachers to help English second language learners overcome interlingual spelling errors?
- o How do the grade 3 teachers support L2 learners in English spelling?

The researcher reminded the school telephonically about the observations since the matter was discussed as a package the first time the researcher negotiated entry. The respondents also were aware about the appointment date and they were willing to participate. For the purpose of this research the basic focus of the classroom observation was to observe the strategies used by grade 3 teachers when teaching English spelling and the support given to the learners when committing interlingual spelling errors. Through classroom observation the researcher was able to formulate a full picture of what is happening inside the classroom in connection with spelling teaching.

The observation data in this research was recorded predominantly through note taking and it was deemed the most suitable and practical method because it allowed the researcher to sit in a corner and watch the various interactions and activities thus reducing the impact of her presence on the situation. The teachers were made aware of the observation schedule used by the researcher and were comfortable about it (Appendix B). The observation schedule helped the researcher to be focused and cover all aspects under observation.

Apart from teaching and learning, the researcher observed every aspect in the classroom like the ways in which the teachers developed the culture in their classrooms through their interaction with the learners, the posters and pictures on the walls, the seating arrangements, and the available books. As the researcher was to observe two teachers this was done at different times. Teacher B was observed two weeks after teacher A. With regard to the classrooms there was a total of forty learners in classroom A, sat in groups of six boys and girls. The desks were directed towards the chalkboard and teacher A stood in front of the class. This was also the case in teacher B's class but with forty two learners. According to the teacher learner ratio both classrooms were overcrowded. On the walls there were few displays of posters and charts and there were no displays of learners' work. For both classrooms there were few English posters, most wall charts were for mathematics and letters of alphabet in teacher B's class.

Both teachers were shown the observation schedule before the lessons took place. The researcher spent time in the classrooms observing the strategies of teaching spelling and learners' responses when they were engaged in learning spelling as well as errors they commit when spelling English words. The lesson introduced by the teacher A was about the new diagraph "ph" whereas teacher B was introducing the digraph "ch". After the interview the teachers were assured again that the observations were being conducted solely for the purpose of research, that the observer was not there to evaluate them, and that the observations would not be shared with school or district personnel.

Phase four document analysis

Document analysis responded to the following research questions:

How do the grade 3 teachers support L2 learners in English spelling?

What are the perceived factors that contribute to second language learners' interlingual spelling errors in English?

The documents analysed by the researcher were grade three learners' workbooks for both classes. The aim of collecting these books was to find out about the interlingual spelling errors committed by L2 learners who speak isiXhosa as their mother tongue. The learners' workbooks who participated in this study were categorised according to the stages of spelling development. For example two learners that were in the phonetic spelling stage, two in the transitional spelling stage and two in the convectional spelling stage were selected in this study (Dorn & Soffos as cited in DuBois *et al.*, 2007; Gentry, 1982; Savage, 2001; and Treiman *et al.*, 1997). This was the case for both classes.

Different genres of writing were identified in the learners' workbooks, like descriptive writing, personal writing and informational writing. These are discussed fully in chapter four. The same document analysis schedule was used for both classes (appendix C). As the researcher was analysing the learners' workbooks noticed that some of the activities done by learners were not assessed. This was the case for both classes. Some spelling errors committed by the learners were just underlined with the red pen with no clue how to go about with the corrections. There were corrections for some of the activities done by the learners, but most of the learners' work was left unmarked.

3.11CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the methodology of this study. It also gave the description of the research design. The procedures of data collection were presented. These were the pilot study, interviews, observation and document analysis. Sampling, description of research sites, ethical consideration and data analysis were also discussed. The following chapter discusses presentation and discussion of findings.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered through semi-structured interviews, direct observation and document analysis. This study investigated Grade three teachers' strategies to help L2 learners overcome interlingual spelling errors. Two Grade three teachers and their classes participated in this study. The researcher used pseudonyms for the school and teachers to ensure ethical issues such confidentiality, privacy and anonymity. The data collected aimed to answer the following study questions:

What are the strategies used by grade 3 teachers to help English second language learners overcome interlingual spelling errors?

How do the grade 3 teachers support L2 learners in English spelling?

What are the perceived factors that contribute to grade 3 second language learners' interlingual spelling errors in English?

This chapter is structured as follows:

4.2 Synopsis of the school

4.3 Layout of the classrooms

4.4 Biographical information of the participants

4.4.1 Grade three Teachers' Profile

4.4.2 Learners' Profile

4.5 Presentation and analysis of data gathered through semi structured interviews

4.6 Presentation and analysis of data gathered through document analysis

4.7 Presentation and analysis of data gathered through classroom observation

4.8 Triangulation

4.9 Conclusion

4.2 SYNOPSIS OF THE SCHOOL

The school where this study was conducted is situated in Mdantsane, a black township of East London in the Eastern Cape. The school is a Government school managed by the School Governing Body comprised of parents, teachers and non-teaching staff. The school is from grade R to grade 4. The medium of instruction in this school is isiXhosa, however, English is taught as a subject from grade one to three. IsiXhosa is also a home language to the learners and teachers. The learners were reported to come from low socio-economic background. This means that the community at large including the parents of the learners who participated in this study comprise of lower income earners, such as domestic workers and social grant pensioners. The researcher did not explore the learners' backgrounds herself but was informed by the teachers. The school is well fenced with two security guards who among their duties monitor the visiting hours as well. The nutrition programme was also reportedly operating in this school with two meal servers, who were both females.

4.3 THE GRADE 3 CLASSROOMS IN WHICH THE STUDY WAS CONDUCTED

All (100%) learners in both classrooms were isiXhosa speakers coming from different backgrounds, some from nearby informal settlement and others from a formal settlement. Despite the conditions of their background, learners in both classrooms seemed to be cheerful and ready to start a new day with a smile. In both classrooms learners (100%) were comfortable with the researcher among them. This was evident when the researcher was conducting classroom observation.

The learners in both classrooms were generally seated in groups with a group leader. However the arrangement of the groups was not the same. For example in TA's classroom, learners were said to be seated according to their ability groups, (top, mediocre and struggling learners). The reported top learners were seated at the back of

the class and were named as 'lions'. The middle and the bottom groups were seated in front and were called 'zebras' and 'giraffes'. When asked about this arrangement, the teacher explained that she wanted to concentrate on the two groups (mediocre and struggling learners) since the top group was advanced and able to work at their own. Bear, et al., (2000) state that once groups are created, teachers develop differential instruction based on the stage of development each group of students has achieved. The names, as reported by TA were used for competition purposes. In TB's classroom heterogeneous grouping was identified. This means that the grouping was according to their different abilities. This means that in each group there were good spellers, mediocre and struggling learners. The motive behind this arrangement as reported by TB was for learners to assist each other. The researcher did not dig more information about the seating arrangement as the main objective of this study was to explore grade three teachers' strategies to help L2 learners overcome interlingual spelling errors. In line with the practice of grouping of learners the researcher confirm that the teachers could identify different characteristics common to good spellers as opposed to struggling spellers to enable the teacher to try out spelling strategies that can benefit both characteristics of learners (Hughes & Searle, 1997, 2000; and Gentry, 1987; 2004).

Both classrooms were very colourful with posters around the wall, between the windows and beneath the chalkboard. The posters displayed in both classrooms were related to language, mathematics and life skills. The language-linked posters indicated that isiXhosa as the mother tongue of the learners was dominating as there were few posters for English first additional language. For example there were the alphabet, vowel posters and posters with road signs. As indicated earlier on this applied to both classrooms except in TA's classroom; in addition to the few English posters, there was a list of classroom rules written in English and a class time table.

With reference to resources in the classrooms, there were books in both classrooms that were neatly packed on tables against the wall. The books were reportedly used by the "early finishers" those learners who finish work before the set time. As the

researcher was observing the classroom she never saw a learner take one, this was observed in both classrooms. However in TB's classroom, the early finishers were observed taking books but from a box placed in front of the teacher's table. This was on the condition that they completed their work on time. Beside the books there were also magazines and newspaper used by learners to cut pictures on. This was observed in both classrooms. In TA's classroom for instance, these magazines were packed in a small cupboard reported to be donated by the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB), whereas in TB's classroom the magazines were packed on the desk. In each classroom there was a carpet where learners reportedly sit during story time. In both classrooms there was also a built-in steel cupboard. In the cupboard as reported by the teachers is where the portfolios, learner profiles, learner journals and registers were kept. In both classrooms there was no specific corner for reading, mathematics or even a mini library.

4.4 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

4.4.1 Grade three teachers' profiles.

Table 5: Grade 3 teachers' profiles

Teacher	Gender	Home language	Qualifications	Age	Experience teaching grade 3	Overall teaching experience
TA	F	isiXhosa	J.P.T.D.	35	7 years	7 years
TB	F	isiXhosa	S.P.T.D.	48	21 years	28 years

Table 5 indicates that both teachers who took part in this research were females. In fact all teachers in the school where the research was conducted were females. The two teachers are simply referred to as TA and TB, for the sake of anonymity. The table reveals that both of them have an experience in teaching grade three. From their teaching experience, it could be possible that they might be in a good position to

provide rich data that could assist in answering the research questions. For example TA possesses a Junior Primary Teachers Diploma and has seven years experience teaching grade three. This indicates that she was trained specifically to teach in the foundation phase. For TB on the other hand, her experience shows that she has been in the system for a long time and she might be familiar with the programmes and content of grade three. This suggests that both teachers might have an understanding of the dynamics of teaching English First Additional Language to grade three isiXhosa speaking learners.

4.4.2 Learners' profile

Table 6: Profile of the learners in both classrooms

The table below presents the profile of the learners that took part in the research. This means that their workbooks were analysed when the researcher did document analysis.

Name	Age	Gender	Home language	Teacher	Developmental stage
Luvo	9	M	IsiXhosa	A	Phonetic stage
Rebecca	9	F	IsiXhosa	A	Transitional stage
Indiphile	9	F	IsiXhosa	A	Phonetic stage
Phakama	9	M	IsiXhosa	A	Conventional stage
Zakhe	9	F	IsiXhosa	A	Conventional
Bheki	9	M	IsiXhosa	A	Phonetic stage
Siyolo	9	M	IsiXhosa	B	Transitional stage
Onwabo	9	M	IsiXhosa	B	Conventional
Siphamandla	9	F	IsiXhosa	B	Phonetic stage
Phumla	8	M	IsiXhosa	B	Conventional
Onela	9	F	IsiXhosa	B	Transitional stage
Bonani	9	F	IsiXhosa	B	Transitional stage

Table 6 above indicates that all learners that took part in this research are isiXhosa speakers. Their ages range from age eight to age nine, the appropriate age for grade three. They comprised of 50 % males and 50% females. The researcher worked with these learners by analysing their workbooks with the aim of collecting information rich data. The researcher requested the teachers to categorise the learners' workbooks according to the learners' abilities in spelling. This means that learners' workbooks were categorised according to the developmental stages of spelling. For instance the researcher chose two learners that were said to be in the phonetic spelling stage, two learners in the conventional stage and two learners that were said to be in the transitional stage. These learners were from both teacher TA and teacher TB's classes. The researcher did this with the hope that the data collected in these workbooks would reveal the manner in which the learners commit interlingual spelling errors. According to literature the stages of development should be used as a diagnostic tool when analysing student writing and making decisions about what needs to be taught next, keeping in mind that some students might not progress through the stages in the same order or at the same rate (Department of Education and children's Services, 2011).

4.5 PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA GATHERED THROUGH SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Semi-structured interviews were used as the initial instrument to address the following research questions:

What are the strategies used by grade 3 teachers to help English second language learners overcome interlingual spelling errors?

How do the grade 3 teachers support L2 learners in English spelling?

What are the perceived factors that contribute to grade 3 second language learners' interlingual spelling errors in English?

4.5.1 Presenting data gathered through semi structured interviews

The interview data were presented in an effort to clarify the strategies used by grade three teachers, the support that teachers give to learners and factors contributing to

interlingual spelling errors. Each teacher was interviewed once and the questions for both interviews were the same. The researcher designed the interview schedule in such a way that it had two sections. The first section focused predominantly on the background of the teachers and considered their experiences of teaching including information related to their training and some of the difficulties they face. The second section asked questions based on their teaching practices and learner activities.

The strategies used by grade 3 teachers to help L2 learners overcome interlingual spelling errors.

According to the data collected through semi structured interviews, the teachers in this study came up with different types of strategies of teaching English spelling to grade 3 learners. Most of these strategies were based on the teaching of English spelling generally not referring specifically to interlingual spelling errors. For example their responses revealed that games, stories, rhymes and songs, planning and knowledge of the letters of alphabet could be the strategies that can be used to help second language learners overcome interlingual spelling errors. The following sections present the reported strategies:

Games

Both teachers who participated in this study described a Foundation Phase learner as somebody who is active and who becomes bored when learning is too formal. For this reason they agreed that learning in the Foundation Phase teaching should be in the form of play to arouse learners' interest.

Both teachers further mentioned *looking games* as the games that could eliminate interlingual spelling errors. The teachers reported that these games were played after the learners have been taught a new sound. To play this game as reported by the teachers, the learners have to look carefully at brief displayed written words and spell orally or write without looking at them.

The teachers in this study also recommended fishing games to teach spelling. These games are reportedly played using the flash cards with the shape of a fish and a money

clip attached on each flash card. TB gave explanation, “*To play this game learners need a magnet to fish one flash card from those put in a box and then say the word aloud and spell it after, like tea-ch-er, e- le- ph-ent*” (TB). The teachers in this study reported that they put more emphasis on those sounds with the same pronunciation as the learners’ mother tongue to eliminate the possibility of interlingual spelling errors. Both teachers suggested *word match* games using word cards and a list of words written on a chart where each child could take a card and matched it with its replica on the chart. According to Talak- Kirky (2010) games are fun activities that promote interaction, thinking, learning, and problem solving strategies. Also playing games help to consider alternatives, and to think flexibly (Martinson and Chu 2008). The games improve learners’ memory, listening, pronunciation and spelling skills (ibid).

Stories

According to both teachers telling stories could help learners to commit less spelling errors because learners can identify sounds whilst they read and discuss the story. Literature also reveals that listening to stories is another way of exposing children to the additional language. For example by reading stories and discussing pictures, the learners can identify sounds and develop spelling lists according to the targeted sound (DoE, 2002). The teachers also suggested that the story chosen should be simple and relevant to the learners’ age and suit their understanding. “*The story should focus on the sound the teacher intends to introduce*” added TA. The teachers in this study further suggested that whilst the teacher reads the story on a chart or Big book, should point at each word and match with pictures. “*At this time a spelling list with a focus sound is developed and learners read the words aloud*” confirmed TB. The teachers suggested that emphasis should be on the L1 sound that could be transferred to L2 words to avoid Interlingual spelling errors. For example the teachers mentioned words like *tsh* and *ch*; *ph* and *f* as those learners commit more interlingual spelling errors.

Rhymes and songs

Rhymes and songs were reported to be an effective strategy to help learners overcome interlingual spelling errors. The teachers who participated in this study suggested that rhymes and songs should be chosen according to those sounds learners frequently commit interlingual spelling errors on, so that they could be able to differentiate between the L1 and L2 features. For example if the targeted sound is *tch* the song or poem should contain that sound. This is reported to be fruitful if learners recite English poems and sing songs relevant to the sound to be taught on that particular day. Literature reveals that through the use of rhymes and songs a child learn new things and remember facts. Words can be grouped together by common sound for example the ‘at’ family cat, hat, sat, bat, can be used to teach children about similar spellings (Bryant, McLean & Bradley, 1990). Rhymes also develop phonological awareness (ibid).

Planning as the teaching strategy

Teachers in this study mentioned ‘planning’ as the first and the most important strategy to teach spelling so that learners commit less interlingual spelling errors. Teacher B gave more clarity “*Through planning I prepare the resources in good time so that my spelling lessons become more effective*” (TB). Litman (2012) refers to planning as the process of deciding what to do and how to do it. For the effective teaching of spelling, teachers need to understand how to plan classroom spelling programmes (ibid). Furthermore planning reportedly help the teachers to strategise their work. “*Abantwana abafani ngezakhono kufuneka utitshala abalungiselele ngokokushiyana kwezakhono zabo*” (TA) In other words planning reportedly helps teachers to accommodate all learners according to their different abilities. *A well-planned lesson comprises of different activities prepared for each group with relevant learning aids* added TA. According to literature class plans should be designed to meet the specific learning needs of all students in the class (Department of Education and Training 1999). This strategy is nevertheless a general strategy that is applicable to any subject, including teaching spelling, and not necessarily responding to interlingual spelling errors.

The knowledge of the letters of alphabet

Mastery of the letters of alphabet was reported by both teachers as the first strategy of teaching spelling at the Foundation Phase. To put emphasis on this teacher B said “*I alphabet kufuneka uyifundise ngale ndlela apelwa ngayo amagama. For example hard C should be spelt as in cat, come and car not as Si for simple*”. According to literature word study provides students with the opportunities to investigate the patterns in words. For example the difference between ‘hard C’ as in cat and ‘soft C’ as in cell (Henderson, 1992& Zutell, 1998). Rubba (2003) also stipulates that knowledge of letters of alphabet is needed in addition to knowledge of phonological structure in order for learners to spell correctly.

Although teachers’ responses with regards to learners’ interlingual errors seemed to be similar, their strategies to respond to these errors sometimes seemed different. For instance TB confirmed that the objects in her classroom are labelled to help the learners to be familiar with both English and IsiXhosa spelling. These objects reportedly include tables, chairs, cupboard, chalkboard etc. “For the objects with the names that have been borrowed from L2 I write the name in English and isiXhosa like *cupboard / ikhabhathi, desk / idesika* (TB). Literature says that the teachers should label objects in the classroom in both the HL and FAL so that learners become familiar to those words by associating the object and the label (DoE, 2011:12). Teacher A on the other hand suggested that English should dominate during English periods and less isiXhosa. “*I create the atmosphere conducive to English by encouraging them to communicate in English among themselves*” (TA). Teacher A also stated that English should not be taught using isiXhosa as this might encourage learners to transfer L1 features to L2. “*English should be taught as English separated from isiXhosa*” (TA). Contrary to this statement, the Department of Education (2011) stipulates that children learn how to write a text first in their Home language and then they learn to write in their First Additional Language. According to Dildine (1994), learners learn to read and write only once, because what they have learned about literacy is applied to new literacy situations.

The use of sentence strips to help learners build sentences

The teachers reported that after the learners understood the sound they should be allowed to build sentences using the new sound. *“By so doing the sound learnt is being reinforced”* According to Leppanen, Niemi and Nurmi (2006) sentence spelling is a test for more advanced spelling skills whereas word spelling is a test for early stages of development. In the sentence spelling test the child is asked to spell sentences read aloud by the teacher (ibid). Same applies with planning as a reported strategy for responding to interlingual errors, the building of sentence strips does not necessarily responding to the interlingual errors but to the general linguistic acquisition.

Pictures help learners to visualise and identify the sound

Both teachers who took part in this study reported that when new sound is introduced it is important to use pictures. They further explained that the learners are shown a picture and are asked to identify the first sound they hear when they name the picture. *“To reinforce the new sound learners should be given the chance to build words based on the introduced sound”* added TA. Also the teachers suggested that the teacher should at the same time take care of pronunciation. To support this statement teacher B said *“learners often pronounce words incorrectly so it could be possible for them to carry over their mother tongue letter pronunciation habits into English”* (TB). To confirm this statement Al-Jabri (2006) states that pronunciation-based problems occur when learners do not know the English sound system and therefore use the wrong letters.

Use of flash cards to support learners in English spelling

According to what both teachers reported, flash cards are useful when introducing a new sound. For example they explained that the new sound should be written in colour to differentiate it from other sounds. Both teachers suggest that the sound is flashed and the teacher reads the sound and the learners join in. *“This process continues until all the learners grasp the sound”* (TA). Teachers in this study commented that flash cards can be used to help those learners who commit interlingual spelling errors because of the borrowed words. *“Mna ndithatha iflash cards ezimbini ndibhale igama*

ngesiXhosa kwenye ndilibhale nge English” and compare the consonants. For example, *cabbage- iKhaphetshu*, *matches- imatshisi*, *ball- ibhola* (TB).

Grade 3 teachers’ support to L2 learners in English spelling

Responding to this question both teachers came up with some corresponding responses and there were few that differed. For instance they agreed upon:-

- *The grouping of learners according to their spelling abilities*
- *Teachers should mark learners’ work so that learners are able to do corrections.*

The grouping of learners according to their spelling abilities

To support learners who commit interlingual spelling errors, teachers in this study suggested the grouping of learners according to their spelling abilities during English period so that the teacher is able to focus on them. “*When focusing on these learners somebody should be careful not to ignore other groups*” suggested (TA). This notion is also supported by Bear and Templeton (1998) who recommended that students be grouped appropriately for spelling since it is unlikely to have a homogenous group where everyone is at the same level. On the other hand there is literature that recommends that struggling learners should be assisted with a peer mentor in pair work rather than a full group or whole class situation (DoE, 2003).

Teachers should mark learners’ work so that learners are able to do corrections.

Both teachers in this study stressed the importance of feedback after written work has been done. According to both teachers, after each activity the teachers should encourage the learners to do corrections. Also teachers should give feedback to learners by discussing their errors individually. Also the teachers mentioned that feedback should be meaningful for both learners and parents. To elaborate on this issue teacher B said “*next to the error always write the correct word with a red pen so that the learner knows where she/he committed the error and how to correct it*” (TB). According to literature teachers should provide appropriate feedback to encourage learners to

develop their spelling skills (Dorn, et al/ as cited in DuBois, et al, 2007). This strategy may also be perceived as a general strategy teachers should use for any subject not necessarily on interlingual spelling errors only.

The perceived factors contributing to second language learner's interlingual spelling errors in English.

Both teachers who participated in this study came up with the following factors which are listed and discussed below:

- a) The environment where the learners come from makes L2 learners commit interlingual spelling errors*
- b) Teachers who use isiXhosa to teach English encourage learners to commit interlingual spelling errors.*
- c) Learners who write words as they hear commit interlingual spelling errors*

The environment where the learners come from makes L2 learners commit interlingual spelling errors

Both teachers in this study expressed some concerns about the environment where the learners come from as the first factor that affects the spelling mastery. This is because the learners come from their homes speaking one language which is different from the FAL taught at school, the teachers explained. This could have a negative impact on learners' second language acquisition. To add more these learners reportedly live with illiterate parents, grandparents and guardians who cannot pronounce words properly. The teachers reported that the learners find it difficult for the learners to pronounce words as they imitate their illiterate parents. Teacher A commented "*These children come from villages, squatter camps and townships where their language consists of slang and vulgar language*" (A). Some learners reportedly not even watch televisions or listening to radios to improve their communication skills. Lemmer (1996:335) stipulates

that “children from disadvantaged socio- economic backgrounds face general linguistic deprivation”. This is because there is a lack of books, magazines, newspapers, educational radios and televisions in the home (ibid). According to Lessing and Mahabeer (2007) low socio-economic environment and literacy levels of parents tend to provide learners with minimal chances of exposure to reading material thereby effectively reducing their literacy abilities. On the other hand Frederickson and Cline (2002:292) stipulate that illiterate parents cannot spell themselves and are not always able to help their children with their spelling activities at home. Dildine (1994) also noted that for English second language learners (ESL) the ability to pronounce words accurately had a distinct effect on their ability to spell the words correctly.

Teachers in this study further explained that illiteracy at home affects the learners’ pronunciation abilities, which in turn affects their ability to spell properly. *“As the children receive the first education at home, they tend to carry patterns of the first language to the second language to make things easy for them” (TA)*. Learners are reported to come to school with this knowledge which in turn makes them to commit interlingual spelling errors in their written texts. Both teachers gave examples of words that are frequently pronounced incorrectly by learners. For example ‘*Pritt*’ is pronounced as ‘*plit*,’ ‘*grapes*’ as ‘*glapes*’ ‘*glass*’ as ‘*grass*’. Templeton (2003); Wilde (1992); and Zutell (1998) also confirm that pronunciation can affect spelling and the word origin. The table below illustrates the list of word pronounced incorrectly as suggested by the teachers who participated in this study.

Table 7 List of words misspelled due to the impact of background of the learners as suggested by both respondents

Targeted Word	Spelling errors
Spirit	Spilit
Pritt	Plit
Glass	Grass
Glue	Grue
Beetroot	Bedlut
Grocery	Glozala
Fridge	Chilve
Goodbye	Kubhay

Table 7 indicates the examples of the words learners committed interlingual errors. These errors were influenced, according to the teachers, by the environment where the learners came from. This table is designed according to the data collected from two respondents. The errors listed in table 7 indicate that // is substituted by /r/. Mossaba (1996) stipulates that where properties of the different languages are shared, learning becomes easy and where not shared learning becomes difficult. For example Kiembu does not have // in its inventory and some learners substituted the // in words and inserted /r/. At other times, they substituted the /r/ and inserted the // Mossaba (1996). This is also the case with isiXhosa speaking learners as illustrated in table 7 since the data was collected in a school where all the learners and teachers are isiXhosa speakers. To paraphrase Mahabeer (2007) low socio-economic environment and literacy levels of parents tend to reduce learners' literacy abilities. Lemmer (1996) stipulates that children from disadvantaged socio-economic background face linguistic deprivation. This is because of the lack of relevant resources as well as the practice of communicative styles that are not consonant with those in the school (ibid).

b) The teachers who use isiXhosa to teach English encourage learners to commit interlingual spelling errors.

The teachers in this study revealed that the teachers who teach English spelling using isiXhosa encourage learners to commit more interlingual spelling errors. *“If the teachers introduce English spelling lesson using mother tongue and translate to English afterwards could make learners see no difference between English and isiXhosa”* (TA). According to what the teachers in this study said the teachers narrate the story in isiXhosa and learners retell the story in their mother tongue and translation follows. Teacher B added *“May be if the teachers can teach English without translating to mother tongue, the interlingual spelling errors could be eliminated.* In contrast Cummins (2001: 17) stipulates that when children continue to develop their abilities in two or more languages throughout their primary school years, they gain a deeper understanding of language and how to use it effectively. They have more practice in processing language, especially when they develop literacy in both, and they are able to compare and contrast the ways in which their two languages organize reality.

Also both teachers in this study agreed that some teachers are not competent in spelling and therefore cannot spell correctly themselves. Confirming this, Miressa and Dumessa (2011) state that many teachers sometimes seem to commit spelling errors themselves while writing some notes on either the blackboard or exercise books. On one hand Dlamini (1998) stipulates that teachers find it difficult to express themselves correctly or pronounce English words correctly and they have poor spelling in L2. This leads to learners as early as grade R to grade three learning incorrect forms of English pronunciation (ibid). Both teachers confirmed that the teacher’s voice could affect the spelling development. *“Utitshala okhawulezisayo xa athethayo okanye othetha kancinci wenza abantwana bangaweva kakuhle amagama loo nto yenze bangabhali ngokuchanekileyo”* (TB). *“For instance if learners did not hear the word dictated properly because of speed of the speaker, it could be possible for them to commit errors”* (TB). According to Al-Jarf (2010) errors due to the speed of the speakers are those which result from the learners’ inability to follow the speaker.

c) Learners who write words as they hear commit interlingual spelling errors

The teachers who participated in this study further explained that it is possible for learners who wrote words as they sound, to commit interlingual spelling errors. According to both teachers some of these words seem to be influenced by patterns of the first language. The teachers gave the examples of these words as they seem to be the influence of the learners' mother tongue and also the learners transferred the vowel to isiXhosa. The examples are *run* written as *ran*; *sad* as *sed*; *gun* as *gan*. The teachers further explained that this was evident especially to phonemes that sound the same in English as in isiXhosa. Al-Jarf, (2008) stipulates that, this occurs when learners apply a native language rule to the second language. Teacher B further explained that the learners write words as they sound because they do not understand the sound system of English and so they use incorrect vowels so they confuse English sounds.

Table 8 below illustrates learners' spelling errors revealing that learners write words the way they hear them

Target words	Errors
Run	Ran
Sad	Sed
Gun	Gan
Son	San
Bad	Bed

Table 8 indicates that because learners write words as they hear them the target words *run* and *gun* are spelt as *ran* and *gan*. In English *ran* is the past tense of *run*, while *gan* is a non-existing word in English. This means that the vowel *u* is pronounced as a

showing that the learner transferred the vowel to isiXhosa. Also the words *sad* and *bad* are spelt as *sed* and *bed*. *Sad* and *bed* have different meanings in English from what they are apparently used for in the reported context. This means that the learners associated the vowel *a* with the vowel *e* as in their mother tongue. According to Al-Jarf (2008:12), when learners apply a native language rule to the second language an error occurs.

4.5.2 Analysis of the data gathered through semi structured interviews

Themes emerged from the analysis of data gathered through interviews. Some issues emerged from the analysis of data gathered through interviews. These are discussed below:

- a) The importance of lesson planning*
- b) IsiXhosa should be limited during English periods.*
- c) There is a correlation between learners' spoken and written language*

a) The importance of lesson planning

This was the strategy came up when teachers in this study were interviewed. *“Through planning teachers could be able to prepare the relevant resources for spelling lesson”* (B). Both teachers reported that if the teachers plan their spelling lessons thoroughly it could be possible for them to use various strategies when introducing new sound. For the effective teaching of spelling teachers need to understand how to plan classroom spelling programmes (Litman, 2012)

b) IsiXhosa should be limited during English lessons

Teachers suggested that English should be taught as English in order for the learners to be familiar to English vocabulary and to eliminate the possibility of transferring L1 features to L2. In other words, the teachers in this study suggested that there should be no mother tongue used when English teaching is taking place. Confirming this

statement, Cook (2003) stipulates that if a rigid wall is kept between the two languages, students will be able to progress rather than be kept back by their constant reliance on the first language and by interference from the language they already knew. Most L2 researchers agree that learners' first language influences some aspects of second language acquisition, a process known as L1 transfer (Gass & Selinker, 1994; Odlin, 1989; Schwartz, 1998). The interference of the L1 system with the L2 system is the principal barrier to second language acquisition (ibid).

The above view is in contrast with Department of Education which notes that as South African classrooms are bilingual and multilingual, switching from one language to another (code switching) is expected to occur (DoE, 1997). To add more the Department of Education's Language in Education Policy promotes additive multilingualism. This means that learners must learn Additional Language at the same time as maintaining and developing their Home Languages (Setati, Adler, Reed & Bapoo, 2002). Likewise, Hammerly (1994) points out that programmes that place an emphasis on the L2 and ignore the L1 are not successful in preventing or removing language errors. Storch and Wigglesworth (2003) also report that in their study of ESL students performing a text reconstruction task and a joint composition task, the pairs primarily used the L1 in conversations about vocabulary and meaning and grammar. The results of the study show that the L1 is often used as a mediating tool to facilitate task completion.

c) There is a correlation between learners' spoken and written language

From the teachers' utterances during this study it can be deduced that pronunciation and spelling are connected. Both teachers reported that the way the learners pronounce words is one of the major factors that contributed to interlingual spelling errors. They further explained that this is because of the impact of their back ground. The learners were reportedly inheriting mispronunciation from their parents and backgrounds which resulted to their committing interlingual spelling errors. Walt and Dreyer (1995:307) believe that the learners' socio-economic status is in many respects a major impediment

to their progress. This is because learners complete their homework without the support and supervision of their parents (ibid). The teachers agreed upon the fact that the learners pronounce words as their illiterate parents or grandparents speak, they tend to pronounce words incorrectly and this leads to spelling errors. On this issue Templeton (2003); Wilde (1992); and Zutell (1998) confirmed that pronunciation can affect spelling and the word origin. On the other hand Al-Jarf (2008) found out that the discrepancy between the spoken and written language reveals learners' inability to separate native language L1 to second language L2 and it leads to spelling errors.

4.6 Presentation and analysis of data gathered through document analysis

Document analysis responded to the following research questions:

- o How do the grade 3 teachers support L2 learners in English spelling?
- o What are the factors that contribute to second language learners' interlingual spelling errors in English?

Presentation of data gathered through document analysis

Both teachers were concerned that the learners had not done what could be regarded as enough number of written activities and exercises in their books. In so much that they were reluctant to give the workbooks to the researcher. They also seemed concerned about their learners' writing abilities and competencies. The researcher analysed the genres of writing that learners were engaged on as reflected in their workbooks irrespective of the number of activities written in their workbooks. The genres of writing identified in the learners' workbooks were descriptive writings; personal writings and informational text writing. The activities that learners had written for each genre are tabulated below:

Table 9: Activities analysed in both classes

Genres of writing	Activities in learners' workbooks
Descriptive writing	Sentence building to form paragraphs
Personal writing/ memoir	My family
Informational text	Phonics, dictation, vowel digraphs

Table 9 shows the activities analysed in the learners' workbooks in both classes. As the researcher was going through the workbooks found that different activities were performed. These were descriptive writing, personal writing, informal text and creative writing. The teachers in this study reported that for the descriptive writing the learners were provided with words to form sentences and thereafter organised sentences into paragraphs. Under personal writing it was reported that learners wrote about the topic "My family". Activities like phonics, dictation and vowel digraphs were written under informal text. Under creative writing as reported by both teachers, pictures were provided and each learner was instructed to develop a story based on what she/he saw. The errors committed by learners on each genre are discussed in depth below except the creative writing as it was not marked in TB's class and did not appear in TA's class.

Spelling errors committed by learners in the descriptive genre of writing

Grade three learners should be able to organise information into short paragraphs that contain a main idea and related details, and begin to use compound sentences and sentences of varying length (Department of Basic Education, 2011). However, from the workbooks analysed for both classes, learners committed many errors when building sentences although they had the idea of presenting information in short paragraphs. Both teachers informed the researcher that learners were supplied with words so that they construct sentences. The workbooks were analysed and different types of spelling

errors were spotted. Among the spelling errors identified the interlingual spelling errors dominated four out of six learners. About (85%) in TA class committed interlingual spelling errors.

Table 10: Learners' activities and the errors they commit under the genre "descriptive writing"

Type of activity	Targeted sentence	Learners' responses	Type of error
Sentence building	My mother cooks food	My matha/mada cooks food	Interlingual spelling errors
	The girl is crying	The gerl/geli is crying	
	The carrot is red.	The kharoth/ kherot is red	
	The boy played the ball.	The boy playid/pleyd the ball	
	My money is lost.	My mony/mani is lost	Words written as they sound /interligual spelling error

Table 10 reveals errors committed by learners for both classes in the sentence construction under the genre descriptive writing. As the table indicated learners struggle to spell words, as a result committed many interlingual spelling errors. For example out of twelve learners (from both classes), four (67%) wrote the word *mada* for *mother* and

the other four learners (67%) wrote the word as *matha*. In the second sentence 25% of the learners spell *girl* as *gerl* and 45% *geli* and only 30% who spell it correctly. This shows that learners seem to be struggling with working with the sounds of the English language and also transfer the features of L1 to L2 which result for them to commit interlingual spelling errors. According to James (1993) interlingual mis-encodings lead to spelling errors that can be linked back to the learner's first language. Beside the interlingual spelling errors learners committed errors like reversal of phonemes in words and vowel substitution. For example one out of twelve learners (8%) wrote *is* as *si* and *carrot* as *kherot*.

Interlingual spelling errors committed by learners in the personal /memoir writing

Heather (2003) described memoir writing as the writing where somebody writes a story tracing his/her experiences, hopes, failures, success and triumphs. This form of writing is also known as personal writing (Poway Unified School District, 2010). Personal writing involves writing about yourself, your experiences, and your opinions. Furthermore personal writing may be for you alone (such as a journal or diary), or it may be directed at a wider audience (such as in a personal essay) (Ibid). When a learner is engaged with memoir writing the learner describes an event from the past. The event has to be based on the truth and reveals the feelings of the writer. For this study the theme that guided the learners' writing under memoir writing was the topic 'My family'.

There were also some spelling errors detected in this genre of writing for both classes. Most of these errors indicated that learners were transferring mother tongue features into the second language. The table below indicates the errors that were found when learners were writing about the topic 'My family'.

Table 11: Interlingual spelling errors committed by learners in personal writing on the topic 'My family'

Errors committed	Classification of error	Number of learners committed the error
My femily is big. My mother khuks fud.	Language transfer	5
I live wif my bladas and sisters.	Influence of the environment.	1

The data presented in table 11 was the reflection of both classes together. In the first sentence two (16.7%) learners substituted the vowel /a/ by the vowel /e/ and as a results family was written as *femely*. The learners seem to transfer the patterns of their mother tongue to the second language. According to Al-Jarf (2008) when learners apply a native language rule to the second language interlingual spelling errors occur. In the second sentence one (8.3%) learner wrote *with* as *wif*. Frederickson and Cline (2002:292) stipulate that learners with speech defects do not pronounce words correctly. Also the same learner in the second sentence committed an error due to the influence of the environment and the word *brothers* was spelt as *bladas*. Dildine (1994) noted that for English second language learners (ESL) the ability to pronounce words accurately had a distinct effect on their ability to spell the words correctly. The third sentence includes a combination of errors like letter transportation, transfer of L1 features to L2. Three learners (25%) committed these errors. The last two sentences reveal that six (50%) learners committed interlingual spelling errors due to the transfer of L1 features to L2

Interlingual errors committed by learners in the informational text genre of writing

The informational text genre of writing known as expository writing presents factual information about a subject (Poway Unified School District, 2010). It is used within academic essays when learners present factual information such as to report facts, to define terms, to summarise ideas and to explain a process. According to LiA (2003) the informational text genre of writing is designed to engage third grade learners writing that results in a descriptive, illustrated report based on personal topic selection and mini-research, paragraphing and writing a report. In the grade three learners' books analysed by the researcher the learners wrote dictation (word spelling and sentence spelling).

Learners wrote word spelling and sentence spelling from dictation so that they spell words from memory. For example, three (50%) out of six were able to spell word correctly and three (50%) committed interlingual spelling errors. In TB's class only two (33%) out of six who spell correctly and four (67%) out of six committed interlingual spelling errors.

For sentence spelling both classes struggled and committed different types of errors but interlingual spelling errors were the most errors committed by learners for both classes. To be specific, for TA's class only one (17%) learner out of six learners managed to spell the words correctly, and five (83%) struggled to spell correctly. In TB's class all learners (100%) committed interlingual spelling errors. The tables 12 below illustrate the learners' performance under the genre informational text.

Table 12: Words that learners committed interlingual spelling errors under the genre informational text in both classes. (The total number of workbooks analysed were 12 workbooks i.e. six for TA's class and another six for TB's class)

Targeted words in the spelling activities	How the learners spelt the word	Number of learners who committed the	No. of learners who spell the word

		error	correctly
Chair	Tshlair	7	5
About	Abhawt	6	6
Because	Bekhauz	8	4
Pink	Phink	7	5
Glasses	Grasses	3	9
Test	Thest	8	4
Played	Playid	7	5
Head	Hedi	5 2	5
Afraid	Afreyd	7	5
Peanuts	Peants	4	8
Colour	Khala	9	3
Going	Gowing	10	2
Girl	Gril Geli	3 6	3
Father	Fada	10	2
Following	Folowing	8	4
Head	Hedi	7	5

Telephone	Telefoni	5	3
	Thelefone	4	
Wish	-	0	12
Leg	-	0	12
Wash	-	0	12
Carrot	Kherrot	4	3
	Kharoth	5	
Money	Mony	6	6
Elephant	Elefent	8	4
English	Inglish	3	5
	Englishi	4	
Scarf	Skhafu	3	4
	Skafu	5	
Fish	-	0	12
Show	-	0	12

Table 12 above illustrates the number of errors committed by learners whom their workbooks were analysed by the researcher under informational text writing. As the table suggests, learners committed different types of errors because of the influences of the mother tongue. For example letter omission, visual errors, letter transposition, consonant insertion, spelling conversion and the interlingual spelling errors (language

transfer errors). In letter omission for instance six (50%) learners spelt *money* as *mony* and four (33%) learners wrote *peanuts* as *peants*. For visual errors three (25%) learners wrote *chair* as *tshlair*. In letter transposition three (25%) learners wrote *girl* as *grel*. According to Al-jarf (2008) a transposition is used when the student reverses the order of two target words, two vowels, two consonants or a vowel and a consonant in the target word. In spelling conversion eight (67%) wrote *following* as *folowing*. In consonant insertion ten (83%) wrote *going* as *gowing*. Although different errors were discussed above however they were also interlingually motivated spelling errors due to the influence of the first language. The interlingual spelling errors reflect interference from the L1 literacy skills upon L2 processing (Akamatsu, 2003; Koda, 2005; Figueredo, 2006). Some of the words that the learners spelt incorrectly were literal translations from isiXhosa. For example nine (75%) learners wrote *colour* as *Khala*, five (42%) learners wrote *head* as *hedi*. Five (42%) learners spelt *telephone* as *telefoni* and (33%) learners spelt as *thelefone*. Carrot was written as *Kharoth* by five learners (42%) and three (25%) learners wrote scarf as *sikhafu*. On the other hand there were some words that seem to be easy to spell for all (100%) learners in both classes for example wish, leg, wash, fish, dish and show. This might be the fact that these phonemes sound as their first language isiXhosa.

Analysis of data gathered through document analysis

Table 6 in paragraph 4.4.2 reveals that the learners' performance was categorised according to the developmental stages. For example learners that were in the phonetic spelling stage, transitional spelling stage and convectional spelling stage were selected in this study (Dorn & Soffos as cited in DuBois *et al.*, 2007; Gentry, 1982; Savage, 2001; and Treiman *et al.*, 1997). Learners at phonetic stage are not expected to spell conventionally most of the time because their spelling concepts are not yet fully developed. At the transitional spelling stage learners pay attention to what words look like, in addition to what they sound like. They begin to incorporate vowels and endings in their spelling and they demonstrate their growing knowledge of English orthography. At the conventional spelling stage learners are expected to spell at a higher frequency level and most words are spelled appropriately. The speller can often recognize a word

that doesn't look right and most words are spelled automatically. As the researcher was analysing learners' workbooks, for TAs' class there was no vast difference between the learners at the conventional and transitional spelling stages as TA categorised the learners at the conventional stage as the good spellers.

The data collected through document analysis revealed the following issues and are discussed below:-

- English Language rules seem to be complicated and learners transfer L1 features to L1.
- Pronunciation Impacted negatively in learners' spelling in so much that they committed interlingual spelling errors
- Lack of teacher support on learners' workbooks.

English Language rules seem to be complicated and learners transfer L1 features to L2

As the researcher looked through the learners' workbooks picked up the issues that could be the reason for the second language learners to commit interlingual spelling errors. The first issue detected by the researcher indicated that the learners translate from their first language (isiXhosa) to spell English words. This applied to all the learners who participated in this research as suggested by the workbooks analysed. In other words, learners rely on their first language to write English words. According to Lott (as cited in Alonso, 1997:10) learners tend to apply the rules of their first language when they do not know the rules of the second language. On the other hand, Al-Jarf (2008:12) found that "...learners sometimes construct their own L2 interim rules with the use of their L1 knowledge to help them in the writing tasks, resulting in interlingual spelling errors."

Beside the interlingual spelling errors committed by learners, their writing reveals that some few learners lack phonetic awareness skills. The learners' books reflected how learners committed different types of errors but interlingual spelling errors were

dominating. These errors reflected that learners struggle with working with the sounds of the English language. Clark-Edmands (as cited in DuBois, *et al*, 2007) and Medrano (1998) stipulate that a lack of phonetic awareness contributes to poor spelling achievement and when learners are unable to understand how to work with the sounds of the language system, they will reverse beginnings of words, substituting similar letters, leaving off endings, and omitting letters. Other words that were incorrectly spelt in the learners' book were written the way the learners heard them or the way they sounded hence *gowing* written as *folowing*

Pronunciation Impacted negatively in learners' spelling in so much that they committed many interlingual spelling errors.

This issue was picked up from the data collected through teachers' interviews and was evident in learners' workbooks. When the researcher was analysing the learners' work books noted that the learners commit errors reflecting on their pronunciation. For example *glass* was written as *grass*, practise as *playtise*. According to the teachers participated in this research the reason for the learners to commit these errors is the fact that their parents struggle to pronounce these words as these words are borrowed from English. Mossaba (1996) stipulates that where properties of the different languages are shared, learning becomes easy and where not shared learning becomes difficult. For example Kiambu does not have // in its inventory and some learners deleted the // in words and inserted /r/. At other times, they deleted the /r/ and inserted the // Mossaba (1996). This is also the case with isiXhosa speaking learners since the data was collected in a school where all the learners and teachers are isiXhosa speakers.

Literature suggests different types of teaching strategies that can be used by teachers to minimise spelling errors caused by pronunciation. For example Senel (2006) suggested some techniques for eliminating the impact of pronunciation problems in spelling development. These techniques are remedial teaching techniques, drilling technique, word - association drill, comparative drill. These techniques are discussed in

chapter two. On the other hand Rippel (2012) suggests the following techniques for preventing spelling errors caused by pronunciation issues:

-Let the learners exaggerate the pronunciation of the word by pronouncing the words 'library' and 'separate' as ('li-brar-y', 'sep-ar-ate'). In this instance the learners will be able to hear each sound clearly, making it much easier for him to spell the word.

-The teacher should model the word for the learner who is not aware of the correct pronunciation. For example if the learner pronounced 'Febary', the teacher carefully pronounces the word for him 'Feb-ru-a-ry' so that the learner can hear each syllable.

Lack of teacher support on the learners' workbooks

Gillham (2000a) stipulates that observation in conjunction with the interview data is important in the research because there is a common discrepancy between what people say about themselves and what they actually do. This was what happened when the researcher was analysing the learners' workbooks. The teachers in this study especially TA was just underlining the errors and left no clue about what should be corrected. This was evident in learners' workbooks and some of the activities were unmarked. Beside those clueless activities, about four (40%) out of ten activities were unmarked in each class. According to literature teachers should mark the learners' workbooks regularly to give the learners the opportunity to do the corrections.

4.7 Presentation and analysis of data gathered through classroom observation

Classroom observation responded to these questions of the main study namely:

- o What are the strategies used by grade 3 teachers to help English second language learners overcome interlingual spelling errors?
- o How do the grade 3 teachers support L2 learners in English spelling?
- o What are the factors that contribute to second language learners' interlingual spelling errors in English?

According to Gillham (200a:45) observations simply involve "watching what people do; listening to what they say; and sometimes asking them clarifying questions". On the

other hand McClure (2002) states that observation is an intuitive process that allows individuals to collect information about others by viewing their actions and behaviours in their natural surroundings. The researcher spent time in both classrooms observing practices of teaching spelling with the aim of finding out spelling errors committed by isiXhosa background learners. Also the teaching and learning strategies in acquiring spelling skills in English First Additional language were observed. As the main objective of this study was to explore the grade three teacher's strategies to help the L2 learners overcome interlingual spelling errors, the researcher was in a position to note of every activity done during English periods. To avoid interruption the researchers sat at the back of the classroom but observing every response in the classroom. The teachers in this study used different approaches to present their lessons but their goal was to teach spelling.

TA's classroom was the first to be observed by the researcher and the digraph *Ph* was introduced, TB on the other hand introduced the digraph *Ch*. TA introduced the lesson by narrating a story with the target sound *ph* whereas TB used flash cards written the sound *ch*. The researcher prepared an observation sheet as a guide to what was going to be observed. The researcher structured the observation process as follows:

Teaching and learning activities in both classrooms

As the researcher indicated earlier in this chapter teaching and learning activities were observed and categorised according to the:

- a) Issues relating to the teachers and
- b) Issues relating to the learners

Issues relating to the teachers

The issues relating to the teachers that were observed during the spelling lesson were:

- i. The teaching strategies used to introduce a new sound

- ii. Word recognition (how do teacher expose learners to letter- sound relationships)
- iii. Pronunciation
- iv. Response to miscues/support given to learners by the teachers

Teaching Strategies used by the teachers to introduce a new sound

The researcher observed both teachers but at different times. The observation showed that both teachers planned their lessons according to the requirements of CAPS. Both teachers had different lesson plans but their style for preparation was similar. Their approaches to the lesson were different. For example TA introduced the lesson by asking the learners to recite a short poem '*Hecory deacory dock*' and then she explained the theme of the poem to the learners. The researcher noticed that the teacher was nervous as the poem seemed not leading to the lesson. She asked learners to sit on the mat as it was the story time. The teacher narrated the story written on a piece of paper and there were no pictures accompanying the story. According to DuBois, *et al* (2007) many probable causes for students' inability to transfer spelling into written work could be within the spelling instruction that students receive. The story was about '*a boy called Phillip*' and was first narrated using the mother tongue (isiXhosa) and translated in English. It was clear that the teacher was introducing the consonant digraph '*ph*'. The teacher engaged the learners by asking them to identify the words with the sound *ph* on the story from their memory as there was no Big book or chart to read on. According to literature to expose children to the additional language is through listening to stories where the teacher reads from a Big Book (DoE, 2011). Some learners about 30% of the class managed to identify the words orally but 70% of the class committed spelling errors when asked to write the words on the chalkboard. The teacher tried to correct the learner pronunciation by explaining that *ph* is pronounced as isiXhosa *F* but is not the same when you write it. She further explained *ph* in English is different from isiXhosa sound *ph* as in *pheka*. According to literature, children need to

learn where sound- spelling relationships are different in their home and additional language (DoE, 2011).

As the researcher was observing, the teacher used the chalkboard as the only resource present in the classroom. The teacher gave learners a classwork and sat on her desk and the learners were left unsupervised. The learners joined a line for the teacher to mark their workbooks. She drew the line underneath the error with no indication to support the learners. The teacher concluded the lesson by asking learners to copy the words with *ph* sound written on the chalkboard. The researcher noticed that TA was complaining about the workload because of the big numbers in their classrooms.

In contrast TB introduced the consonant digraph *Ch* by using flash cards, a chart and chalkboard. The teacher showed the *ch* sound and pronounced it loudly and slowly and the learners repeated after her. The learners were asked to read each grapheme in the consonant digraph (*c* and *h*) and then blend them together as phoneme *ch*. The flash cards were pasted on the chalkboard. After that the learners together with the teacher read the words with the *ch* sound written on the chart. Different colours were used to identify the target sound *ch*. The teacher asked the learners to give words with *ch* sound and write them on the chalkboard. In this instance few (25%) learners struggle to construct *ch* words. The learners enjoyed this activity as they learn whilst they were playing (chasing each other to be the first to grab the chalk) but the space was a factor because of the big number of learners. The teacher gave the learners an activity of filling in the digraph *ch* to the remaining words in their workbook. While the learners were writing, she moved around to give assistance to the struggling learners. She also checked to see whether all the learners had followed the instructions. The researcher noticed that the learners sound out words whilst they were writing.

According to literature when new sounds are introduced auditory cues are used (DoE, 2012). Learners who were struggling to spell words; TB referred them to the chart and read the words again. There was no long line for marking because whilst the teacher was moving around, she was also marking the questions finished. Her marking involved

underlining spelling errors made by the learners and left clue for making corrections. The tables below table 13.1 and 13.2 show the performance of learners in both classes.

Table 13.1 Learner performance in TA's class

Words with ph sound in the story narrated by teacher A	words with the correct phonic <i>ph</i> written by learners on the chalkboard	The incorrect words written by learners on the chalkboard
Phillip	Telephone	Filip
Elephant	Photo	Elefent
Orphan	Alphabet	Ofani
Trophy		Trophi
Dolphin		Dolfini

Table 13.2 Learner performance in TB's class

Words with Ch sound written on the chart by teacher B	Words with correct phonic Ch written by learners on the chalkboard	The incorrect words written by learners on the chalkboard

Chocolate	chips	Tships
Chalk	children	Tshiren
Children	chicken	Shcken
Chicken	chop	Chlair
Choose	Chalk	

Table 13.1 shows that the learners in TA's class committed spelling errors as influenced by their mother tongue. For example 80% of the class wrote *ph* as an isiXhosa sound *f*. According to Miressa and Dumessa (2011) these errors are referred to as interlingual spelling errors. As the researcher was observing teacher A's class noticed that what the teacher did was contrary to the data collected through interviews. Both teachers mentioned the use of concrete objects to support the learners overcome spelling errors however TA introduced the new sound without resources in place. On the other hand Table 13.2 indicates that learners in TB's were supported as they committed few errors. According to literature when new sounds are introduced visual, auditory and tactile cues are used (DoE, 2012). This was evident when TB was introducing the sound Ch in her class.

Word Recognition

The manner in which the teachers in this study were exposing learners to letter- sound relationship was also observed. As the researcher has indicated in table 12.1 above, most (80%) of the learners in TA's class were struggling to spell and write the *ph* digraph as they relied to their mother tongue to spell words, whereas only 25% of learners in TB's class were struggling to spell the digraph *ch*. Unlike teacher A, teacher B had given the learners the opportunity to associate the shape of the sound with a relevant picture to aid memory (DoE, 2012). Moreover, after the work was marked teacher B gave learners chance to do corrections something not done by teacher A.

Pronunciation by the teacher

Both teachers tried to mind the pronunciation of the words in so much that *ph* sound was stressed so that learners hear the difference between the *ph* sounds as in isiXhosa. For example, when TA was pronouncing *elephant* it sounded like *ele-ph-ph-phant*, and TB when pronouncing the word *teacher*, it sounded like *tea-ch-ch-cher*. TB also tried to make the difference between the sound *ch* in L1 as in *tshata*, *tshisa* and L2 *chips*, *chop*, and *child*. The researcher noticed the voice change by both teachers as they pronounced the words. According to literature voice should be changed when a new sound is introduced in order for the learners to imitate (DoE, 2012).

Teachers' response to miscues

Both teachers made the learners to repeat the word when the pronunciation is incorrect. For example where learners pronounced *elephant* as *ph* as in isiXhosa, they had to repeat after the teacher two to three times. Teacher B also used flash cards, chart, and chalkboard to ensure the mastery of spelling. For written activities an error detected by TB was underlined and the correct word was written in red to indicate the error and how to correct it, this strategy was evident in teacher B's class only.

Issues related to the learners

As the researcher was observing the teacher practices, the participation of learners was also observed. The researcher observed whether the learners participated freely in the spelling activities. Different skills acquired by some of the learners as they were busy doing their work were also observed by the researcher. What emerged from the data was discussed below:

- i. Learner responses towards the acquisition of spelling skills
- ii. Factors influencing their spelling performances

Learners' responses towards the acquisition of spelling skills

Editing skill

It was evident that some of the learners especially in TB's class acquired an editing strategy. After finishing copying words, some learners read their work to make sure it was the same as what they had copied from the chalkboard. The learners were able to identify a spelling error and quickly erased it without the concern of the teacher. This was noticed by the researcher at TB's class as the learners were whispering and looking at each others' workbooks. Teaching students to reread their own writing and make corrections independently is an important part of teaching students the importance of correct spelling (Dubois, *et al*, 2007). For TA this spelling skill was not identified by the researcher.

The use of charts and word walls by the learners

Not all of the learners adopted the editing strategy; others were observed by the researcher making use of word wall words in finding familiar words with the same digraph studied. As the researcher indicated earlier there were few posters for English on the walls, learners in TB's class made use of the chart and flash cards designed to teach the consonant digraph *ch*. They did this when they encountered problems in spelling words. They also looked around the classroom to see whether a similar word was on the few lists of words on the wall and they copied it. Strategies such as building a "word wall" in the classroom also help learners improve their vocabulary (DoE, 2011). Learners in TA's class seemed as if they were not exposed to the use of the word walls and posters in the classroom.

Factors perceived to influence the learners' spelling performance

As the researcher was observing through all the spelling activities performed in the classroom identified some extrinsic factors that affect the learners' performance in spelling. Extrinsic factors are those factors caused by other people or unfavourable conditions (Frederickson & Cline, 2002:292). For example the teaching strategies, the lack of resources, the teacher's voice and the classroom environment could impact

negatively to the performance of the learners. In this study for instance TA introduced the lesson without preparing the resources. She was not using pictures, Big book or any visual learning aid when she was telling the story. Also in both classrooms, posters for FAL were few so learners did not have enough resources to refer on. According to Garza and Lira (2008) a print-rich learning environment sets the tone for ways in which learners can discover the relationships between spoken and written language. Also the fact that teachers, especially teacher A did not encouraged the learners to do the correction this could impact negatively to the learners' spelling development.

As the researcher was observing the learners answering questions orally noticed that pronunciation was a factor. This means that learners who pronounced words incorrectly were likely to commit spelling errors. This was evident when the learners were writing words on the chalkboard.

4.8 Triangulation: Analysis of data gathered through semi structured interviews, document analysis and classroom observations

As indicated earlier semi structured interview, classroom observation and document analysis were used in this study responding to the same research questions. The data gathered through the three instruments was analysed and the following themes emerged:

Learners transfer mother tongue features to second language

In all the instruments used to gather data, it was evident that the influence of the learners' native language has an impact in the learners spelling. For example during the interviews the teacher reported that learners often pronounce words incorrectly, in other words, they carry over isiXhosa letter pronunciation habits into English. Also in the document analysis 75% of learners wrote words transferred from their native language which resulted in spelling errors. In the classroom observation as the learners were observed writing lists of words on the chalkboard the spelling errors they made reflected

their mother tongue features. English language rules seem to be complicated for second language learners and lead to learners transfer L1 features to L2.

In all the instruments used for data collection, it was evident that learners commit a range of spelling errors; however the interlingual spelling errors dominated. This proved that English rules were not understood or followed by the learners and that forces learners to use their mother tongue. For example the learners committed errors including vowel omissions and insertion, letter transposition, visual errors, and consonant blending. In all these errors committed by learners, interlingual spelling error prevailed. For instance, if a learner wrote *gun* as *gan* the vowel was substituted because of the influence of the mother tongue. What the teachers in this research had told the researcher during interviews was also revealed in learners' workbooks and during classroom observation. For example in their workbooks the researcher noticed that the learners committed errors like letter omission six (50%) learners spelt *money* as *mani*. For visual errors three (25%) learners wrote *chair* as *chlair*. In letter transposition three (25%) learners wrote *girl* as *gril*. Clark-Edmands (as cited in DuBois, *et al*, 2007) and Medrano (1998) stipulate that a lack of phonetic awareness contributes to poor spelling achievement and when learners are unable to understand how to work with the sounds of the language system, they will reverse beginnings of words, substituting similar letters, leaving off endings and omitting letters.

Learners' spoken language influence their spelling

During interviews the researcher was told by both teachers that the way the learners pronounce words affects the way they spell words. Both teachers further explained that the learners imitate their illiterate parents whom their pronunciation is incorrect in so much that most parents as reported by the teachers tend to substitute the liquid /r/ with /l/ and vice versa. Document analysis and classroom observation also revealed errors emanated from pronunciation. It was proven through document analysis that the pronunciation contributes to the interlingual spelling. For example *mother* written as *mada*, *glass* written as *grass*. This was also the case when the researcher was observing their activities in the classroom.

Teachers seem to lack competence in their work

When teachers in this study were interviewed, they mentioned the fact that teachers do contribute to learner spelling errors. This according to the teachers in this study becomes evident when teaching was taking place in their classrooms. For example it was reported that some teachers are incompetent and they cannot spell properly. Also their teaching strategies are reported to be less effective as far as the spelling teaching is concerned. The manner in which TA was presenting the spelling lesson proved that competence was lacking.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter tried to paint a clear picture of the classroom situation for both teachers in this study. The structure of teaching activities and the resources in the classrooms were then mentioned to give a broad idea of what was going on in grade three classrooms. Then the sample of the children's work was analysed in order to gain a deeper perspective of what is taught and how it is taught in these classrooms. Also in this chapter the data collected for the purpose of research was analysed. The findings obtained from the semi-structured interviews, document analysis and direct observation were discussed, interpreted and presented to answer the research questions. In the next chapter conclusions and recommendations will be presented

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This study investigated Grade three teachers' strategies to help second language learners overcome interlingual spelling errors at a primary school in Mdantsane in East London district, Eastern Cape. The research questions related to the topic were:

Main research question

What are the strategies used by grade 3 teachers to help English second language learners overcome interlingual spelling errors?

Sub research questions

How do the grade 3 teachers support L2 learners in English spelling?

What are the perceived factors that contribute to grade 3 second language learners' interlingual spelling errors in English?

Data gathering instruments used in this study included document analysis, semi structured interviews and classroom observation. The findings of this research revealed that the teachers teaching in township schools face many challenges. More detailed report of findings and recommendations of this research are discussed in relation to the literature reviewed and with reference to the objectives of the research.

5.2 Discussion of findings

Many themes emerged throughout the process of this study responding to the research questions. These themes and recommendations are discussed fully below:

a) Conclusions related to teacher practices and approaches to teaching spelling in English First additional Language and helping learners overcome interlingual spelling errors

- Teaching and learning activities

The important conclusion arose from the findings of the interviews and classroom observations was that teachers in this study seemed to understand the teaching approaches and strategies for the effective teaching of spelling but the skills of implementing these strategies were lacking. For example TA presented a lesson without considering the available resources in the classroom. Literature says that teachers should consider the resources that will be required for each lesson plan to re-sequence units according to the availability of the resources (DoE, 2003). Through this study the researcher has noticed that teacher practices can contribute to second language learners' interlingual spelling errors. This is due to the fact that the strategies used by the teachers were those of teaching spelling generally and not focusing on L2 learners' interlingual spelling errors. Also teachers expected learners to self monitor their spelling practices.

- ***Teacher support to learners***

During interviews, teachers reported that teachers need to support learners after each spelling activity but teacher A was careless when she was supposed to encourage learners to do corrections. As the researcher was analysing learners' workbooks, the manner in which teacher A was marking was not developing spelling skills to learners as she did not indicate what needed to be corrected. Also for both classrooms there were no specific structures in the classroom dedicated for the development of language let alone the interlingual spelling errors. In so much that both classrooms had no posters or charts that introduced learners to all spelling variations of phonemes that are similar in isiXhosa and English. For instance, there was no differentiation for those words who share the same features as the mother tongue: Words like 'chair' and 'tsh'; < tsh> in isiXhosa sounds the same as < ch> in English, in English as in the word 'boy' sounds the same as <bh> in isiXhosa, as in the word, 'bhuti'. To add more, those objects labelled in the classrooms were of no help for minimising interlingual spelling errors.

- ***Teacher education***

The teachers' qualifications provided in table 5 indicated that both teachers possessed the diplomas that were phased out long ago. It seemed as if both teachers lack motivation in improving their qualifications. Maybe this could impact negatively on their teaching performance. Although teachers mentioned that they attend cluster meetings and the developmental workshops for the foundation phase, to teacher A the workshops seemed not to have any influence to her classroom practices. The researcher observed her presenting a spelling lesson without the use of resources. The teacher also paid less attention on how the learners pronounce words. If by chance she did correct the learner pronunciation she did this in the manner that could make learners commit more interlingual spelling errors. For example 'early' was over emphasised as if 'y' is replaced by 'i'

Recommendations

Teachers should be encouraged to improve their qualifications. For example there are in- service programmes like Advanced Diploma in Education (ACE) and NPDE whom teachers could improve their qualifications. Also the developmental workshops or the in-service programmes should capacitate teachers on the strategies of how to teach English spelling to eliminate interlingual spelling errors. Schools should arrange for suitably qualified and experienced personnel to support teachers. Teachers should be made aware of how to create reading corners and develop school libraries (McDonough & Shaw, 1993).

b) Conclusions related to the impact of background to the learners' spelling development

It was mentioned earlier that this study was conducted in a context where socio economic factors impacted negatively to the English spelling teaching. For example it was reported that both teachers in this study were reluctant to give learners homework because the parents and the guardians were illiterate and were unable to support their children with spelling lists given by teachers as homework. According to literature the degree of poverty, illiteracy and unemployment affect learning (HSRC, 2007). The fact

that parents are illiterate also affects learners' pronunciation which in turn affects learners' spelling. Literature says if pronunciation is incorrect it is possible to spell incorrectly (James, 1993). This situation is made more difficult by the lack of libraries in the context and the one available is far from this school. Even if it was not the case the learners were not familiar with the use of these facilities since the school seemed to be under- resourced.

Recommendations

Teachers should be encouraged to develop reading corners and mini libraries in their classrooms so that learners be exposed to reading to improve their vocabulary (McDonough & Shaw, 1993). According to literature spelling development is related to the learner's overall reading and decoding strategies (Nassaji, n.d.). Also schools that are in the disadvantaged communities should be encouraged to develop homework centres where the learners are assisted in completing their English spelling homework. This means that after school the learners could take a short break and do homework afterwards. This programme could involve the retired teachers approached by the school for this purpose. Again people identified by the Departmental district could conduct literacy advocacy campaigns with parents to encourage them to play a role in English spelling development. May be the erection of ABET centres close to these disadvantaged settlements could serve the purpose. The ABET classes should focus in English for parents of L2 learners. Also to acquaint learners with library facilities, teachers and SGBs should organise trips to the library may be on weekly bases or twice a month depending to the needs of the school. Failing which schools should make arrangements for municipality mobile library.

c) Conclusions related to the ill health of learners

The teachers in this study commented that learners with hearing impairment commit spelling errors because they could not hear all the sounds in a word. These learners are reported to commit spelling errors involving the omission of letters.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the seating arrangement should accommodate these learners. They should be placed in the view of the teacher and the chalkboard. The teacher with that kind of a learner in the class must be quotient with her /his voice. Also teachers should seek help from the Department of Education after compiling evident about these learners and refer the learners to the Department therapist.

d) Conclusions related to overcrowded classrooms

The researcher observed that the classrooms were overcrowded in so much that it was not easy for teachers to move around monitoring learners' work.

Recommendations

The department of education should erect additional classrooms and employ more teachers for the smooth running of the school programmes.

e) Conclusions related to the relationship between learners' spoken and written language

This study revealed that there seemed to be a correlation between learners' spoken and written language. It was evident in this research that learners' pronunciation had an impact in their spelling development. Because they pronounced words incorrectly, they committed interlingual spelling errors. Learners also relied heavily on their home language isiXhosa and this resulted in them using isiXhosa spelling rules when writing English words.

Recommendations

Teachers have to find ways of monitoring learners' pronunciation of words. For example if the learner pronounces the word incorrectly, the teacher should repeatedly pronounce the word for that learner. The use of a dictionary to support learners to pronounce a word correctly is recommended. Also teachers should make more emphasis on the words that the learners spell incorrectly. For instance if the learners spell 'Kh' instead of

'C' for 'cabbage' the teacher should use different flash cards with these sounds written in different colours and models the pronunciation for the learners.

f) Learners were not familiar with English phonology

As the researcher was analysing learners' workbooks noticed that because the learners were not familiar with phonology they wrote words as they hear them. This indicated that the learners struggle with phonemic awareness. Phonemic awareness help learners to think about and work with individual sounds in a spoken word. Medrano & Zych (1998) and Bailey, *et al* (as cited in DuBois, Erickson & Jacobs, 2007) highlighted that learners whose phonemic awareness is underdeveloped struggle with spelling and with reading. This means that learners in both classes might struggle with spelling and commit spelling errors.

Recommendations

Learners need to be taught the spelling rules of the English language and how English spelling rules differ from isiXhosa spelling rules. For example, isiXhosa has a transparent orthography and English does not. Hence a print rich classroom with visual aids is recommended by Cairney (2009); DuBois, *et al* (2007) and Garza & Lira, (2008) and it can be helpful.

g) Conclusions related to interlingual spelling errors caused by the influence of pronunciation

Learners' workbooks were analysed and the researcher noticed that there were some spelling errors due to the impact of pronunciation. According to Rippel (2012) in order for the learners to overcome interlingual spelling errors caused by pronunciation, teachers should let the learners exaggerate the pronunciation of the word. For example the words *library* and *separate* should be 'li-brar-y', and 'sep-ar-ate'. In this instance the learners will be able to hear each sound clearly, making it much easier for him to spell the word. Also the teacher should model the word for the learner who is not aware of

the correct pronunciation. For example if the learner pronounced 'Febary', the teacher carefully pronounces the word for him 'Feb-ru-a-ry' so that the learner can hear each syllable.

Recommendations

The schools should make use of videos so that learners hear the words pronounced whilst watching the English first language teacher presenting the lesson. Also inviting English first language teachers for demonstration could minimise the interlingual spelling errors caused by pronunciation. Educational programmes like 'English in Action' also could help second language learners overcome the spelling errors resulted from pronunciation.

5.3 Recommendations for further research

This case study was investigating grade three teachers' strategies to help English second language learners overcome interlingual spelling errors. It was conducted in one primary school in Mdantsane, in the East London District. The main objective was to investigate the strategies used by grade three teachers to help English second language learners overcome interlingual spelling errors. As the researcher was conducting this research the data was collected by using three of the research instruments, interviews, analysis of documents and classroom observation. It was through these instruments that the researcher found that the strategies used by grade three teachers in spelling classes were those strategies used to teach spelling generally not specifically for interlingual spelling errors. It is for this reason that the researcher recommends for further research.

Also it has been acknowledged that the participants in this study were only two grade three teachers in a particular school not all teachers of the Foundation Phase in the Eastern Cape so as the findings. Replicating this study with a larger sample may be could substantiate the findings of this study.

5.4 The limitation of the Research Study

This was a case study so the data collected and findings identified cannot be generalised as representing a fair population of the primary schools. This study was investigating grade three teachers' strategies to help English second language learners overcome spelling errors. However the teachers in this study seemed to have a limited number of strategies to help learners overcome interlingual spelling errors instead they used the strategies to teach spelling generally. Also the reluctance of teachers to participate in the classroom observation did not affect the findings and credibility of the study as the researcher anticipated this challenge and prepared as such.

5.5 Conclusion

The main purpose of the study was to explore the strategies used by grade 3 teachers to help English L2 learners overcome interlingual spelling errors. The support given by teachers to learners and the factors contributing to spelling development were also investigated. From this study one could deduce that the interlingual spelling errors including other errors committed by learners in English spelling are emanated from different factors but the dominant factors are the pronunciation, the environment where learners come from including the status of their parents, language transfer and language borrowing.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (Pilot study)

AIM OF THE STUDY: INVESTIGATING GRADE 3 TEACHERS' STRATEGIES TO HELP ENGLISH L2 LEARNERS OVERCOME INTERLINGUAL SPELLING ERRORS.

SECTION A

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

TEACHER	A	B

Gender		Age				Home Language			LoLT	
Male	Female	25-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	isiXhos a	Englis h	Othe r	IsiXhos a	Englis h

HIGHEST TEACHING QUALIFICATIONS TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN GRADE 3

CERTIFICATE	PTC		JSTC	ACE						
DIPLOMA	NPDE		JPTD	SPTD		STD				
FIRST DEGREE	BA		BED							
POST GRADUATE DEGREES	BED HONS									
MED & ABOVE										
OTHER										

SECTION B

LEARNER EXPERIENCES

Writing in English is a problem to second language learners:

What are the challenges of teaching English in the foundation phase?

What types of spelling errors do they commit most in English?

What do you think is the source of these errors?

What are the areas of success and the challenges when they write English spelling?

Do you have learners who have the challenges of using isiXhosa when spelling English words?

SECTION C

TEACHER PRACTICES AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES

How do you support learners who transfer the features of isiXhosa spelling to English?

What are the challenges of teaching English spelling to the isiXhosa background learners and how do you face them?

How do you introduce new English sounds to minimize the first language (isiXhosa) interferences?

What routine/order do you follow when introducing new sounds?

What strategies do you implement when teaching English spelling?

APPENDIX B
CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

Teacher Observed

A		B	
---	--	---	--

Date _____

Time _____

Grade _____

Name of observer _____

Presentation of the session

Sound introduced: _____

Phonemic awareness

How does the teacher introduce the new sound?

What strategies does the teacher use to develop phonemic Awareness?

Word walls	Sentence cut- ups	Word match- ups	Rimes	Other

Word Recognition

How does the teacher expose learners to letter sound relationship?

Visual knowledge

What activities does the teacher do to stimulate the learner's memory?

Pronunciation

What does the teacher do when the learners pronounce wrongly?

Miscues

Does the teacher pay attention to miscues?

Teacher- learner participation

Learner Activities

Do they build words?

Do they recall words from memory?

		Teacher's role when they do errors
Recall and be able to write		
Recall and unable to write		

Do the learners use word games?

What are the factors that influence their spelling performance?

Intrinsic (on the person of the learner)	
Extrinsic (from other people or unfavourable conditions)	
Mother tongue	
Others	

APPENDIX C

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS SCHEDULE

Document A: Learner's Book

Learner A: Gender (F/M):

Age:

Home language:

Types of written exercises

	Learner controlled	Teacher controlled	Themes guiding learner writing	Frequency of interlingual errors	Words commonly mis-spelt
Creative writing					
Transactional					
Memoir					
Narrative					
Other					

Interlingual spelling errors committed by learners in each type of writing

	Targeted word	Errors
Creative writing		
Transactional		
Memoir		
Narrative		
Other		

Feedback by the teacher

Type of feedback	Frequency
Complementary	
Monitoring	
Confirming	
Improving	

APPENDIX D

Consent forms

I, Nomfusi Rululu, a Masters of education candidate at the University of Fort Hare, School for Post Graduate Studies, as part of my academic programme, am conducting research on *Grade 3 teachers' strategies to help English L2 learners overcome interlingual spelling errors*

As part of this process, I am inviting you to participate in this interview.

I wish to guarantee you that any information that you may provide will be confidential. Your identity will not be made available to anybody other than the researcher.

Thank you.

Signature..... Date.....

I,, hereby give/not give consent to participate in the study on *Grade 3 teachers' strategies to help L2 learners overcome interlingual spelling errors in English*.

I hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project. I consent to participate in the research study. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I desire.

Signature..... Date