

CHAPTER SEVEN

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

7.1 PROLOGUE

Schematically, the teachers' biographical details and their experience in ESL study and teaching (Sections A and B of Appendix B) are, on the one hand, represented as follows:

TEACHERS: BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS AND ESL STUDY AND TEACHING			
EXPERIENCE			
VARIABLE	CLASSIFICATION	NUMBER	TOTAL
GENDER	Male	14	20
	Female	6	
AGE	21-27 years	—	20
	27-37 years	15	
	37 years & above	5	
HOME LANGUAGE	South Sotho	12	20
	Setswana	5	
	Xhosa	2	
	Xitsonga	1	
RESIDENCE	Town/City	13	20
	Township	7	
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	South Africa	20	20
CITIZENSHIP	South African	20	20
QUALIFICATIONS	JSTC	1	20
	Teacher's Diploma	14	

	B. Degree	5	
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TEACHING EXPERIENCE	4 years & below	4	20
	5-8 years	6	
	9-12	4	
	13 years & above	6	
SUBJECTS TEACHERS TEACH OTHER THAN ESL	Afrikaans	1	20
	South Sotho	1	
	Arts & Culture	2	
	Business Economics	3	
	Technology	1	
	Geography	2	
	History	7	
Three teachers teach ESL only			

TABLE 7.1. The Biographic Details of the Teachers

On the other hand, the schematic representation of the ESL learners' biographical details and school background (Section A and B of Appendix C) is as follows:

LEARNERS: BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS AND SCHOOL BACKGROUND			
VARIABLE	CLASSIFICATION	NUMBER	TOTAL
GENDER	Male	59	119
	Female	60	
AGE	14 years & below	4	119
	15 years	28	
	17 years & above	86	
		One did not indicate	
HOME LANGUAGE	South Sotho	89	119
	Setswana	4	
	Xhosa	15	

	Zulu Xitsonga	6 1	
PLACE OF RESIDENCE	Town/City Township Rural Area Mine Hostel	15 91 9 3 One did not indicate	119
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	South Africa	119	119
CITIZENSHIP	South African	119	119
SECONDARY EDUCATION ENTRY (SAME SCHOOL OR NOT)	Yes No	85 32 Two did not indicate	119
SECONDARY SCHOOL ENTRY LEVEL (GRADE)	Grade 8 Grade 9 Grade 10 Grade 11	7 6 12 7	119

TABLE 7.2. *The Biographical Details of the Learners*

Both tables 7.1 and 7.2 bespeak an educational scenario within an urban context. The schools are themselves located in the townships. Thirteen teachers reside in the townships whilst the remaining seven stay in the nearby towns. Fifteen learners dwell in towns whilst ninety-one of the learners live in the townships. Out of the remaining thirteen learners, nine are residents of the rural areas and three stay in the mine hostels, whilst one did not state his place of residence. The inference drawn from these figures is that a substantial number of learners should have some kind of exposure to the English language both in and out of the classroom. Through leisure activities which constitute urban culture, namely, television, radios, newspapers and magazines, cinemas and institutions such as libraries, access and exposure to English language should fairly be possible because these activities are mostly conducted through the medium of this language. Out of these activities, topical issues that would engage learners in using language critically in order to question the common sense assumptions that are linguistically mediated could emerge. The continual engagements in such issues should be initiated to tone up the learners' awareness of how language is used to constitute reality and humans. Such awareness should be manifested in their ESL programme.

Teachers in such a context should never be in short supply of activities to sharpen their learners' critical edge. They should be able to take advantage of the accessibility of media and institutions mentioned in the above paragraph for the benefit of ESL teaching and learning, thus emphasizing the fact that language teaching or learning is not merely about structure but is more about: How language is used daily to achieve innumerable goals; how aware language learners are of the processes involved; and what they do to challenge the ill-effects of the processes. The diverse linguistic and cultural catalogue of both the learners and the teachers should be an ideal breeding ground for a more *engaging* ESL programme. Further, one would expect that the eclectic cultural make-up of the ESL class in this context would be capitalized on to reflect the perpetual conflictual unity of the South African cultures and its effects on the learners' educational, socio-economic and political life, and to show how English language as a lingua franca, is used to facilitate this dynamism. Discernable from table 7.1, all the teachers who participated in this research are English majors with an emphasis on ESL teaching, regardless of the type of qualifications they have. A certain level of expertise would be expected of them to deal with the changing paradigms that affect ESL teaching practice, including the contemporary drive towards the adoption of a Critical Language Awareness programme. Beside ESL, eleven teachers teach subjects that allow learners to exercise their linguistics skills to appreciate, question, argue, probe, to ask the *why* about pertinent issues that affect their lives -- Art and Craft, History, Afrikaans and South Sotho.

Three teachers teach ESL only. Among the significant principles of the ESL programme is the selfsame quest of offering learners the platform to exercise their linguistic skills to deal with the challenges of life. Both the former teachers and the latter ones combined amount to thirteen teachers, thus suggesting that the teaching approaches of almost seventy one percent of the teachers converge on the quest just mentioned. It would therefore be expected that the teachers' teaching practice would reflect the benefit of this mutual quest. The above raised possibilities could

eventually be confirmed or disconfirmed in the sections subsequent to this one.

It should be noted that both the teachers and the learners' questionnaires and interviews responses are recorded verbatim in an attempt to maintain a sense of authenticity. The next section **(7.2)** presents and discusses the findings generated by section C of both appendices B and C.

7.2 ESL TEACHERS' AND LEARNERS' QUESTIONNAIRES

The points of convergence and divergence exhibited by both the teachers and the learners' questionnaires responses present an interesting mixed bag that epitomises the teaching practice of the context under investigation. Appendix G sums up the subsequence subsections in a tabular form.



7.2.1 OBJECTIVES OF ESL TEACHING AND LEARNING

(Question 11 of appendix C; question 12 of appendix B) ANNESBURG

Seventeen teachers believe that ESL is taught in order to develop the learners' communicative competence. Here are some of the comments which endorsed to this view:

- Help learners learn the language thereby reading and writing, communication: Self expression and fluency.*
- Help learners to master English. Help them with rules of using the language. They must be fluent talking the language. They must be able to express themselves properly. Enable learners to communicate effectively.*
- Help learners to understand and communicate properly.*
- To teach them how to write, read, speaking English. They must read for understanding.*
- Since English language is regarded as a universal language it is therefore necessary to teach ESL for communicative purpose for one not to be caught wanting when one goes to other countries.*
- To enable learners to communicate with the outside world, express themselves effectively.*

- For the learners to have command of the language.*

One teacher felt that ESL teaching and learning is aimed at:

Making learners critically aware of language use. Provide programmes for learners who want to be successful in reading, writing, speaking and listening to contemporary English. Help learners learn and enjoy English as they develop self confidence in communicating in English. Ensure how learners learn to be, independent and become responsible adults or citizen of this land.

The stark contrast between this teacher and the rest of the seventeen mentioned above is that for him critical awareness to language use is the key. The development of the four basic language skills is worked within the framework of critical language awareness. It is within this framework that the learners' autonomy could linguistically be enhanced. Out of this, responsible citizenry could be under a negotiated construction. This could mean that the potential to construct and deconstruct the subject position that learners are placed in, is created and recreated. The learners' awareness to language is not merely an awareness. It is, however, vivacious, effervescent, zestful and alive, hence critical. Inherent within this teacher's philosophy of ESL teaching is a shift away from the parochial tendency of transforming the learners into a mere communicative competent mass. Notably, the teacher ratio on the objectives of ESL teaching is seventeen to one. Apparently, the trend in this context is that the ESL programme is taught in order to develop the learners' communicative competence. Twenty seven learners confirmed this trend. As far as some of them were concerned ESL is important to them because:

- It is a bridge to communication.*
- You speak properly you get a job.*
- Most easy language, include everybody blacks and white.*
- Medium of instruction, university and technikon without it you go nowhere.*
- Good for my life site, can take you far. Linked to education. Key to life.*
- Want to see myself in parliament.*
- Its official language.*
- Not difficult.*

The remaining eighty-eight learners gave a wide range of reasons. The reasons are framed around four themes: Language identity; language choice; the teachers' ability to teach what the learners called English as a Foreign Language (EFL); and the learners' own ability to succeed in studying EFL. Of the eighty-eight, thirty-two learners raised questions that have to do with language identity. For them their mother tongue comes first and they are not prepared to replace it with English, let alone any language. The compromise that they are willing to make is to study ESL. After all:

- English is not my mother tongue.*
- I love my mother tongue.*
- I do not want to loose my mother tongue*

Behind this reasoning is an underlying fear that studying EFL would threaten the existence of their mother tongue. In order to maintain and sustain their mother tongue, the language they “love” dearly, studying EFL should never be an option. Twenty-five learners doubted their teacher’s ability to teach EFL and they therefore are happy to study ESL. Some of the comments they made are the following:

- English as a first language is difficult to teachers*
- Teachers are scared to teach english as a first language.*
- They are scared to teach higher grade classes*

However, fifteen learners pointed out that their schools offer English as a Second Language. They do not have any choice other than to accept what the schools offer. Sixteen learners opted for ESL because they think that EFL is difficult for them. Four did not respond. These learners might not have responded to the question appropriately, but they raise telling points. For them to conclude that their “teachers are scared to teach [English] as a first language” and that “[EFL] is difficult for the teachers”, the learners might have observed some element of weakness in their teachers. Based on the learners' observation, further doubt could still be cast on the teachers' awareness of

the objectives of the ESL programme. Over and above that, is the question of whether the teachers are able to locate the current operational paradigm and be in tune with the inveterate changes that affect it. The skepticism cuts deeper if further questions regarding these teachers' capability to infuse these changes within the ESL teaching programme are raised.

The crucial observations made in this subsection are threefold. First, ESL is taught purely to enable learners to communicate in English. Second, there is the potential for the development of Critical Language Awareness and the learners' communicative confidence. Third, and most important, Critical Language Awareness is not given adequate attention.

7.2.2 TEACHING METHODS AND APPROACHES

(Question 13 of appendix B)

Asked which teaching methods or approaches they use to realise what they believe to be the main objectives of teaching ESL, four teachers cited the Communication Approach as the ideal approach.

Seven felt that the Narrative method is the key to their success whilst three opted for the Question and Answer method. One teacher chose the Textbook method whilst another one preferred the Discussion method. Yet another one found what he call "Demonstration method" helpful. The last teacher did not have a specific method, instead used what he referred to as "Triangulation of methods". Clearly, the teaching practice of the majority of the teachers relies heavily on the Narrative method. The Communicative approach is second whilst the Question and Answer method is third. The other methods and approaches mentioned are placed fourth.

It is rather sad to learn that most of the teachers do not understand the fundamental framework of the teaching methods and approaches used in language teaching, let alone teaching in general.

Surely, teaching methods and approaches are the basic facilitatory mode that define teaching as a practice. All the teachers, practising or otherwise, should have an idea of the essence of each method and approach used in the teaching profession. Besides, these teachers' specialty as ESL trained teachers should be evidenced by the type of approaches they cited. Approaches such as Grammar-translation, Direct, Structural, Functional -notional, Audiolingual, Natural, Suggestopedia, Community Language Teaching, Total Physical Response and the Silent Way should be featuring in these teachers' choices. After all, they are exclusive to the field of language teaching. It is quite regrettable that these approaches were never mentioned. This might mean two things. One, these teachers are not aware of these approaches because they were not trained as ESL teachers, despite what they claimed in the questionnaires. Two, if indeed they are trained as ESL teachers, their training programme might not have considered the above approaches. Hence they broadly referred to general teaching methodologies such as Narrative, Question and Answer, Textbook, Demonstration and Discussion methods. Another subject of concern is that these teachers still talk of teaching method -- a concept that is no longer popular in the field of language learning and teaching. By its essence a method is narrow and one-dimensional as compared to the concept *approach*. The difference between the two concepts indicates the shifting paradigm within language learning and teaching -- the processes that ESL teachers are expected to be attuned to.

Method is seen as a rigid procedure and is favoured by the supporter of a specific view of language learning and teaching. An approach constitutes a more open-minded attitude to language learning and teaching ; an outlook that changes with circumstance surrounding the teaching process (Kilfoil and van der Walt:1997:9).

The inflexible and narrow teaching and learning conceptual framework set out by the term *method* has long been noted by both linguists and language teachers. Chief among its weakness is that the term implies that a specific method should be adopted independently and rigidly throughout a given lesson. Copying and borrowing some possible contributory elements from other methods is out of

the question. What it means is that a method that is credible starts and ends a lesson. The results have been that language learning and teaching was reduced to a mechanical routine that is meaningless and uninteresting. Rote learning in the form of substitution tables, for instance, characterised language learning and teaching. An average ESL teacher should at least have this background. Even the broad teaching methods the teachers mentioned are not clear to them. The following teachers state their reasons for choosing the Narrative method:

- ❑ *I use narrative method reason being it makes our learners to be actively involved in their learning situation. And at the same time the lesson become pupil-centred approach but not teacher-centred approach.*
- ❑ *I feel comfortable employing narrative method whereby learners are being offered an ample opportunity to express and raise views in as far as the lesson presented is concerned.*
- ❑ *I employ narrative method because it enables learners to hear the language spoken.*

It is rather difficult that the Narrative method could “make learners to be actively involved”. Neither will it ever “offer learners ample opportunity to express and raise their views”. Narrative method and Learner-centred approach are incompatible. As to how these teachers manage to achieve all the quoted objectives through this method remains a subject of wonder. The Narrative method refers to the lecture or the story telling method. The teacher narrates or lectures. The learners listen passively as the teacher narrates until the end of the lesson. Any form of active involvement, if ever, takes place beyond the allocated time of the lesson when they are expected to individually commit what has been narrated to memory.

Yet another interesting dimension is advanced by the teacher who thinks that the Narrative method guarantees communicative competence in that “... it enables learners to hear the language spoken”.

This teacher had the concept of naturalistic language acquisition in mind, thus confusing the Natural approach with the Narrative method. He might be of the opinion that as the learners listen to his lessons they are naturally picking the target language. Ultimately their communicative competence is enhanced. Unfortunately, this concept does not apply here. The classroom ambiance he implies is neither near a natural setting nor a simulated one. The target “language [the learners] hear spoken” is both artificial and superficial. It is neither a live nor a natural interaction between speakers through the medium of the target language. Whatever his learners pick up is very little.

Ostensibly, this teacher’s operational premise is that a focus on listening skill is the only key to develop the learners’ communicative competence. This is fallacious. No single skill could be developed in isolation. Language learning and teaching place a high premium on the interaction of all the seven basic language skills, namely, listening, speaking, reading and viewing, writing and thinking, and reasoning (Revised National Curriculum Statement Overview:2001:45). The continual interplay of all these skills signifies a distinctive feature of language learning and teaching. Phrased alternatively, language learning and teaching is centred around the development of all the seven skills mentioned.

Two points are clear, though: Individually the methods cited by the teachers do not offer the possibility for Critical Language Awareness -- critical reflection to language use -- the dominant method, Narrative, is a case in point, and the fact that the teachers do not know the fundamental essence of each method they cited further hinders the probability for the adoption of a CLA perspective.

7.2.3 HOW THE METHODS OR APPROACHES GUARANTEE THE ATTAINMENT OF THE OBJECTIVES

(Question 14 of appendix B)

When asked to select one of the methods or approaches they mentioned and then briefly explain how these help them to achieve the objectives they cited, three teachers gave alternative labels instead of sticking to their initial ones. The new labels are “dramatization”, “debate session”, and “general topics”. The fact that these additions fall snugly within the principle of Communicative approach is not a coincidence. These teachers had initially indicated that the Communicative approach is their preferred approach. They felt that these methods or approaches help them to achieve what they believe to be the main objective of teaching ESL. They elaborated:

- ❑ *Dramatization, I think the method works the best because if a learner is asked to go and read a piece that he is going to perform, they try by all means to read as they know, that it will be embarrassment in front of the class if you do not say anything concerning the story. One other thing is that learners remember more of what they have said and done than listening to someone only i.e by passive listening.*
- ❑ *Debate session, learners speaking skills improve a lot even those who were initially shy or could not speak publicly are now able to do so. The sentence construction improves. Learners speak the language outside and inside the classroom situation freely with confidence.*
- ❑ *General topics, topics affecting the community are discussed in the class whereby parts of the speech are corrected. Learners participate freely in the class*

The remaining three teachers who preferred the Communicative approach did not clearly indicate how this approach helps them. The vagueness of their response is summed up below:

- ❑ *It assist in achieving the above mentioned objectives.*
- ❑ *Participative method they become part of what we are doing in the class.*
- ❑ *The communicative helps because play a major role on the lesson and it becomes easy for them to answer on the lesson taught.*

There is a strong possibility that these teachers do not know what the Communicative approach entails. This approach could be a buzz word within their work environment, but they might have not taken the trouble to establish the fundamental theory and practice of the concept. The fact that they are unable to elaborate clearly is a cause for concern. There is a strong possibility that the teachers do not know how their teaching approaches help them to achieve the objectives of ESL teaching and learning they had cited earlier. Furthermore, it is not possible to link what the teachers are asked in

this section with the response “participative method, they become part of what we are doing in the class”. This teacher’s response is not relevant.

One teacher who opted for the Narrative method gave a response that is both vague and theoretically contradictory to the notion of Narrative method:

- ❑ *The approach that I selected and that I regard as crucial is pupil-centred because it helps me to make my lesson effective due to the fact that all pupils become involved.*

It has already been expostulated that the Narrative method can never be pupil-centred. The impression created here is that of transmission pedagogy. The teacher who valued the Discussion method enthused:

- ❑ *Discussion method set precedence for an educator in a way the lesson moves from known to unknown. From the input of the teacher with regards to the subject matter, an educator thereby determine real readiness of the learner, thus relate the abstract concepts of his/her lesson that include application. The learner will therefore have to substantiate knowledge of the situation the register suitable.*



This quote is difficult to read. It is not clear how this method “set[s] pre[c]edence] for the educator in the way the lesson moves from known to the unknown”. The kind of precedence referred to is equally unclear. The proposed link between this hazy precedence and the phrase “known to unknown”, is nebulous. Ascertaining “the real readiness of the learners” through the “input” derived from “the subject matter” brings yet another obfuscating dimension. What sort of readiness is determined and how could the subject matter possibly be established this readiness if not defined? It is undefined and non-existing. Without this, the teacher would be unable to carry out crucial tasks linked to his practice, chief among these being to “relate the abstract concept of his/her lesson including application”. Further questions arise: Does the teacher relate this abstract concept to the learners or to himself; if the learners are the target, for what “situation” are they expected to “substantiate their knowledge”; what register does the phrase “substantiate their knowledge of the

situation the register suitable” refer to; and above all, how do all these really help learners to express themselves better in English? The more these kinds of questions arise, the less intelligible this quote becomes. The key point is that the teacher does not understand what discussion entails. According to the teacher who selected the Question and Answer method, this method:

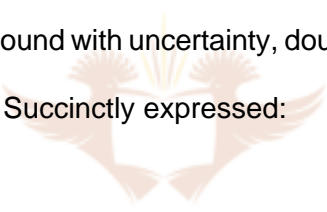
- ❑ *Helps in the sense that learners are not passive listeners. There is a two way communication. This helps because learners get involved and they are able to participate actively. It is impossible for one to learn a language without speaking it. It is important to speak during a lesson.*

Herein lies a valid point. The Question and Answer method encourages learners’ oral participation. To a considerable degree this method contributes towards the development of the learners’ communicative competence. But it would be unthinkable to believe that it could single-handedly be successfully adopted for the entire period of a lesson. On its own, it is unsustainable. As for the teacher who chose the Textbook method, this method is an embodiment of a lesson. Textbook provides a lesson with the contents to be taught to the learners. It is so central that the existence of a lesson is entirely reliant on it. The learners’ “understanding of the lesson” is at the mercy of the textbook. This centrality bequeaths teachers with a corresponding method, the Textbook method. In his own words the teacher contends:

- ❑ *Learners find it easy to understand when textbook are available. It helps us to facilitate the process of learning and teaching. So it helps learning and teaching to be easy. It also makes the discussion to be easy and fruitful. It enables learners to understand things they are being taught because they have textbook at their disposal. The discussion becomes easy and fruitful.*

The line of thought expressed by these quotes conjures up issues worthy for critical reflection. This teacher seems to unconsciously raise the concern that resources are so scanty that textbooks are

the only teaching material provided. However, underlying this concern is a figurative rearing finger pointing and accusing the selfsame teacher of complacency. Ostensibly, the teacher is content with the use of the textbook that the possibility of venturing into the new approaches is absolutely remote. He is not reflective enough to be either critical or suspicious of his own intellectual assumptions (Lawson: cited by Hassard and Parker:1993:12). The textbook provides him with a sense of certainty and security-- something that might not be guaranteed by alternative teaching approaches. The impression created by this practice is that learning is about certainty and that absolute truth is God-given, and is encoded in the textbook. Hence a text is endorsed as immutable and eternal. Inculcated in the young minds, this is a pernicious theory since it has within it the elements of rote learning. Learning is an exploration as is teaching. As with the text, the teacher initiates the learners into the process of exploration. He simultaneously initiates himself in this process as he teaches. Exploration is, therefore, bound with uncertainty, doubts and perpetual questions. Without these, exploration will never exist. Succinctly expressed:



We are creatures of this sort, and we are lost if we relinquish our orientation to the dry land. But we are not content to remain there. That is why our flutterings are so uncertain and perhaps so absurd to those who sit secure and content on the dry land, and are intelligible only to those who have been seized by the same unrest. For them the world is a point of departure for flight upon which everything depends, which each man must venture on his own though in common with other men, and which can never become the object of any doctrine (Jasper: Cited by Abbs:1979:90).

The teacher, quoted in this subsection, “relinquish[es his] orientation to the dry land”. To him learning, just like the “dry land”, is affixed, restful and complete. Any undertaking that doubts the completeness of the “dry land” is “absurd”, chaotic and therefore disruptive. It breeds instability, something that should be avoided at all costs. Instead of it being the “point of departure for flight upon which everything depends...”, learning is an end, final and conclusive. Such a conviction is imperceptible, considering the interactive nature of the learning and teaching process as concisely

proclaimed by Jasper (Cited by Abbs :1979) in the quote above.

Notably, the teacher's preoccupation with making "learning and teaching easy" through the use of textbooks simplifies ESL learning and teaching practice for the sake of convenience. Unfortunately this simplification heralds simplistic learning and teaching practice, the results of which defeat the very purpose of ESL teaching and learning. The teacher who believes that the Demonstration method is the ideal one to reach what he regards as the chief objective of teaching ESL, states the following:

- *When learners adopt this method where they communicate among themselves and with their teachers. This makes them to remember most of the things they have learnt.*

The main drawback inherent within this comment is that this method has an element of rote learning. Learners mimic response as the teacher demonstrates. It is probable that this mimicry could be a mechanical exercise that is done without understanding. The teacher who uses "triangulation of methods", now attempts to be specific:

- *But if I had to be specific; I use mostly the textbook and chalkboard methodology. However, I use chalkboard method mostly 'cause it enables one to gain the attention off the whole class to what I am referring as I put on the board. The chalkboard also allows me to mingle around freely on what I am teaching. I see how well or not well are the learners getting what I am saying. I am to erase and present difficult matters in another way till they get it.*

The mere reference of the term chalkboard as a methodology does not have a positive ring. It draws an image of a dry, heavy and one dimensional classroom scenario which is domineeringly escorted by the bouncing voice of the omniscient teacher punctuated by the incessant clock-ticking sound made by the chalk as he writes on the chalkboard. This is a typical "chalk and talk method". The authoritative ambience implied, suggests that the teacher is the only one speaking. He is never

questioned. The learners speak when commanded to do so by the teacher. Otherwise whatever question they have in their minds is answered by the notes written on the chalkboard. The image of the teacher “mingl[ing]... freely on what [he is] teaching” is tantamount to the promotion of the learners’ passivity. The teacher is never challenged. It does not strike this teacher’s mind that learners could contribute to the lesson. Little said by the learners could yield anything constructive to the lesson, so why allow them to spoil its flow . Once again, the teacher is so free to “mingle” and to “see how well or not well are [learners] getting what [he is] saying”.

The phrase: “... getting what I am saying” strengthens the point raised regarding the authoritative attitude of the teacher. Perhaps he is domineering purposefully, lest questions posed by the learners might expose his weakness. This is a convenient defensive mechanism, indeed. As the teacher “erase[s] and present[s] difficult matters in another way till they get it”, he implicitly involves the learners in a rote learning exercise. Of note is the ultimatum in : “... till they get it”, that presupposes a sense of force -- a deliberate mechanical act. The question of engaging the learners in an attempt to rationalise whatever is taught to them, so as to arrive at an understanding appears, to be out of question. The teachers’ comments in this subsection show that they do not know the essence of the language teaching approaches and methodologies. The other point is that the teaching practice adopted by these teachers encourages rote learning -- a practice that contradicts the principle of Critical Language Awareness. Therefore CLA does not feature here.

7.2.4 PRESCRIBED ESL BOOKS AND OTHER LEARNING RESOURCES

(Question 15 of appendix B; question 12 of appendix C)

There are a number of ESL books used in the schools under investigation. ***Animal Farm***, ***Winners***, ***Encounters*** and ***Appreciating Poetry*** are the only literature texts read by grade eleven ESL learners at these schools, among the list of twelve prescribed by the Free State Education Department. Each school uses one or two of the following texts for language study: ***Advance with***

English; English Made Easy; Language Communication; Understanding English; A-Z of Grammar; English for Secondary Schools; Book of English; Active English; Student Companion; Informal English; English Dictionaries; and *Let's Use English*. Besides these texts, teachers provide learners with extra language study materials. Among these are newspapers, magazines, previous years' ESL matric question papers, "**English Grammar Study Manuals**" and "**Contextual English exercises**". This is as impressive a catalogue of language resources that any ESL teacher could hope for. The books themselves are replete with invaluable information and exercises useful for both teachers and learners.

The object of this subsection is to analyse only two of these books, namely, **Advance with English** and **Let's Use English**, and to ascertain whether they either advance or at least provide the platform for the possible introduction of Critical Language Awareness perspective in ESL classes. The two books are the most used ESL texts in these schools. The conviction of the present researcher is that although these texts promote a critical reflection of language use, CLA, they are not used accordingly. It is important to examine how this conclusion was arrived at and these are the findings:

Each of these texts forms part of a comprehensive ESL course for secondary school education. Their course components consist of a package for each secondary school grade or standard. **Advance with English**, for instance, is a course that ranges from standard six to ten whilst **Let's Use English** ranges from grade seven to grade ten. The former is based on the following accredited principles that marked its publication and entrance to the ESL learning and teaching industry as a revolution:

- no "formal" grammar, in the sense of grammatical explanation for its own sake;*
- systematic attention to those grammatical peculiarities of English (tense*

- usage, articles, etc.) that cause practical difficulties to speakers of African languages;*
- ❑ *a “cognitive” approach whereby each point is exemplified and explained in simple terms and then practised meaningfully, rather than through mechanical drills (although these too have their place);*
 - ❑ *a “communicative” approach whereby the language is used for genuine communication between pupils and teachers, or between pupils and pupils, and not just as artificial exercise;*
 - ❑ *training in both phonemic and intonational distinctions, once again concentrating on well known African areas of difficulty (Cobb, Mawasha and Gilfillan:1987a:IV).*

It consists of sixteen units. Each quarter of the South African school calendar is allocated four units.

An attempt has been made to ensure that the activities set out in the text are closely integrated in order to reinforce each other. The aspects identified for each unit are presented, practised, tested and revised in an organised fashion to ensure that learners could pick up knowledge step by step.

Revision is systematically structured along the framework of continuous evaluation. Each unit has a review session (Cob, Mawasha and Gilfillan:1987). The learners' interest is kept alive through group work or pair activities. Here, learners engage each other orally among their peer group.

The comprehension extracts chosen are adapted to accommodate the learners' reading taste. The pictorial illustrations accompanying the extracts bring in the needed visual impetus meant to attract the learners' attention. Furthermore, these illustrations are functional in that they visually reinforce a structure or lexical item (Cob, Mawasha and Gilfillan (1987:IV). They are also used as basis for oral and written work. Most importantly, each book is accompanied by a teacher's guide and cassette tape. The former suggests suitable teaching approaches, as well as giving answers to exercises contained in the main text. The latter is the recording of eight extracts that are meant for listening comprehension exercises and what is referred to as “ear training”-- pronunciation, stress and intonation (Cob, Mawasha and Gilfillan:1987:IV). The text, ***Let's Use English***, on the other hand, adds a contemporary feel to ESL classroom. Its operational paradigm is in keeping with the current South African National Curriculum Guidelines. The text clearly sets out its intended outcomes. The

outcomes are meant to enable learners to:

- use English for interpersonal communication;*
- use English to access and process information;*
- respond to and use English creatively;*
- demonstrate an ability to use the conventions of English;*
- demonstrate critical awareness to language use;*
- become autonomous learners (Ellis and Robinson:1997:VI-VII).*

Its integrated Communicative approach focuses on: listening; speaking; reading; writing; thinking; language study; and study skills. With the help of the activities included in the text, learners are taught to think for themselves, communicate fluently and to develop reading and study skills. Similar to ***Advance with English***, this text allotted units to each quarter of the South African school calendar. Unlike ***Advance with English***, each quarter is allocated three units. In total the book has twelve units.

The structure of each unit consists of the following sections: Listen with a purpose; improve your reading; role play; improve your writing; grammarland; make it yourself or puzzle corner; and word lists (Ellis and Robinson:1997:VII). The first section, listening with a purpose, is provided with extracts to be read or recorded and played to learners. This ensures that learners are able to carry out the task given. The section labelled "improve your reading" consists of an extract that is accompanied by pictorial illustrations. These illustrations are divided into segments. Each segment depicts different scenarios, themes or sub-themes addressed, in chronological order, by the extract. The learners read the extract in conjunction with the pictures. This enhances comprehension. Role play is catered for by engaging learners in dialogue, interviews and learner(s) to learners address. The learner(s) to learners address is an exercise that tasks learners to individually address the class about an issue of his (or their) choice. The class is expected to determine the conviction of the argument through oral questions. The section that focuses on improving the learners' writing requires learners to label pictures, study pictures or diagrams and write what all these signify, write

essays and give their opinions, and write argumentative pieces. Grammarland is a section that caters for the learners' grammatical awareness. Teaching of grammar aspects is couched within a real life communicative scenario. For instance, learners are asked to study the different ways of talking about the future tenses and then requested to complete some sentences (Ellis and Robinson:1997:42). The task in question is as follows:

Think about this situation: There has been drought. The villagers have gone to see the Sangoma to ask him to bring rain. What do you think will happen ? (Ellis and Robinson:1997:42)

As the learners deliberate, in pairs, on what the Sangoma would do, they are unconsciously engaged in future tenses. Observe that an element of naturalistic language learning is at work here. Such an approach offsets any form of mechanical rote learning. The puzzle corner engages learners in critical reflection. The learners are expected to use language critically to analyse an advertisement or CD cover, for instance. They are, for instance, also tasked to draft an advertisement or design a CD cover and then explain why they think it would sell. The last section, word list, is a glossary. This is where selected vocabulary in each unit is recorded. The meaning is explained for the learners. Teachers are urged to ask the learners to revise the word list as homework, especially after the completion of each unit (Ellis and Robinson:1997:X). This is done to enrich the learners' vocabulary capacity. Notably, Critical Language Awareness, the subject of this study, is also mentioned as one of the outcomes of the course **Let's Use English** hopes to help learners to achieve. The common intent of both this study and the course **Let's Use English** is concisely captured in:

A critical awareness of language: The pupils will have an understanding of how English can be used manipulatively to create or reinforce socio-political structures. They [the pupils] will be able to recognise how the choice of language positions a listener/reader and they have developed strategies for challenging such uses of English (Ellis and Robinson:1997:VI).

Undoubtedly the course offers a strong base for Critical Language Awareness perspective in an ESL classroom. The teachers do not have an excuse for ignoring CLA. In fact, the onus is on them to actualise this perspective in their language class. The emphatic statement made by the authors of ***Let's Use English*** is that the teaching and learning of English does not mean the replacement of the pupil's home language, but should instead strengthen the development of a multilingual South Africa (Ellis and Robinson:1997:VII).

Even though all the schools, except one, that were involved in this research have electricity, and considering the confirmations made by the teachers in these schools that their English departments do have electronic teaching aids such as audio cassette, cassette player, video tape, and video tape player, none of the teachers mentioned anything about these in this section. The implication is that these teaching aids are not utilized at all. One could only imagine the interesting dimension a CLA perspective could have brought to the ESL programme, if these aids were used. Some of the ESL courses or textbooks oblige teachers to use a cassette player and other related resources. ***Advance with English***, for instance, spells out that the book should be used in conjunction with the accompanying cassette. By ignoring these cassettes, both the learners and teachers are missing a lot. In the case of the course just cited, these comprehension passages are recorded so that they could be used in developing the learners' listening skills. As to how the teachers deal with this is open to question. In addition, all of the teachers involved in this research confessed that they were not aware of any teachers' guide accompanying the texts that they use. This implies that they did not read the preface of their learners' textbooks -- in which the information about the whole course is outlined. The fact that invaluable suggested guidelines, provided by the author of these texts, on how to best use the texts is left to waste, suggests that these texts are inappropriately used. Out of this tendency develops the accompanying unsubstantiated and flawed conviction that these texts are uninteresting, irrelevant and therefore useless. Such a conviction is best summed up by this teacher's comments:

- ❑ *Book of English and Successful English are not helpful at all. **English the Active** way is very useful because it has everything the teacher wants to the learners to learn more especially Language in Action.*

This is a conspicuously superficial statement to make. There is no way that these texts could be hopelessly useless. In fact, the two texts have as much information and “language in action exercises” as the **English the Active Way**. It is common sense that no text could sensibly claim to have “everything” that should be taught. A text is itself finite. As a complete course, **Let’s Use English**, for instance, has the capacity to incorporate what the curriculum or course designers desire. Even then it will require some supplementary activities. The analysis of the two courses, **Advance with English** and **Let’s Use English**, shows that these courses are not only useful resources that incorporate elements of critical reflection on language use, but also offer great possibilities for the advancement of a Critical Language Awareness perspective within ESL teaching and learning. The latter course declares in its preface, and it is shown throughout both the teachers and the learners’ copies, that Critical Language Awareness is among the key components of ESL learning and teaching.

7.2.5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ESL PRESCRIBED BOOKS AND OTHER LEARNING RESOURCES

(Question 16 of appendix B)

Eighteen teachers found the texts and the study guides they mentioned quite helpful. Two teachers did not respond to this question as they only responded to the biographical section of the questionnaire. Of the eighteen teachers fifteen felt that their ESL texts and study guide were effective, and did not indicate just how effective these were. There is strong a possibility that these teachers do not know how effective these resources are. The remaining three teachers attempted to show how effective these resources are:

- ❑ ***Advance with English** has more language study based on the comprehensive passages. Understanding each helps learners to read with understanding because it has more passages based on reality.*
- ❑ ***Advance with English** helps with the comprehension. The others helps us with grammar.*
- ❑ *Very helpful as they provide a lot of explanatory notes and examples together with the exercise. They are helpful in the sense that what the educator want to teaching learners are available to see for themselves and they also serve as reference. The teacher also does not have to waste time by writing everything on the chalkboard.*

These comments are misleading. **Advance with English** is a more balanced course that does not overemphasize “language study”. Neither could any one claim that the importance of this text could be limited to “comprehensions” passages only. The “other” texts referred to in the above quotes have comprehension passages as well as other language study activities. They are not merely “grammar books”. The teachers’ perception of the usefulness of these texts is parochial, indeed. What they regard as useful in these texts is not clearly linked to the objectives of teaching ESL. Neither does it refer to the effectiveness of these texts with regard to the development of Critical Language Awareness perspective within the ESL class learners. Equally unclear is how these texts could be located within the paradigm outlined by the current South African curriculum, and how they contribute towards the ever shifting paradigms. **Section 7.2.4** has showed the effectiveness of these texts in the development of CLA perspective. It is likely that they do not read either their ESL learners’ prescribed texts, nor at least the preface of the these texts, or the accompanying teachers guides, otherwise they could have noted the important contribution these texts have made in the advancement of CLA. The other strong possibility is that the teachers are aware of the emphasis these texts place on a CLA perspective but they find it difficult to introduce it in their ESL classes. Consequently, they avoid it.

7.2.6 THE TYPES AND CONTENTS OF ESL EXERCISES

(Question 17 of appendix B; question 13 appendix C)

A considerable convergence is observable from the learners and teachers’ comments on the

question regarding the types and contents of the language exercise that typifies the ESL programme of the context under investigation. Although four categories are observable from their list, namely, grammar, creative writing, literature and oral work, there are other aspects raised that defy categorisation. These are grouped together under the name **EXCEPTIONS TO THE CATEGORY**, in subsection 7.2.7.5 below. The structure adopted in categorising the data below emerged from the very essence of the data presented. An alternative structure could have been difficult if not impossible to design. Some instances of divergence reflect the different educational levels of the learners and the teacher. For instance, the level of sophistication regarding phrasing, labelling and categorisation of the aspects of the ESL programme distinguished teachers from the learners. Although visible, the gap indicating the different levels of sophistication is not too big.

7.2.6.1 GRAMMAR

The following usual language aspects were mentioned:

LEARNERS:

Parts of speech; tenses; passive and active voices; direct and indirect speech; synonyms and antonyms, correct forms, and singular and plural.

TEACHERS:

Reported speech; vocabulary; homophones; adverbs; adjectives; pronouns, conjunctions; part of speech; comprehension passage; and formal and informal language.

7.2.6.2 CREATIVE WRITING

LEARNERS:

Creative writing; diary writing, describe cartoons

TEACHERS:

Original and creative writing; writing skills; and composition.

7.2.6.3 LITERATURE

LEARNERS:

Novel Animal farm, the teacher read it for us explain difficult words, teachers gives notes and summary.

TEACHERS:

Literature.

7.2.6.4 ORAL WORK

LEARNERS:

Sometimes debate on topics to challenge each other. Prepared and unprepared speeches.

TEACHERS:

Oral topics; and the development of speaking skills.

7.2.6.5 EXCEPTIONS TO THE CATEGORIES

LEARNERS:

*Teacher explain to us and gives homework and we repeat that for many times;
Teacher takes 25 minutes, gave classwork to write.
Teacher teach us in Sotho for the whole 45 minutes.*

TEACHERS:

*Listening to a story that entail historical and social background.
I can ask them to recall details.*

7.2.6.6 REFLECTION

The data presented in the sections on grammar (7.2.6.1), literature (7.2.6.3) and exceptions to the category (7.2.6.5) exhibit a deep-rooted transmission language pedagogy. The concomitant teacher-centred approach implies that a language aspect, homophone for instance, is defined and explained in detail to the class until the end of the period. What it means is that the learners spent their class sessions listening to the teachers' explanation and taking volumes of notes. Granted, ESL teachers are, at times, obliged to do some detailed explanation in order to facilitate understanding. But the moment it becomes a pattern adopted for the entire ESL teaching session, it contradicts the basic principle of language teaching. The point is that the learners could be well equipped with the

information for passing written or other formal evaluation but be unable to use it in a real life situation.

The data recorded in subsections **7.2.6.2** (Creative writing) and **7.2.6.4** (Oral work) exhibit a great potential for an interactive ESL programme. It is encouraging to note that learners are given exercises in which they are expected to “describe cartoons” in writing. Such activities could be used to place learners on the threshold of critical reflection. The target language could serve as the necessary medium that enables them to cross the threshold as they interactively locate their position within the socio-cultural labyrinth. If it was not for the fact that “debate on topics to challenge each” is done “sometimes”, this state of being a potential or a possibility could be transformed into an actuality.

Although the deep-rooted transmission pedagogy dominates, as expressed by the sections **7.2.6.1**. (Grammar), **7.2.6.3**. (Literature) and **7.2.6.5**. (Exceptions to the category), the latent interactive language programme alluded by the subsection **7.2.6.2**. (Creative writing) and (Oral work) presupposes the crucial potential elements of the CLA perspective. The integrative essence espoused has the potential to enliven this perspective. There is, however, no strong evidence that these potential elements are ignited sufficiently to be transformed into the actual CLA perspective.

7.2.7 TYPICAL ESL LESSONS BASED ON THE ACTIVITIES CITED

(Question **18** of appendix **B**; question **15** of appendix **C**)

Asked to select one of the language exercises they mentioned, and to briefly explain how this exercise ensures what they regard as a successful ESL teaching, six teachers did not respond at all. Fourteen teachers responded, though. Out of this number, ten merely mentioned the activities. The remaining four mentioned the activities and showed how they facilitated lessons through these activities. Although they did not indicate how these activities ensured what in their opinion could be

regarded as successful ESL teaching, their response gives some hints to this. Such responses are epitomised by the following three quotes:

- ❑ *Choosing correct verbs from those given in brackets. This gives the educator an ample time to see as to whether what the educator has taught is understood or not and this enables the educator to drill whatever was not understood.*
- ❑ *Direct and indirect speech as observed in a dialogue will be noted whereby learners will be asked to assume of a situation of someone seeking direction to particular destination and the other one is well conversant of such a destination providing information. The learner will justify their command of language and better can they be able to express themselves.*
- ❑ *Tenses: simple present tense. Giving the sample sentences. I start explaining the tense and its need for us. I start with present and give as many examples as possible afterwards I then giving me examples are already in the correct present tense. that they can do easy thereafter and can then see that the lesson of the day has been successfully. I do with the other simple tenses i.e past future, which also can easily do.*

The first quote is unequivocal -- that is it exclusively focuses on drills. The exercise is equally poignant. Learners merely choose a correct “verb from those given in brackets”. The choices, done rationally or through guess work, go through the next step punctuated by the same phenomenon, namely, drill. The question of understanding is not the issue here. The teacher is always alert of any opportunity that could give him “ample time” to engage learners in drill exercises. This teacher contradicts himself. He is the very same teacher who unreservedly stated that ESL is taught to help learners to communicate effectively and that the Communicative approach is his preferred teaching approach. Involving learners in drills does not enhance their communicative skills. Neither can it be credible to associate drills with the Communicative approach.

Although the second quote is consistent with the teacher’s personal philosophy regarding ESL teaching and learning, that is enabling learners to express themselves in the target language, it is

not clear how direct and indirect speech could be “observed in [a] dialogue”, and the three be used simultaneously to facilitate the development of speaking skills. The confusion is further exacerbated by the teacher’s convoluted expression. The same applies to the third quote. However, what could be discerned in these quotes is a typical teacher-centred approach. The teacher “gives sample sentences“ and “explains the tense to the learner”. He gives them “as many examples as possible” -- of sentences “already in the present tense”. If the learners are able to generate sentences in the same tense examples, then the lesson is regarded as “successful”. The Critical Language Awareness perspective does not feature anywhere in this scenario.

These learners were taught present tenses before. Countless “explanations” could have probably been made in the junior classes. This teacher should be in a position to sense this. It, however, does not strike his mind that an alternative approach is needed to address the learners’ problem with tense. The severity of this concern is that the approach adopted by this teacher is not limited to present tense only. He does the same to “other simple tenses; past future”. Although these “other simple tenses; past future” suggest a sense of the teacher’s universal teaching practice, it is of concern to note that the teacher himself has some problems distinguishing tenses. Such language problems could be the reason why a CLA perspective would be difficult for him to implement. Eighty-three learners who participated in this research exhibited similar profound tendencies towards a teacher-centred approach. Some of them expounded:

- ❑ *Tenses: first he will tell us or mention the topic of the day may be we are doing future tense. He will stand in front of us and say my children everything has rules. In order to know something must firstly determine the rules. What it is important in the future tense is rules. When you use will “will” in your sentence bear in mind that will is the matter of must and when is you use shall remember that shall is optional, then the lesson will be easy for us to understand.*

- ❑ *To write letters and comprehension: firstly he started with address how to write adres and what should put it, and come to the solutions after that he*

came to the body of the letter and also know who you write to, what you want to say to the person you write, after body of the letter catering's how to great an letter understand and be sure is perfect.

- ❑ *Reported speech: when my teacher enter the classroom he told us we are going to talk about reported speech. Firstly asked us what is the meaning of the word report. Then we give him the answer. Then he wrote some of the sentences on the chalkboard. After he wrote then we change them in a reported speech but we do it oral not indivedal. After doing all this things saw that we understand he gave us classwork that everyone understand.*

Thirty-five learners merely mentioned the activities, whilst one learner did not respond. All in all both the teachers and learners confirm the fact that Critical Language Awareness is not incorporated in their ESL lessons and activities. The main preoccupation here is the teacher-centred approach and transmission pedagogy.

7.2.8 THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE ESL ACTIVITIES TOWARDS THE REALIZATION OF THE AIMS OF STUDYING ESL

(Question 14 of appendix C)

Asked how the classroom language activities help them to realize what they have mentioned as the main aim of studying ESL, the learners gave various responses. Sixty-three learners felt that the classroom activities they cited do contribute towards the achievement of the aims of studying ESL. Out of these, eight learners did not show how these activities contributed. The remaining fifty-five merely indicated what the learning activities and lessons helped to achieve, but they did not show how these were achieved. These are some of the comments made by the learners:

- ❑ *I think it does sometimes help incase of relating with others society and show me where to use verbs and nouns during my communication like in our classroom we make some sort of debate on that thing he have taught us and we don't actually understand what he is saying.*
- ❑ *It does help me a lot because, you can never learn how to write and speak without knowing the rules. The rules are most important part of english. If I follow the rules as a noun goes with object and the verb. What happens is that I think those types are more helpful on speaking. I can communicate*

with whoever I want and I can go countries by know it.

- ❑ *According to the way that I've been involved in English, I differentiate many things that I was not capable of doing and I see the difference. The reason is why I say that is that, it is because I don't mix my tenses and I don't speak English unfluently.*

These three learners are able to relate their knowledge of “parts of speech” and other grammatical aspects with the everyday language use. The knowledge of how to use nouns and verbs, for instance, facilitates better “communication [especially when] relating to other societies”. The “sort of debates...” that the learners are engaged in, could be the source behind their eloquence. These engagements are again proven to be significant in ESL learning and teaching. Inherent within these learners' response is a strong potential for critical reflection, and better still an indication of critical language use in action. On the other hand, fifty-three learners believed that the success rate of their classroom activities with regard to the attainment of the objectives of ESL study is minimal. Two learners indicated that their classroom activities do not contribute towards the attainment of the objective of ESL study. One learner did not respond. The following are some of comments made by the learners who asserted that their language activities were not helpful:

- ❑ *It does not help me because nowadays we must know English but instead of knowing it I'm in the middle, I am not there. I think if it is English period we must feel it that this classroom is English class. For e.g If it is English we speak Sotho but it is English period. The tense we as learners we must gasing we don't know yet. If I do not know English well now in grade 11, in grade 12 I'm going to suffer. I think if the whole school was speaking English will know English well.*
- ❑ *They help me to know the words of English not speak it. We never get to speak English in a class unless we ask a question. They are not really helping.*
- ❑ *It doesn't help because my teacher doesn't teach us how to speak in the classroom, like debating and also he doesn't attend school like other teachers and sometimes we don't even know why he doesn't so this makes feel like I am learning English on my own. Is like I do not have an English teacher, so I*

decided to go on studying the magazines and reading newspapers like “scamto ground brake”.

It should be noted that these learners do not merely question the efficacy of their ESL activities. They also suggest alternative measures that could better their situation. They rightly argue that any language activity that “never gets [them] to speak English in class” does not help them to “know how to speak English”. Instead, it helps them to “know the words of English”. Their motivation to know English is further destroyed by the fact that their ESL period does not feel like one because they “speak Sotho [even though] it is English period”. These learners wonder whether they will ever be good enough for grade twelve. The fact that some ESL teachers do not attend classes aggravates the problems.

The learners struggle with “tense” because the teacher do not attend their ESL class, hence they feel “like learning English on their own”. Against all odds, they study English on their own, and they know the sources that could assist: magazines; newspapers; and TV programmes such as “Scamto Ground Breakers”. They also suggest that constant debating sessions, and an introduction of the system where English is the only language spoken during the school session, could help to improve their English proficiency. It is a unfortunate that ESL teachers would leave such enthusiasm to be wasted. The element of self-reliance and the sense of autonomy displayed by these learners are fertile ground upon which an ESL programme that incorporates CLA could be enhanced. The following quotes do not clearly show how the ESL language activities contribute towards the attainment of the objectives of studying ESL. They do, however, raise important points relevant to the theme of this chapter:

- *The activities help my because todas are no English bether. Not to saying are to English are traying to spek english all the time will my classmate in the san action language. English have me respect my self and mast a lowwast be happy teaching me wat a must SApost to do. English thel me wat are may doing won are finishing at school.*

- ❑ *Well my view is that my classroom language is more easily become it a life my home language. If someone explains to you using your home language is more easy become he/she tells the language which one of us understood so I ask rely on my classroom language every much more easy but third we last. I understand but it copies must lay our gain makes likes the everytime don't improve this school English hers say out a 100% it is 5% and the to on.*
- ❑ *I think is English is present and past tense.*

At least the learner is aware that language learning is the process that requires constant practice, with “classmate”, for a start. He is also aware of what English could do to build up his self “respect” and to advance his future. Such an awareness signals the learner’s attempt to venture beyond the threshold of critical reflection mentioned in the preceding subsection -- a potential basis upon which ESL teachers could capitalize to introduce an CLA perspective. The authenticity of the statistic given by the student in the second quote might be unsubstantiated, but the fact the he feels that his school’s English proficiency could be rated at five percent due to this practice cannot be ignored. Further telling points are raised by the fact that a learner could perceive “English [as] present and past tense”. This learner’s ESL lessons is characterized by a chronic rehearsal of tenses so much so that her conception of an ESL programme is nothing else. Subjecting this learner to such a gross misrepresentation of ESL programme does not help her to “speak English as much as she can”. Her other aim, “being able to go anywhere in the world” due to her proficiency in English”, will remain a dream for ever. The strong possibility that these tenses could be taught in South Sotho, does not help the situation either. The fundamental structural difference between the English and the South Sotho system of tenses is bound to cause confusion for learners. Further complication is envisaged, considering the fact that translation of the English syntactic rules into South Sotho would require a considerable level of expertise -- something that the teachers in the context under investigation do not display. It should, however, be noted that the present researcher does not hold the view that code switching should be completely barred from an ESL class. Code-switching is one of the necessary devices that are crucial in facilitating language learning and teaching. What is

strongly opposed, though, is the perennial abuse of this invaluable phenomenon.

The lessons or activities presented by the teachers and learners in this subsection are not geared for the development of the learners' communicative competence as claimed by the majority of teachers (seventeen) and learners (twenty-seven). Further, there is hardly any evidence that the CLA perspective is part of the language learning and teaching practice.

7.2.9 THE LEARNERS' RESPONSE TO ESL PROGRAMME

(Question 19 and 20 of appendix B; question 16 and 17 of appendix C)

Fifteen teachers are of the opinion that their learners' response to their ESL teaching practice is positive. These are some of the comments made in this regard:

- ❑ *They respond positively as they are eager to learn. It arouse interest on learners so as to improve and express themselves in English.*
- ❑ *They respond positively, but at times they turn to have an attitude finding it difficult to express themselves in a different language. They sometimes prefer to keep quite than expressing themselves in a different language. Sometimes one gets positive response especially having explained the importance of knowing more than one language.*
- ❑ *Positive, they are prepared to learn, but I experience problem when coming to writing essay, they can't express themselves on the paper.*

The sense of positivity expressed by the above quotes is contradictory. It has already been noted that the adoption of a teacher-centred and top-down approach in an ESL class does not offer learners opportunity to express themselves. Instead, it is the teacher who has the leverage to speak throughout the lesson. Despite the learners' eagerness, there is no chance that they would ever create the opportunity to sufficiently exercise their English speaking skills. This is hardly a positive scenario. Equally negative is the fact that the learners often "prefer to keep quiet" rather than express themselves in the target language. They find it difficult to express themselves orally or even in a written form. It is unfortunate that the learners' lack of knowledge and acquiescence is

mistaken for a positive response. Statistically, there is still an element of inconsistency with regard to the teachers' conception of positivity and the reasons behind the learners positive response. Of the seventeen teachers three merely stated that the learners' responses were positive. Two did not respond, whilst twelve gave reasons that suggested the opposite of the positive scenario they had suggested earlier. Some of the comments are the following:

- ❑ *Shortage of learning material. The school library is not functioning as there are no learning materials. Educators offering content subjects often explain in Sesotho i.e first language. They cannot explore information outside the school situation.*
- ❑ *They hardly know my style know my style of teaching and they are not relevant due to the fact that they feel that some of basics are not laid in the low grades. The bottom line is teachers are not doing enough whereas at the ultimate and whereas is responsible for grade 12 gets little credits and is confronted with the responsibility to give account on high rate of failure.*
- ❑ *They have this attitude because they concentrate only in technical subjects.*

Despite one learner's failure to respond, one-hundred -and-eighteen learners, in some ways, validated their teachers' stance that the ESL teaching and learning practice adopted in their classes was positively received. As far as they were concerned their current ESL programme was quite helpful. The responses were merely labelled positive without substantiation. Nothing could be found from both the teachers and learners, under this subsection, that suggests that the positive scene they alluded to had anything to do with Critical Language Awareness perspective being part of their current ESL learning and teaching.

7.2.10 THE LEARNERS' PARTICIPATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY

(Question 21 of appendix B; question 18 of appendix C)

There is a general consensus among learners and teachers that the ESL programme and practice they adopted in their classes play a role in terms of the learners' current and future participation and contribution to the society as individual learners, scholars and responsible citizens. Twelve

teachers and seventy-seven learners stated that the ESL programme and teaching practice enable the learners to communicate with and within the society. Out of the seventy-seven learners, forty-eight did not indicate how their ESL helped them to participate and contribute to society. However, twenty-nine attempted. The following represents the teachers' overall feeling in this regard:

- ❑ *Learners will be able to fit well in the society and work related situations. They are exposed to various exercises such as how to write CV, dairies, minutes of the meeting. These skills will help them when they join the world outside.*
- ❑ *A fluent, easily speaking person has a wide platform of expression such a person is confident his/her views everywhere. Having broken the language barriers you have opened door to any individual. Thus I have seen it and believe that my teaching program makes my learners contributing, responsible and needed member of the society.*

The first quote clearly indicates the exercises or language aspects that learners use for their benefits in and after school: "CV, dairies; minutes of the meeting". Mastery of these also ensures that they pass their examination too. What the quote is unable to show is how the learner's knowledge of these benefits the society. It should, however, be clarified from the onset that adjusting within the society and work environment is not necessarily bad. However, the image conjured by the phrase: "fit well in the society and work related situations", is salted with a pinch of deterministic intent. Nothing is said beyond merely fitting within the given convention. The question of the learners' ability to critically use language in order to remodel and refine the societal paradigms and conventions is never a consideration. Perhaps these are regarded as not contributing to society. The impression created is that the learners' critical reflection is curtailed, monitored to fit within the crucible until it solidifies as dictated. Individuality is crushed for the sake of the crowd -- the general good. Language is portrayed as a mechanical tool to control humanity's attempt to individually explore the multicoloured spiral of the world. An inferiority complex is bred, oscillated and internalized within the learners' conscience. Consequently, their creativity is benumbed to a point where they do not regard themselves as participants in the exploratory quest of making meaning

about the world. Theirs is merely to know how to draft “CV, diaries, minutes of a meeting”. They are also expected to be content with the language used to do these tasks. The possible linguistic gaps and ideological manipulations inherent within these forms of writing are not for them to mess around with.

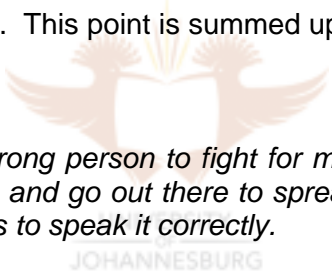
In the second quote the teacher believes that his ESL programme and teaching practice “make” his learners contribute to the society as responsible citizens and “needed members”. Strangely enough, this teacher is unable to give at least a single piece of evidence to support his claim. It could be safely argued that he probably does not know whether his teaching practice and programme is contributory to the society. It is, however, encouraging to note that he is aware that the confidence of a prospective “fluent” speaker, or any language learners for that matter, is built by the constant creation of a “platform” for oral exchange. This platform, he contends, breaks “the language barriers” and thus “[opens] door for individuals” -- perhaps to participate and contribute meaningfully to the critical debate for the advancement of society. Ironically, the teacher-centred approach suggested earlier by this teacher contradicts the noble claims he suggests here. As just mentioned, his claims are baseless since he is unable to provide supporting evidence.

The comments made by the twenty-nine learners corroborated the teachers’ claim that the ESL teaching practice and programme helped them to communicate. Unlike the teachers, the learners presented tangible ways to substantiate their claim. Among these are the following:

- ❑ *I am a life skill educator in love life youth centre. I teach the youth about things that are happening in their life, and I’m teaching them in English. I know that I’m not perfect but I try.*
- ❑ *Sometimes there are terms which my neighbours need to know and don’t have dictionaries so its easy for me to tell them the meaning. Old parents sometimes get letters from the manicipality and other instituetes. They can’t read so I find it easy to help them and even translate to them what has been written or what the white man is saying to them.*

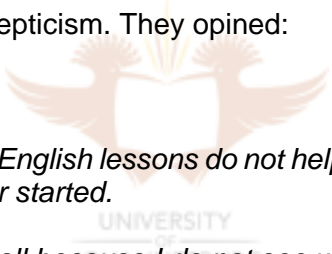
- ❑ *It has been helpful and I am happy about that. All I can say is that I was afraid to speak English in the society doesn't mean I was afraid actually I did know how to speak it. Now I know and I have been very helpful to the society because I can stand there and translate in English you are saying.*

The learners are utilizing their basic ESL skills to help “teach” at the youth centres, and to read and translate for the aged who are unable to read letters written in English. Effort for an engagement in critical debates around issues affecting the society through the medium of English is not yet a priority. Instead, the focus appears to be on basic language skills, as in reading and translating for the community. This is how far their ESL teaching practice and programme can take the learners. However, latent within these learners’ efforts, teaching in youth centres for instance, is a wealth of opportunities that could be tapped for the introduction of a Critical Language Awareness perspective. Twenty-nine learners who felt that their ESL programme and practice helped them to “fight for their right”, alluded to these opportunities. This point is summed up by the following quotes:

- 
- ❑ *It has made me a strong person to fight for my rights and other who can't stand for themselves and go out there to spread the importance of English even teach teenagers to speak it correctly.*
 - ❑ *They help and give me a chance to stand firm against everything that I don't approve of in the society at large. I give speech to my teachers and classmates. I also speak with pride and confidence in front of my brothers in religion knowing that I won't let my school down especially my English teacher.*
 - ❑ *They boost my confidence and I'm now having a high/good self esteem and I'm able to confront people who are doing wrong things. Now in my society people think that I am clever. Sometimes they come to me when they have problems. They respect me as I respect them. One another I help other students who have problems to overcome them even though they are not from my school.*

Fighting or standing for one's right requires a high level of critical language awareness, and if the claim made by these learners is anything to go by, then it appears that the CLA perspective is central to their ESL programme. But the opposite is the truth. How on earth could a teacher-centred approach prepare learners to engage in a cognitively-cum-linguistically demanding enterprise—especially if it is facilitated through the medium of a second language? It is difficult to imagine that

rote learning could transform learners into such highly reflective individuals, whose ability to locate and challenge the linguistically mediated gaps inherent within abstract concepts such as “rights” could be the envy of both ESL teachers and English professors. Something else could be in operation here. One possibility is that the learners’ first language teaching practice and programme have long incorporated a Critical Language Awareness perspective, and therefore learners draw from this in dealing with challenging issues. The other possibility is that the learners’ ability to apply a critical stance towards language use is expressed only through the medium of their first language. This possibility is based on the confirmation already made by both the teachers and learners that there is a considerable tendency among ESL teachers to conduct their ESL lessons through the medium of South Sotho. Other than this, there is no convincing evidence to suggest that the currently adopted ESL teaching practice and programme could engender such a breed of critical learners. Forty-one learners confirmed the skepticism. They opined:

- 
- Frankly speaking my English lessons do not help at all regarding all the things we did when this year started.*
 - They doesn't help at all because I do not see where it leads me.*
 - I never had something that I can say it is better to do in my society or help them, the thing had been through is good enough not in the society but in classroom.*

Apparently, these learners are “frank” enough to present the situation as they see it. They suggest a teaching practice that establishes and maintains rigid boundaries between the school and the outside world. To this particular learner, what is done in his ESL class is “not good enough in the society”. The gaps between the ESL class and the society is widened to a point of insignificance. Hence the learners believe the “lessons do not help” in this regard. The crucial point is that learners do not see where their ESL lessons lead them to. Five teachers never commented on the issue regarding the contributory effect of the ESL lesson to the society . The comments of the remaining three teachers did not address the issue at all. The same applies to the opinion of twenty learners.

The fact that some of the learners and most teachers were unable to show how their ESL programmes prepare the learners to contribute and participate in their society, and the fact that they did not comment on these two issues, make it difficult to conclude that the CLA perspective is among the focus of their ESL programme. The contributions and participation of ESL programme cited by the learners can hardly be linked to the CLA perspective.

7.2.11 THE STRENGTHS OF THEIR ESL PROGRAMME

(Question 22 of appendix B; question 19 of appendix C)

Three teachers did not mention the strengths of their ESL teaching practice and programme. There is a strong possibility that their inability to identify these strengths could be linked to the fact that there is none after all. However, one teacher felt that:

- *It attempt to synthesize the old way of teaching language and the new way. It is kind of like two in one in that through “English made easy” they are getting the best of the old and through “Book of English” they are not lost to new further communicative of teaching English.*

At least the teacher recognised the importance of the two texts. To him the texts symbolised the transition from “the old” to the “new way” of teaching. They were both useful. It is noteworthy that this is the same teacher who indicated that ESL teaching and learning is taught to help learners to develop the learners’ critical awareness of language use. The reference to the synthesis of the old and the new indicates the teacher’s attempt to fashion an approach that is communicative in nature. The key point is, however, that the Communicative approach he constructs is not extended to the Critical Language Awareness perspective he had suggested earlier in subsection **7.2.1**. Furthermore, he did not show how this approach could be seen as a strong point of his ESL teaching and learning practice. Additionally, the fact that he limited his evaluation of his ESL programme to textbooks only does not yield a complete picture. Unlike this teacher, sixteen teachers claimed that the strength of their ESL teaching practice and programme was that it built their learners’ confidence by giving them sufficient time to express themselves. As to how the sufficient time given to the learners helped them

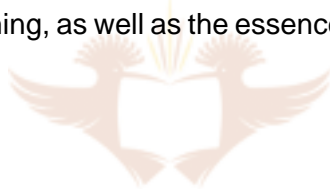
to express themselves was never explained. The overwhelming conviction was that:

- ❑ *Learners are vehemently outspoken because I always create an atmosphere that does not threaten them. They happen to trust my judgement and we interact well as this is evident from the way they consult with me, the way I always manage to arouse the interest of the learners during my lessons. Always prepared to create a situation that compliment your lesson objective.*
- ❑ *Producing confident learners who are able to stand up on their own and be rational. To me I find it to valuable and helpful as my learners are to debate and are eager to get involved in competition. It help the learners to improve themselves more expecially when coming to issue of communication. My strength method/approaches that I use expecially the communicative appraoch.*
- ❑ *Learners are able to summarize the passage the passage given to them. They are able to apply for jobs and bursaries on their own.*

The lopsided case presented by the teacher in the first quote is contradictory, considering what he had said earlier regarding his learners' response to his ESL lessons. Then he said that the learners "hardly know" his teaching style, hence their responses are always "not relevant". He thus concluded that the teachers "are not doing good enough". He probably shares the same blame. Now, he claims that his learners are "vehemently outspoken". He keeps the learners' interest high. They consult with him because they "trust his judgement". The interaction between him and his learners is described as very "well". This contradiction indicates that he is not being honest. If the learners really consulted with him as he claims, their response would not always be irrelevant. Also, if the interaction between him and the learners was as regular and "well" as he puts it, then learners would, to a considerable extent, be attuned to his teaching style.

Admittedly, the learners involved in this research exuded a considerable amount of confidence. Their courage, commitment and interest to tackle issues raised, especially through the medium of a language that is not their mother tongue was remarkable. The teachers in the second and third

quotes were right about the impressive confidence shown by the learners. They attributed this to the fact that they adopted the Communicative approach. What should be noted is that their conception of the strengths of their ESL teaching practice and programme was epitomised by their learners' ability to write a summary, apply for jobs and bursaries, debate and enter into competitions. The inclusion of debate in the list of activities that learners could do, offers some sense of hope that at least the legitimacy of the boundaries and other issues that are linguistically and ideologically set by the other activities could be contested. The impression is that the mechanical behaviourist expediency approach adopted in skills development programmes appears to be offset. However, throughout this section both learners and teachers indicated that debate sessions were a rarity in their ESL class. They both projected a classroom scenario that was functional in approach, with similar intentions and practices usually adopted by the skill development projects. Such an approach misrepresents the objectives of ESL learning and teaching, as well as the essence of the Communicative approach the teachers hoped to conform to.



Regardless of the fact that only one learner did not respond under this subsection, one-hundred-and-seventeen were of opinion that their ESL programme enabled them to “communicate in English”; “know nouns and tenses”; and to “pass ESL examination”. There is no indication of how the programme enables the learners to achieve all these. Ostensibly, the issues mentioned by both the teachers and the learners do not show any inclination of the CLA perspective.

7.2.12 THE WEAKNESS OF THEIR ESL PROGRAMME

(Question 23 of appendix B; question 20 of appendix C)

The teachers' comments on the issue pertaining to the weak points of their ESL teaching programme and teaching practice are quite revealing. Their response is the consequence of their self-introspection. Guilt assails any language practitioners the moment traditional teaching approaches -- or any other approach for that matter are used as a scapegoat for poor ESL teaching -- as if these

approaches forbid anyone to look for alternatives. This is an unfortunate projection of how the past contaminates the present. Whilst two teachers did not respond, the following are some of the comments made by the eighteen teachers who did:

- Lack of follow ups especially when learners seems to be unable to cope with the load of work given.*
- It really does not offer slow learners to catch up.*
- One is that at times they tend to be passive especially if during the introduction of the lesson was not explained vividly. The other one is that a few may contribute for the sake of making a contribution.*
- I tend to focus too much on the old other close content at the expense of the new way.*
- The method and approaches of the old syllabus. They are not so resourceful. Curriculum of the past under which learners were subjected to. Inactivity or lack of participation of from or by the parents. Lack of support services by the education department. No workshop for the teachers. Too much administrative work.*
- Contemporary or current methodologies need to be introduced.*
- The main weakness is that we do not have enough effective teaching practice here at school as teachers you have to go out and found them yourself. Sometimes you do not get them.*
- Is that of teaching the writing skills. I only concentrate on speaking rather than writing.*
- I have not yet developed self-confidence among learners.*
- Slow, shy learners always make it difficult to success. Lazy ones always give up and make english their monster. Sometimes my fluency render learners not understand.*

Observable from these quotes is that nothing is said as to how and why all these are manifested within the teachers' ESL teaching practice and teaching programme. Seemingly the teachers quoted hardly critique their ESL teaching programme and practice. It further implies that they too are themselves not critical in their approach. It is therefore unlikely that they would consider the Critical Language Awareness perspective as one of the main components of the ESL learning and teaching.

The learners raised various issues under this section. Of particular relevance to this study are the following:

- Is we as learners are not give chance to give own opinion in the classroom and given suggestion.*
- In English class we are not talking English. He marks his work 1 day or 2 days after we are write a work.*
- In this lessons we are doing, I do not like what the teacher is doing because he teaches us one thing for the whole three month.*
- I think the past tense because you will already taught the from the school if it is the message of the previous day.*
- The weak point about English programme i'ts that our teacher read books every weak. Three days a week. And I do not even know how to write formal letter and there are so many things that we can do exept reading of books everyday. We do one thing every week.*

The issues raised by the learners crystallise the point deduced from the teachers' comments that the current ESL classroom scenario in the context under investigation does not cater for the CLA perspective.



7.2.13 SOLUTIONS TO ADDRESS THE WEAKNESS OF THEIR ESL PROGRAMME

(Question 24 of appendix B; question 21 of appendix C)

Two teachers responded to the biographical question only. The following solutions epitomise the suggestions given by eighteen of the twenty teachers who participated in this research.

- Workshop and inservice training should be done for educators. Lessen administrative load or workload in general. Normal class size. Resources and facilities be availed and support service be improved. The schools when their medium of instruction is English must ensure that it happens.*
- Extra classes should be organized for learners experiencing problems.*
- The educator must first develop interest in what he or she does as a result learners will do likewise.*

- ❑ *By encouraging and establishing a centre where TESOL teachers can meet or upgrading their qualification in English.*
- ❑ *To be given chance to accompany a learner through every step of their developmental phase. To sharpen learners' concentration span especially in lessons that concern their listening skills. To establish a bond or a level of trust with colleagues who prepare the learners from the lower grade that they are doing enough. To inculcate the sense of responsibility in our learners to know it is their right to learn.*

The key towards the possible success of the aforementioned solutions lies squarely on the development of the teachers' interests towards ESL as a subject. The rest will follow. Although it is not clearly stated how these solutions would improve the situations, it is important to note the teachers' honest acknowledgement that in-service training should be conducted to help them. So too is the fact that these teachers call for the establishment of centres that could cater for the teachers' training within the field of TESOL. The learners join the teachers' call for programmes such as TESOL. But they approach this differently. For them "specialised teachers for English language" are imperative. It is the programme such as the one mentioned here that such a teacher could be produced. In addition, the learners raised the following issues as possible solutions to their language problem:

- ❑ *I can address this point to tell my teacher about that thing and my teacher it will handle that English should be improved in debating as the way I see it, it is not even taken into consideration.*
- ❑ *There must be specialised teachers for English language which would then teach or workshop.*
- ❑ *I think my teacher should go to the teacher who will address her on how to do it right way not just witting it and there's no untidyiness in that summary and think that is good while is not good.*
- ❑ *You must teach real things in life, consequence in life at least based on living.*
- ❑ *Our English teacher should not teach us about books three times a week. He should at least read a book once a week or twice during the week, not one thing a week. Should make some change.*

- ❑ *The teacher can teach for a certain period and let us ask him questions or input or output what we were already taught.*
- ❑ *The confidence of township school children should be boosted so that they would speak it freely. Teachers should stop adding other languages while teaching english.*

It is not stated clearly how these solutions would improve the ESL programme. The apparent gaps between the solutions given by the learners and some of the teachers, and the effect these could bring to improve the current ESL programme, render their comments speculative. Although the reference to the TESOL programme, and the need for specialised teachers speak volumes for how the learners and teachers believe the situation could be bettered, there is no direct reference to the need for a Critical Language Awareness perspective. Suffice is to say that the two issues referred to here have the potential to incorporate a significant foundation for the possible introduction and advancement of the CLA perspective.

7.2.14 THE 2001 REVISED DRAFT NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT ON LANGUAGES LEARNING AREA

(Question 25 of appendix B)  CITY
JOHANNESBURG

Asked to comment on the Revised Draft of the National Curriculum Statements on Languages Learning Area and on the implications of this document their ESL teaching practice, all of the teachers confessed that they were not aware of such a document. This is a worrying point, considering that the changes suggested in this document are supposed to be communicated to the teachers, thus ensuring a well coordinated and well informed implementation. There have been many media reports about this document so it could reasonably be expected that the teachers would be in a position to say something, however minute, regarding it. It is incumbent upon any teacher to show interest in the subject he teaches so much so that he would keep abreast with any new developments. The said document outlines the theoretical foundations and the importance of a language programme that has strong elements of the CLA perspective. The National Department of Education endorses CLA as

reflected in the 2001 and 2002 revised Draft National Curriculum Statements on languages. Therefore teachers do not have the excuse to ignore CLA as part of their ESL learning and teaching. The teachers' lack of interest, and ignorance, hinder the prospect of a successful implementation of both C2005 and CLA.

7.2.15. THE IMPLICATION OF THE 2001 NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENTS ON THE LANGUAGES LEARNING AREA FOR THE TEACHERS' ESL TEACHING PRACTICE

(Question 26 of appendix B)

A consequence of their unawareness of the July 2001 revised draft National Curriculum Statements on Languages Learning area is that none of the teachers responded to the question addressed by this section. This means that the context under investigation has not been well enough prepared for the implementation of the changes contained in the document. With the implied lack of interest in the ESL related issues, it is probable that the implementation of the CLA perspective, an approach that places a high premium on both intensive and extensive reading and other related preparation, would be difficult if not impossible for the teacher to consider. As pessimistic as it seems, the potential for the possible introduction of CLA can never be completely ruled out. As this section is concluded the reader is asked to keep in mind the issues raised in order to observe clearly how the next section develops and corroborates the findings of this section.

7.3 ESL TEACHERS' AND LEARNERS' INTERVIEWS

Each of the subsections presents the responses of both the learners' and the teachers' of individual schools. The comments of the learners and the teacher from the same school are juxtaposed in an attempt to establish the prevailing phenomenon.

7.3.1 TRANSCRIPT ONE:

INTERVIEW WITH A TEACHER

Q: Could you briefly describe the type of learners that your ESL programme and teaching practice intend to produce?

A: A learner who is able to communicate, in the language that I taught him, with the outside world. The one that is able to express himself fluently in the corporate world. It feels good if the learners gets good result in the subject.

Q: Why do you think this is so important?

A: This is what I expect them to be.

Q: You probably know that language is not a neutral communicative tool. It is a social phenomenon that is loaded with ideology. How does your ESL programme and teaching practice deal with this fact?

A: In teaching ESL I do not expect perfection from the learners. There are a lot to be done. Basic things: encourage them, use more materials, conduct orals, debates (on Fridays) and dictionary work.

Q: How does your teaching practice/programme develop your learners' critical reflection with regard to how language is used to either empower or disempower them?

A: I can't answer that question.

Q: How do you engage your learners in language activities that oblige them to use language critically in contesting challenging issues?

A: I do not cover these types of aspects in my class. With the type of learners I have, it is extremely difficult to incorporate such an approach. They won't bother to answer questions designed along the format you mentioned.

Q: Have you tried this before, and what was their reaction?

A: I have not tried it yet.

Q: What type of activities characterize your ESL programme/practice?

A: Newspapers and magazines. I also choose materials that would encourage them to express their views.

Q: How does your ESL programme prepare your learners to debate issues critical to the advancement of the society?

A: Some of our student are participating in the Junior counsellor activities. We are getting somewhere. Our learners interact with learners from different walks of life. They enjoy oral work more.

Q: How do you engage them in writing activities?

A: This is a problem because you request them to submit their written work, they always claim to have left their exercise books at home. I use force to ensure that they are do their work. Not literary beating them. I tell them that anyone who fail to submit written task will be allocate zero towards their term mark. It works.

Q: What teaching approach works for you?

A: Interaction between the teacher and the learners.

Q: You probably might want to comment on issues that were not raised in this interview. You are welcome to raise them now.

A: Learners enjoy oral work. They encounter problems to speak. They answer question in their mother tongue. They are not prepared to do anything about their problem even though they know their problem.

Q: How does the education department assist you?

A: The LF's (Learners' Facilitators) are not helpful at all. They only come once in a while. Their visits focuses on teachers' personal files, learners' exercise books and evaluation of the oral marks of the matriculants. They do not go anyway near the classrooms. Worse of all, they are not reliable. I invited my ESL Language Facilitator to address problems related to ESL several times. She promised to come, but she

never came.

INTERVIEW WITH THE LEARNERS

Q: *What kind of a learner, in your opinion, is your ESL programme intended to produce.*

A1: *Learners that can speak freely.*

A2: *Learners who can speak English like the first language speaker.*

A3: *Express myself in public.*

A4: *Learners who speaks English with friends and family without hesitation.*

A5: *Learners who know the meaning of words.*

A6: *Learners who can form groups, discuss and participate in class.*

A7: *Be yourself.*

Q: *Why are all these important?*

A1: *We need communication. English helps in the expression of feeling. I want to argue with you. Know about English.*

A2: *Know how to communicate, interview. To speak English.*

A3: *Broad communication.*

A4: *Improve English listen to the radio.*

A5: *Be able to consult dictionary, be able to know the meaning of words in the dictionary.*

Q: *Describe typical language activities or aspects that you would engage your ESL learners in, if you were a teacher.*

A1: *Debate topics that will encourage us to express ourselves.*

A2: *Speeches dialogue and short stories.*

A3: *Learners should look for information outside the class.*

A4: *Magazines, reading, and saying what it say.*

A5: *Read a lot because readers normally know how to speak English.*

A6: *Things that forces learners not to be afraid to speak.*

A7: *Poems, this is another form of expressing yourselves.*

A8: *Tell, force them to speak English and punish those who speak other languages.*

A9: *I would rather motivate my learners. I do not think that punishing will help.*

A10: *Idioms and proverbs.*

Q: *Are all these part of your current ESL programme?*

A1: *No, the teacher uses exam to force us to learn.*

A2: *Magazines are not brought in the class.*

A3: *The teacher is most of the time absent. When he comes, he reads the book and get out.*

A4: *Learners play and make noise as the teacher teaches. Ill-disciplined.*

A5: *The teachers read the book for us, explain the story to us and ask us question. She never give us chance to read.*

A6: *She must let us find meaning of the story rather than she telling us the story is about.*

A7: *It is painful that if I am unable to read properly, the teachers omit you.*

A8: *We just read literature book.*

A9: *The teacher is too slow. The things that he teaches us I already know. I have done those things before in the previous grades.*

A10: *She does not give us time to talk.*

Q: How do you react to this classroom situation?

A1: We just read, write and read and write whatever we are told to do. Not enjoyable at all.

A2: Boring. The teacher gives us classworks and tests. The answers to this works are pasted on all the four walls of our classroom by our teacher. So we just copy from the wall. Not challenging.

Q: How often do you get engaged in language activities that require your critical response, either spoken or written?

*A1: No really. We always read **Winners**.*

A2: Once in a while if we have debate, we use those big words.

A3: Picture work. We are asked to say what the picture is all about. But we need more of these. We did this once when we were doing grade 10.

Q: After completing your grade eleven ESL programme, you should be able to do what your ideal ESL learner could do. Is that the case?

A1: We are not doing much.

A2: I think that grade twelve is going to be difficult for us.

A3: We lack confidence. We cannot express ourselves clearly.

A4: We suffer in a way. Grade twelve learners should be able to express themselves better. We are less what we want be.

A5: Debating chairperson mixing English with Sotho. We wanna speak English.

A6: We are not able to read like grade twelve learners.

A7: The teacher cannot be the only one to blame. We too are to blame. We should work together in groups. If the teachers is out and I try to encourage the class to discuss, some learners things that I am putting myself on top.

A9: We cannot express ourselves in English.

7.3.2. REFLECTION



The above transcripts corroborate the conclusion drawn from the learners' and teachers' questionnaires that ESL learning and teaching is aimed at teaching learners merely to communicate in English. The consensus among the learners and the teacher on this point is thick and tight. Evidence of other objectives of teaching ESL is inconspicuous. As far as the teacher quoted in the above transcript is concerned, teaching learners to communicate is so important to her because that is what she "[expects] from them" and nothing else. The development of the learners' critical reflection and the issue related to the language ideology do not feature in her teaching practice/programme. She thinks that these aspects are difficult for the "type of learners" she has. She, however, confessed that she had never introduced these to her class. Her confession indicated that she was not in a position to conclude as she did until she attempts to introduce these aspects. Her unsubstantiated conclusion is a reflection of her ignorance of her learners' ability and intelligence. It also points to her

own inability, or at least her unwillingness, to deal with such issues. Exposed to the young minds, such an attitude is a great blow to the learners' confidence, self-esteem, autonomy and their critical reflection. Unsurprisingly, the learners think that their confidence is so low, to a point that they fear that grade twelve is going to be "difficult" for them.

The learners' comments do not suggest that application of the Critical Language Awareness perspective would be impossible. Furthermore, the learners do not appear to lack latent critical language ability as suggested by the teacher. One can observe their remarkable mental dexterity at work as they question the credibility of the teaching practice adopted by their ESL teacher. First they describe their ESL class activity as "boring". They went on to justify their point. In their justification they presented the situation and allowed the listener/reader to observe the problem. They then concluded confidently, hoping the listener/reader would arrive at the similar point that what is done in their class is "not challenging". They question the teacher's tendentious drive to reduce ESL to merely reading of literature text "**Winners**". By the same token, they offer suggestions that could be helpful in teaching literature: "She must let us find meaning of the story rather than she telling us [what] the story is about". They are so perceptive that they observed and articulated their dissatisfaction regarding their teacher's constant repetition of what they have already done in the previous grade-- if she by chance decides not to read "**Winners**" to them. Admittedly, the learners commit some language errors but, interestingly, they still continue to struggle on, critically questioning and challenging the issue at hand. For any other language teacher, these comments suggest good grounds for initiating the CLA perspective. Some aspects of dedication, interest and responsibility are needed from the teacher's side. She should perhaps take initiatives to ensure that learners are prepared "to do something about their language problem". It is not appropriate that she could leave the learners to respond, in their mother tongue, to questions asked in their ESL class. It is clear from this transcript that the teachers' ESL practice did not show any inclination towards the CLA perspective. Some of the learners, however, exhibit potential skills that are good enough for the

implementation of CLA. But the teacher's inability to note these potential skills, and to introduce CLA perspective in her ESL class implies that her teacher training programme did not include CLA as one of the crucial components of language learning and teaching. There is a strong likelihood that the language education programme designers and lecturing staff at this teacher's training Institution either did not value, or were unaware of, the significant critical reflection a CLA perspective could bring to language learning and teaching.

7.3.3 TRANSCRIPT TWO:

INTERVIEW WITH THE TEACHER

Q: What kind of product do you aspire to produce in your grade eleven ESL class?

A: The learners who is able to communicate in competence. Encourage them to read a lot to increase their vocabulary. Not have high self esteem. Ask question.

Q: Why is that important?

A: So that learners could be able to communicate with other people around them.

Q: You are probably aware that language is not a neutral communicative tool. How does your ESL programme reflect this point?

A: I am not used to that. As a teacher remember to teach learners reality. Ask them to come up with abstract things.

Q: What is your preferred teaching approach?

A: Narrative method. The learners get involved in the every day activities of the class. This method is a success because it becomes centred-approach not teacher centred-approach. Learners are always involved.

Q: What support do you get from the department of education?

A: The LF's only visit our schools to give information about matriculant. She only came once this year.

Q: How do you facilitate writing activities?

A: I set time for them and stop them. Take the answers and tell what he has written. Tell them that they must not copy. I tell them to do your task.

Q: What is the success rate?

A: To some is a problem. They take a lot of time to complete the tasks, some do not complete at all.

Q: You probably might want to comment on issues raised in this interview with regards to ESL teaching and learning. You are welcome to raise them now.

A: I think I am covered.

INTERVIEW WITH THE LEARNERS

Q: How does what you have already done in your ESL class help you to be the kind of learner you aspire to be?

A1: I do not think that it can make me what I want to be because we do not do a lot of English in our class. We speak Sotho. Our teacher gives us classwork daily and leave the class. There is nothing exciting.

A2: Due to the fact made by my classmate, I do not have self confidence. I am unable to express myself.

A3: Our teacher is too lazy. He only come to class to give homework and classwork and collect these from us.

A4: I do not think so, my teacher is too shy, he teaches facing the chalboard or looking at the wall instead of facing us. She does not mark the work she collects from us.

A5: She reads for us. We never get chance to read ourselves. This is not motivational.

Q: If you were to give your teachers advice that will help him to make his or her ESL teaching practice better, where would you start?

A1: Ask him to go back to the college to improve.

A2: Learn more English. Going back to college is harsh.

A3: Excite learners. Introduces issues that learners love in his workschedule. Be creative. Ask learners to give more information that they want.

A4: To find meaning and explain to the learners, do something about the learners' wrong spelling. Encourage the learners and answer the question asked by the learners. Be prepared to help them.

A5: Explain clearly to make us understand what he is teaching.

A6: Read a lot. Encourage us to read a lot too.

A7: Should be afraid of us.

A8: Buy dictionary to help deal with her spelling problem. It is not acceptable for the teacher to misspell.

A9: Be active in class. Learn from other teachers to make the lesson enjoyable.

A10: When giving assignments or tasks the teacher should give us real event situation, for example write stories about weekend events. This would make the class interesting. Have fun with the learners. Make jokes. Ask learners about soapies and comedies played on the TV. Just teach half the glope. Be a "teacher" just because you are a "teacher" you will be a "teacher". And you will get bad attitude from us.

A11: Think about the young. We have the right to be wrong. Allow us to express ourselves. That is the best way to learn.

Q: How do your ESL activities engage you in critical thinking?

A1: Nothing. I do not think for the whole thirty minutes. Things like writing summary is never done. Nothing to make me think.

A2: The teacher sit in the class and tell us to do the work. But he does not tell us what we must do.

A3: Give us task and we are expected to copy the answers directly from the book. This is not challenging.

Q: How do you cope with this situation?

A1: Get used to it. Push yourself to succeed. There is no way if you do not push yourself.

A2: I made my own time table. Buy weekly papers to look for interesting projects. This helps a lot.

A3: There is nothing new we did from January. I rely on previous years question papers.

A4: I need to upgrade myself.

Q: How do you deal with writing activities.

A1: Our teacher never writes on the board. She Just talks. Her spelling is very bad. We take after her.

7.3.4 REFLECTION

The questionnaires revealed that the teachers, in the context under investigation, are often unclear of the essence of the teaching approaches and methods within the field of language teaching. The confusion caused results in an unfortunate reduction of language education to a mechanical rote learning activity. This interview transcript exhibited similar fundamental problems. Here the teacher's preference for Narrative method is based on her conviction that this method is learner-centred. It has already been indicated in section **7.2.2.** that the Narrative method is not teacher-centred. It was also expounded that the method is too narrow a concept in that it does not cater for eclecticism -- a concept that holds sway in the contemporary language teaching profession.

The teacher's honest acknowledgement is strikingly clear. She is "not used to" issues related to the politics of language. She does not leave this point hanging loose, however, her peroration is marred by the inherent contradiction. As far as she is concerned, involving learners in these issues would not be "teaching reality" and would therefore be inappropriate. However, she would rather ask learners to "come up with abstract things". This is contradictory because a call for reality is incompatible with abstraction. If she is indeed serious about asking learners to delve into abstraction, she might as well consider the selfsame issues of the politics of language and the likes, since these require a considerable amount of abstraction. To locate a covert linguistically mediated manipulative act, or to identify and challenge the ideological gaps embedded within a text, is an exercise that thrives on abstraction.

Her claim to include "reality" in her lessons is refuted by her learners. They feel that she "should give them real situation" as part of their lesson. This request also appeals to the teacher to bring the outside world in the classroom so as to minimize the gap between the class and the real world. Further, it is an honest call to indicate that the interplay between abstraction and reality is the driving force behind critical reflection. The ability to harmonize the two in an attempt to innovate alternative conception to the existing world is the cornerstone of learning as an exploration. Language as a

medium is central to the process. The Critical Language Awareness perspective is the live-wire that enlivens and oscillates this ability. It crystallizes and sharpens the learners' ability to be involved in making sense and creating knowledge out of the myriad of meanings floating abundantly throughout the world. Depriving the learners of all these processes is equivalent to robbing them of their birth right to live constructively --to be joint participant in the construction and deconstruction of knowledge. Yet another concern raised by this transcript is bad spelling. The learners claim that their teacher's predilection to avoid writing on the chalkboard is aimed at concealing this fact. The few words she writes on the board are spelt "badly". Once again, the teacher should make it her responsibility to work on her spelling problem.

The context, as projected by this transcript, does not cater for CLA perspective. The matter is worsened by the fact that teachers themselves abdicate their roles, thus creating a situation that is not conducive for either ESL learning and teaching nor the implementation of the CLA perspective. Worse still is the fact that with their questionable ability to handle English language spelling and syntax, teachers would likely be unable to handle the CLA perspective. For it to flourish CLA is heavily dependent on the teachers' good command of the target language.

7.3.5 TRANSCRIPT THREE:

INTERVIEW WITH THE TEACHERS:

TEACHER A

Q: What is the success rate of your ESL teaching practice/programme?

A: Not that much. This is caused by the government as benchmark. Teachers are laxed. Grade Twelve teachers are vilified. Grade eleven learners, for example, do not know how to write a letter let alone an address. Both the learners and teachers' language background is shockingly poor. We are going no way with this OBE thing. Our learners will finish their secondary education without having gained enough.

Q: What could be the main cause of all these?

A: OBE is a nonstarter. Total nonstarter. We do not stand to gain from it. Observe what is going in ESL examination. Learners are advised to their answer in their first language, in case they find it difficult to express themselves in English. Why do we then have ESL as a subject.

Q: Do you wish to raise some more issues regarding ESL teaching?

A: We have a serious language problem. The best way to deal with this problem is to address this issue as early as in the primary school. Perhaps allocating three period daily for ESL could be another possibility. In the “golden years of apartheid”, I am saying Golden because the teachers were teachers, teachers were attending courses to capacitate themselves. In this “democratic age” we are stagnant. Nothing is happening. The kind of teachers are merely certificated. Mostly they are university graduates with degrees to build their profile. In my opinion colleges, not university, make quality teachers. Most of these university products are neither dedicated nor well-read. Immediately they finish their studies they stop reading further.

TEACHER B

Q: Language is not a neutral medium of communication. How does your ESL programme address this issue?

A: If you come with this type of ideas you won't succeed here. Our learners are not committed. You ask them a question they keep quiet. Unless you get learners that are interested you are definitely not going to succeed.

Q: How do you deal with this situation?

A: We try our best. Use the simplest of the simplest of English. Their essay testifies this. It is really difficult. If the learners are not prepared to do anything about their problem then you do not know how to help them.

Q: How does your ESL teaching practice influence your success?

A: Being committed, help an assist. My success is determined at the end of the year when the result are out. I teach for marks.

INTERVIEW WITH THE LEARNERS

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Q: Design your ideal ESL programme.

A1: Give homework daily.

A2: First I will be more of a friend than a teacher.

A3: Teach nouns, verbs, direct and indirect speech. Have discussion time. The learners will be expected to talk most of the time. Quarter of the time they will write.

A4: I will teach them to stand up for themselves and speak out. To be confident. I will involve them in debates. This will help them to improve their English.

Q: Are all these covered in your current ESL class.

A1: No. There have never been a single debate session since the beginning of the year, except classworks on nouns and notes, notes and more notes. We are more involved in literature.

A2: No, sir, more and more of notes. We are not happy.

A3: If our SRC was engaged in education it could have been better. We could be engaged in pronouncements so as to build confidence in ourselves. I do not know how to address crowd.

Q: How would you solve this problem.

A1: The teachers must listen to the learners' needs. Help us to get better marks and prepare for our future.

A2: Teachers must involve learners in problem-solving situations.

A3: Learners should have a good relation with teachers and parents should be involved in our education.

7.3.6 REFLECTION

Teacher A presents a catalogue of disillusionment and low morale. For him the main problem lies with the government's introduction of OBE. This type of education is for him a "nonstarter". He touches on the "shocking English language background" of both the learners and teachers -- who are the products of Outcomes Based Education (OBE) -- and their "lax" attitude. Even more shocking is the evidence he presented to justify his claim that OBE, as an educational system, is the cause of the problems he cited. The grade eight 2001 ESL Common Assessment Pilot Paper, attached as appendix F, allows the learners to answer fifty percent of the paper in a language of their choice, preferably their mother tongue. The teacher's concern is justified. Such papers undermine the very essence of ESL as a subject.



The South African Department of Education, according to this teacher, does not run in-service training or special course for teachers in order to "capacitate[d] them". He describes the situation as "stagnant". This is paradoxical considering that a "democratic age" should be defined by, among other things, a strong emphasis on capacity building. He sadly but honestly calls the apartheid years "golden" for a reason. According to this teacher, these years are marked by the existence of a strong desire to capacitate teachers by involving them in-service courses. Out of this interaction emerged teachers who "were teachers". Though unpalatable, considering the brutality accompanying the apartheid system of government, the teacher rightly laments the lack of rigour in teacher training and the lack of commitment displayed by the new breeds of teachers. Implicitly, these teachers acknowledged that the successful implementation of the CLA perspective relies on: the teachers' good command of the target language; and department of education's willingness to engage teachers in continuous workshops and training.

It is notable that the elements of some of what teacher A says come to life through the mouth of teacher B. She claims, like the teacher in transcript one, that critical language development will never be successfully implemented in her school, because her learners are not committed. The only sign indicating that her learners are as she describes them, is that when she asks “them questions they keep quiet”. It is difficult to see how she links the learners’ quiet response to not being committed. Unless she goes beyond this, her assumption remains as unconvincing as ever. Even that does not help either, as expressed in the comments: “Unless you get learners that are interested you are definitely not going to succeed”. This is quite revealing. The learners keep quiet because she fails to “interest” and excite them with her lessons. Their quietness has nothing to do with their lack of commitment. There is no teacher who would ever get a prepacked set of “interested learners” every time the school session starts, or every time he goes to class. Instead, the teacher has to generate interest in the learners in order to facilitate meaningful learning. It is a matter of responsibility-- something that is not shown by teacher B. The highlight of this teacher’s lack of commitment and responsibility is ensnared in her bold declaration: “If the learners are not prepared to do anything about their problem you do not know how to help them”. Perhaps the situation is too much for her, hence she runs out of ideas. It is a pity that a professional could easily run of ideas like that. The punch line concludes it all: “I teach for marks”. This is a mechanical rote learning mentality. Contrary to this teacher’s comments the learners’s call for an ESL class that engages them in “problem-solving situations” so that they could be able to “stand out for themselves and speak out”, is a good enough sign that they are capable to deal with the challenges of the CLA perspective.

7.4 CONCLUSION

There are a number of key issues discernable from the data presented in this chapter. These issues are indicative of the common trends adopted by ESL teachers in the context under investigation.

They also reflect the challenges faced by both the teachers and the learners regarding their ESL class. First, the problem lies within the class-- classroom teaching practice/programme. Second, it lies with the teachers' commitment towards their task, and their conception of what ESL teaching learning is all about. Third, it lies with the support given to both ESL teachers and learners by the Educational Authority of the area under investigation, and the local Universities. All these have a strong bearing on the possible success or failure of the ESL programme. It particularly influences the possible failure and success of any endeavour to introduce the CLA perspective in ESL class.

The overwhelming stance emanating from the teachers and the learners is that the ESL is taught to enable learners to communicate in English. Only one teacher indicated evidence of developing the learners' critical language awareness through his ESL programme. Apparently, CLA is not given adequate attention. Although inadequate, at least there is an indication that at least something is done to encourage the CLA. Yet another positive thing is that the learners' response shows some hints indicating a shift towards this perspective. Embraced by C2005, as expressed by among others the 2001 and 2002 Revised Draft National Curriculum Statements on Languages Learning Area, this perspective is inevitable and both learners and teachers would have to incorporate it within their ESL programme.

A larger percentage of the teachers are preoccupied with the concept method – general teaching methodology. They are not aware of the teaching approaches specifically designed and adopted in the field of language. Individually, the methods they cited do not offer the possibility for Critical Language Awareness. The dominant method, Narrative Method, is a case in point. The teachers are not clear as to how their teaching methods help them to achieve the objective of ESL teaching and learning they cited. Their responses demonstrate that the language learning and teaching practice in this context is in the form of transmission pedagogy, rote learning and “chalk and talk” approach. The essence of the three styles of teaching contradicts the principle of Critical Language Awareness.

Therefore CLA does not feature here.

The analysis of the two popular prescribed language textbooks, ***Advance with English*** and ***Lets Use English***, indicates that these texts are useful resources that do not only incorporate elements of critical reflection to language use but also offer great possibilities for the advancement of the Critical Language Awareness perspective within ESL teaching and learning. The latter text states clearly in its preface, and it is observable throughout both the teachers' and learners' copies that CLA is among the key components of ESL teaching and learning. It is therefore, reasonable to conclude that these textbooks are neglected. Hence the teachers do not know how effective these texts are, particularly with regard to the advancement of the CLA perspective. It is further tenable to argue that the teachers are unable to introduce the CLA perspective in their ESL class.

Although creative writing, reading and debates are only three of the twenty language aspects cited by the learners -- and this vaguely implies potential elements of the CLA perspectives -- there is no compelling evidence that these are sufficiently transformed into an actual CLA mode. The remaining seventeen language aspects point to a transmission mode of teaching. The lessons or activities cited by the learners are not geared for development of the learners' communicative competence as claimed by both the teachers and learners. It is either that the teachers do not know what the concept *communicative competence* is, or they do not know how to develop it in their learners. This anomaly casts serious doubt on whether the teachers will be able to handle the challenges of implementing the CLA perspective in their ESL classes.

Discernable from the exercises regarded by the teachers as indicative of their successful ESL teaching is a learning and teaching environment that is typified by drill exercises, explicit explanation of language rules for the entire teaching sessions, teachers-centred approach and transmission

pedagogy. This confirms the point that the CLA perspective is not incorporated in the teachers' ESL lessons and activities. Albeit the teachers' insistence that their learners' response to their ESL programme is positive, their justifications to this claim project a negative scenario. The apparent contradictions, plus the learners' unsubstantiated stance that their ESL scenario is positive, suggest that both the teachers and the learners are not being honest. There is a strong likelihood that the scenario is not as positive as projected. The conceivable conclusion to draw is that the unfounded positivity claimed here has nothing to do with Critical Language Awareness.

The teachers are unable to establish elements of the CLA mode from the forms of contributions the learners give to the society. At least the learners show potential inclination towards CLA by the mere fact that some of them teach, through the medium of English, in the youth centres. If the teachers were aware of what CLA is, they could have noted that what the learners mentioned as their contribution to the society is indicative of the learners' latent ability to use their critical reflection to language use. The teachers could have used this potential abilities as a platform to introduce an ESL language programme that is grounded on CLA mode. Apparently, there is no hint that teachers are aware of CLA perspective. Neither do the points raised by both the learners and teachers as the strength of their ESL programme signal any sense of the CLA perspective. A similar conclusion can be drawn with regard to the cited weak points of their ESL programme. None of the solutions proposed by both the teachers and the learners can be linked with an attempt to introduce a CLA perspective in their ESL programme. It is fair to argue that the learners and the teachers are not critical enough to see the lack of critical dimension within their current ESL programme.

Although the following issues may not be directly linked to the presuppositions of this study, they to a certain extent hamper the possible success of a Critical Language Awareness ESL programme. It is therefore important to give a brief overview of these issues here.

By their own admission, the teachers feel that they are unable to move away from the traditional teaching approach. This scenario is not consonant to both the spirit of Curriculum 2005 and the CLA perspective. The teachers themselves do not keep abreast with the changes in education. It should be noted that none of the teachers who participated in this research knew anything about the 2001 Revised Draft of National Curriculum Statements on Languages Learning Areas. Obviously, they do not know what implication this document has for their ESL teaching practice and programme. Their lack of interest, or their ignorance, hinders the implementation of both Critical Language Awareness and C2005.

The dominance of the teacher-centredness approach in this context can be attributed to a number of factors. Among these is that the teacher training programme undergone by some of these teachers, is summed up by the dictum that teachers are meant to impart knowledge and learners can do nothing but passively receive knowledge. They consciously or otherwise use this dictum as a survival strategy to conceal their weak points. This bespeaks the lack of confidence evinced by most of the teachers.



The negative effect of their teacher training programme is glaringly displayed by the questionable English language proficiency of most of the ESL teachers. By their own admission, the teachers need in-service training and other related support systems to upgrade and improve their classroom practice.

The support given by department of education to these teachers is not adequate. The in-service training sessions are according the teachers not entertained. The ESL Language Facilitators do not give teachers the needed support required to deal with the growing language problem. Consequently, teachers are overwhelmed by the complexity of their duty. Although not acceptable, this appears to be the case here.

The teachers spent much time reading literature text to their class at the expense of language. Even though the teachers do not study the teachers' guide accompanying the learners' language texts, they

do not look beyond these texts. Electronic teaching aids such as cassettes player and video tape recorder/player are not used even if these are available at their schools. It does not strike them that these could bring an alternative dimension to the class. There is no inclination to make ESL lesson interesting to the learners. Moreover, there is no follow up on the learners's written tasks. These tasks are not even marked. Some ESL classes are not attended to since some teachers are never present for their lessons. This is not picture that is conducive to learning in general.

