

CHAPTER 7: RESULTS OF THE SITUATION ANALYSIS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the data acquired from the five case studies are represented and the implications of the data for an ESL Programme are discussed. The data are discussed under four categories, namely data on the 5 different preschools, the parents, the preschool teachers and the preschoolers themselves. At the end of each of these sections, the implications of the data for an ESL Programme are discussed.

7.2 DATA FROM THE PRESCHOOLS

The data gathered from the preschools are discussed under two headings. These are the general information gathered about the preschools, which also includes the location, history and background information, and the second heading discusses the implications of the data gathered for an ESL Programme.

7.2.1 General Information about the Preschools

7.2.1.1 General Information about Preschool A

Preschool A (Pr.A) is situated in Block 2 in Ikageng. The building is actually the property of the Presbyterian Church and the school rents it from them during the week. This means that all the furniture, toys, posters, equipment etc. have to be packed up on a Friday so that the building can be used for church on a Sunday.

There is no electricity or running water on the premises. The teacher prepares food for the children on a gas stove in one corner of the building and the children use potties when they have to go to the bathroom. The creche consists of about 35 children and only one teacher. This means she has to prepare the children's food and wash the dishes after every meal while

supervising them.

Pr.A has very few toys for the children to play with, so they usually play group games where no toys are required. The children never do drawings of any kind that they can take home, as there are no paper, crayons or paint available.

This preschool is run by the teacher and a governing body consisting of parents and members of the Presbyterian Church. The school fees are R65 per month and they take in children from two years onwards. This creche is not registered with the government, so it doesn't qualify for a government subsidy.

English is only taught incidentally as part of the daily programme. In the week the creche was observed, the teacher didn't spend more than 5 minutes per day on English.

7.2.1.2 *General Information about Preschool B*

Preschool B (Pr.B) is situated in Block 1 in Ikageng. It had first existed on its own, but when the number of children dropped to only five, they decided to merge with two other preschools. This meant that they could register with the government and that they could apply for a subsidy. The subsidy made it possible for the school to lower the fees from R120 per month to R80 per month.

At the moment there are about 90 children in the school. These children have been divided into four classes according to their ages. The babies (about 15 children) are in one room and have one caretaker. She doesn't have any formal training. The teachers of the three other classes have all had training in Educare at the Technical College. The two- to three-year-olds (about 20) are in one class, the four-year-olds (about 30) are in another class and the five- to six-year-olds (about 25) are in another class.

The school consists of three rather big buildings and each building consists of two to three rooms - either classrooms, the principal's office, the kitchen, the dining room or the bathroom. It also

has a relatively large playground equipped with swings, slides, tyres and a jungle gym. The classrooms don't have electricity, but the kitchen is equipped with electricity and running water. The bathroom (unisex) has standard sized toilets for preschoolers as well as running water.

The preschool class is equipped with posters, magazines, scissors, and make-believe toys. The teacher also has a supply of crayons, glue, paint and paper. There are small tables and chairs for the children and three of them can work comfortably at a table.

In the five- to six-year-old class, English is taught incidentally as part of the daily programme. The teacher merely translates some of the vocabulary they learn in Tswana into English. The children repeat the words after her, but sometimes they don't have a concrete example (e.g. an object or picture of the object) about which they are learning. They merely parrot the teacher.

7.2.1.3 *General Information about Preschool C*

Preschool C (Pr.C) is situated in the double garage at the teacher's home. It consists of one qualified teacher (responsible for the four- to six-year-olds), one unqualified caretaker (responsible for the two- to three-year-olds) and one cook (who prepares the food and washes the dishes).

There is a small garden with some tyres in the front and one toilet in an outside building at the back. They also make use of one room inside the house which is attached to the garage. This room consists of a double bed and a small table. They use the room to change the nappies of the babies and to lie them down when they fall asleep in the course of the day. It was rather cool in the garage in the mornings, but one of the garage doors need to be open to allow some light into the building. It appears that this could be a problem in winter as most of the children don't have sufficient warm clothes to wear.

There are carpets on the floor of the garage and the walls are covered with posters. As there isn't much space, the small tables and chairs are stacked against the walls and used only during

mealtimes and structured indoor play. There are also cupboards against the walls containing toys and books and materials for creative play i.e. play dough, paint, paper and crayons.

Pr.C was the first preschool that was visited where the children were allowed to play with all of the toys. At the other preschools mentioned so far, some of the toys were exhibited, but the children were not allowed to play with them. In the course of the day, then, children played with make-believe toys, such as dolls and motorcars, but also with construction toys such as blocks and pegs with peg boards. The children also took part in a creative activity as part of the daily programme which included playing with play dough, painting, drawing with crayons or cutting and pasting. However, the story books were kept out of reach, in order to prevent them from getting damaged.

The school fees at Pr.C is R65 per month for the children and R70 per month for the babies. At the time the preschool was visited 25 children attended regularly. According to the teacher, more children would join at the end of March after their parents had settled their Christmas debt.

English has formed part of the school's daily programme since January 2001. The children are exposed to English songs played on a portable CD-player during their arrival, mealtimes and before departure. Furthermore, the teacher spent about 10 minutes each day teaching them to greet someone in English and to introduce themselves in English. The teaching method is basically that of rote learning and repetition.

7.2.1.4 *General Information about Preschool D*

Preschool D (Pr.D) is situated in Kanana in Ikageng. It is a makuku¹ with two medium sized rooms and one smaller room and it looks exactly like the rest of the houses in the neighbourhood. If it weren't for the swing and slide outside, one would never have guessed that it was a preschool. This preschool is situated next to the property of the teacher, about 20 metres from

¹A shack made of sheets of corrugated iron.

her house.

There is no electricity or running water on the property. At the moment the children make use of potties situated outside about ten metres from the building. The smaller room is used as a kitchen and the food is prepared over a fire and one small gas stove.

There is a small patch of grass (about two metres by two metres) with a slide on it. There are also tricycles and tyres as well as swings.

Pr.D consists of about 71 children of which half of them (about 40) is aged between 4 and 6. The staff consists of one qualified teacher, an assistant who looks after the babies and a cook who prepares breakfast and lunch for the children.

This is the first preschool that was visited that has a big supply of toys and learning aids. One of the rooms have bookshelves that line three of the four walls and are filled with magazines, papers, paint, glue, crayons and story books. The other room has make-believe toys (dolls, furniture, accessories etc.) stacked in the one corner and in the other corner a great variety of construction toys (building blocks, peg boards etc.) can be found. Both rooms are not very big (about 7 metres by 3 metres), and gets a bit crowded when there are almost 40 children in each, but the children are used to the small space they have to play in and they enjoy themselves very much.

English forms part of the daily programme, and the children are taught a variety of Bible verses, prayers, rhymes and songs in both Tswana and English and sometimes even in Afrikaans. They know all of these off by heart, but they very rarely are presented with pictures or objects that would give meaning to what they are reciting. They spend about 10 minutes each morning to recite these verses, rhymes and songs.

7.2.1.5 General Information about Preschool E

Preschool E (Pr.E) is situated in Extension 6. It is a fairly large makuku (see footnote 1) with an

open plan consisting of three rooms. The one room is used for the smaller children (one- to three-years-olds), while the other one is used for the four- to six-year-olds. The third room is a kitchen - with stove, cupboards and a basin. There is no electricity or running water on the property

There are no trees or grass outside on the property and when the children start jumping or running around, it becomes extremely dusty. A pent-roof has been erected outside so that the children can have some shade during their free play. There are also some tyres to play with and a big basin of water, so that they can help themselves to some water when they get thirsty.

Inside the makuku, the walls are covered with a number of English posters. There are also small tables and chairs used during mealtimes as well as during indoor play. They also have bookshelves, but no books. There are a small number of toys to play with. (The children have to take turns when they want to play with the toys.)

Of all of the parts of the daily programme, the children love story time the best. The teacher has pictures and flash cards of several fairy tales and while she dramatizes the story, she shows the pictures. Most of the children love this very much, but they love it even more when she gives them a chance to tell the story they have just heard.

As there are no trees or shade of any kind, the makuku gets really hot in the course of the day. By lunchtime, the children are all sweating and very sleepy, but they can't really rest outside as it is very dusty and dirty.

At Pr.E, they are very lenient when it comes to paying the school fees of R65 per month. The teacher never refuses a child if his or her parents can't pay the school fees on time. This means that most of her children attend the preschool regularly and the parents make arrangements with her if they can't pay on time.

English doesn't form part of the daily programme. The children know about three English songs

and the teacher may translate some of the Tswana vocabulary they learn into English, but that happens incidentally. Not more than 5 minutes per day are spent on this incidental English teaching.

7.2.2 Implications for an ESL Programme

One of the main aspects highlighted in the observation of these preschools, is the prevalent poverty in the community. This will have a definite influence on an ESL Programme in that the programme should not make use of expensive methods or sophisticated resources.

With regard to resources, most preschools had paper, paint, and crayons available. These should be used extensively in the activities prescribed by the programme. Furthermore, other available, free resources (such as pebbles, dirt, leaves, sticks etc.) could also be incorporated to make creative activities more fun.

The preschool classes are fairly big and this should be taken into consideration in the design of the programme. The content and methods should be adapted to a group of 25 or more children. Another alternative is that the activities should be of such a nature that the children can work together in smaller groups while the teacher only supervises them.

Another limitation on the design of a programme is that of space. None of the preschools have a lot of space indoors, and most of them don't have a lot of space outdoors either. The activities prescribed by the programme should thus be planned that they would not require more space per child than is available.

Lastly, an ESL Programme should not rely on rote learning and repetition alone, as it was quite obvious that the children enjoyed speaking English, but they didn't have the faintest idea of what they were saying. This also implies that more than 10 minutes per day should be spent on teaching English as the children should be given time to process the information they receive.

They should also be allowed to learn ESL with the help of most of their senses. What they learn should be given to them in a very creative and concrete manner.

7.3 DATA FROM THE PARENTS

The data from the parents were categorized according to the information gathered on the children's exposure to English at home, the parents' views of an ESL Programme and the implications of these data for an ESL Programme. The first category is discussed with the five different children as subheadings. The second category is discussed with the five different parents as subheadings and the third is a summary of the factors gathered from the first two categories that might have an influence on the ESL Programme.

7.3.1 Data on the Children's Exposure to English at Home

7.3.1.1 Child A's Exposure to English at Home

Child A (CA) is a five-year-old and the youngest child of two children. He has been in Pr.A for the past two years. His mother is a housewife and his father is a cleaner at a high school in Potchefstroom. They live in Berlin in Ikageng which is walking distance from the creche.

They speak Tswana at home. CA's grandparents and uncle (on his father's side) also live with them at home. CA's mother cannot speak English, but his father and his brother who lives with them can speak English.

CA have no running water at home, but they have access to electricity. They also have a television and a radio. They don't have any English magazines or books, except those that CA's ten-year-old brother uses in primary school. They never speak English at home, but CA sometimes watches English children's programmes on television. That is the total amount of his exposure to English at home. He never listen to English stations on the radio.

7.3.1.2 *Child B's Exposure to English at Home*

Child B (CB) is a five-year-old and the youngest of two children who lives with her mother, older sister grandmother, grandfather, and uncle and aunt (on her mother's side). Her mother and father isn't married. Her father works for the army in Potchefstroom and her mother does part time hairdressing from home. CB only visits her father during the holidays and, according to her mother, she has a good relationship with him. CB's father takes full financial responsibility for her and supports her mother as much as he can.

CB lives in Block 2 in Ikageng which, according to her mother, is a safe and secure neighbourhood and CB is very happy there. At home, they have running water, electricity, a television and a radio. CB's mother also buys English magazines and English books for her children on a monthly basis.

CB first attended an English medium preschool in Potchefstroom, but as her father couldn't afford the school fees anymore, they decided to move her to Pr.B. She has been in Pr.B for a year now. CB's nine-year-old sister is in Grade 4 now in the English medium primary school in Potchefstroom and CB will also attend that primary school next year.

CB watches English children's programmes on television for about half an hour each day. Her mother also makes a point to speak English to her for about 15 minutes each day after school. CB also loves to page through English fashion magazines, although she can't read any English. She doesn't listen to any English stations on the radio.

7.3.1.3 *Child C's Exposure to English at Home*

Child C (CC) is four going on five. She is the youngest of three children and she has an older brother of 17 years and an older sister who is 11 years old. CC lives at home with her mother, father, brother and sister.

CC's father is unemployed at the moment and her mother is a preschool teacher. In 2000, CC

started going to a preschool in Mohadin (the Indian township) where the medium of instruction is English but where they do accommodate Tswana children. However, CC struggled to adjust to the new environment. This was why CC's mother decided to open up her own preschool at her home in 2001. This means that CC attends preschool at home and her mother is always nearby.

CC lives in a house in Mandela Road in Kanana in Ikageng. They have electricity and running water at home as well as a television and a radio. They also have English story books and CC's mother reads them to her even though she doesn't understand much of it.

CC doesn't watch much TV, and never any English programmes. She doesn't listen to English stations on the radio either. Her mother speaks English with her for about 5 minutes each day after school, and she loves to listen to her mother read English stories, but she has never attempted to speak any English.

7.3.1.4 *Child D's Exposure to English at Home*

Child D (CD) is five going on six. She is the youngest of two children and lives with her mother, grandmother and older sister in Kanana in Ikageng. They share their property with two other families, but they have their own makuku on the property. They live walking distance from the preschool.

According to CD's mother, the neighbourhood they live in is not very child friendly - it is dangerous and the children don't have any space to play or entertain themselves. They do have a radio and television at home, and the English books at home are those CD's sister uses at school.

CD occasionally watches English children's programmes (about three times a week for about half an hour), but she never page through English books or magazines and they never speak English at home. She never listens to English stations on the radio either.

7.3.1.5 *Child E's Exposure to English at Home*

Child E (CE) has just turned five years old and he's the oldest child in the preschool. He lives in Extension 6 in Ikageng. CE lives in a makuku with his mother, her sister and his nephew who is already attending primary school. According to CE's mother, Extension 6 is a safe neighbourhood for children, but, as they don't have any running water or electricity, the children have to think of games themselves to pass the time. They can't watch television or listen to the radio and therefore children are not stimulated as much as they can be.

CE's father is not part of his life, and he doesn't support him financially either. CE's mother looks after him and his nephew, while his aunt is a domestic worker during the week in order to support the four of them financially.

CE's mother and his aunt can speak English, but they never speak English at home. They don't buy any English books or magazines, and as they don't have electricity, he doesn't get any exposure to English from the television or radio.

7.3.2 **Data on the Parents' Views of an ESL Programme**

7.3.2.1 *Parent A's Views of an ESL Programme*

Parent A (PA) couldn't speak English, so the whole conversation had to be translated by a Tswana assistant. She sent CA to preschool to prepare him for Grade 0. She plans to send him to Grade 0 in 2002. According to PA, children should learn to communicate and socialize on preschool level - not only in Tswana, but also in English. They should also start to learn reading skills in Tswana and English on preschool level.

PA liked the idea of an ESL Programme for CA and said that it should include speaking, writing and reading skills. The programme should preferably be conducted in the mornings at the Pr.A. They would be willing to pay an extra R30 per month for these classes. Although she wouldn't be able to help CA at home with his English, his uncle would be able to help him and would be

willing to do that.

7.3.2.2 *Parent B's Views of an ESL Programme*

Parent B (PB) studied Human Resources at the Technikon of Northwest for two years after Grade 12. She didn't pursue a career in that field, because she wanted to stay home with her children. She is proficient in English.

PB is of the opinion that English should form a very important part of a preschool syllabus. She thinks that children should start learning English at the age of three. This is why initially she sent CB to an English medium preschool in Potchefstroom. Her older daughter didn't attend an English medium preschool and when she started Grade 1 in an English medium primary school, she struggled with each component of the syllabus, because she couldn't understand the teacher. PB had to help her every day after school and during weekends so that she could keep up with the other children.

In PB's view it is important for the child to be able to communicate in English. They should be able to talk to others about the people and events in their own world. They need to know who their family is, what their names are, and where they live and go to school. All of this should be included in an ESL Programme.

PB would very much like CB to be part of an ESL Programme at school. She is willing to pay R50 extra for this and would be more than willing to support CB at home. She thinks that CB will benefit tremendously from such a programme, because she picked up a lot of English in the few months she attended the English medium preschool and PB doesn't want her to lose that, but rather to build on the skills she has already acquired.

According to PB, an English programme would also prepare CB for Grade 0 in an English medium school. She would also prefer CB to be in a group of not more than 5 preschoolers for the English programme. And it would be convenient for her if the English programme was

implemented as part of the preschool syllabus.

7.3.2.3 *Parent C's Views of an ESL Programme*

Parent C (PC) is a preschool teacher and of the opinion that it is important for preschoolers to be able to communicate their names, ages and addresses in English as this could be helpful when they get lost. She believes that an ESL Programme would be helpful in developing the preschoolers' communicative abilities.

PC believes that CC will learn English easily if she gets the correct stimulation and attention. An ESL Programme would be ideal for this. She is willing to support CC as much as possible at home and would be willing to pay an extra R10 per month for extra English classes at school.

7.3.2.4 *Parent D's Views of an ESL Programme*

Parent D (PD) is unemployed and stays at home to look after her mother and two children. She doesn't know where CD's father is and he doesn't support her in any way with the education or upbringing of CD.

PD finished her matric at a high school in Ikageng and she can speak four languages: Afrikaans, English, Tswana and Northern Sotho. She doesn't have a monthly income and depends on the subsidy of R110 per child per month she receives from the government.

According to PD, a preschooler should mainly learn communication skills at preschool. This also includes learning other languages such as Afrikaans and English. She is of the opinion that they pick up the language faster at an early age and should therefore be exposed to other languages from the age of three. She specifically sent CD to Pr.D because CD's sister also attended that preschool and she picked up a lot of Afrikaans and English before she started attending primary school.

CD will go to Grade 1 in 2002. PD is of the opinion that an ESL Programme would be very

beneficial in her preparation for primary school. She isn't able to pay any extra money for the ESL programme, but she would be willing to support CD at home as much as she can.

7.3.2.5 Parent E's Views of an ESL Programme

Parent E (PE) was in Standard 8 (Grade 10) when CE was born and her parents looked after him until she finished matric (Grade 12). She has been taking care of CE since then. She is unemployed.

Even though she struggles financially, PE sent CE to Pr.E when he was three years old. She believes that preschool plays a very important role in preparing children for Grade 0 and Grade 1. Furthermore, she can't give CE the stimulation he needs at home and a preschool is ideal for this.

PE is of the opinion that CE will learn English easily if he is given the opportunity. In her view, English is a very important language in our country and empowers people to get better jobs and better study opportunities. She would be willing to pay R10 more per month if an English programme was implemented at Pr.E.

7.3.3 Implications for an ESL Programme

It is quite obvious that all of the parents that were interviewed, were very positive about an ESL Programme at their children's preschools. None of them had any objections to such a programme. This is an indication that there is a definite need perceived from the point of view of the parents for the children to learn English.

The designed programme shouldn't require teaching aids that are very costly (not more than R10 per month per child), as parents are not able to pay more than that. Again, it becomes clear that teaching aids and resources shouldn't be expensive.

Parents expect that an ESL Programme would enhance their children's communicative

competence and prepare them for primary school. One of the outcomes should thus be that children should be able to communicate important information about themselves and their immediate environment in English. The syllabus should also focus on listening, reading, writing and speaking skills as children need to be prepared for Grade 1 in their preschool year.

Parents are keen to help their children at home with their English, but it also became apparent that an ESL Programme should not rely on support and input from the children's homes. The parents are not proficient enough to help the children with acquisition skills at home. They also rely very much on and has shifted the responsibility to the preschool to prepare their children for Grade 1.

7.4 DATA FROM THE TEACHERS

The data gathered from the teachers are discussed under three headings. These are data on the place of English Second Language in the current preschool syllabus, the teachers' views of an ESL Programme and the implications of the data for an ESL Programme.

7.4.1 Data on the Place of English Second Language in the Current Preschool Syllabus

None of the schools that were visited had an ESL syllabus or course outline. Teachers A, B and E taught English incidentally in the course of the day (which was no more than 5 minutes per day). Teachers C and D spent not more than 15 minutes per day on drills for rhymes, Bible verses, songs, prayers or greeting forms. When children learnt new English vocabulary, it was in a very roundabout way. Certain Tswana words were learnt, and they were repeated in English by the teacher. The children then repeated the English words a few times.

7.4.2 Data on the Teachers' Views of an ESL Programme

7.4.2.1 Teacher A's Views of an ESL Programme

Teacher A (TA) has been at Pr.A for eight years now. The creche belonged to her daughter

before that. TA completed Standard 6 (Grade 8). Although she hasn't had any specific training related to preschool children, she loves the children very much and feels that her experience as a mother and grandmother is sufficient.

TA is of the opinion that an English Programme for preschool children wouldn't work. The focus during the preschool years should rather be on the children's proficiency in their home language. Children should start learning English in Grade 1. Furthermore, she doesn't think the parents will be able to pay an extra fee for English classes as it is already a struggle to collect the current school fees. According to TA, many parents will say that they are willing to pay extra for English classes, even though they know that they can't afford it.

7.4.2.2 *Teacher B's Views of an ESL Programme*

Teacher B (TB) has had three and a half years of training in Educare at the Technical College. She has been a preschool teacher for two and a half years now, of which the last year and a half was at Pr.B. Even though she doesn't have that much experience, she doesn't hesitate to ask for advice from the other, more experienced teachers at school.

According to TB, preschools play a very important part in preparing children for formal learning in primary schools. However, children at preschool level should never be taught according to the formal methods they use in primary school. Preschool children learn best by playing and therefore all learning should take the form of a game.

TB would welcome an English Programme, but is of the opinion that an ESL Programme should be coupled with training on how to implement the programme. She will be more than willing to incorporate it in her daily programme. She is of the opinion that the children should learn more English, but she doesn't know exactly what and how to do it. She also thinks that some of the parents would be willing to pay extra for the English classes at school.

However, TB has a group of 25 children. This means that the PB's expectation of not more than

five children per group is not very practical. TB will have to accommodate all 25 children in her group if she wants to implement an ESL Programme. She would prefer that the programme didn't take up more than half an hour per day.

7.4.2.3 *Teacher C's Views of an ESL Programme*

Teacher C (TC) has been a preschool teacher for six and a half years. The previous six years she taught at an Afrikaans medium preschool in Promosa (the Coloured township). At that preschool they were encouraged to improve their education. As a result of this, she is now doing her final year of her Diploma in Education on a part time basis at the Potchefstroom College of Education.

TC is of the opinion that themes chosen as part of an ESL Programme should be related to the children's world and should start with the children themselves - their bodies, their families and their position in the families. The themes then get wider, e.g. the food they eat and their environment.

According to TC, music and songs play a very important role in the life of these preschoolers. The children enjoy singing songs, and doing movements on the beat of the songs. However, she finds it difficult to explain the songs to the children if they are in English.

TC would welcome an ESL Programme as part of her daily programme. The programme could take up as much as an hour of her daily programme. She is of the opinion that it is necessary for children in South Africa to learn English as early as possible, as the ability to communicate in English can open many doors for the children. Furthermore, she doesn't know how to teach English effectively to the children and a programme that has been worked out systematically would be very helpful to her.

7.4.2.4 *Teacher D's Views of an ESL Programme*

Teacher D (TD) grew up on a farm near Mafikeng and finished school up to Standard 3 (Grade 5). When she got married she moved with her husband to Ikageng. She started working as a

cleaner and later as an assistant at a preprimary school in Potchefstroom and she was employed there for nine years.

TD realized that there was a need for a preschool in the Kanana area in Ikageng. A few mothers contacted her and she started a day care centre from her home. She also entered and completed a Level 1 course in Educare at a non-governmental organisation. In the beginning of 1992 she started her own preschool.

TD is of the opinion that preschoolers will only learn while they are playing and having fun. The children should be provided with a safe and loving environment in order to help them to adapt to the routine of preschool life. Furthermore, they should be allowed to take risks and to do things on their own within this environment.

According to TD children should be exposed to as many languages as possible on preschool level. She is proficient in Tswana, English and Afrikaans and she uses all three these languages in the course of the day. When she gives certain commands to the children in Tswana, she also repeats them in Afrikaans and English so that they can get used to the other languages.

TD expressed her interest in an ESL Programme for the five-year-olds, but she is of the opinion that she would use the programme for all the children in her school. It should therefore not take up more than 45 minutes per day of the daily programme. The little ones would then also be exposed to the language more, so that when they are five years old, they would be used to the routine and then they would be able to focus on the content of the programme.

7.4.2.5 *Teacher E's Views of an ESL Programme*

Teacher E (TE) has been a preschool teacher for nine years now. She didn't finish primary school and got married at a very early age. When she moved to Ikageng with her husband, she was introduced to a non-governmental organisation, that provided training for women who wanted to become preschool teachers. She finished her Level 1 training with them and is now busy with N4

in Educare at the Potchefstroom Technical College.

According to TE, preschoolers learn best when they can play and when they are in a situation where they feel safe. Teachers shouldn't expect preschoolers to sit still and concentrate and repeat the things they are supposed to learn. They should discover things for themselves while they are playing and the teacher should only guide them in their play and point them in certain directions in this process of discovery.

TE is of the opinion that children should be exposed to a second language from the age of four years old. She would therefore be interested in an ESL Programme as she wants her children not only to recite rhymes and sing songs, but also to communicate simple concepts and in simple sentences. At the moment she is of the opinion that the rote learning isn't very effective, because they still don't understand any English at all. However, the ESL programme should not take more than half an hour per day as the children don't have a very big concentration span.

7.4.3 Implications for an ESL Programme

All of the teachers, except one (TA), recognized the need for an ESL Programme as part of their daily programme. Most teachers want to incorporate English into their schedule, but they don't know how to do it effectively.

The programme should be adapted to be taught to small groups, but also for bigger groups of 25+ children. The activities should be of such a nature that the teacher will still be able to supervise the children, even if they work individually.

The themes for the programme should centre around the child and his world. Themes should start with concepts that are very familiar to the child (such as his body) and then move to broader themes (such as the environment).

The programme should be set out in a very transparent, clear and simple manner. This will ensure that the less experienced or underqualified teacher will also have access to it. The teacher should be very clear on what is expected of her in the programme.

Another very important guideline that was gleaned from the teachers is that the ESL Programme should be fun to the children. The activities should be interesting to them and the teaching methods shouldn't require them to sit quietly for long periods of time. The children need to be actively involved in all the materials that are presented.

The data gathered from the teachers also gave an indication of the amount of time per day that can be spent on an ESL Programme in the preschools. It seems that a daily ESL Programme of about thirty minutes would be practical and convenient for most of the teachers.

7.5 DATA FROM THE CHILDREN

The data from the children are discussed under two headings. The first heading deals with the data gathered on the children's English proficiency, while the second deals with the implications of their proficiency for an ESL Programme.

7.5.1 Data on the Children's English Proficiency

7.5.1.1 Data on CA's English Proficiency

CA's father requested very unexpectedly that CA shouldn't be observed or interviewed individually. The agreement was that CA could only be observed as part of the class. CA is a very sociable and cheerful child. He enjoys his time at the preschool very much. He is also one of the more "experienced" preschoolers in the creche and has certain responsibilities such as handing out breakfast and lunch to the other children during the day.

As most of the boys in the creche, CA prefers games that involve running around or chasing

someone or playing with a ball. However, when it comes to sitting quietly and listening to the teacher and repeating words or letters or numbers from a poster, CA isn't as enthusiastic.

It was very difficult to gather any data on CA's proficiency in English. Even when teaching English words, the teacher mostly spoke Tswana and asked the questions in Tswana and the children only had to repeat one word in English. They never learned any phrases in English - only single words represented by means of pictures on a poster. The only phrase that CA did say in English was "My name is Tsepo" and that was done as part of a song. The moment a few of the other children were asked what their names were, they didn't understand, even though they sing that song every morning as part of circle time.

7.5.1.2 *Data on CB's English Proficiency*

CB is a bright and happy child. She has a fair degree of self confidence and is not scared to try new things. She loves singing very much and the music time in the daily programme is definitely her favourite time. She knows many English songs and she loves to sing them.

CB participated in class when they were doing the theme on family and she also repeated the words in English, but she never volunteered an answer on her own. She answered when the teacher asked her in Tswana or when she was prompted in Tswana, but never out of her own free will. It was also only one word answers in English

CB was shown some story books and asked certain questions in English. She didn't understand questions such as "What is this?/What colour is this?/Who is this?/ What shape is this?". She was then asked in Tswana to indicate any objects that she knew in English and to name them. At first she just paged through the books and enjoyed it very much. It was obvious that they are not allowed to handle books in the preschool and this was confirmed by TB who said they had only a few books and couldn't let the children handle them as they got damaged.

However, after a bit of prompting in Tswana, CB started naming some of the objects of the pages

in Tswana and then in English. The words she knew included mainly different types of animals (dog, cat, butterfly, zebra, elephant and giraffe), and body parts (nose, mouth, eyes, ears). She could also name certain objects such as an aeroplane (pronounced [ɔləupləɪn]), a watch and a ball.

CB was asked (in Tswana) to sing any English songs that she knew and she enjoyed this very much. She sang two religious songs and made movements with them, but she couldn't explain what they meant, not even in Tswana. Her pronunciation of the English words wasn't as good as when she paged through the books. E.g. the word "happy" was pronounced as [heppi], "love" as [lɔ:], "is" as [ɪf] and "down" as [dəu].

Furthermore, CB volunteered to recite the nursery rhyme "Humpty Dumpty". Again she didn't understand what the rhyme was all about and the pronunciation was poorer than when she named the objects in the books. E.g. "wall" became [wɔ:] and "men" became [me].

CB was shown a page with five shapes on it: a circle, a triangle, a square, a rectangle and a star. She didn't know the name of the shapes in Tswana, but she could name the circle, triangle, square and rectangle in English.

CB did say "Good morning" when greeted in English, but she didn't understand "How are you?" or "What is your name?". CB didn't attempt to use any sentences at all in the course of the interview - she only used single words.

7.5.1.3 *Data on CC's English Proficiency*

CC is a very shy girl, and she doesn't trust people very easily. This made it very difficult to observe her or to get close to her and try determine her proficiency in English. The other children were used to being observed within two days and they even tried to communicate with me when they played outside. When they realized I could only speak English, they came to me and said "Hello, my name is (and gave their names). I am years old" (and gave their ages). Some of them pointed at me and I realized that they wanted to know my name. However, CC just

watched this from a distance and didn't attempt to join in this "game".

Even though CC is very shy, she knows all the English songs they sang during the week, but she wasn't willing to sing them on her own, so it was impossible to listen to her pronunciation or to determine her comprehension.

She also started crying when she was removed from the group to page through books and magazines with her in order to try and determine some of her English vocabulary. The assistant who helps with the babies then accompanied CC and tried to page through the books with her, but CC was still upset and didn't say a word. Another child (a little boy, who is CC's friend) was then asked to join CC in paging through the books. They both enjoyed it very much, but CC still didn't say a word. Together, they recognized and named a circle and with prompting they also recognized and named a triangle and rectangle. They couldn't name any of the body parts in English, but they named them all of them in Tswana. The only animals they could name in English was a cat, a dog and a zebra.

When they were greeted in English, both of them responded. "Good morning. I am fine and you?" They also responded to the question: "How old are you?" - "I am four years old". This was the only sentences that could be elicited from either of the two children.

7.5.1.4 Data on CD's English Proficiency

CD is a very outgoing, sociable child. It is obvious that she's at home in the preschool environment and she makes an effort to make the new children feel at home there as well. She usually initiates games during free play and goes through a lot of trouble to include new or shy kids.

However, when CD was taken out of the group, she became very shy and self-conscious and it was very difficult to get responses from her without prompting her. TD assisted in this, and the prompts from her teacher put her more at ease. CD only identified a few objects from the story

books ("watch", "cabbage" and "steps") and named them in English. When she became more relaxed after a while, she named many objects in Tswana, though.

CD loves singing songs - even when it was on her own. Most of the words in the songs could be recognized, but some of her pronunciation was unclear. For example, clap was pronounced as [klep], wool as [wu], bags as [bɛ:], dame as [dɔi] and lane as [ləi]. When she became more relaxed, CD responded in full sentences to two English questions, namely "What is your name?" and "How old are you?". Again, "name" was pronounced as [nɔi].

CD also likes to recite English nursery rhymes. TD teaches them movements with the rhymes and dramatizes the words and phrases. CD loves listening to her teacher and repeating the words in the same way that TD has recited them. However, when asked any questions about the nursery rhymes, she couldn't answer them and she couldn't relate any of the vocabulary used in the rhymes to the pictures in the storybooks.

7.5.1.5 *Data on CE's English Proficiency*

Even though CE is the oldest child in the preschool, it usually takes him longer to catch up when they start with a new activity or learn something new. His concentration span is not very long and he would rather be busy with some physical exercise (playing with the tyres outside) than with mental exercises (building something with the blocks or listening to a story).

CE, however, enjoyed it tremendously to page through books himself. He loved the story books better than the magazines and kept telling his own stories in Tswana when he saw the pictures. He identified some of the animals and objects in the books and magazines in English when prompted (dog, cat, horse, trolley (for a wheelbarrow), tomato (for beetroot), and sheep), and he could also name three parts of the body (nose, mouth and ear). CE only named one shape in English and that was the circle.

CE also sang a song and recited some rhymes, but the pronunciation of certain words made it

difficult to understand what he was singing e.g. "thumb" was pronounced as [ta], "have" as [hε], and "How do you do?" as "Why do you do?". He didn't respond to the question "What is your name?" and CE never used any sentences - he only said key words in English.

7.5.2 Implications for an ESL Programme

It quickly became apparent that none of the children was even slightly proficient in English. They don't view the language as a means of communication as they get by very well in Tswana only at the schools. This fact has basically two implications for an ESL Programme.

The first is that the starting level of the programme should be very basic. The programme shouldn't rely on any prior knowledge of communicating in English that the children may have. Furthermore, the programme should guide the children from the beginning not to communicate in single words, but in simple sentences.

The second implication for an ESL Programme is that the children should be motivated, somehow by the programme to speak English. This means a desire should be created within them to communicate in the language. The easiest way to do this is to create a character (e.g. a puppet) who is very likeable, and interesting and who can only speak English. They will want to communicate with this character and the only way he can understand them is if they speak English.

Furthermore, the children don't have a very big concentration span. A single activity in the programme should never be more than 15 minutes, or the children will get bored. The syllabus should rather consist of a variety of shorter activities.

The children loved the pictures used in the story books. It would thus be advisable to include many pictures in the programme - especially during English story time. This will not only help them to place the language they hear into context, but it will be very enjoyable for them. This will

motivate them to learn more English.

The focus of the programme should be on communicative competence, and some attention should be paid to pronunciation, so that children will be able to communicate more effectively. Attention should also be given to pronunciation of end sounds when the children learn a new song or rhyme.

7.6 CONCLUSION

There were many similarities found in the five case studies. One of these are that all of the parents and most of the teachers perceive an ESL Programme for preschoolers as a very effective solution to a need that exists. An ESL Programme would enable their children or pupils to cope better within the primary school system in South Africa. In this system, African children usually receive instruction in their mother tongue only for the first four years of learning, and then English is used as the medium of instruction (Macdonald & Burroughs, 1991:5). Furthermore, the opportunities for a bilingual person in this country are far more than those for a unilingual person. The adults feel that the sooner children become proficient in English, the better.

However, another similarity occurred within the children's attitude towards English. At the moment they can't see any need for communicating in another language and therefore they don't view English as a means of communication. This means that the programme will have to create a need within them and will have to motivate them to start communicating in English.

Furthermore, from the case studies, many more guidelines for designing an ESL Programme became apparent. These guidelines relate to factors such as the budget for implementing an ESL Programme, the use of resources, possible syllabus content and the support the children would get from home. These are very important guidelines and a very good starting point for the design of an ESL Programme.