

CHAPTER 10 CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCH

10.1 INTRODUCTION

This concluding chapter provides a summary of all the preceding chapters. It describes how all the preceding chapters lead to the design of an ESL Programme for preprimary children in Ikageng. The factors that were taken into consideration were the theory of course design, the preprimary child, Curriculum 2005, the method of research, the results of the situation analysis done in Ikageng. Lastly, the limitations of this study as well as recommendations for further research will be discussed.

10.2 FACTORS THAT INFLUENCED THE DESIGN OF AN ESL PROGRAMME FOR PREPRIMARY CHILDREN IN IKAGENG

10.2.1 The Blending of Curriculum Models and Outcomes Based Education

Even though the design of an ESL Programme formed the focus of this study, the latest developments in the theory of course design were studied and described, as any course should have a sound theoretical basis. The steps in the circular model for curriculum design as proposed by Nicholls and Nicholls (1978:21) were followed and incorporated into the guidelines given for the Foundation Phase of Curriculum 2005.

The steps included doing a situation analysis, selecting the aims, selecting and organising the content as well as selecting and organizing the teaching methods. In doing this, the ESL Programme functions on different levels of educational programme planning.

In selecting the aims, the levels of polity determination and curriculum design (cf. Section 2.2. and 2.3) played a very important role. These aims also had to be in accordance with the Specific

Outcomes given for the eight different Learning Areas in the Foundation Phase as set out in the policy document of Curriculum 2005 (cf. Appendix). The aims were constructed in terms of General Outcomes for the programme as well as Specific Outcomes for each week. As part of these Specific Outcomes, the Assessment Criteria for each have also been included in the weekly programmes in order to give the teacher an indication of whether the learners have achieved the outcomes (cf. Appendix).

The next step entailed the selection and organization of the content. This usually takes place on the level of syllabus design (cf. Section 2.4). In following this step, the results of the situation analysis had to be taken into consideration as well as the Phase Organisers as prescribed by Curriculum 2005. These basically determined the themes or topics for each of the 20 weeks of the programme.

Lastly the selection and organization of teaching methods functioned on the level of the teaching-learning situation (cf. Section 2.5). These were described in the programme as "Activities" (also called "tasks") that focus on one of six different skills - either speaking, listening, reading, writing, creativity or playing games.

10.2.2 The Preprimary Learner

The characteristics of the preprimary learner were studied and described in order to get a clearer picture of the target group for this ESL Programme. The preprimary child, and specifically the five-year-old, was described in terms of his psychological, cognitive, physiological and social development. Furthermore, different aspects influencing the learning of preprimary children were discussed with specific reference to the learning situation and the learning programme. Most of these aspects (as far as they were appropriate to the situation in the township) were taken into consideration in the design of the programme

10.2.3 Results of the Situation Analysis

The situation analysis was done in the form of five case studies in five different preschools in Ikageng (the township near Potchefstroom). Data were gathered from the children themselves, their teachers and their parents. The data gathered from the case studies not only provided insight into the social, economic and family lives of the children, but it was also an indication of the the aims, the starting point, the content, the cost, the format and the time-frame within which and ESL programme could be implemented.

10.2.4 The Proposed Programme

The proposed programme is a task-based syllabus originating from the Communicative Approach to language course design. Because it aims at the communicative competence of preschoolers, the different tasks were categorized under six different skills, namely reading, writing, listening, speaking, creativity and playing games. Furthermore, each of these tasks has been designed in such a manner that they adhere to certain Specific Outcomes of the eight learning areas as prescribed by the Foundation Phase Policy Document of Curriculum 2005.

10.3 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

Even though this programme aims to fulfil the needs of the target group, the first, very obvious drawback of this study is that it is limited to a particular age group and a few specific ethnic groups. It is also based solely on the data gained from one township. These factors prevent the findings as well as the programme from being generalized. Furthermore, the programme has not been implemented in the teaching-learning situation, and its validity could therefore be contested.

Thirdly, there are time constraints on the programme. As the preschools only finalize the numbers of the children at the end of March and as their school year ends at the end of November, only twenty weeks are available for the implementation of an ESL programme. The main aim of the

course is to provide the children with communicative competence in their second language, but twenty weeks of half an hour of English per day would not be sufficient to meet this aim.

Fourthly, this study took place during a transitional period with regard to the implementation of Curriculum 2005. At the moment, the curriculum hasn't been implemented on all levels and in all grades and some changes will most probably still take place with regard to practicalities, legal requirements and the implementation. Some of the aspects that are referred to may be dated.

10.4 FURTHER RESEARCH

The study raises the following possibilities for future research:

1. The programme could be implemented in preschools in Ikageng. In its implementation research can be carried out into whether the Specific Outcomes have been achieved and whether the learners adhere to the mentioned Assessment Criteria.
2. The implementation of the syllabus will also necessitate research into the production of teaching aids in the teaching-learning situation.
3. The study could be extended in two ways. The first would be in designing ESL Programmes for Grade 1 - 3 in Ikageng or more case studies could be done in preschools in other townships in order to be able to generalize the Grade 0 programme so that it can be used in more preschools all over South Africa.
4. As this syllabus is task-based, research could be done whether another type of syllabus would enable the learners to achieve the same outcomes.
5. Research could also be done in the field of training, retraining and in-service training of preschool teachers, specifically with regarding to teaching a second language.
6. As this programme will only last for twenty weeks, research could be done to see whether and ESL programme could be implemented at an earlier age than five in order to achieve the aim of communicative competence before the preschoolers start attending primary school.

7. The situation analysis done in this study can be extended further. More case studies can be carried out and primary schools (specifically Grades 1 - 3) can also be included in the analysis.
8. The programme can only be evaluated after it has been implemented and as the circular model for course design has been used and it is therefore an ongoing process, research can be done in any of the mentioned elements.

10.5 CONCLUSION

This study should help to meet the communicative needs of preschool children in Ikageng. It is also in line with the prescribed outcomes based curriculum in South Africa and would therefore meet the requirements set out by the Department of Education. Furthermore, it is accessible to preschool teachers who didn't have proper training in preprimary teaching and who has English as a third or second language as it not only provides the content, but it also presents and organizes teaching methods in a clear format and in simple English.