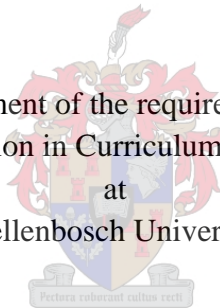# *The Mandarin Chinese Second Additional Language Curriculum for South African schools:*

Considerations and Possibilities.

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Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Education in Curriculum Studies
at
Stellenbosch University

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Co-supervised by: Professor U Yu

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Declaration

By submitting this dissertation electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my original work, that I am the authorship owner thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

Signature: ………………………………………….   Date: ……December 2017………….

Abstract

The focus of this study was the Mandarin Chinese curriculum for South African schools. The study undertook to analyse the curriculum in order to highlight considerations and possibilities for action.

China is a big country boasting the world's largest population and second largest economy. Since establishing diplomatic relations in 1998, South Africa and China have been working on strengthening mutual political and economic ties. In March 2014 Sino-South African cooperation in the field of education gained momentum with the signing of an agreement which included the introduction of Mandarin Chinese into South African schools. This resulted in the release of the first curriculum for Mandarin Chinese in South Africa, published by the Department of Basic Education that same year, the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) Grades 4-12: Mandarin Second Additional Language*.

This study set out to analyse the new curriculum by first sketching and understanding the context into which it entered, namely the South African educational landscape, and secondly by exploring the unique characteristics of the Mandarin Chinese language. Framed within the interpretive research paradigm, content analysis was chosen as the appropriate research method. The study analysed and compared the structure of the South African curriculum with that of the Australian curriculum using conventional content analysis. The analysis was further enriched and nuanced by using the Chinese language-specific as well as the South African educational landscape affordances derived from the literature survey as tools for directed content analysis.

The study found that the new South African Mandarin Chinese curriculum conceptualises the initial teaching of Mandarin Chinese as second additional language as if Mandarin Chinese is related to English by using the English generic curriculum as template to 'version' the Mandarin curriculum. It further frames the curriculum against South Africa's unique historical background as well as the policy-practice gap evident in South African curricula.

The study also found that the South African curriculum and the Australian curriculum include some common but also unique elements in the following areas:

- the level of involvement of relevant role players as they collaborate in language education, with Australia stating this as a high priority;
- the development of a curriculum that allows for the unique character of Mandarin Chinese, as is done in the Australian curriculum;
- a more structured allowance for learner diversity, along the lines of the three pathways in the Australian curriculum, where learners' previous exposure to Chinese is taken into consideration; and
- the inclusion of cultural elements in the curriculum, with the Australian curriculum strong in this area.

This study is an attempt to contribute towards policy making as well as curriculum development as they relate to the teaching of Mandarin Chinese in South Africa. With regard to policy making the Mandarin Chinese curriculum suffers from many of the problems that other South African second additional language curricula experience. The study identifies the need to develop a Chinese language-specific curriculum to allow for the unique character of a language that is not remotely related to English. It is also necessary for curriculum advisers to promote Mandarin Chinese and iron out policy-practice gaps. As shown by the Australian curriculum, the South African curriculum needs to allow for learner diversity and smooth learner progression in the curriculum.

With regard to curriculum development as it relates to the South African Mandarin Chinese curriculum, the study identifies the need to adjust the curriculum in terms of the expected proficiency for vocabulary to be achieved by learners and by focusing on listening and speaking and modifying the text-based approach at Intermediate Phase level. The need to present a clear Pinyin-character policy and to incorporate aspects of Chinese culture into the South African Mandarin Chinese curriculum was also identified.

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List of Abbreviations

ANA	Annual National Assessment
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
C2005	Curriculum 2005
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CCIEEC	Chinese Culture and International Education and Exchange Centre
CCM	Constant Comparative Method
FET	Further Education and Training
IIAL	Incremental Implementation of African Languages
LiEP	Language in Education Policy
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
NALSSP	National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SGB	School Governing Body

Chapter 1: Introduction to the study

1.1 Introduction

The teaching of Mandarin Chinese in South African state schools was proposed to start in 2016 (Department of Basic Education, 2015:5). This Asian language is an exciting new addition to the South African school curriculum, but one, as this study will show, that needs careful consideration in order to maximise its full potential. In this context, I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to critically examine the South African Mandarin Chinese curriculum in order to contribute towards its successful introduction.

My personal interest in Mandarin Chinese started with two years of formal Chinese language study at Ligong Xueyuan （力工学院）in the Chinese city of Tianjin from 2000 to 2002. My husband and I then continued living in China for a further 10 years, working and raising our family of four children there. My own experience of learning Chinese as an adult in a university setting, coupled with the experience of supporting my children in learning Chinese in local schools, sparked a lifelong interest in the process of Chinese language study. I formally got involved in the teaching of Chinese during the last stretch of our stay in China as I supported Chinese teachers at a local international school, Xining International Academy. Back in South Africa, I have been serving as a volunteer teacher in the Confucius Classroom at the Cape Academy of Mathematics, Science and Technology.

I love China, Chinese people and the Chinese language. Based on how such exposure has enriched my own life, I naturally am excited about the teaching of Mandarin Chinese in South African schools. I am, however, sensitive to the challenges it poses as I know from personal experience what it means to bridge the two cultures. As we therefore proceed to implement this new Mandarin Chinese curriculum, we need to be well-informed in order to approach this process wisely in a school context where languages jockey for position. In order to contribute towards the successful introduction of Mandarin Chinese into South

African state schools, the study critically analyses the new South African Mandarin Chinese curriculum.

1.2 Context as motivation for the research

With the world's largest population (Population Pyramids of the World from 1950 to 2100), and second largest economy (Ni, 2015:14; Tinsley & Board, 2014:32) China has become an increasingly dominant world power. As China continues its rise on the world stage, the demand for Chinese as a foreign language is growing (Everson & Xiao, 2011:xiii).

Official diplomatic relations between South Africa and China started in 1998 and were recently cemented through mutual state visits (Corke, 2015; Ni, 2015:14-15). China is the biggest trading partner of South Africa, and South Africa is China's biggest trading partner in Africa. In 2013, bilateral trade totalled $65.15 billion, up 8.6 percent year on year (Ni, 2015:14-15). Based on these developments in the South African diplomatic, political and economic sectors, one can conclude that Mandarin Chinese is positioning itself as one of the most strategic foreign languages for South African citizens to study.

With regard to its teaching in South African state schools, 2014 saw major developments in cooperation between the two countries. In March 2014 the two nations signed an agreement which, among other things, included the introduction of Mandarin Chinese into the South African school curriculum ("*Motshekga wants more Mandarin in schools"*, 2014). In the course of 2014, China sent curriculum experts from the East China Normal University in Shanghai to work closely with the South African Department of Basic Education on the development of such a curriculum (Ding, 2016). A subsequent mini-conference on 6 June 2014 in Pretoria brought together relevant stakeholders (Mini-conference, 2014). At the end of 2014, the first curriculum for Mandarin Chinese in South African schools, the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) Grades 4-12: Mandarin Second*

Additional Language (Mandarin Second Additional Language, 2014a-c), was published by the Department of Basic Education.

As the study set out to analyse this Chinese curriculum for South African schools, it aimed to be sensitive to the context within which the curriculum will function by first exploring those characteristics which sets Mandarin Chinese apart from other Western languages. The study also highlighted the need to be sensitive to the local educational environment. As such the literature survey explored the history of curriculum development in South Africa since the first democratic elections; the complexity of the South African educational landscape; and recent developments following the introduction of Mandarin Chinese. The South African curriculum history was unpacked with reference to the South African Constitution, the Language in Education Policy as well as South African curricula since 1994. The complexity of the current South African educational environment was recognised and explored as it relates to major issues. In conclusion, the following noteworthy developments with the introduction of Mandarin Chinese were discussed: the development of the curriculum, the implementation strategy thereof as well as opposition encountered in the process.

This is the context both international and local for the entry of Mandarin Chinese into South African schools.

1.3 Statement of the problem

South Africa follows a three-curricula model for language learning and teaching at school: 'Home Language' for the first language, which is also the language of learning and teaching, 'First Additional Language' for the second language and 'Second Additional Language' for the optional third language (English Second Additional Language, 2002:4). Mandarin Chinese would be offered as a second additional language from Intermediate Phase (grade 4-6) through Senior Phase (grade 7-9), all the way to the Further Education and Training (FET) Phase (grade 10-12) (Department of Basic Education, 2015:4-5). The *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS): English Generic Second Additional Language* was used

as basis for the development of the Mandarin curriculum (Department of Basic Education, 2012:3), henceforth referred to as the CAPS English Generic SAL.

In taking the unique nature of Mandarin Chinese as a truly foreign language and the challenges this poses for the non-mother tongue speaker into account, we as South Africans need to be careful in how we adapt the English generic curriculum for the study of Chinese. In order to succeed in what this study was set out to do, namely highlighting issues for consideration and positively directing the implementation of the new South African Mandarin Chinese curriculum, the study commenced with an in-depth exploration of the unique nature of Mandarin Chinese and its pedagogic implications for second language learners.

The unique nature of Mandarin Chinese is introduced in the literature survey by defining the concept of 'linguistic distance'. The discussion reveals a marked linguistic distance between English and Chinese as they belong to different language families. The implications of this difference as it applies to reading and writing are discussed by referring to the complexity of Chinese characters, the concept of transfer, the concept of a skills mix, the text-based approach employed in the CAPS as well as standard South African approaches to literacy development. Unlike English, which uses an alphabet, Chinese uses a logographic script, where strokes are the basic spelling symbol and characters the basic analytical unit (Xiao, 2011:115). Learners with an alphabetic background therefore need to put a lot of time and effort into mastering this 'foreign' writing system (Australian Curriculum Languages Chinese, 2013: context statement; Jorden & Walton, 1987:117; Xiao, 2011:115). Secondly, the concept of transfer, which holds that major thought processes acquired through the study of the first language need not be learned afresh, but can simply be transferred to the new language (Edwards, 2015:77), unfortunately is not applicable to the study of reading and writing Chinese characters (Everson, 2011a:100). Thirdly, the concept of a skills mix holds that the reading of Chinese texts in characters does not help one's speaking ability or develop vocabulary as reading in Chinese and speaking in Chinese are two different skills (Christensen, 2011:22; Jorden & Walton, 1987:118). The complexity of Chinese characters as well as the concepts of transfer and skills mix has major pedagogic implications in terms of the pacing as well as priority of reading and writing during the early stages of learning

Chinese. Literature is therefore united in suggesting that, in the study of Mandarin Chinese, speaking and listening skills should be established before working on reading and writing; and learning of speech should not be held back by the speed at which the written system is mastered (Everson, 2011a:100-105; Halliday, 2014:3; Jorden & Walton, 1987:118-120). The Mandarin Chinese curriculum pace and expected proficiency level for different language skills at different stages therefore need to be language specific and cannot blindly follow the structures set out by a generic curriculum. The text-based approach employed in the CAPS as well as standard approaches to literacy development of South African languages are further questioned on the basis of the linguistic distance between Chinese and English.

The pedagogic implications of the linguistic distance between English and Chinese are further explored with reference to the four different tones used in speaking Mandarin Chinese, as well as a discussion on the marked social distance between speakers of English and speakers of Chinese. The study of Mandarin Chinese requires special attention to both of these aspects which is not relevant to the study of English by western learners.

One of the ways in which one could learn about the implementation of the new Mandarin Chinese curriculum is by comparing it to similar initiatives in countries that are comparable to South Africa. Australia has been chosen as country for comparison, as motivated in section 4.2.2. This country's large Asian population and location in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as politics and economics have driven a considerable investment in education as it relates to Asian studies. With Chinese further having been taught in Australian state schools since the 1950s, Australia as a country clearly has experience and expertise. In selecting the sample for comparative analysis, another consideration has been to opt for a Non-Asian country as opposed to an Asian country, as the nature of the learners who enter the programme and the consequent issues that need to be addressed are similar to those in South Africa. The Australian context also provided national curricula which is comparative to the CAPS curricula in South Africa.

When looking to another country for guidance, we as South Africans however need to contextualise in terms of our own unique South African problems and solutions. The literature survey describes these complexities in terms of South Africa's persistent

inequalities in schools, the competing discourses of transformation and the market economy, as well as the debate around English versus home language as the language of learning and teaching. Recent opposition to the introduction of Mandarin Chinese may point to a lack of understanding of and allowance for the true complexities of the South African educational environment.

In the light of these issues, the central research questions for this study were:

1. How does the South African CAPS curriculum conceptualise the initial teaching of Mandarin Chinese as a second additional language in terms of document structure and in terms of affordances of the South African educational landscape and the Chinese language?

2. How does the South African curriculum compare with the Australian curriculum in terms of document structure and these affordances?

1.4 Research paradigm and methodology

This is an analysis and comparison study. The text or document under analysis is the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) Grades 4-6: Mandarin Second Additional Language* (Mandarin Second Additional Language, 2014a). Although the South African Mandarin Chinese curriculum is available for grades 4 to 12, the study only analysed the Intermediate Phase curriculum because the focus was on the initial teaching of Mandarin Chinese as defined by the first central research question. In the process, the CAPS curriculum is compared with existing Australian curricula to highlight issues for consideration in the South African curriculum and possibilities for action in the future. These curricula are the *Australian Curriculum Languages Chinese (2013): Second Language Learner Pathway, Year 3-4*; and *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages (2011)*.

In their introduction, subsection 1.2 *Overview*, all South African school curricula specify that the current curriculum and assessment policy statements for learning and teaching in South

African schools should comprise the following three documents (Mandarin Second Additional Language, 2014a:4):

(i)   *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements* for each approved school subject

(ii) *The policy document, National policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12*

(iii) *The policy document, National Protocol for Assessment Grades R-12 (January 2012)*.

The current study's focus as defined by the central research questions was on the teaching of Mandarin Chinese. In this context, document (i) deals with the progression and structuring of learning content for this subject, whereas documents (ii) and (iii) deal with assessment strategies and promotion in general. As the Australian curriculum documents have no comparable sections on the topic of assessment, the current study did not deal with this topic and therefore the *National policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12,* was not analysed in detail but only used as reference, and the *National Protocol for Assessment Grades R-12* was not analysed at all.

The study could be classified as a content analysis study. According to Mouton (2001:165), content analysis studies "analyse the content of texts or documents." Content analysis traditionally is limited to being classified primarily as a qualitative versus a quantitative research method (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008:108; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1277; Mouton, 2001:166). Hsieh and Shannon (2005:1278) go further to identify three distinct approaches to qualitative content analysis: conventional, directed and summative. The current study made use of both the conventional and directed content analysis methods, as discussed in Chapter 3.

Conventional content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1279-1281) aims to describe a phenomenon concerning which existing theory or research literature is limited. Researchers do not use preconceived categories, but derive the categories from the data by immersing themselves in the data. For the purposes of this study, conventional content analysis was used as a method to compare the structure of the South African curriculum with that of the two mentioned Australian curricula.

Directed content analysis studies use existing theory or prior research to develop the initial categories, elements or codes which serve as the basis for analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1286). For the purposes of this study, the South African curriculum was analysed and compared with the Australian curricula based on four South African educational landscape affordances as well as four Chinese language-specific affordances. These were identified through the following process. The literature survey was used to identify initial codes which were conceptualised in a semantic map with three categories: educational landscape themes and related language priorities as well as Chinese language-specific curriculum factors. This conceptual map assisted in the process of boiling down all the factors to the eventual eight curriculum affordances, as Saldanha (2013:8-9) explains: "qualitative codes when clustered together according to similarity and regularity, actively facilitate the development of categories and the analysis of their connectedness".

A quick reference to the research paradigm within which the current study functioned, seems to be in order here. Research paradigms, in the words of Le Grange (2000:194), are "frameworks that serve as maps or guides for scientific/research communities, determining important problems and issues for their members to address and determining acceptable theories and methods to solve identified problems/issues". Interpretivism has been identified as the primary theory guiding this particular research process. As opposed to Positivism, it stands for fluid versus static reality; subjectivity versus objectivity; insider's perspective versus outsider's perspective; emergent categories versus fixed categories and understanding versus explanation (Le Grange, 2000:193). As such, the aim of this study was to go beyond merely describing or explaining the curriculum; the aim of the study was to generate understanding (Connole, 1993:19; Le Grange, 2009:3). This being a qualitative study performed within the interpretivist paradigm, I chose to use the first person singular with reference to choice of methods and interpretations as these were made on a subjective and not objective basis.

Mandarin Chinese was listed in the Government Gazette as a non-official language as recently as 20 March 2015, with 2016 stated as the year for implementation of the new curriculum (Department of Basic Education, 2015:5). As such, the study frequently

referenced non-academic sources because of the current and public nature of the issue under investigation.

As the offering of Mandarin Chinese would commence in the month of January 2016 (Department of Basic Education, 2015:5), the limited time frame only allowed for a conceptual study and not a programme evaluation of the implementation of the curriculum in a school which would produce empirical data.

The study did not examine international Chinese examinations for foreigners, namely the British Cambridge and Pearson examinations, the American AP examination or the Chinese HSK examination, as these are examinations equivalent to the South African Grade 12 examination, but not curricula in the sense that they teach students through year-by-year progression as new knowledge builds on previous knowledge.

1.5 Conclusion

With this introduction of the study as background, the particulars of the research are presented in the following chapters: Literature survey in Chapter 2, Research methodology and method in Chapter 3, Analysis and comparison of the curricula in Chapter 4 and, finally, Chapter 5 with answers to the research questions, recommendations based on the findings of the study, pointers for future research, a reflection on the limitations of the study as well as some personal notes.

Chapter 2: The South African curriculum landscape and the role of Mandarin Chinese in this context

2.1 South African curriculum landscape

The South African educational landscape is a complex and changing one. Since 1994, in particular, South Africa has witnessed the development of a myriad of education policies. Le Grange (2007:424,427) argues that we, in the complex and textured world we live in today, need to learn to know in different ways, one of such being knowing as situated enquiry: rethinking how far knowledge can travel and whether it still makes sense in other locations. When talking about the internationalisation of the academic field of curriculum studies, Pinar (2010:1-2) also highlights the danger of the uncritical importation of concepts from other countries. It is for this reason that the literature survey sets out by sketching the educational context into which the Mandarin Chinese curriculum is entering.

With the research focusing on comparing the South African Mandarin Chinese curriculum with an international curriculum, sensitivity is needed for the appropriateness of importing constructs or methods from elsewhere; the focus should be on developing indigenous methods. This, of course, does not mean that one cannot learn from others who are more experienced, but one should do this critically; always being mindful of your own unique context. Pinar (2010:1-2) describes this challenge as follows:

> The promise of internationalization is the intellectual advancement not only of nationally distinctive fields but of a worldwide field of curriculum studies structured by knowledge of the national, the local. This is, I suggest, the test our generation must pass.

As the current study moves between the international and national, it sets out by grounding such 'intellectual advancement' in the knowledge of the local. This chapter therefore proceeds to explore the local South African educational landscape with emphasis on language learning and language curricula and ends by deriving some affordances for the implementation of Mandarin Chinese in South African schools from such understanding.

2.1.1   Policy documents directing language learning in South African schools

2.1.1.1 The South African Constitution

The first democratic elections of 1994 marked South Africa's break with its colonial and Apartheid past. As Probyn (2005:155) explains, "[T]he new government embarked on an ambitious programme of political, economic and social transformation aimed at redressing the injustices and inequalities of the apartheid past."

One of the first steps the government took was to prepare a new constitution. Language reform as presented in the South African Constitution of 1996 opted for an inclusive strategy of eleven official languages: nine indigenous 'previously marginalised' languages in addition to English and Afrikaans, the former two official languages. In Table 2.1 the number of home language speakers for each of these languages is listed according to the 2011 census.

Table 2.1: Official languages in South Africa and percentage of population by home language spoken

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES	HOME LANGUAGE SPEAKERS
IsiZulu	22.7
IsiXhosa	16
Afrikaans	13.5
English	9.6
Sepedi	9.1
Setswana	8
Sesotho	7.6
Xitsonga	4.5
SiSwati	2.6
Tshivenda	2.4
IsiNdebele	2.1
Other	1.6
Sign Language	0.5

Source: Statistics South Africa (2012:24)

Languages are normally described as 'majority' and 'minority' languages based on the frequency of use, but in South Africa these terms refer to the status of the languages. Therefore, although IsiZulu is the most frequently spoken language in South African households, followed by IsiXhosa, both of these are regarded as minority languages (Alexander, 2012:4): it has had minority status imposed upon it because of colonialism and apartheid. In this scenario, English, and to a lesser extent Afrikaans, are regarded as languages of power (Alexander, 2012:2-3) or majority languages: it has dominated the media as well as the educational arena. Because of this situation, there is a drive to introduce indigenous languages in schools as a way to redress their minoritised status, recently materialising in The Incremental Implementation of African Languages (IIAL) draft policy, dated September 2013 (Department of Basic Education, 2013), to be discussed in section 2.1.1.4. This possibly leaves less 'space' for Mandarin Chinese to enter the South African language landscape. This is an important characteristic of the South African language learning context into which Mandarin is entering, the implications of which are discussed in the landscape affordance Principle of redress in section 4.4.1.1.

Plüddemann (2015:187) rightfully states that within this context of social inequality indexed by languages of different status, developing the language competence of South Africa's young people is by no means a simple task. Relevant policy documents are analysed in the rest of the chapter to show the way in which this complex situation is playing out.

2.1.1.2 The Language in Education Policy (LiEP)

The Language in Education Policy (LiEP) promulgated in 1997 was the first post-apartheid document stipulating language policy in education (Department of Education, 1997:1). This section provides a brief overview of this legislative framework as context for the main focus of the chapter, namely language curricula and the introduction of Mandarin Chinese.

The LiEP is in line with the pro-multilingualism ethos of the Constitution which aims towards nation-building with recognition of cultural diversity (Plüddemann, 2015:189). As such, the document states that the Department of Basic Education aims to promote multilingualism with the "underlying principle to maintain home language(s) while providing access to and the effective acquisition of additional language(s)" (Department of Education, 1997:1).

Within the context of promoting multilingualism, the LiEP does not prioritise any one language above another, as is clear from the following directive (Department of Education, 1997:2):

> All learners shall offer at least one approved language as subject in Grade 1 and 2. From Grade 3 onwards, all learners shall offer their language of learning and teaching and at least one additional approved language as subjects.

As such, the LiEP gives responsibility to determine individual schools' language policy to school governing bodies (SGB): governance structures introduced into schools through the Schools Act of 1996 which are made up of teacher, parent and learner representatives and are responsible for managing aspects of individual schools (Le Grange, 2007:424). Their decisions should be subject to the constitutional ideals of equality, redressing discrimination of the past, and acknowledging the rights of learners, and must be in line with the relevant provincial or national laws. In this context, the LiEP recognises different approaches to promoting multilingualism, and has only one requirement: the language(s) of learning and teaching (LoLT) must be (an) official language(s) (Department of Education, 1997:1-3).

A variety of court cases about the use of official languages in education have however shown the LiEP lacking in providing direction to South African schools on how to approach multilingualism. One could argue that this is to be expected and desired in a general guiding document that needs to remain valid over years. I, however, agree with Probyn (2005:159) that this, coupled with the freedom given to SGBs at individual schools, does leave the door open to a plethora of implementation possibilities, and has maybe not provided South Africans with a clear enough map to navigate educational language challenges.

With reference to the introduction of Mandarin it is interesting to note that, in line with its multilingual approach, the LiEP aims to "support the teaching and learning of other languages over and above the official languages which… are important for international trade and communication…" (Department of Education, 1997:2). As such the LiEP opens the door to the teaching of foreign languages in South African schools.

2.1.1.3 South African curricula as implementation of the LiEP

With the LiEP as legislative policy setting the groundwork for multilingual education, we now turn to the South African school curricula as realisation of this policy.

South Africa has seen a series of new curricula as part of the transformation process in education. The initial revision of the curriculum was undertaken in three main stages, as explained by Chisholm (2005:80), chair of the C2005 Review Committee:

> The first involved the 'cleansing' of the curriculum of its racist and sexist elements in the immediate aftermath of the election. The second involved the implementation of Outcomes Based Education (OBE) through Curriculum 2005 (C2005), promulgated in 1997. The third involved the review and revision of C2005 three years later in the light of recommendations made by a Ministerial Review Committee, resulting in the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS), promulgated in 2002.

A further curriculum revision undertaken recently is the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) of 2011 (Le Grange, 2014:470), which includes the National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). In her introduction to the CAPS, the current Minister of Basic Education, Mrs Angie Motshekga (English Generic Second Additional Language 2011:4) explains its function:

> From 2012 the two 2002 curricula, for Grades R-9 and Grades 10-12 respectively, are combined in a single document and will simply be known as the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12. The National Curriculum Statement for Grades R-12 builds on the previous curriculum but also updates it and aims to provide clearer specification of what is to be taught and learnt on a term-by-term basis.

As part of the National Curriculum Statement, the CAPS is therefore not a substitute for the previous RNCS, but re-packages it to ensure that the curriculum content and assessment procedures are spread evenly across the teaching year.

What are the main features of each of these curricula and why were there so many revisions? Let us first look at the curriculum which preceded them. The apartheid curriculum, in the Tyler Mode[1] took an objective, product approach to curriculum

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[1] Ralph Tyler is regarded as the 'father' of what has become known as an 'objectives' or product approach to curriculum planning. Tyler's most famous book is called *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* (Hoadley & Jansen, 2009:66).

development which provided an outside-expert-driven, content-based, prescriptive syllabus with separate subject disciplines, teaching being teacher-centred and traditional forms of assessment focusing on memory recall and rote learning (Cohen & Welch, 2000:309; Hoadley & Jansen, 2009:173,175; Soudien, 2010:41).

In my opinion, the post-Apartheid curriculum, known as Curriculum 2005 (C2005) is a typical example of a pendulum swing to the opposite extreme. It is the curriculum which described South Africa's attempt at OBE (Outcomes Based Education) associated with 'learner-centred education', and which served as basis for all subsequent curricula revisions. At this point I should therefore like to spend some time to critically examine its most important features, since these features also influence the Mandarin Chinese curriculum:

- It is an outcomes-based curriculum and as such describes objectives as 'learning outcomes', portraying a product approach (Cohen & Welch, 2000:309; Hoadley & Jansen, 2009:72,89; Hugo, 2010:60).
- The route to these objectives in the process mode are left open, however, in being implicit as to what content should be selected and how it should be sequenced (Hoadley & Jansen, 2009:72, 89,173; Hugo, 2010:60).
- It is competence based, relating learning to the lives of learners and trying to integrate subjects under themes, aiming to enable learners for participation in the workforce (Hoadley & Jansen, 2009:173-175).

It is a curriculum with progressivism as its underlying value orientation: learners are seen as individuals whose individual backgrounds are taken into consideration and whose full potential needs to be developed. It uses techniques such as group work, problem-based learning and integrated studies (Hoadley & Jansen, 2009:146). Hugo (2010:60-61) points to the rationale behind this approach for South Africa: as a country with enormous contextual differences between communities, allowing different paths to the same end point seemed a useful solution to the problem of diversity.

However, making the means to reach the end implicit means that one relies heavily on the school, teacher and student to have the skills and resources to generate the various routes towards the goal (Hugo, 2010:61). It is here where one finds C2005 seriously inappropriate

for the South African context: having been denied opportunities in the past, the school system is lacking in knowledgeable teachers and autonomous students (Hugo, 2010:61; Soudien, 2010:42). Critics of progressivism such as Wayne Hugo (2010:59-62), Jonathan Jansen (1998:325,329,330) and Johan Muller (2001:61-63) pointed this out and stated that a more explicit and hierarchical understanding of curriculum is necessary in South Africa.

Not surprisingly then, C2005 was met by fierce contestation, creating for the first time in South African history a broad public debate as well as research about curriculum and pedagogy (Le Grange, 2014: 470). In response, a committee was appointed to review C2005, leading to the next curriculum document: The Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) (Chisholm, 2005:80). The RNCS was an attempt to sort out problems in C2005 by:

- simplifying the design features;
- making more explicit what teachers should be teaching and learners learning in each grade;
- balancing the overemphasis on integration by working on progression within specific disciplines; and
- increasing the time allocated to Mathematics and Language in the GET Phase which provides the skills necessary to progress in other learning areas (Cohen & Welch, 2000:310-311; Spreen & Vally, 2010:42).

The criticism against OBE did not abate, however, and the current Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga, set a new curriculum revision process in motion in 2009, releasing a ministerial report, which resulted in the current National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (Le Grange, 2014:471; Spreen & Vally, 2010:442). As already quoted, Education Minister Angie Motshekga described this as a re-packaging of the previous curriculum to help teachers with content and time management, thus one can describe it as a programme of work. In the languages it includes detailed plans for teaching content on a grade by grade, term by term and even two-weekly basis (English Generic Second Additional Language, 2011:17-81; Mandarin Second Additional Language, 2014a:35-74). With the removal of any outcomes-related speech in the new CAPS curriculum and its more prescriptive nature as to what, when, and for how long teachers must teach different

topics, some critiques such as Grange (2014:472) have questioned whether it is OBE any more.

Before concluding, I should like to highlight one more important aspect of C2005: the policy came to South Africa as an example of what was thought to be 'best-practice' elsewhere in the world, namely in New Zealand and the United Kingdom (Soudien, 2010:41). This being the case, I am tempted to see it as an example of uncritical importation of concepts from other countries, which then is imposed on that which was not properly understood.

This brief discussion on the last two decades of curriculum change in South Africa not only leaves us with the current CAPS as working document in teachers' hands, but also gives us insight into the complexity of its history and the challenges it poses. The CAPS, specifically the CAPS English Generic SAL, was then used as a template for the 'versioning' of the Mandarin language curriculum (Department of Basic Education, 2012:3).

2.1.1.4 Language learning as specified by the South African curricula

South Africa follows a three-curricula model for language learning and teaching at school. The terminology for 'first language learning', 'second language learning' and 'foreign language learning' (which generally appear in international literature on language teaching and learning) has been changed to 'Home Language' for the first language, 'First Additional Language' for the second language and 'Second Additional Language' for the foreign language (English Second Additional Language, 2002:4). The CAPS curriculum (English Generic Second Additional Language, 2011:8) explains these language levels as follows:

> The Home Language is the language first acquired by learners while First Additional Language is the language learnt in addition to one's home language. The Second Additional Language is the further language that a learner can learn, that enables broader communication and promotes multilingualism as enshrined in the Constitution and the Language in Education Policy. The language may be in use within the community or culture and will enhance nation building and intercultural understanding.

The term 'additional' as used for the second and third languages invokes the principle of additive bilingualism while maintaining home language as directive policy described in the LiEP (Department of Education, 1997:1) and as guiding principle for the language curricula.

These three distinctive language levels are described in all the current CAPS language curricula under the heading of *2.1 Languages in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement: Language Levels*:

- At Home Language level it is assumed that learners enter grade 1 able to speak and understand the language. However, this point of departure is in conflict with the following statement in the CAPS (English Generic Second Additional Language, 2011:8):

    > Many South African schools do not offer the home languages of some or all of the enrolled learners but rather have one or two languages offered at Home language level. As a result, the names Home Language, First Additional and Second Additional Language refer to the proficiency levels at which the language is offered, and not the native (home) or acquired (as in the additional) languages.

    I would like to argue that this point of entry into the school system may disadvantage many South African students. Considering that a strong curriculum is provided at Home Language level with regard to various types of literacy, with learners working towards language proficiency for "cognitive academic skills essential for learning across the curriculum" as well as language skills that enable them to "create, imagine and empower their understanding of the world they live in" (English Generic Second Additional Language, 2011:8); learners who enter the school with no link to the home language will find such a curriculum very challenging.

- With the First Additional Language it is assumed that learners do not necessarily have any knowledge of the language when they enter grade 1, so the initial focus is on the skills of listening and speaking, but soon moves on to also include reading and writing. The curriculum provides strong support for those learners who will use this language as the LoLT later on (English Generic Second Additional Language, 2011:8). With this challenge being a reality for the majority of South African students, the current CAPS curriculum allows for a switch from mother tongue as LoLT to English as LoLT as early as in grade 4. First Additional Language has furthermore been added in the Foundation Phase (grades 1-3) as a fourth subject in preparation for this

switch (English Generic Second Additional Language, 2011:8; Plüddemann, 2015:190).

- At Second Additional Language level it is also assumed that learners do not have any knowledge of the language when they arrive at school. It is intended for learners who wish to learn three languages, and as such is optional and may be an official language or a foreign language (English Second Additional Language, 2002:4). The focus is on developing the skills of listening and speaking – basic interpersonal communication skills. It is offered from the Intermediate Phase (grade 4-7) onwards. This additional language "enables broader communication and promotes multilingualism as enshrined in the Constitution and the LiEP… enhances nation building and intercultural understanding" (English Generic Second Additional Language, 2011:8).

Mandarin Chinese was to be offered as an optional second additional language from the Intermediate Phase onwards (Department of Basic Education, 2015:1-2). It is important therefore to note that it is not a compulsory subject and the emphasis is on interpersonal communication skills. This needs to be understood in contrast to the LoLT in which learners need to achieve high levels of literacy in order to manage all the other subjects.

In 2013, a new development added yet another dimension to the language learning environment in South Africa: the launch of The Incremental Implementation of African Languages (IIAL) draft policy (Department of Basic Education, 2013). The main aims of the policy are to:

- improve proficiency in and utility of African languages at Home Language level, so that learners are able to use their home language proficiently;
- increase access to languages by all learners, beyond English and Afrikaans, by requiring all non-African home language speakers to learn an African language; and
- promote social cohesion and economic empowerment and expand opportunities for the development of African languages as a significant way of preserving heritage and cultures (Department of Basic Education, 2013:6).

This IIAL daft policy proposes the addition of an indigenous language for all South African learners as a compulsory subject. As it will be taken at First Additional Language level and the study of the indigenous language will start in Grade 1, all learners from grade 1 to 12 will then study a total of three languages: one language at Home Language level and two at First Additional Language level. What a feat to start learning to read and write in grade 1 in three languages! However, the introduction of an extra subject has major implications for instructional time: the school day will be lengthened by 2h/week for grade 1-2, 3h/week for grade 3 and 5h/week for grade 4-12 (Department of Basic Education, 2013:11-13). Plüddemann (2015:191), however, argues that the main challenges will be to appoint and/or train a sufficient number of African-language specialist teachers, and to source cost-effective learning materials in sufficient numbers. The introduction of the policy was delayed at the beginning of 2015 (Nicholson, 2015); one can only wonder if it was not due to lack of resources. This policy's relation to the introduction of Mandarin Chinese in South African schools is discussed further under the landscape affordance Principle of redress in section 4.4.1.1.

A discussion on languages offered in the current CAPS curriculum would not be complete without critically looking at the question: Which languages should be taught and why? Section 2.1.2 below presents the issues and complexities surrounding multiple languages as these play out in the South African educational landscape. Considering South African second additional language curricula the CAPS, however, only allows for German, Serbian, and now also Mandarin, to be offered as non-official second additional languages from grade 3 to grade 12, as specified in the policy document, *National Policy pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grade R-12* (Department of Basic Education, 2011:13, 20, 56-57; Department of Basic Education, 2015:4-5). The other non-official second additional languages are only offered from grade 10 to 12: Arabic, French, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Latin, Portuguese, Spanish, Tamil, Telegu and Urdu (Department of Basic Education, 2011:56-57); and have no developed curricula, only subject assessment guidelines for the grade 12 examination (Thutong). Both German and Mandarin have developed CAPS curricula from grade 4 to 12 (German Second Additional Language, 2011; Mandarin Second Additional Language, 2014a-c). One can conclude from this that the majority of foreign languages are offered for the benefit of

students coming from other countries or with parents from foreign countries and that they already know the basics of the language; only German and Mandarin are considered for study at school level as languages for South African students with no background in the language. Whereas some critics argue that even offering second additional languages within the public education system is a waste of money (Ditaunyane, 2014), the conservative aim of only offering two optional foreign languages for native South African students puts this into more perspective. In conclusion: it makes sense for South Africans to study official languages as second additional languages and the inclusion of only German and Mandarin as foreign languages offered at Second Additional Language level, is a conservative aim.

This is the existing background for language curricula against which Mandarin Chinese is to be introduced. It is by no means uncomplicated, and needs to be understood in order to create an opening for this new Asian language. The next section builds on this 'policy' exploration by also looking at the 'practice' of schooling in South Africa.

2.1.2   Complexity of the South African educational landscape

Graham-Jolly (2009:248) argues for a comprehensive understanding of curriculum incorporating both the formal or official curriculum, those policy documents which are planned and documented, as well as the actual curriculum, which is the practice of schooling as it is realised in schools. So far, the former as set out in South African policy documents has been discussed. For a thorough understanding of curriculum it is important to turn to the latter: curriculum as a contextualised social process shaped by both societal structures and human agency (Le Grange, 2014:469). Plüddemann's (2015:188) onion metaphor explains this practically:

> While national policy is usually formulated by or on behalf of government (the outer layer), a pronouncement of whether, or to what extent, a policy has been realised can only be answered with reference to what happens in practice within each layer of the onion…failure to take local contexts, language repertoires and language ideologies into account will in effect mean that policy texts are ignored or merely complied with superficially. In extreme cases, practice becomes de facto policy.

Although the official curricula have been planned by experts and have the best intentions to educate learners to the highest levels, problems may occur at classroom level when the curriculum is implemented. South African learners' performance in international benchmark tests that assess language and literacy proficiency levels and knowledge of science and mathematics is a concern, as summarised by academics such as Fleisch (2008:99-104), Spreen and Vally (2010:46) and Wildsmith-Cromarty (2012:158). They are in agreement that South African learners perform poorly and point to a downward trend in the results.

Because of this situation, the Department of Basic Education has put a new systematic standardised national assessment called The Annual National Assessments (ANAs) in place in 2014 as a strategy to annually measure progress in learner achievement. It assesses languages and mathematics in the Senior Phase (grades 7 - 9), Intermediate Phase (grades 4 – 6) and literacy and numeracy for the Foundation Phase (grades 1-3). The ANAs represent one of the initiatives that formed the backbone of the Department of Basic Education's "Action Plan to 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025" (ISASA: Annual National Assessments, 2015:1).

It is clear from this discussion that schooling in South Africa faces a variety of problems and low student performance is a clear symptom. The study now proceeds to explore these complexities with reference to local context, competing ideologies and academic discourses.

2.1.2.1 Persistent inequalities in schools

In post-apartheid South Africa, deep inequalities carved by apartheid are still very present. These are evident in people's level of wealth (economic), their social activities (society) and their sense of who they are and what has meaning in their lives (identity and culture) (Christie, 2008:43). While the syllabus revisions have established a common curriculum to be used in all schools, this commonality is undermined by inequalities still persisting in schools previously divided by race (Graham-Jolly, 2009:248).

Spreen and Vally (2010:40, 47) describe these basic shortcomings in the majority of schools as: overcrowding, lack of textbooks and learner support materials, unqualified teachers, no functioning libraries and non-existent early childhood development. Adding to these,

Hoadley and Jansen (2009:114-118) identify reasons for persistent inequalities as a poor culture of learning and teaching in many schools and home environments not supportive of learning. They also point to the fact that learners in rural areas with a majority African population are more affected by these inequalities (Hoadley & Jansen, 2009:111-112). Banda (2010:223) summarises studies that have focused on these phenomena as reasons for poor achievement of learners in South Africa. Spreen and Vally (2010:40, 56) conclude that the main problems for South African education are these structural inequalities as well as the impact of poverty on learners, and warn that policy makers need to move away from the technicist and bureaucratic approaches followed in policy change to address these local challenges. I understand this to mean that top-down changes, such as curriculum changes, will not make a lasting difference in schools if schools are not empowered with the necessary resources and motivated to make change happen.

In 2001, Kraak and Young (2001:4) called for patience and perseverance in the implementation of policies: "Implementation of changes in a system with deep historical divisions and low levels of capacity is inevitably a slow process when compared to the relatively easy task of designing new policies." Thirteen years later, however, Le Grange (2014:472) still struggles with the big policy-practice gap in South Africa and points to political forces complicating educational policies and the appropriate allocation of, for instance, the educational budget. While this thesis was written we have seen even further muddling of the political waters and its rippling effects on government departments. Alexander (2012:2) agrees that lack of implementation planning of language policies, and thus of delivery, has reduced language policies in South Africa to mere lip service.

It is noteworthy that one of the main conclusions of the 2005 Review Committee in May 2000 was that historically disadvantaged schools did not have the resources to implement C2005 effectively and recommended that these problems be addressed (Le Grange, 2014:471). Spreen and Vally (2010:4200) proceeded to highlight that nearly a decade later with the ministerial report that led to CAPS in 2009, some of the same issues were raised once again. This illustrates the Department of Basic Education's persistent inefficiency in addressing inequalities in schools.

While these inequalities undeniably are one of the important factors holding South African learners back, I would like to agree with scholars like Banda (2010:222-223) and Christie (2008:41) that one needs to look even further in order to understand the full picture. When we situate South Africa in its international context, we find competing discourses in the educational sphere, as explained in the next section.

2.1.2.2 Competing discourses of transformation and the market economy

Chisholm (2005:80), as chair of the C2005 Review Committee, identifies the tension between transformation policies with their emphasis on rights, development, social justice and nation-building as opposed to neoliberal market-led policies as a key feature of the transition to democracy in South Africa. The transformation discourse is portrayed by politicians talking, for example, about "equal educational opportunities"; while neoliberalism can be identified in talk about the need for education to equip all citizens "to participate meaningfully in the economy" (Hoadley & Jansen, 2009:151).

These conflicting policies were already evident in the LiEP as the first post-apartheid document stipulating language policy in education. Aiming for transformation, one can identify three ideals: cultural diversity with multilingualism as means to this end; individual language rights with focus on home language; and a constitutional commitment to the redress of historically disadvantaged indigenous languages (Department of Education, 1997:2). Probyn (2005:158-159) argues that the instrumental need to acquire English for participation in national and global affairs is in opposition to these ideals. She sees the proviso in the LiEP that language policies as implemented by schools should be subject to 'practicability' as the door that was left open for English, "reflecting a certain lack of conviction or political will on the part of the some policy-makers, and the kinds of compromises made" (Probyn, 2005:159).

Allais (2007:66) argues that the market economy is the driving force behind the implementation of OBE in South African curricula. Governments are making stronger links between education and the economy as part of a neoliberal agenda. These outcomes-based qualification frameworks "claim to provide world-class standards against which students must perform and which are linked to employment, economic improvement and

international competitiveness" (Allais, 2007:67). Spreen and Vally (2010:45) affirm this by stating that OBE originated in debates about skills and training that were conducted within the labour movement. They conclude that:

> It is not argued that education and training do not have a role to play in economic development. Rather, the motivation for economic development via education should recognise the needs of human beings and their rights and values, not the narrow needs of the market.

However, when we look at the dominance of English as the LoLT in South Africa, it is clear that the 'narrow needs of the market' do indeed overshadow the broader needs, rights and values of learners. Moreover, parents' and educators' perceptions of the elevated status of English contradict the ideals for a multilingual society as presented in the LiEP. The debate around English and its dominance is discussed in more detail when we approach it from a language acquisition angle.

2.1.2.3 Academic discourses of secondary language acquisition theory

Less than one South African child in ten speaks English as their first language (Statistics South Africa, 2012:24), but by the end of grade 3 most school children are taught and assessed in the English language (Fleisch, 2008:98). How can one explain this? The reality is that English is seen as the language of power and prestige in post-apartheid South African (Probyn, 2005:164). As Alexander (2012:2) explains:

> Language is the main instrument of communication at the disposal of human beings; consequently the specific language(s) in which the production processes take place become(s) the language(s) of power. To put it differently, if one does not command the language(s) of exchange and distribution, one is automatically excluded and disempowered.

South African parents consequently not only request English as LoLT, but direct school language policies towards this end through their say in SGBs, as discussed in section 2.1.1.2 on the LiEP. Wildsmith-Cromarty (2012:158) provides two reasons for this: firstly, parents' attitudes were formed during colonial and apartheid times where English was the language of the colonial power and African languages the language of the mother-tongue, mediocre

Bantu education (Banda, 2000:53) and, secondly, parents want their children to be competitive in a globalising, modern world with English as lingua franca.

A growing number of influential educational researchers are concerned that the straight-for-English policies and early exit from mother-tongue teaching is not giving the majority of South African learners the opportunity to draw on their home language for learning. These researchers blame these issues for South African learners' poor performance. Research on this topic is summarised, for example, by Banda (2000:51), Heugh (2002:174,178-179), Makoe and McKinney (2014:659), Rodseth (2002:105-106) and Wildsmith-Cromarty (2012:158). They hold that the promotion of learners' home languages as media of instruction benefits cognitive development, conceptual growth, social development and improved second language learning (Probyn, 2005:158; Rodseth, 2002:100,104). Some research, however, does challenge a simple link between learning in an additional language and educational failure, pointing to the complexities and dynamics of language and achievement (Fleisch, 2008:98).

These competing discourses on second language acquisition are portrayed in the South African language policy documents. While the LiEP holds to the ideals of promoting multilingualism, home languages and indigenous languages as discussed in 2.1.2.2, the South African curriculum documents prioritise English above other home languages with the current CAPS document introducing English as subject earlier, from grade 1, in preparation for the now accepted change to English as LoLT in grade 4 (Plüddemann, 2015:190). Furthermore, with regard to African languages, the IIAL draft policy dated September 2015 was preceded by a June 2013 draft which contained an additional section allowing for African languages as LoLT and the extended use of African languages as LoLT beyond the Foundation phase, which was later dropped (Plüddemann, 2015:191).

It seems that English as LoLT and African languages as subjects is the route the Department of Basic Education is taking. One could argue that it is the more practical route, but, considering the complex language environment in African schools, it may not always produce the best results. Plüddemann (2002:48) and Wildsmith-Cromarty (2012:159) summarise research and conclude that one of the main reasons for failure of English as a LoLT includes the low English proficiency of the majority of teachers for whom English is an

additional language which they themselves were taught poorly. Teachers in their own defence say that leaners do not understand the textbooks, with rote-learning for tests a common way out; they blame the time-consuming process of teaching in English for often not completing the syllabus; and complain of stress and feelings of helplessness in the face of such problems (Probyn, 2005:162). In addition, Wildsmith-Cromarty (2012:159) cites extensive research findings that indicate that many urban children grow up speaking a mixed form of language so that a standard form of their home language may not be familiar to them, while rural children living in more or less monolingual areas often find the use of English for instruction an alienating experience. Because of these challenges, different forms and levels of code-switching are widely used by both teachers and students (Banda, 2010:233).

It is clear that the situation with regard to the learning and teaching of languages in South Africa is a complex one, with languages competing, not for time and space on the curriculum only, but also against the perceived status of English. It is in this environment that Mandarin has to find its place.

So far we have discussed both curriculum-as-plan (section 2.1.1) and curriculum-in-practice (section 2.1.2) as played out in the South African context. We have come to a point in the discussion where we can appreciate the local context: holding to our South African ideals of multilingualism with African and foreign languages introduced into the school curriculum, but getting a better understanding for what this means within a sphere of limited resources and contesting discourses. Pinar (2010:1-2) has challenged us to tackle the internationalisation of the field of curriculum studies with a firm grasp of the local, as discussed in the introductory section 2.1. Coming to grips with the South African curriculum landscape has therefore been a crucial step from where we can compare the South African Mandarin Chinese curriculum with other international examples of Mandarin Chinese curricula.

2.2 Mandarin Chinese language

The study now proceeds to look at the Mandarin Chinese language by exploring its place on the world stage and discussing how China relates to South Africa. This section is then concluded by looking at the language itself and what sets it apart from other languages.

2.2.1 Mandarin Chinese as world language

The People's Republic of China (henceforth called China) is a socialist country founded in 1949 by the Chinese Communist Party (Marsh & Morris, 1991:61). China is the world's fourth largest country geographically (Maps of World), her population, estimated to be over 1,4 billion by 2015, is the world's largest (Population Pyramids of the World from 1950 to 2100), and her economy has become the second largest in the world (Ni, 2015:14).

Chinese culture is one of the world's oldest and richest continuous cultures; as such, the language we call Chinese today has existed for well over 10 000 years. During the Han Dynasty (206 B.C. – A.D. 220) other nations referred to the Chinese people as the Han people. Names such as Han people, Qin people or Tang people were used because it was the names of ruling dynasties at different times. Today Hanyu （汉语）is the name the Chinese call their own language. Terms such as Zhongwen （中文）, Guoyu （国语） and Huayu （华语） are similar in meaning, with Guoyu, for instance, used in Taiwan and Huayu in Singapore (Wu, 2009:24, 54).

Modern Chinese may be broadly or narrowly defined. In its broader definition it includes all seven dialect groups spoken in China: Putonghua (Mandarin), Yue (Cantonese), Wu (Shanghainese), Xiang (Hunanese), Min, Gan and Hakka. In its narrower interpretation, it refers to Chinese with a pronunciation based on the Beijing dialect and grammar based on the model of modern vernacular writings (Wu, 2009: 32, 54). It is commonly called Mandarin or Putonghua （普通话） (literally common speech), and is not only the official language in China, but also has official status in Taiwan and Singapore (Tinsley & Board,

2014:32). Mandarin Chinese is spoken by 873 million speakers, making it the most widely spoken first language in the world; it is also the official language taught in all schools in Mainland China and Taiwan (Simons & Fennig, 2017: Chinese, Mandarin). Chinese could arguably be the lingua franca of Asia: in addition to China and Taiwan, it is also spoken in Chinese communities of Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, the Philippines and Mongolia. In addition, one should consider the large diasporic Chinese population throughout the word.

As China continues its rise on the world stage, demand for Chinese as a foreign language is growing (Everson & Xiao, 2011:xiii). The British Council published an interesting report on the foreign languages they consider most strategic for UK citizens to study (Tinsley & Board, 2014:1-46). They conducted a strategic analysis, looking at a variety of economic, geopolitical, cultural and educational indicators and scored different languages against these. The four economic indicators were: Current UK export trade; Language needs of UK businesses; UK government future trade priorities; and Emerging high growth markets. Mandarin Chinese was among the top five. The four cultural, educational and diplomatic indicators were: Diplomatic and security priorities; Public language interest; Outward and Inward visitors' destinations; and UK government international Education Strategy priorities. Mandarin Chinese again was among the top five. Two last factors were also considered: Level of English proficiency in other countries and Prevalence of different languages on the internet. The British Council report concluded in ranking Mandarin Chinese fourth most important language to learn following Spanish, Arabic and French. Fair enough, one could say, but how does this apply to South Africa? The next section explains the relationship between China and South Africa and how it affects the prioritising of Mandarin Chinese in South Africa.

2.2.2 China in Africa and South Africa

China is a big country with a great economy: thirty years of uninterrupted growth averaging ten per cent per annum has transformed China into the second largest economy in the world (Tinsley & Board, 2014:32). The last few years has seen China being quite involved in

Africa with commerce: often with allegations that China is colonising Africa for its natural resources, such as copper, iron and oil. There are signs that its role in Africa is evolving, however: China, for instance, is playing a part in UN peacekeeping in Africa; sending supplies and doctors to countries hit by infectious diseases; and has long-standing investments in building hospitals and cooperation in agriculture (Wang, 2015:14-15). It seems that, as the cooperation continues, Africa is looking to China for even more. In the words of Kofi Anan, former secretary general of the UN:

> China has experiences which are very relevant to Africa, which we can learn from, whether in agriculture, in the development of infrastructure, or energy. Today energy and lack of infrastructure are the two main bottlenecks for African economic development. China has a lot to offer in these areas (Wang, 2015:15).

South Africa has been part of an international partnership between Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa called BRICS since September 2010. These countries partner in the areas of finance (business and banking), security, agriculture, trade, health, science and technology, statistics and academics (BRICS).

South Africa and China started diplomatic relations in 1998. The relationship was strengthened in August 2010 when the two countries agreed on a comprehensive strategic partnership, South Africa being the only African country to establish such a relationship with China. It gained further momentum with South African president Jacob Zuma's state visit to China from 3 to 5 December 2014. During the visit, a Five to Ten Years' Strategic Plan on Cooperation was signed for comprehensive cooperation in politics, economy, cultural exchange, security and international affairs (Lan, 2016:1; Ni, 2015:14-15). This was followed by Chinese president Xi Jinping's most recent visit to South Africa in December 2015. During this visit, 26 agreements worth R94 billion were signed, with Zuma saying that this shows that the cooperation between the two countries is stronger than ever (Corke, 2015).

China has now become the biggest trading partner of South Africa, and South Africa is China's biggest trading partner in Africa. In 2013, bilateral trade totalled $65,15 billion, up 8,6 percent year on year (Ni, 2015:14-15). When looking at economic and political indicators, Mandarin Chinese is clearly very relevant for South Africans.

With regards to education, agreements were signed between China and South Africa in March 2014 aimed at strengthening educational ties. These agreements included the introduction of Mandarin as a South African school subject ("*Mandarin to be offered in South African state schools*", 2015; "*Motshekga wants more Mandarin in schools*", 2014). Consequent cooperation between the two countries within that year resulted in the release of South Africa's first Mandarin Chinese curriculum: *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) Grades 4-12: Mandarin Second Additional Language* (Mandarin Second Additional Language, 2014a-c). The government notice approving the listing of Mandarin Chinese as part of the school curriculum was issued by the Department of Basic Education on 20 March 2015: South African students have been able to choose it as second additional language since January 2016 (Department of Basic Education, 2015:1-2).

Based on these developments in the South African diplomatic/politic, economic, cultural and educational spheres, one could conclude that Mandarin Chinese is positioning itself as one of the most strategic foreign languages for South African citizens to study: not only for personal gain, but also to see our country move forward. In order to develop the present positive relationship, we as South Africans need to be able to engage with China at a deeper level than is currently the case. Continuing with the status quo may leave South Africa suffering negative consequences as a subordinate in the relationship. An equal partnership can only be achieved if there is a solid pool of South Africans who deeply understand China and its language. As South Africa then proceeds with welcoming Mandarin Chinese into its schooling system, this study promotes a well informed and nuanced understanding of the language and its unique characteristics. In the next section Mandarin Chinese as a language is therefore examined to identify what sets it apart from other languages and what the pedagogical implications of these characteristics might be.

2.2.3 Unique nature of Mandarin Chinese

Most people would intuitively say that Mandarin Chinese is a difficult language to learn, but how difficult is it really? Jorden and Walton (1987:111) identify Mandarin Chinese as an ideal example of a 'truly foreign language', and define such a language as being

"linguistically unrelated to English and spoken within societies that are culturally in marked contrast to our own". At this point it is interesting to look at the concept of 'linguistic distance' which, according to Van der Walt, Evans and Kilfoil (2009:13) "implies that some languages and cultures are closer to each other than others and are called cognate languages". These authors proceed to explain that, with regard to languages within a specific language family, the learner can transfer some of the knowledge from the first language to the target language, making the learning task easier. For the aim of the current study, one needs to realise that English is from the Indo-European language family and Mandarin Chinese from the Sino-Tibetan language family, two totally different groups (Simons & Fennig, 2017: Summary by language family). Except for language families, Ma (2009:91-93) further points to the minimum learning time needed to reach a basic level of proficiency or language proficiency level achieved within a certain time, as ways to describe the difficulty of a language. Based on the length of time it typically takes to attain a certain level of proficiency, the American Foreign Services Institute groups Chinese together with Arabic, Cantonese, Japanese and Korean as one of the five most difficult languages for native English speakers to learn (Thompson, 2014). It is not surprising, then, that Xiao (2011:114) reports that the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages recognises Chinese as one of the most difficult languages for native English speakers to learn, stating that it takes them three times the number of instructional hours to reach the same level of proficiency as in French or Spanish.

What exactly makes Mandarin Chinese so difficult to learn? First, we need to consider the Chinese written system. There are two formats for the writing of Chinese characters: simplified and full form/complex characters. Both are regularly used in the media, in education and in environmental print, the former officially in Mainland China and the latter in Taiwan. Whereas some educators from a learner-centred perspective promote concurrent exposure to both forms, with the student choosing one form to write (Ning, 2011:48-49), others choose simplified characters as the internationally recognised official form of Chinese (Australian Curriculum Languages Chinese, 2013: context statement). Unlike English, which uses an alphabet, Chinese characters form a logographic script, where strokes are the basic spelling symbol and characters the basic analytical unit (Xiao, 2011:115). Chinese characters are based on pictographic characters, meaning that they originated from

drawings of which the basic shapes sometimes still are recognisable. For example, the ancient form of the character 'ri' (sun) was a rounded sun, which today is written 日; the 'shan' (mountain) was a literal painting of three peaks, today it is written 山; the 'shui' (water) looked like a flowing river, today it is written 水; and 'ren' (person) was the profile of a person with arms outstretched, today it is written 人 (Han, 2009:88). Modern Chinese characters are made up of different components organised in a particular sequence within a square, parts of which could suggest the sound and others the meaning of the whole character (Australian Curriculum Languages Chinese, 2013: context statement). Learning to study Chinese characters is difficult, and students of Chinese require extensive training in handwriting and recognition (Jorden & Walton, 1987:117). Literature is united in reporting that literacy development in terms of learning to read and write Mandarin Chinese is a laborious process which takes much more time and intentionality than we are used to in alphabetic script languages (Australian Curriculum Languages Chinese, 2013: context statement; Jorden & Walton, 1987:117; Xiao, 2011:115), time which isn't always available for the study of a third language.

What are some of the other pedagogic implications besides the complexity of Chinese characters and the time implication for learning, when teaching reading and writing Chinese to second language students? 'Transfer' is an important issue that warrants our attention as an approach to the study of second additional languages in South African curricula. The Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) on which the current CAPS curriculum is based describes it as follows: "Learners can use what they know about learning their First Additional Language, and what they know about reading and writing, in learning the new language" (English Second Additional Language, 2002:9). The Second Additional Language CAPS words it as follows: "Learners apply the oral and literacy skills they have already learned in their Home and First Additional Languages to the study of the Second Additional Language" (Mandarin Second Additional Language, 2014a:11). This philosophy is based on Jim Cummins' Common Underlying Proficiency theory dating back to the 1970s (Edwards, 2015:77). This theory holds that, although surface features such as grammar and vocabulary differ from one language to another; major thought processes acquired through the study of the first language need not be learned afresh, but can simply be transferred to the new language (Edwards, 2015:77). First language to second language transfer, especially in

terms of reading and writing, is backed by extended international research as summarised by Rodseth (2002:105-106). Much of this principle however does not seem feasible for the early stages of Mandarin Chinese study, as native English speakers cannot apply their ability to read and write in alphabetic systems to their study of Chinese characters where the relationship between sound and print is arbitrary (Everson, 2011a:100). This profoundly affects the pacing of teaching Mandarin Chinese as second additional language with regard to reading and writing.

Another challenge associated with the study of Mandarin Chinese which has pedagogic implications, is the principle of 'skills mix'. Because the Chinese written system does not phonologically reflect the spoken language, reading and speaking are two different skills. Being able to speak therefore helps very little with being able to read Chinese characters, which poses a serious problem to the novice reader (Christensen, 2011:22; Jorden & Walton, 1987:118). The other side of the coin also holds true: extensive reading of authentic texts is not a feasible strategy for the improvement of speech or development of vocabulary at the beginner level. This, again, is a strategy employed by the Second Additional Language CAPS as clear from the following exemplar: "Research shows that the best way to develop a wide vocabulary is through reading of authentic texts" (Mandarin Second Additional Language, 2014a:12). This particular skills mix associated with learning Chinese combined with the weakened concept of transfer and the complexity of Chinese characters explains why the literature is united in suggesting that speaking and listening skills for the study of Mandarin Chinese should be established before working on reading and writing; and learning of speech should not be held back by the speed at which the written system is mastered (Everson, 2011a:100-105; Halliday, 2014:3; Jorden & Walton, 1987:118-120).

The philosophy of transfer often sees itself realised in a text-based approach to teaching a second language, which is dependent on the continuous use and production of texts (Edwards, 2015:77, English Generic Second Additional Language, 2011:14). With regard to the reading and production of authentic texts in characters, this seems problematic in the beginning stages of Mandarin Chinese study, due to the discussed issues of transfer, skills mix and the complexity of Chinese characters.

Another pedagogic implication should be considered: standard approaches for literacy development as used for all South African languages, such as the letter-sound correspondences on which the phonics approach depends (Edwards, 2015:80), are not sufficient for the study of reading and writing Mandarin Chinese. The phonics approach has similarities with the mastering of Pinyin, as Pinyin is the Romanized form of writing characters (Jorden & Walton, 1987:117). Literacy development in Chinese however necessitates a systematic progressive strategy where Pinyin as a means of transitioning towards Chinese characters, is employed (Halliday, 2014:3; Jorden & Walton, 1987:117). The Pinyin system is important for utilisation of a dictionary (Jorden & Walton, 1987:117) and for text input when creating texts in characters using digital media (Australian Curriculum Languages Chinese, 2013: context statement). The use of a phonologically based transcription system for characters such as Pinyin is, a contested issue, however. It is seen as:

- lacking cultural legitimacy;
- unnecessary by native Chinese teachers;
- making second language learners over dependent on it; and
- limited in its readability (Australian Curriculum Languages Chinese, 2013: context statement; Halliday, 2014:5; Jorden & Walton, 1987:117).

The details of the Pinyin to character teaching strategy need to be clearly specified therefore, so that the phonetic transcription is not seen as a substitute for the native orthography (Australian Curriculum Languages Chinese, 2013: context statement; Jorden & Walton, 1987:119). A possible approach, as taken by the Australians (Australian Curriculum Languages Chinese, 2013: context statement) and supported by others such as Halliday (2014:3), is to clearly separate the task of learning to interact orally, supported by print materials in Pinyin on the one hand, and learning to read and write, supported by text and resources in characters on the other.

Considering the needed investment, what level of proficiency should one aim for in reading and writing Chinese characters? This is again a contested issue which is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. Second language learners often rely heavily on Pinyin (Everson, 2011a:100,102). However, when we seek to answer this question, we must not forget one

important fact expressed in the words of Liu *et al.* (2009:169): "Chinese characters are the solid bricks that compose Chinese civilization". Any study of Chinese without a proper study of characters is therefore open to debate.

We have now looked at teaching reading and writing. How difficult is teaching listening and speaking? One only needs to talk to any foreign student of the Chinese language and it becomes clear that mastering near native tones is a feat that often eludes even the advanced student.   There are four tones; with tone referring to the pitch variation within a syllable. The tone that a syllable takes determines its meaning: ma (first tone) may mean mother, ma (second tone) may mean trouble, ma (third tone) may mean horse and ma (fourth tone) may mean curse (Wu, 2009:9). Learners of Mandarin Chinese are therefore not only required to produce new sounds, which is true in learning any foreign language, but new types of sounds that utilise completely unfamiliar articulatory gestures as well (Jorden & Walton, 1987:115).

One can also argue that, on top of reading, writing, listening and speaking challenges, culture is another aspect that makes learning Chinese challenging to native English speakers in terms of the marked social distance between the two cultures (Christensen, 2011:20-21). Christensen (2011:22) proceeds to explain that teaching culture not only includes aspects such as the achievements of a culture or information on a culture, but behavioural culture especially, defining it as those common unwritten rules which dictate daily behaviour. Jorden and Walton (19887:111) further explain that, with culturally unrelated languages, students are challenged to overcome their base filter, in other words, their native language and culture, which is automatically and unconsciously operative. Students need to ignore features that are crucial in their base language, and become aware of features of the target language that may be hidden initially. Current paradigms of language teaching, such as the communicative approach to language learning and teaching, emphasise these sociolinguistic aspects of language learning that consider culturally appropriate language use as important or more important than linguistically correct language use (Everson, 2011b:6-7; Jacobs & Farrell, 2003:16; Van der Walt, Evans & Kilfoil, 2009:41). Nowadays, the importance of gaining cultural skills for competency in a foreign language is commonly accepted according to Christensen (2011:19), who summarises this as a "shift in thinking from traditional,

structure-based approaches to learning to more holistic, communicative-based approaches".

I would like to conclude by coming full circle to Jorden and Walton's (1987:111) concept of Mandarin Chinese being a truly foreign language for users from other language families. Having in this section looked at the challenges posed by the Chinese written system, characteristics of the spoken language as well as social distance from other South African languages, Mandarin Chinese is a difficult language for South Africans to learn. Tackling the challenge of introducing Mandarin Chinese into South African schools therefore needs a sound and thought through approach in order to be successful. Thankfully, other countries and countless people have shown that Chinese can be mastered successfully. As we proceed to introduce the study of Mandarin Chinese into South African schools, we need to face this challenge head on: making informed pedagogical choices appropriate for our local situation and for Mandarin as a language and always being positive about the endless possibilities it opens up for South African students.

2.3 History of Mandarin Chinese in South African Schools

Partnerships in the field of education have followed along with blooming China-South Africa relations. For the purpose of the study, however, it is important to note that said partnerships are still in their infancy, with concrete actions only having been taken since 2014. The following section presents a brief summary of such developments, focusing on the release of the recent Mandarin Chinese curriculum and South Africans' reaction to it.

2.3.1 Development of the South African Mandarin Chinese curriculum

Engaging with any new language can provide cognitive as well as cultural and social benefits, so the choice of which language to offer in a school system is normally made on the basis of

links to the local community and assumptions about the learners' eventual contact for work and leisure with people in other countries (Orton, 2008:8). In addition to its own official languages offered at Home Language, First Additional Language and Second Additional Language levels, South Africa has also allowed for its citizens to study foreign languages offered at Second Additional Language level. Mandarin Chinese is the new foreign language introduced into South African schools.

As discussed extensively in section 2.2.2, the study of Mandarin Chinese is not only potentially beneficial to South Africans on a personal level, but also strategic for South Africa as a country aiming to engage with China as an active informed partner. The Government's timely action towards seeing Mandarin Chinese introduced into South African schools is therefore commended.

2014 was a benchmark year for cooperation between China and South Africa in the field of education. In March, the two nations signed an agreement including, among other things, to introduce Mandarin Chinese into the South African school curriculum. "As South Africa's biggest trading partner it is important for our children to become proficient in the Confucius language and develop a good understanding of Chinese culture," Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga said ("*Motshekga wants more Mandarin in schools"*, 2014). As part of the press release it was stated that a curriculum for the teaching of Chinese would be developed with the help of the Chinese government. A subsequent mini-conference was held on 6 June 2014 in Pretoria with delegates from the Chinese Embassy, officials from the Department of Basic Education and delegates from centres across the country where Mandarin Chinese is taught. The meeting set the groundwork for the establishment of a committee dedicated to the implementation of Mandarin Chinese in the curriculum (Mini-conference, 2014). Curriculum experts from East China Normal University were sent to work closely with the Department of Basic Education on its development (Ding, 2016). The first curriculum for Mandarin in South African schools published by the Department of Basic Education, the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) Grades 4-12: Mandarin Second Additional Language* (Mandarin Second Additional Language, 2014a-c) was released in 2014. In this thesis, this is referred to throughout as the CAPS Mandarin SAL. It was listed as non-official language in the Government Gazette of 20 March 2015, with 2016 stated as the year for implementation (Department of Basic Education, 2015:5).

It is important to note that the whole process of producing South Africa's Mandarin Chinese curriculum was finalised in the course of a year: from signing of diplomatic agreements in March 2014 to the release of the curriculum documents at the end of 2014. One could comment that to see such an ambitious project through from diplomatic agreement to final product in the short time span of a single year is extremely expedient, maybe a little too fast. Whatever the reasons may have been, it only heightens the urgency to keep working on and improving the curriculum. It is therefore timely to look critically at the document before it is implemented more widely.

2.3.2 South African Mandarin Chinese curriculum implementation strategy

After the bilateral agreement in education signed in March 2015 and China's help with curriculum writing, cooperation has been extended to include the current implementation of the curriculum.

In order to understand the process, it is necessary to look at the Council of Chinese Language (Hanban) and its Confucius institutes and Classrooms. Confucius Institutes and Classrooms are centres for the study of Chinese language and culture (Makoni, 2010). These centres are now present in more than 130 countries across the world and are joint ventures between local universities or schools and Hanban (Hartig, 2015). Hanban is the China National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language, which falls under the Chinese Ministry of Education (Hartig, 2015; Lan, 2016:2). In partnering with local universities and schools, Hanban provides the teaching staff, personnel training and teaching materials and equipment for these institutions. As such, it is part of China's broader foreign relations policy promoting a positive image overseas (Hartig, 2015). South Africa boasts a total of five Confucius Institutes and three Confucius Classrooms.

The implementation of the curriculum has been headed by a steering committee within the Department of Basic Education comprising language experts from China, Department of Basic Education higher management and members from the Chinese Embassy. The strategy is built on the concept of pilot schools. These pilot schools were set up through the existing

network of Confucius Institutes and Classrooms, as well as a newly-founded Confucius Classroom set up specifically for this purpose, the Chinese Culture and International Education and Exchange Centre, henceforth called CCIEEC. Comprising all of these centres, Chinese was taught during the course of 2016 as either a credit or enrichment course at 47 schools to a total of 3100 South African learners (Lan, 2016). Teaching through the CCIEEC has been closely monitored for the purposes of evaluation. This centre, headed by Dr Li Xiaoyan, is staffed by teachers sent by Hanban through the Jiangsu Provincial Department of Education. In the course of 2016, the programme was run in 10 schools in Gauteng with 600 students involved, mostly after school hours, for 90 minutes per week (Li, 2016). China's involvement with the implementation of the CAPS Mandarin SAL has further extended to include the sponsoring of a group of South African teachers for training during the June/July holidays in 2016.[2]

Considering the complexities of the South African educational landscape as discussed in section 2.1.2, it comes as no surprise then that this new development was also met with some opposition.

2.3.3 Recent opposition to the introduction of Chinese in South African schools

As the LiEP states: "…the learning of more than one language should be general practice and principle in our society. That is to say, being multilingual should be a defining characteristic of being South African" (Department of Education, 1997:1). Being able to speak a language does not equate with being literate in that language, however, and as our discussion in 2.1.2.3 has clearly shown, getting South African children literate in two or more languages is by no means an easy feat. As the different South African languages compete for recognition within this arena, it is not surprising that the introduction of another foreign language, Mandarin Chinese, has been met with resistance.

News reports were outspoken with headings such as: "Teaching Mandarin in schools is another slap in the face for African Languages" (Nicholson, 2015); "Teaching Mandarin at

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[2] I was invited to attend this training myself, and did so during the June holidays 2016.

school will colonise SA anew'- Sadtu" (Nkosi, 2015) and "Teaching Mandarin in South African schools is political 'gat kruiping'" (*Teaching Mandarin in South African schools is political 'gat kruiping'*, 2015). Opposition from the community has mainly come from teacher unions who advocate for African languages to be taught in schools as first additional language. The IIAL draft policy, as discussed in 1.1.4, prescribes the study of an African language for all South African learners from grade 1 to 12 at first additional language level (Department of Basic Education, 2013:11-13), but while it should have been implemented in 2015, it has been delayed. Others argue that "filling the gaping holes in our schooling system" should be our focus (Teagle & Chui, 2016) and we need to get the "basics right", referring to the teaching of English, Afrikaans and Zulu (*Teaching Mandarin in South African schools is political 'gat kruiping'*, 2015).

I would like to conclude by arguing that South Africans' opposition to Mandarin Chinese has less to do with the language itself and more to do with South Africa's inability to:

- address the proper study of the indigenous languages; and
- implement a successful strategy for literacy development which will set students up for improved overall academic achievement.

To stop or even postpone the implementation of Mandarin Chinese as second additional language in South African schools, as some parties may advocate, just does not make sense considering the strategic nature of Mandarin Chinese for South African citizens, as discussed in section 2.2.2.

The discussion so far has centred on understanding the South African educational landscape and proceeded to look at the language Mandarin Chinese and its place in the world, in South Africa and in South African schools. As a country that wants to equip itself with the necessary language skills needed for the future, the literature survey points to the need for South Africa to prioritise the study of Mandarin Chinese. The hope now is that, based on the preceding discussion, we are at a point where we are informed enough to creatively engage with the challenge of identifying factors that would influence and even be considered essential for the successful introduction of Mandarin Chinese into South African schools.

2.4 Towards affordances for the implementation of Mandarin Chinese in South Africa

2.4.1 Conceptual map

Based on the review of literature and policies discussed in this chapter, the study now proceeds to identify factors important for consideration with the implementation of Mandarin Chinese in South African schools. Figure 2.1 depicts these factors in a conceptual map comprising three interrelated circles: the outer circle shows current themes in the South African educational landscape, with connected language priorities related to each within the second circle (both of these discussed in section 2.1.2 as part of the complex South African educational landscape). The innermost circle depicts some Chinese language-specific curriculum factors relevant for consideration for the South African Mandarin Chinese curriculum (discussed in section 2.2.3 as part of the unique nature of Mandarin Chinese).
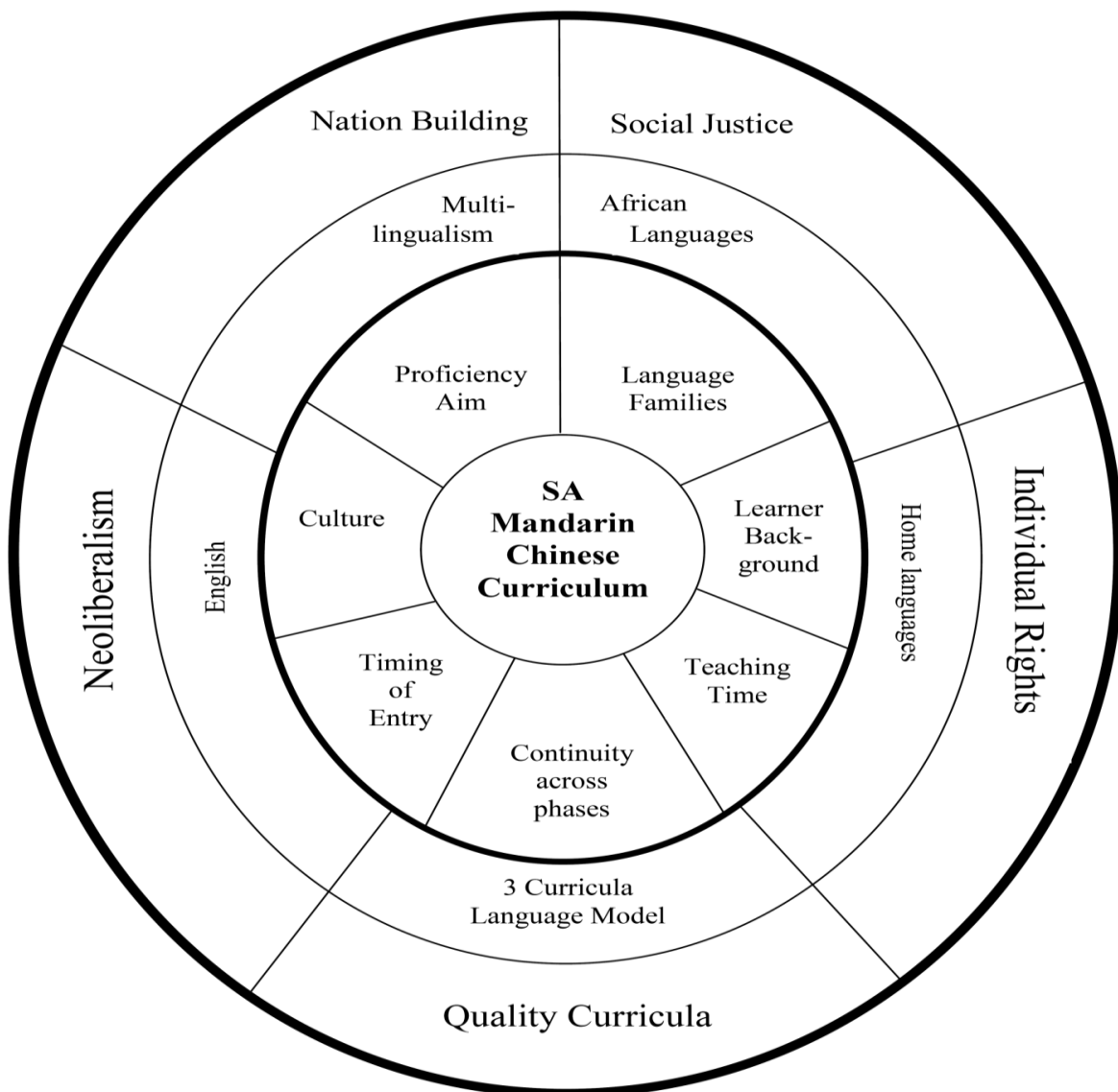
Figure 2.1: Conceptual map

The themes in the outer circle represent dominant principles and priorities as pertinent in the current South African educational landscape. The second circle connects each of these with a specific language priority:

a) Nation building – Multilingualism

The Constitution aims for nation building through the recognition of cultural

diversity. The language learning and teaching landscape sees it materialised through the principle of multilingualism and the South African schooling system therefore allows for the study of various languages as specified in the LiEP.

b) Social justice – Indigenous languages

Since 1994 the constitutional commitment to social transformation has also impacted on language learning and teaching in schools, aiming specifically for the redress of historically disadvantaged indigenous languages. Recent developments include the IIAL draft policy dated September 2013 that proposed the addition of an indigenous language for all South African learners.

c) Individual rights – Home languages

A growing number of influential educational specialists argue for the benefits of home language as LoLT during the early years for improved cognitive development, conceptual growth, social development and second language learning. Current policy prescribes for learners to do the foundational phase in their home language, but schools in poorer areas are often unable to do so due to limited resources. Recent changes to policy have also added English from grade 1, with a proposed shift to English as LoLT in grade 4. Educational specialists blame South African learners' poor performance on this straight-for-English approach.

d) Neoliberalism – English

In opposition to the principles of nation building, social justice and individual rights stands neoliberal market-led priorities. Within the language learning and teaching landscape we see these conflicting priorities as English competes with indigenous and home languages for priority.

e) Quality curricula – Three-curricula language model

South Africa has gone through a series of new curricula as it seeks to negotiate all of these principles and priorities. The current CAPS curriculum presenting language learning and teaching within a three-curricula language model seeks to strike the perfect balance. Unfortunately the South African government is currently paralysed by politics crippling the ability, for instance, to address persistent inequalities in schools and we are left with an uncomfortable policy-practice gap, despite the best intentions of curriculum experts.

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The inner circle identifies unique characteristics of the Chinese language relevant for the South African Mandarin Chinese curriculum:

a) provision for the distance between English and Chinese as belonging to different language families;

b) appropriate proficiency aims in terms of listening, speaking, reading and writing;

c) teaching culture alongside technical language teaching;

d) allowing for different stages of entry through the schooling years;

e) providing for continuity across phases such as primary school to high school;

f) allowing for sufficient teaching time; and

g) accommodating learners with different Chinese language backgrounds.

I now proceed to identify affordances for the purpose of future curriculum analysis on the basis of how these factors (as presented in the conceptual map) relate to each other and to successful curriculum design and implementation.   As Hsieh and Shannon (2005:1281) explain: "existing theory can provide predictions about the variables of interest or about the relationships among variables, thus helping to determine the initial coding scheme or relationships between codes". These affordances will subsequently be used as basis for analysis and comparison of the South African and the Australian curricula through the process of directed content analysis as described in Chapter 3 and results presented in Chapter 4.

2.4.2 Affordances as determined by the South African educational landscape

Affordances are understood to be "that quality of an object
or environment that allows someone to perform an action" (Macmillan Dictionary). This section describes these 'qualities' of the South African educational landscape which either promote or hinder the implementation of the curriculum. For each of the affordances, the studied literature and policies were used to formulate an operational question (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1281).

2.4.2.1 The principle of redress

As pointed out in section 2.1, Mandarin Chinese is in competition with African languages which are also jockeying for position in South African schools and on the timetable. We can therefore formulate an operational question as follows:

> How does the constitutional commitment to the redress of historical injustices and inequalities affect the welcoming of Mandarin Chinese into the language teaching landscape of South Africa?

2.4.2.2 Multilingualism versus Home Language and English

This factor links up with the previous one in that an ideological battle is taking place whereby the call for improved performance through mother tongue education is in competition with the ideal of multilingualism and is further complicated by the need to acquire good English. The operational question that we can ask is:

> How does the competition between the constitutional recognition of cultural diversity with multilingualism as a means to this end on the one hand and individual language rights with focus on home language and English on the other, affect the viability of Mandarin Chinese?

2.4.2.3 Neoliberal market-led forces

The very real impact of globalisation on our current world can also be seen in closer ties between South African and China as described in section 2.2.2. With neoliberalism and its prioritisation of the market economy as one of the grand narratives of globalisation, we can present the following operational question:

> How does the influence of global neoliberalism on the South African educational system affect the opening for Mandarin Chinese?

2.4.2.4 Policy-practice gap in South Africa

Section 2.1.2 of the literature survey has described the complexities of the South African educational landscape which has resulted in an alarming policy-practice gap. The next operational question is asked within this context:

> How does our understanding of the very real policy-practice gap in the South African educational system affect contextualised implementation of the CAPS Mandarin SAL?

2.4.3 Affordances as determined by the unique nature of Mandarin Chinese

This section describes the characteristics of the Mandarin Chinese language which either promote or hinder the implementation of the South African Mandarin Chinese curriculum.

2.4.3.1 Language families

As discussed in section 2.2.3, Chinese is one of the most difficult languages to learn for speakers from the Indo-European language family. Writing, reading, tones in speaking and cultural differences were identified as specific aspects contributing to this challenge. Within this context and with the challenge of an English generic curriculum prescribed for the development of the Chinese curriculum, we present the following operational question:

> In terms of distance, Mandarin Chinese from the Sino-Tibetan language family and English from the Indo-European language family are on separate branches of the language family tree. How does the curriculum accommodate this?

2.4.3.2 General aim and expected proficiency level

This factor ties in with the previous one. Considering the challenging nature of Chinese for Western learners, the curriculum needs to develop each of the language skills with careful consideration for pace and purpose. The operational question asked within this context is:

What does the curriculum want to equip the learners to do, and flowing from this aim, what level of proficiency is expected of the learners and how is it developed?

2.4.3.3 Culture

Section 2.2.3 identified the importance of gaining cultural skills for competency in a foreign language and identified this as a shift in thinking from traditional, structure-based approaches in learning languages to more holistic, communicative-based approaches. Again, this aspect of Chinese language study was described as being further complicated by the marked social distance between Chinese and English. We can therefore formulate an operational question as follows:

How is culture taught and what emphasis is put on it?

2.4.3.4 Allowance for learner diversity

Considering the investment in time needed for this challenging language, the curriculum should aim to provide "continuous appropriately sequenced and educationally challenging pathways through the curriculum so [that] students make worthwhile gains in language learning" (The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, 2011:4).

How does the programme allow for learner diversity in terms of Chinese background, time on task and continuity across phases?

2.5 Conclusion

In order for the current study to effectively analyse and compare the South African Mandarin Chinese curriculum, the literature survey shows that an awareness of two factors and their interrelatedness is crucial: the uniqueness of the South African curriculum landscape as well as the uniqueness of the Chinese language. Both of these factors are deemed equally important but often mutually exclusive depending on one's vantage point.

As such the literature survey has set us up for the next phase of the research: it has provided us with knowledge of the local (the South African educational landscape) as well as knowledge of the subject of study (the Mandarin Chinese language) which is the context for exploring knowledge from elsewhere (the Australian curricula which will be used for comparison) with the ultimate aim of true 'intellectual advancement' (Pinar, 2010:1-2).

Chapter 3: Research methodology and method

3.1 Introduction

Before plunging into the details of methodology and method, this chapter starts by first revisiting the central research questions, using the 'what' of the investigation to direct the 'how'.

The central research questions for this study have been formulated as follows:

1. How does the South African CAPS curriculum conceptualise the initial teaching of Mandarin Chinese as a second additional language in terms of document structure and in terms of affordances of the South African educational landscape and the Chinese language?
2. How does the South African curriculum compare with the Australian curriculum in terms of document structure and these affordances?

The central research questions make it clear that this is a study for analysis and comparison of curriculum documents. Chapter 2 concluded with identifying the curriculum affordances to be used in the analysis and comparison as they crystallised from the literature survey. Two sets of affordances were identified: (a) affordances as determined by the South African educational landscape that serve as guiding principles for contextualising the implementation of the curriculum (section 2.4.2) and (b) Chinese language-specific curriculum affordances as determined by the unique nature of the Mandarin Chinese language (section 2.4.3). The research so far thus has produced some tools for analysis and comparison, and the rest of the chapter explores and identifies guidelines for their subsequent utilisation.

According to Harding (1987:2-3), the distinction between methodology and method lies in the following: "Method is a technique for (or way of proceeding in) gathering evidence,

while methodology is a theory and analysis of how research does or should proceed". This chapter proceeds with the main focus being the identification of a research methodology and method that will assist in document analysis and comparison.

3.2 Research methodology

Le Grange (2000:194) argues that, compared to the traditional categories of qualitative and quantitative research, paradigms provide a more useful means of categorising contemporary educational research. This section aims to explain research paradigms as the frameworks used to guide research. It then endeavours to apply it to the current research project.

3.2.1 Research paradigms

Thomas Kuhn, through *The structure of Scientific Revolutions*, first published in 1962, brought the concept of 'paradigms' into scientific enquiry (Kuhn, 1970:11-12). Paradigms, being frameworks that guide scientific communities, determine important problems as well as acceptable theories and methods for the solving of these problems (Le Grange, 2000:194; Usher, 1996:15). This idea introduced by Kuhn challenged the prevailing idea that the relationship between facts and theory are direct; it brought in a new idea of knowledge being relative rather than absolute (Connole, 1993:14-15). Kuhn's idea of paradigms holds that research is subjectively defined by time, place and people, and not as objective or transcendental as previously held (Usher, 1996:17). In this scenario, a 'paradigm shift' is described as the process whereby acceptable principles and values within a paradigm is challenged (Le Grange, 2009:2-3), which may at first be dismissed by colleagues, but a new paradigm coexisting with others is formed as peers join to form a like-minded community (Connole, 1993:15). Based on Kuhn's concept of paradigms, four paradigms that reflect

social research conducted in the current post-positivist era can be identified: Positivism, Interpretivism, Critical Science and Post Modernism (Connole, 1993:22-23; Le Grange, 2009:3; Usher, 1996:14-32).

This study functions mainly within the interpretivist paradigm. As opposed to Positivism, it stands for a fluid versus static reality; subjectivity versus objectivity; insider's perspective versus outsider's perspective; emergent versus fixed categories and understanding versus explanation (Le Grange, 2000:193). Critical and post-modern perspectives challenge Interpretivism. According to Usher (1996:23), critical science "engages with understanding the causes of powerlessness, recognises systematic oppressive forces and acts individually and collectively to change the conditions of life". Knowledge as generated through positivist and interpretivist perspectives is challenged "in terms of the ownership, the social, political and economic interests of those who own it and its potential to oppress or emancipate those who are being researched" (Connole, 1993:20). Whereas the current study includes such elements, it does not put the emancipatory project as its defining value, a critique often directed at Critical Science (Le Grange, 2000:193; Le Grange & Beets, 2005:116).

In this study, as is the general case, it is important to realise that the distinctions between different types of perspectives in reality are much less tidy than the above would suggest, with many researchers adopting a combination of the approaches of the different paradigms – borrowing elements and creating combinations which may be difficult to unravel (Connole, 1993:21). Interpretivism nevertheless has been identified as the primary theory guiding this particular research process and is now investigated in more depth and applied to the current study.

3.2.2 Interpretivism as operating paradigm

Interpretivism has its historical roots in the tradition of hermeneutics, which began as the interpretation of Biblical texts (Connole, 1993:19). Interpretivism applies to the study in the following ways:

3.2.2.1 Theory of reality

Social reality is complex, multifaceted, fluid and messy (Le Grange, 2007:422). Ontologically, therefore, reality can only be understood subjectively and notions of objectivity are rejected (Le Grange, 2000:193; Usher, 1996:21). As the curriculum documents under discussion constitute a 'static reality', their 'fluidity' is understood in the interpretation thereof by the researcher.

3.2.2.2 Theory of Knowledge

The epistemological position held by Interpretivism is that knowledge that is generated is dependent on the process of discovery (Connole, 1993:23). As the process of discovery is a human action, the 'facts' can be selected and arranged in many different ways with many potential meanings (Connole, 1993:14). This was relevant to the current study as the data under analysis could contain multiple meanings. In the end, as Connole (1993:23) puts it, "the integrity of the findings depend[s] on the quality of the social, linguistic and cognitive skills of the researcher in the production of data analysis and conclusions."

3.2.2.3 Knowledge interest

Since Interpretivism holds that there are multiple views of reality, the researcher's main aim in producing knowledge is to understand what is going on by defining the situation (Connole, 1993:20; Le Grange, 2009:3, 8). The researcher is concerned with illumination in order to create understanding (Golafshani, 2003:600). In line with this, the present study aimed to find patterns of meaning which emerged and related it to existing theory in order to create understanding.

3.2.2.4 Theory of method

The described assumptions about reality and knowledge result in specific choices of method within the interpretivist paradigm. The scientific method which uses empirical analytic enquiry is deemed insufficient in understanding multiple realities; instead different methods are used, with interviews and observations being dominant (Connole, 1993:22; Golafshani,

2003:600; Le Grange, 2007:421). As with the other methods used within the interpretivist paradigm, data produced by this study were of a qualitative nature (Le Grange, 2000:192-193).

3.3 Research method

According to Harding (1987:2), there are only three methods of gathering evidence for social enquiry: listening to or interrogating informants; observing behaviour; and, lastly, examining historical traces and records. The current study fell within the last category as the offering of Mandarin Chinese was to commence in the month of January 2016 only (Department of Basic Education, 2015:5): a programme evaluation (in other words a combination of the first two categories) was not possible within the timeframe of this study. The South African Mandarin Chinese curriculum released at the end of 2014 provided the necessary documents for the analysis attempted in this study.

3.3.1 Introduction to content analysis

In referring back to the central research questions, it is important to remember that this comprised an analysis and comparison study of curriculum documents. A study of documents implies a study of content and content analysis was therefore seen as the most appropriate research method. According to Mouton (2001:165), content analysis studies "analyse the content of texts or documents", which Hsieh and Shannon (2005:1278) specify as including a wide variety such as "verbal, print or electronic form that might have been obtained from narrative responses, open-ended survey questions, interviews, focus groups, observations, or printed media such as articles, books or manuals". Interestingly, Mouton (2001:166) points out that content analysis studies are usually aimed at public documents, which is what a curriculum is.

Elo and Kyngäs (2008:114) maintain that one can examine large amounts of textual data through content analysis. Woodrum (1984:2) clarifies the process of analysis in a content analysis study as a systematic identification of specific characteristics in the text from which deductions are made. Hsieh and Shannon (2005:1278) define content analysis as "a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns".

This is exactly what the study aimed to do: framed within the interpretivist paradigm, it held to the principle that reality can only be subjectively understood, but aimed to systematically analyse and compare the curricula on the basis of curriculum affordances as identified from the literature survey. In the words of Elo and Kyngäs (2008:114): "content analysis allows the researcher to test theoretical issues to enhance understanding of the data". To the extent that this study was 'testing' the South African and Australian curricula against each other and then against what the literature survey revealed, theoretical issues were tested and questioned.

Content analysis however describes a family of analytic approaches which vary according to the theoretical and substantive interests of the researcher and the problem being studied (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1277). In order to choose the best approach for the current study, the different possibilities: their aims, advantages and disadvantages were investigated. This is presented in the next section.

3.3.2 Classification of content analysis

Traditionally, content analysis is limited to being classified as either a qualitative or a quantitative research method (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008:108; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1277; Mouton, 2001:166). Hsieh and Shannon (2005:1278) go further to identify three distinct approaches to content analysis as a qualitative research method, namely the conventional, directed and summative approach, and state that all three interpret text data from a predominantly interpretivist paradigm.

Conventional content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1279-1281) aims to describe a phenomenon regarding which existing theory or research literature is limited. Researchers do not use preconceived categories, but derive the categories from the data by immersing themselves in the data. Many qualitative methods share this initial approach to study design and analysis, but then go beyond conventional content analysis to develop theory or a nuanced understanding of lived experience. The advantage of this method is its ability to avoid imposing preconceived categories or theoretical perspectives on the data. A major challenge is the possibility that key categories might not be identified, with the findings thus not representing the data sufficiently.

With directed content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1281-1283), the researcher uses existing theory or prior research to develop the initial categories, which can be revisited and redefined as analysis proceeds, or additional ones may even be developed. The goal and also strength of this approach is its ability to validate and extend an existing theoretical framework or theory conceptually. Its challenge lies in the fact that researchers approach the data with an informed but nonetheless potential bias.

The summative approach to content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1283-1285) is fundamentally different from the other two approaches. Rather than analysing the text as a whole, the text is approached by focusing on single words and their context. The process starts by identifying and quantifying certain words or content in text, and proceeds to include the interpretation of content. The main advantage of summative content analysis is its unobtrusive and nonreactive way of studying phenomena: it can provide basic insights into how words are actually used. Findings derived through this process however are limited by their inattention to the broader meanings present in the data.

Each one of these three approaches has its own place and function. Hsieh and Shannon (2005:1277) advocate for a thorough analysis of the specific aim of a content analysis study in order to choose the best possible study design and analytical procedures.

3.3.3 Selection of the most suitable type of content analysis

This section presents the two approaches to content analysis chosen for the study.

3.3.3.1 Directed content analysis

Of the three approaches to content analysis discussed so far, directed content analysis was deemed most appropriate for analysis and comparison of the curricula based on the identified affordances.

Firstly, the choice was made on the basis of the aim of the study. According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005:1286), the differences between the conventional, directed and summative approaches to content analysis lie in the manner in which initial codes are developed. As is clear from the central research questions, this study was directed by existing theory: the South African educational landscape affordances as well as Chinese language-specific curriculum affordances defined by means of the conceptual map emerging from the literature survey. It therefore is a directed content analysis.

For further clarification, it is important to look closely at the phenomenon under investigation as stated in the central research questions, namely the conceptualisation of the initial teaching of Mandarin Chinese Second Additional Language in the CAPS curriculum. There are other countries where Mandarin Chinese has been taught as a foreign language for many years. Theory and research literature on the subject of investigation therefore exist and it is possible to draw on this in the analysis of a new curriculum. Directed content analysis is the method that best fitted such a scenario.

I would argue that the perceived weakness of directed content analysis, that is, supposed researcher bias towards preconceived conceptual categories, was not a drawback in this case. The conceptual map has been justified on the basis of literature which is available for anybody to study. It is therefore possible to check the conclusions, in this case the conceptual map and curriculum affordances, against the literature, mitigating extreme bias. As such it is true that the researcher isolated the factors as presented in the conceptual map (section 2.4.1) and the eight affordances (sections 2.4.2 and 2.4.3) from amongst all the

information as most relevant to the South African Mandarin Chinese curriculum. Such interpretation however is in line with and to be expected for an interpretive study where reality is recognised to be subjectively understood, and where the data under analysis could contain multiple meanings (see discussion on Interpretivism in section 3.2.2).

The choice of any one of the approaches also depends on the nature of the data. As described earlier, the documents for analysis as well as comparison were curriculum documents. Because the conventional approach only looks at what is present in the data, it is not able to point out what may be lacking. In investigating the curriculum documents for this study, the aim was to look at what was present, but also to identify that which may have been absent in both the local and international curricula, as possible with the directed approach.

It was, however, found that directed content analysis was insufficient as sole method of research. As the documents were scrutinised (as discussed in Chapter 4) and the research unfolded, the need for the use of the conventional approach in addition to the directed approach, was identified.

3.3.3.2 Conventional content analysis

As discussed in section 3.2.2, the interpretivist paradigm recognises the complexity, fluidity and messiness of social reality, the consequent limitations of research methods in portraying it (Le Grange, 2007:422) and the need for such methods to adapt accordingly (Connole, 1993:22). Content analysis framed within this paradigm does not necessarily proceed in a linear fashion: it is flexible, allowing different variations (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008:113).

When applying the coding process reported in Chapter 4, I realised that the structure of the two documents would be best analysed and compared by means of an inductive approach; by immersing myself in the data in order to allow the content categories to emerge (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1279, 1285). The process of research therefore took a circular path with the later developments affecting change in previous plans of method: conventional content analysis was chosen in addition to directed content analysis for analysing and comparing the

structure of the curricula. As opposed to directed content analysis, which is directed by existing theory, the conventional method derives categories from the data as the coding process is applied (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008:109). Researcher bias is limited as the researcher gains direct information from the data without imposing preconceived ideas or theoretical perspectives (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1279-1280).

By making use of both directed content analysis (deemed most appropriate for analysis and comparison of the curricula on the basis of curriculum affordances) and conventional content analysis (found to be most appropriate for analysis and comparison of the structure of the curricula), the weakness of the one approach is mitigated by the strength of the other. Where the conventional approach is challenged if the researcher does not identify key categories (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1280), the categories identified from literature for the directed approach may fill in these gaps. Where directed content analysis calls for personal interpretation of the available literature in order to identify the initial categories, conventional content analysis looks at the data and allows the categories to emerge from it (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1279,1283).

3.3.4 Application of content analysis

According to Elo and Kyngäs (2008:110) qualitative content analysis processes are represented in three main phases: preparation, organising, and reporting. Hsieh and Shannon (2005:1285) describe the analytical process shared by all approaches to qualitative content analysis in more detail. They propose the steps to be:

(i) developing the research questions;

(ii) selecting the sample for analysis;

(iii) defining the categories to be applied;

(iv) outlining the coding process and coder training;

(v) applying the coding process;

(vi) establishing trustworthiness; and

(vii) analysing the results of the coding process.

For the purposes of this study, it is possible to arrange Hsieh and Shannon's categories by distinguishing a preparation, organising and reporting phase as summarised in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Application of the analytical process of content analysis based on Elo and Kyngäs (2008:110) and Hsieh and Shannon (2005:1285)

ELO & KYNGäS	HSIEH & SHANNON	APPLICATION
Preparation	(i) Developing the research questions (ii) Selecting the sample for analysis	The research questions were developed as presented in Chapter 1 in response to the current context. Motivation for choices of specific data samples from both countries are given in section 4.2.
Organising	(iii) Defining the categories to be applied (iv) Outlining the coding process (v) Applying the coding process	The language and landscape affordances were derived from the conceptual map flowing from the literature survey in Chapter 2. The coding process is described in section 3.4 and applied in Chapter 4.
Reporting	(vi) Establishing trustworthiness (vii) Analysing the results of the coding process	Aspects of trustworthiness as described in section 3.5 are built into the design and process of this study throughout planning and implementation. Chapter 4 presents the analysis of the results of the coding process.

3.4 Coding process

3.4.1 Introduction

Of all the steps in qualitative content analysis, the success of the research endeavour depends largely on the coding process (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1285). The researcher has to analyse and simplify the data into categories that reflect the subject of study in a reliable manner as well as cover all the data (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008:112; Le Grange, 2009:7).

One can summarise the essence of a code in Saldanha's (2013:3) words as "a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient and/or essence-capturing attributive for a portion of language-based data". By grouping portions of similarly coded data together on the basis of 'belonging' to a group, we create a means to not only describe a phenomenon, but also to increase understanding and generate knowledge (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008:111), all of which is appropriate for this study.

The sample selected for analysis comprised curriculum documents. These documents are highly structured. As such, the first step is to analyse and compare them in their totality on the basis of their structure. An inductive approach to coding was used for this step, in line with the conventional content analysis method by which researchers allow the content categories to flow from the data during data analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1279). Here the research moves from the specific (the curricula) to the general (the categories derived from it) (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008:109).

The second step is to analyse and compare both curriculum documents on the basis of landscape and language affordances. The conceptual map derived from the literature survey was used to formulate the curriculum affordances. The directed content analysis method uses a deductive approach to coding by which the research moves from the general (the predetermined categories) to the specific (the curricula) (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008:109).

With Interpretivism as methodology guiding the current study, subjective interpretation by the researcher was desirable as social reality is seen to be complex, multifaceted, fluid and messy. The discussion of the specifics of the coding process in this section therefore makes use of the first person singular in order to discard any notions that the interpretation was objective. The coding process is further described in as much detail as possible in order to increase transparency and strengthen trustworthiness (see section 3.5.2.3 on Rich, thick description).

As Elo and Kyngäs (2008:113) explain, the organising phase or data analysis of a content analysis study is more difficult than with quantitative analysis because it is less standardised: each study is unique with the results dependent on the skills, insights, analytic abilities and style of the investigator. There are guidelines, but in the end there is no simple, 'correct'

way of doing it. The unique details of the coding process as it played out for this study are discussed next.

3.4.2 Application of the coding process for conventional content analysis

For the purpose of coding in this study, I started by scanning the two curricula in terms of headings and basic structure. I then allowed myself time to read through the curricula, still keeping to the main ideas, but starting to look for commonalities. It was only after this initial phase that I started reading the curricula in more detail, immersing myself in the data, this being a common feature of this inductive approach contributing to trustworthiness. As I read, I highlighted the exact words from the text that appeared to capture key thoughts or concepts and made notes of first impressions, always seeking to find ways in which these key thoughts related to each other (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1279). This process enabled me to identify overarching categories that combined more than one key thought, which in essence formed the final themes. As research prescribes, initial coding thus resulted in pattern detection and categorisation (Saldanha, 2013:4; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1279).

After identifying the themes and whilst writing up the findings, I however realised with quite a bit of unease that the comparison seemed to be guided by the structure of the CAPS Mandarin SAL into a 'deductive approach' as opposed to the inductive approach prescribed by conventional content analysis. I subsequently returned to the original curriculum documents, and reread the data samples as well as the comparison thereof. I was reassured that I did approach the data inductively. The results were a natural consequence of the central research question directing the research: the primary focus was on the conceptualisation of the teaching of Mandarin in the South African curriculum and comparison with the Australian curriculum could be seen as a secondary focus.

Consequently, as Elo and Kyngäs (2008:113) hold, the analysis process in this content analysis did not proceed in a linear fashion for me either. After identification of themes and as I was writing up my findings, I repeatedly went back to the curriculum documents to make sure that the categories and findings were true representations of the data.

As part of my Master's studies I had enrolled for an Educational Research 769 module in which I was required to investigate teachers' lived experiences making use of the constant comparative method, henceforth referred to as the CCM (Maykut & Morehouse, 2001:126-149). Whereas some researchers hold that there are no simple guidelines for qualitative content analysis, with each inquiry being distinctive (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008:113), others suggest that one needs to adhere to an analytic procedure or coding scheme (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1286) such as the CCM in order to increase the trustworthiness of the study. Considering that this was a content analysis of curriculum documents and not transcribed interviews or observations, the structured nature of the curricula in my opinion did not necessitate such a complex process for identifying key categories.

For the identification of subthemes under the themes of Aims, Language skills and Language Levels in the CAPS Mandarin SAL, I, however, fell back on the more formal coding procedure of the CCM (Maykut & Morehouse, 2001:134-139). As the themes in these sections were not evident on first impression, the more detailed and structured nature of the CCM was helpful in sifting these out. This method was also helpful when I had to identify key categories where the structures of the two curricula were very different, as in the case of the general curriculum aspects of both documents. The CCM in these instances generally took the following course:

a) The initial coding process commenced from a text in which key thoughts had already been highlighted. I then went through the data, cutting up the text into pieces of meaning with the highlighted words as guide and putting it into separate filing pockets, adding pieces depending on whether they 'looked like' or 'felt like' the meaning of the initial piece. All of the data were used, and if anything fitted no existing pocket, a new one was created.

b) The pieces were then used to create a mind map for each filing pocket, in essence describing the key idea of that category. If needed, categories were redefined and pieces were regrouped. If a piece fitted more than one group it was duplicated. The ideas which emerged became the identified themes.

3.4.3 Application of the coding process for directed content analysis

For the purpose of the current study, the categories used for the directed content analysis were four South African educational landscape affordances as well as four Chinese language-specific affordances. These were formulated through the following process.

With the literature survey as basis I was able to identify all possible initial codes which either promoted or hindered the implementation of the CAPS Mandarin SAL for the action of Mandarin Chinese language study. As Hsieh and Shannon (2005:1281) state, "[by] using existing theory or prior research, researchers begin by identifying key concepts or variables as initial coding categories". These initial codes were conceptualised in a semantic map which organised them into three categories: South African educational landscape themes; related language priorities; and Chinese language-specific curriculum factors. The conceptual map assisted in the process of developing the eventual eight curriculum affordances, as Saldanha (2013:8-9) explains "qualitative codes when clustered together according to similarity and regularity, actively facilitate the development of categories and the analysis of their connectedness".

Saldanha (2013:8-9) describes coding as the "initial step" of many "cyclical processes". With the current study being a cyclical process, I was comfortable with going back to previous research and working through it again in the light of new developments or revelations. The affordances, for instance, were tentatively drafted after the initial step of completing the literature survey, but were refined and only finalised after completing the conventional content analysis and subsequent immersion in the data.

With the eight affordances in hand, the study proceeded with analysis and comparison of the curricula. According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005:1281), coding for directed content analysis can begin with either of two strategies. As directed content analysis was preceded by the process of conventional content analysis, I had by this time become quite familiar with the data. I was therefore confident in using the second strategy proposed by Hsieh and Shannon (2005: 1282) and "[began] coding immediately with the predetermined codes".

I started the coding process by reading through the CAPS Mandarin SAL in conjunction with the corresponding results of the conventional content analysis, identifying all the sections that related to the affordances I was coding at that stage. As I gathered this data, I made notes of the subcategories that emerged from the data and how these related to each other and the overarching affordance. I only went back to the Australian curriculum where this was relevant. In order to write up my findings, I examined the data for the affordance under discussion by relating it to existing theory (identified through the literature survey) and prior research (analysis of the structure of the document with conventional content analysis). I aimed to not only describe but to create understanding. An important aspect of my analysis was to also comment on "absence" of important aspects, which Hsieh and Shannon (2005:1281) refer to as "supporting and non-supporting evidence for a theory". When writing up my finding, I "showed codes with exemplars" and "offered descriptive evidence" as proof of my conclusions (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1281). I went through this process for each identified affordance, eventually working through the text eight times for each of the eight affordances – an example of another cyclical process.

The coding process itself basically involves the organising of large quantities of text into much smaller content categories, and developing themes that are more or less directly expressed in the text or derived from it through analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1285). From this discussion, it is clear that both the inductive and deductive approaches to coding were used in the organising phase of this study.

3.5 Trustworthiness in the interpretivist paradigm

3.5.1 Introduction

Trustworthiness traditionally is expressed through the concepts of reliability and validity, with reliability referring to the ability of a research instrument to produce consistent results,

and validity referring to the ability of a research instrument to measure what it is supposed to measure (Golafshani, 2003:598-600; Le Grange, 2009:7). Depending on which research paradigm a researcher ascribes to, reliability and validity will be constructed differently however (Creswell & Miller, 2000:125; Le Grange, 2009:7).

The traditional understanding of reliability and validity based on the ideal of objectivity and the notions of prediction and control which ties in with Positivism, is challenged in the interpretivist paradigm (Le Grange & Beets, 2005:116; Le Grange, 2009:8). The interpretivist researcher sees reality as subjective: multiple realities exist as seen through the eyes of different individuals (Connole, 1993:22). This requires active involvement from the researcher in the process of negotiated meaning, not detachment, and inevitably raises the question of ambiguity (Connole, 1993:20). No wonder then that there are diverse perspectives on validity in qualitative research, with reliability often not even discussed. For clarification, Golafshani (2003:600) notes that one should not look at reliability and validity separately in qualitative studies; terminology that encompasses both, such as credibility, transferability and trustworthiness should be used instead. The need for qualitative research to be trustworthy remains valid (Creswell & Miller, 2000:124; Golafshani, 2003:600).

Content analysis as framed within the interpretivist paradigm has consequently also found critics in the positivist paradigm who consider it to be a simplistic technique that does not lend itself to detailed statistical analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008:108). As Elo and Kyngäs explain, though, "it is possible to attain simplistic results by using any method whatsoever if skills of analysis are lacking. The truth is that this method is as easy or as difficult as the researcher determines it to be."

Trustworthiness therefore depends on the ability and effort of the researcher (Golafshani, 2003:600). Since the researcher's main aim is to generate understanding as opposed to explaining, predicting and controlling (Connole, 1993:19; Le Grange, 2009:3), the trustworthiness of the research is, as Connole (1993:23) puts it, "dependent on the quality of the social, linguistic and cognitive skills of the researcher in the production of data analysis and conclusions".

3.5.2 Application of trustworthiness to this study

How, then, have researchers within the interpretivist paradigm maximised the credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative studies? Le Grange (2009:9-10) identifies four types of validity that are typical for the interpretivist paradigm: inter-subjective objectivity, face validity (member checking), thick description and triangulation. As inter-subjective objectivity and face validity are mostly related to interviewing and observing as methods of gathering data, this study made use of thick description and triangulation as validity types. It is important to note, however, that the boundaries between different paradigms and the types of validity framed within them are often blurred (Le Grange & Beets, 2005:116; Le Grange, 2009:9). The study consequently also made use of content and construct validity framed within the positivist paradigm as categorised by Le Grange (2009:10) and researcher reflexivity and peer debriefing framed within the critical paradigm as categorised by Creswell and Miller (2000:126). Where needed, terms could be redefined to fit the interpretivist paradigm (Le Grange & Beets, 2005:116).

3.5.2.1 Content and construct validity

As mentioned in section 3.4, the success of qualitative content analysis is greatly dependent on the coding process (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1285). In this context content and construct validity were redefined to function within the interpretivist paradigm for the purposes of the current study: content validity refers to the extent to which the researcher was able to cover all of the data without omitting any key categories; and construct validity refers to the extent to which the identified categories reflect the subject of study in a reliable manner (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008:112; Le Grange & Beets, 2005:115).

Content and construct validity as defined here are listed as a challenge for conventional content analysis. As Hsieh and Shannon (2005:1280) explain, there may be evidence of researchers "failing to develop a complete understanding of the context, thus failing to identify key categories". One of the activities employed by this study to enhance content validity was immersion in the data and repeated engagement with the data as suggested by

Elo and Kyngäs (2008:113). Hsieh and Shannon (2005:1280) refer to this as prolonged engagement. In order to strengthen construct validity, the central research questions were kept in mind throughout the process of data analysis and comparison.

In a sense one can see these two as strengthened by all the other types of validity which are discussed here. The use of triangulation by employing not only the conventional but also the directed content analysis method, for instance, also increases the credibility as categories are identified from the literature as well as the curriculum documents.

3.5.2.2 Triangulation

According to Creswell and Miller (2000:126), "[t]riangulation is a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study". The term originated from military navigation where sea vessels would find their bearing by triangulating among different distant points. With triangulation being a type of validity framed within both the positivist and interpretivist paradigms, Golafshani (2003:603) motivates its contribution to the latter as strengthening a study's ability to portray the complexity of social reality.

In this study, triangulation was used in two ways to enhance the credibility of the study: different data sources and different methods of data analysis were used. Firstly, the conceptualisation of Mandarin Chinese teaching in South Africa was explored by comparing the South African curriculum with another data source, namely the Australian curriculum. By looking at how another, comparable country went about conceptualising their Chinese teaching, a more comprehensive understanding of South Africa's approach is reached. Secondly, two methods of data analysis were used, both the conventional and the directed content analysis methods, as discussed in section 3.3.3. The weakness of the one approach is the strength of the other and so the use of both strengthened the trustworthiness of the conclusions.

The use of different data sources and different methods of data analysis could also identify negative evidence or evidence to the contrary, a validity procedure described as disconfirming evidence. In this study, disconfirming evidence, "[as a] process of first

establishing themes or categories and then searching through the data for evidence that is consistent with or disconfirms these themes" (Creswell & Miller, 2000:127), was interpreted as not only looking at what is present in the curricula, but also identifying that which is absent.

3.5.2.3 Thick, rich description

According to Denzin (1989:83), "[t]hick descriptions are deep, dense, detailed accounts… [t]hin descriptions, by contrast, lack detail and simply report facts". Although this type of validity is traditionally used when people are interviewed or observed in order to transport the reader into a setting or situation, it can also be applied to the study of documents.

In this study of curricula, credibility was established by using the literature review to comprehensively describe the context for the study, namely the South African educational landscape (section 2.1) as well as the uniqueness of the Mandarin Chinese language and its history in South African schools (section 2.2.3 and 2.3). A clear open motivation has also been given for data selection strengthening the credibility of the data sources as it motivated the compatibility of the two countries' curricula (section 4.2). The research proceeded to apply thick interpretation of data by describing the analysis process and the results in as much detail as possible in Chapter 4. This has increased the reliability of the study as it demonstrates a link between the results and the data. Supporting excerpts as well as tables and appendices were used in this context, as suggested by Elo and Kyngäs (2008:112,114). As Elo and Kyngäs (2008:112) put it "demonstration is needed of the reliability of the findings and interpretations to enable someone else to follow the process and procedures of the inquiry".

Another aspect of thick, rich description is its ability to contribute to transparency when strengths and limitations are openly discussed (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008:112). In this context, the strengths and limitations of the research method is discussed in section 3 of this chapter, that of the analysis in Chapter 4, and of the researcher in Chapter 5.

3.5.2.4 Peer debriefing

Peer debriefing involves having someone external to but familiar with the study and having expertise regarding the subject under investigation, to review the study or aspects of it (Creswell & Miller, 2000:129).

In the initial phase of constructing the research proposal, repeated skype chats with Andrea Klopper, a Chinese English friend involved in facilitating Chinese language study for foreigners in China, helped me with clarifying the study focus. Right in the midst of the analysis and comparison process, fellow postgraduate students gave their input at a writing seminar held on 17 May 2016. I was also very fortunate to be invited to attend a training session for South African Chinese teachers in the June/July 2016 holiday at the East China Normal University in Shanghai, where I could talk to one of the CAPS Mandarin SAL writers, Professor Ding. The discussion centred mainly on their experience as curriculum writers in writing the CAPS Mandarin SAL, but I could also discuss some of my ideas with her (Ding, 2016). During the final phase of reviewing the first draft, I identified Professor Renate du Toit from the Stellenbosch Department of Modern Foreign Languages, a key expert on CAPS second additional language curricula in general and specific experience with German. At this stage, Andrea Klopper once again contributed by reading through the Introduction. In general, I found it very helpful to discuss my research with interested parties who had varying degrees of expertise, as the process of verbally explaining myself helped me to identify salient features and the other party often posed questions which forced me to think of aspects I had overlooked.

3.5.2.5 Researcher reflexivity

According to Creswell and Miller (2000:127), "[r]esearcher reflexivity is for researchers to self-disclose their assumptions, beliefs and biases that may shape their inquiry". As such it is a type of validity positioned within the critical paradigm by means of which individuals reflect on their own backgrounds as a force that shapes their interpretation. This may be one of the most challenging phases of any study (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008:113). For this study, the aim was to describe the researcher's own actions and insights by using interpretive commentary throughout the discussion of the findings presented in Chapter 4. In the first

chapter, a description of my personal background and interest in the topic of Mandarin Chinese study is included and Chapter 5 contains a separate section dealing with the limitations of the study which include my reflections on my own limitations as researcher.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter presents Interpretivism as methodology underpinning the study; content analysis, both conventional and directed, as research methods for analysis and comparison and five types of validity used to establish the trustworthiness of the study.

The discussion not only describes but also provides justification for these choices. The work done in this chapter therefore serves as preparation and planning for the actual process of investigation presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Analysis and comparison

4.1 Introduction

Both South Africa and Australia have prioritised the teaching of Mandarin Chinese within their schooling systems: South Africa only recently since 2015, and Australia since the 1950s (Australian Curriculum Languages Chinese, 2013: context statement[3]). For South Africa, this has been part of a series of actions towards the strengthening of diplomatic, political and economic relations with China (see section 2.2.2 China in Africa and South Africa). As for Australia, their distinctive migrant history as well as their geographical position have necessitated engagement with Chinese culture and language, as discussed in more detail in the following section.

4.2 Motivation for choice of data sample

The central research questions make it clear that this is an analysis and comparison study: the South African document to be analysed in this study was the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) Grade 4-6: Mandarin Second Additional Language* (Mandarin Second Additional Language, 2014a), henceforth referred to as the CAPS Mandarin SAL; and the international document with which it was to be compared the *Australian Curriculum Languages Chinese, 2013: Second Language Learner Pathway, Foundation to Year 10 Sequence, Year 3 to 4 Band* (Australian Curriculum Languages Chinese, 2013), henceforth referred to as the Australian Chinese Curriculum. This section proceeds to re-cap and motivate the specific choice of data samples.

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[3] The Australian Curriculum Languages Chinese, 2013 document has no page numbers and consequently all references to sections of the document use section headings as a specific reference instead of page numbers.

4.2.1   Brief re-cap of the South African Mandarin Chinese curriculum

The development of the South African Mandarin Chinese curriculum was traced back to its roots, as unpacked in Chapter 2. Section 2.1.1.3 South African Curricula as implementation of the LiEP presented the recent developments of South African curricula and concluded by presenting the current CAPS curriculum as the document which formed the basis for the development of the Mandarin Chinese curriculum. In section 2.1.1.4 Language learning as specified by the South African curricula, the inclusion of Mandarin Chinese at the level of second additional language offered from Intermediate Phase onwards is explained, and section 2.3.1 Development of Mandarin Second Additional Language Curriculum, in conclusion presented the first curriculum for Mandarin in South African schools published by the Department of Basic Education: *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) Grades 4-12: Mandarin Second Additional Language (Mandarin Second Additional Language, 2014a-c)*.

The CAPS Mandarin SAL consists of three documents: CAPS Grade 4-6 (Intermediate Phase), CAPS Grade 7-9 (Senior Phase) and CAPS Grade 10-12 (Further Education and Training/FET Phase). The document chosen for analysis was the CAPS Grades 4-6. Although the curriculum is available for grade 4 to 12, the current study's emphasis is on the initial teaching of Mandarin, as clearly stated in the research questions. The study refers to the Senior Phase and FET Phase curricula for purposes of discussion of issues such as progression, however.

4.2.2   Context and Motivation for the Australian Mandarin Chinese curriculum

The study of Asia and China has a long history in Australia. The presence of the Chinese community in Australia extends back to the mid-1800s and patterns of migration in recent decades have seen rapid growth in Australia's Chinese population (Australian Curriculum Languages Chinese, 2013: context statement; State of New South Wales: Department of

Education and Communities, 2011:6). In addition to its demography, Australia's location in the Asia-Pacific region has necessitated its focus on the Asian languages of its neighbouring countries: with Japanese, Chinese, Indonesian and Korean taught in Australian schools (Dabrowski, 2015; Kessler, Illman & Wesley, 2009; State of New South Wales: Department of Education and Communities, 2011:6), with Chinese specifically since the 1950s (Australian Curriculum Languages Chinese, 2013: Chinese context statement). Others add that economics should not be overlooked as a primary motivator for Australia's engagement with Asia (Curtis, 2010:25-26; State of New South Wales: Department of Education and Communities, 2011:9-11). As a result, a substantial amount of research and development have been invested in education related to Asian studies. One of the first programmes was the National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005-2008 (The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, 2011:5). Following this came the National Asian Language and Studies in Schools Program from 2008-2012 (State of New South Wales: Department of Education and Communities, 2008; The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, 2011:5). As a result 'Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia' was established as one of the current three cross-curriculum priorities that should be considered in all learning areas that comprise the Australian Curriculum (The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, 2011:34). Over the course of many years Australia has clearly accumulated a wealth of knowledge and experience regarding the teaching of Chinese.

In selecting the sample for comparative analysis, another consideration was to opt for a Non-Asian country as opposed to an Asian country, as the exposure local students have to this 'foreign' language as well as the nature of the learners who enter the programme are similar to South Africa. Considering different Non-Asian countries, a country with available national curricula providing direction and standardisation was a further prerequisite for comparison with the South African national CAPS curricula.

With regard to the latter, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) fulfils such a role by guiding the development of language curricula in Australia through The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages document and language-specific curricula (The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, 2011:1,8,35). With regard to the former, the nature of Chinese learners and specifically student demographics in Australia speak significantly to our South African situation. Historically, Australia saw rapid

growth in students studying Chinese since the 1980s as China undertook an open door policy promoting economic reform (Australian Curriculum Languages Chinese, 2013: context statement). Australian government as invested a lot in such teaching, as mentioned. However, the number of students studying Asian languages in Australia has decreased over the past decade (Dabrowski, 2015). With regard to Chinese, statistics shows that there has been increased participation by learners from a Chinese background, while second language learners with no Chinese background seem to drop out of Chinese programmes early (Orton, 2008:19; Scrimgeour, 2012:4). Different authors give different reasons, all of which are noteworthy: it may be a result of a lack of interest and a perceived lack of value attached to the learning of Asian languages (Dabrowski, 2015); it may be because Chinese is perceived as too difficult and may negatively influence students' university entrance scores (Kessler, Illman & Wesley, 2009: key principle 4); or it may be that second-language students with no former exposure to Chinese have had to compete with Chinese background students in the same class and for entry into university (Lane, 2011).

In order to address these challenges and especially the increased learner diversity, the Chinese curriculum in Australia saw some restructuring in 2013 (Scrimgeour, 2012:4). Pre 2013 Chinese was offered as either first language or second language (Orton, 2008:13). The recent Australian Chinese Curriculum recognised and responded to these challenges by developing three pathways to cater for three main groups of learners:

> The Second Language Learner Pathway caters for students learning Chinese as a second or additional language. The Background Language Learner Pathway has been developed for students who have exposure to Chinese language and culture, and who may engage in active but predominantly receptive use of Chinese at home. The First Language Learner Pathway caters for students who have had their primary socialisation as well as initial literacy development and primary schooling in Chinese, and who use Chinese at home (Australian Curriculum Languages Chinese, 2013: context statement).

The Australian Second Language Learner Pathway corresponds best with the CAPS Mandarin SAL and its focus on learners who do not necessarily have any prior knowledge of the language, thus focusing on developing basic interpersonal communication skills (see section 2.1.1.4 for a discussion of the three language levels and their focus in the CAPS).

As the analysis is based on the first three years of primary school Mandarin Chinese study in South Africa (grade 4 to 6), a comparison with the first three years of primary school

Mandarin Chinese study in Australia seemed natural. The Australian Second Language Learner Pathway is divided into five bands: Foundation to Year 2, Year 3 to 4, Year 5 to 6, Year 7 to 8 and Year 9 to 10. In Australia, the first three years of Chinese language study at primary school level is the first band: Foundation to Year 2. The nature of the students is described as "engaged through the shared experience of play and group activities" (Australian Curriculum Languages Chinese, 2013: Foundation to Year 2 Band description). During this phase students are "beginning to explore Chinese language and culture" (ibid.) and the achievement standards are basic.

Although the initial thinking was to use the first band of the Australian Second Language Learner Pathway for comparison this changed as the research proceeded and the Australian curriculum was investigated. Comparing Australian Foundation to Year 2 learners with South African grade 4 to 6 learners leaves one with a range of ages (Foundation to grade 6) where the difference in teaching approach is substantial, mainly because the first years of schooling are devoted to the development of basic literacy and numeracy skills in students' first language. The second band was therefore deemed more appropriate. The curriculum aims are more advanced, with the following exemplar describing the nature of the students as proof: "beginning to use Chinese in relation to their personal world, Chinese speaking countries, and the world of their imagination" (Australian Curriculum Languages Chinese, 2013: Year 3 to 4 Band description). There is still an age difference between the Australian year 3 to 4 (second band) and the South African grade 4 to 6, but it is a better match than a comparison between the Australian Foundation to year 2 (first band) and the South African grade 4 to 6.

In this context it is also important to address the following question: Using the Australian second band as comparison for the South African initial stages of Chinese study, how much recognition should there be for missing building blocks laid in the Australian first band? My perception is that the Australian first band is an introduction to Chinese, providing the opportunity for students to get accustomed to the new language, which in my opinion is a very good idea considering the foreignness of Chinese, as discussed in section 2.2.3. This conclusion is based on the presentation of the first band through its band description, and evident from exemplars such as "students are immersed as much as possible in the sounds and words of Chinese, the meaning of which is made clear through participation in active

listening and action-related talk, gestures, dramatization and games" (Australian Curriculum Languages Chinese, 2013: Foundation to Year 2). Presenting Chinese at this stage in this fashion allows for minimal competition with first language and literacy development. The fact that the Australian Second Language Learner Pathway is presented with Year 3 as an acceptable entry level without provision for a different curriculum, provides further proof that the first band is purely an introduction to Chinese and optional for that matter.

An open and rich discussion of the choice of data sample as presented in the preceding paragraphs strengthens the credibility of the data sources as it motivates the compatibility of the two countries' curricula. This discussion on the Australian curriculum also sketches the context for, or educational environment in which the curriculum functions. Such an understanding is necessary, for example for the interpretation of the themes History and Aims as discussed later in this chapter.

The research next proceeded to what Elo and Kyngäs (2008:110) identified as the Organising phase of content analysis. The findings from the data analysis are discussed in two extensive sections: section 4.3 concerning the application of conventional content analysis to the structure of the curricula and section 4.4 concerning the application of directed content analysis making use of the eight identified curriculum affordances.

4.3 Analysis and comparison of the structure of the curricula

In section 3.3.4 Application of content Analysis three steps for the organising phase of content analysis are defined: Defining the categories to be applied; Outlining the coding process; and Applying the coding process (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1285). These steps were implemented in varying order in the two chosen research methods. The first method, conventional content analysis, was used as research method to analyse and compare the structure of the curricula presented below.

4.3.1 Overview of the structure of the two curricula

The focus of the research so far has been on the *Australian Curriculum Languages Chinese (2013): Second Language Learner Pathway, Year 3-4* as the document for comparison (referred to as the Australian Chinese Curriculum). At this point another Australian curriculum document was introduced, as seen in Table 4.1. This was *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages (2011)* (referred to as the Shape of the Australian Curriculum). Within the framework of Australian language curricula, this document functions as introduction to the curricula. It is a comprehensive document aimed at guiding the development of language curricula in Australia, as it relates to all languages learnt in addition to English (The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, 2011:1,8,35). As sections 1 and 2 of the CAPS Mandarin SAL also serve as introduction to all other South African language curricula, these sections were analysed and compared with the Shape of the Australian Curriculum; and the rest of the CAPS Mandarin SAL was analysed and compared separately with the Australian Chinese Curriculum. When using the term 'document introduction' I refer to the general introduction to both curriculum documents, analysed in section 4.3.2. The term 'document body' refers to the rest of the document which is specific to Mandarin Chinese and is analysed in section 4.3.3.

The introduction to the CAPS Mandarin SAL comprises two sections: *Section 1: Introduction to CAPS*, which is common to all subject curricula in South Africa; and *Section 2: Introduction to Second Additional Language in the Intermediate Phase*, which is specific to Intermediate Phase second additional language curricula in South Africa. General curriculum aspects and language specific curriculum aspects were thus compared separately, as presented in Table 4.1. A difference needs to be highlighted: Section 1 of the CAPS Mandarin SAL is common to all subjects, whereas the Shape of the Australian Curriculum is already language specific. Where relevant, reference is made to it in the subsequent discussions.

Table 4.1 presents an overview of the structure of all three curriculum documents as they relate to each other.

Table 4.1: Overview of the structure of the CAPS Mandarin SAL as it compares with the Australian curricula: the Shape of the Australian Curriculum and the Australian Chinese Curriculum

	HEADINGS CAPS MANDARIN	HEADINGS AUSTRALIAN CURRICULA	
		The Shape of the Australian Curriculum	Australian Curriculum Languages Chinese, 2013: Second Language Learner Pathway, Year 3-4
Document introduction: General curriculum aspects	Section 1: Introduction to CAPS	Introduction

Background

A rationale for language learning

Languages as a learning area in the Curriculum

Language, culture and learning

Language learners | |
| Document introduction: Language specific curriculum aspects | Section 2: Introduction to Second additional language in the Intermediate Phase | Design of the Curriculum

Structuring of the Curriculum

Describing the Curriculum

Further considerations in developing the Curriculum | |
| Document body | Section 3: Content and teaching plans for language skills

Section 4: Assessment in Second Additional Language | | Chinese context statement

Band Description

Scope and Sequence |

Sources: Mandarin Second Additional Language (2014a); The Shape of the Australian Curriculum Languages (2011); Australian Curriculum Languages Chinese (2013)

4.3.2 Conventional content analysis applied to document introductions

This section hereby presents the analysis of the document introductions, which includes both general curriculum aspects as well as language-specific curriculum aspects.

4.3.2.1 Analysis and comparison of general curriculum aspects

Section 1 of the CAPS Mandarin SAL, namely *Introduction to CAPS,* and the first few sections of the Shape of the Australian Curriculum incorporate general curriculum aspects as part of the document introductions. The results of conventional content analysis applied to the introductory sections of the curricula are summarised in Table 4.2, with the numbers in column one below referring to the numbering of the CAPS document. The identified themes are discussed in the rest of this section.

Table 4.2: General curriculum themes as incorporated in the CAPS Mandarin SAL and the Shape of the Australian Curriculum

CAPS	AUSTRALIAN	IDENTIFIED THEME
1.1 Background 1.2 Overview	Background: history, challenge and an opportunity	History
1.3 General aims of the SA Curriculum	Introduction	Aims
	A rationale for learning languages Languages as a learning area in the Australian Curriculum Language, culture and learning	Recognition of the value of languages
1.3 General aims of the SA Curriculum	Language learners	Learner characteristics
1.4 Time allocation		Instructional time for all subjects

Sources: Mandarin Second Additional Language (2014a:4-9); The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages (2011:1-21)

a) History

This category incorporates those parts of the curriculum devoted to sketching the educational context in which the curriculum functions, both past and present.

In the CAPS Mandarin SAL, the primary reference to South Africa's educational history is found in sections 1.1 *Background* and 1.2 *Overview*: a breakdown of the curriculum documents which precede this current document, how it fits into the current set of documents and how the preceding documents are to be phased out, is given. As discussed in section 2.1.1, South Africa has had a complex and often confusing curriculum history with

a series of different curricula following each other up over the course of two decades. This unique feature of the South African educational landscape explains why the reference to curriculum history is all about curriculum documents and how they relate to each other. In the midst of a multitude of curricula, the need for clarity was prioritised. No mention is made of other historical factors as they relate to curriculum development in South Africa.

The comparative section in the Shape of the Australian Curriculum entitled *Background: history, challenge and an opportunity* (The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, 2011:3-5) focuses on Australian-specific history as it pertains to languages: collaboration and key themes in the ensuing debate; recent research; and conditions found to be essential for language programmes to work in Australia. Unlike the South African document, no reference is made to curricula preceding the current one.

In order to better understand how the Australian-specific educational context relates to South Africa, I would like to highlight the following aspects from this section of the Shape of the Australian Curriculum.

- Section 2.1.2 of the literature review mentioned some of the competing discourses and role players in the South African educational landscape. There is also a "diversity of interests that have shaped debates about language policy and language education" in Australia (The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, 2011:3). Mention is made of academic discourses, market-led forces, minority groups such as immigrant, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups, as well as policy makers. This document claims their active involvement in language education planning in Australia, with the corresponding policy tailored to their needs and interests.

- Key issues relevant to the Australian debate covering curriculum development but also policy and implementation thereof, as well as conditions found to be essential for language programmes to work in Australia, is listed in this section of the Shape of the Australian Curriculum. As these considerations apply to more than curriculum development, they may go beyond the scope of the current study. The need to address these factors on a country-specific level in order to see curricula make a difference to language learning, necessitated my mentioning it here (this is discussed further in section 4.4 as it relates to the South African context and relevant

curriculum affordances). As in Australia, South Africa should refuse to see curricula in isolation, but instead work towards involving the whole network of contributors as they relate to these key issues and essential conditions. These factors pertaining to the development and successful implementation of a curriculum as relevant to the Australian situation is subsequently listed (The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, 2011:4,5):

KEY THEMES

Which languages to be taught and why.

Whether to limit or sustain the diversity of languages to be taught in schools.

How to recognise the language learning experience of different groups of students such as first language, second language, and background language learners.

How to provide continuous, appropriately sequenced, and educationally challenging pathways through the curriculum so students make worthwhile gains in language learning.

How to manage transition in learning and articulation between different phases of schooling.

How to manage resources to ensure the provision of qualified teachers of languages as well as quality teaching and appropriate learning materials.

How to provide appropriate time allocations for language learning at both primary and secondary levels within a 'crowded curriculum'.

How to work with universities to ensure appropriate transition in language learning, to support initial and ongoing teacher education, to collaborate on research and to promote and reward language learning.

How to work productively with complementary providers such as state government schools of languages and ethnic and community schools.

How to maximise the role of technology in enhancing provision.

How to encourage more students to study languages at senior secondary levels in order to increase Australia's overall language capability.

ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS

Recognition of the value of languages by the school and the wider community.

Appropriately qualified teachers who are supported by ongoing professional learning that is linked to current and best research.

Appropriately sequenced curriculum and assessment guidance and support.

Adequate teaching and learning resources.

Appropriate time allocation: language learning requires significant time, regularity, and continuity.

Exploring and understanding each country's history helps one to understand its current education priorities and aims. In this sense, South Africans will prioritise and address the listed key issues and conditions differently from Australians. This is a natural difference between countries, but a difference this study needs to be attentive to in order to understand how it plays out in unique features of curriculum design, especially if considering importing features from one country's curriculum to another seems useful. In such cases an awareness of the origins and historical contexts of curricula may promote the development of appropriate and context-sensitive methods (see discussion on the internationalisation of curriculum studies in section 2.1). For the purposes of this research the South African context was sketched in section 2.1 and the context for Australia in section 4.2.2.

In conclusion, the comparison clearly shows that this section of the CAPS does not mention much of South Africa's educational history as it relates to curriculum development. The subsequent discussions in this chapter will seek to explore and understand relevant South African historical factors as identified in the literature survey.

b) Aims

This category incorporates those parts of the curriculum devoted to discussions on the purposes and principles of the curricula.

Section 1.3 *General aims of the South African Curriculum* of the CAPS is divided into five subsections. Subsections a to c describe the general aims and purposes of the CAPS, as well

as general principles on which the CAPS is based. Subsection d describes the type of learners the curriculum aims to produce, to be discussed under the theme Learner characteristics. Special mention is made of inclusivity in subsection e, with the curriculum affordance 4.4.2.4 Allowance for learner diversity exploring this concept further.

"Five basic orientations to the curriculum" by Elliot Eisner (1985:276-286) was directive for me in identifying the values and premises behind the CAPS aims. The following curriculum value orientations were identified: Social adaptation; Social reconstruction; and Personal relevance. One can see the value orientations of Social adaptation and Social reconstruction mirrored in the constitutional principle of social justice; and the value orientation of Personal relevance mirrored in the constitutional principle of human rights. As such, the analysis shows that the CAPS aims are closely knitted with the South African history of building a new nation after apartheid.

Curricula with Social adaptation and Social reconstruction as their primary orientation are sensitive to social needs and social problems and provide curricula that are relevant to meeting these needs and addressing these problems (Eisner, 1985:283). Curricula with Personal relevance at the centre emphasise the importance of personal meaning and the school's responsibility to make such meaning possible for students (Eisner, 1985:280).

The combination of these curriculum value orientations is clear from exemplars such as "equipping learners…with the knowledge, skills and values necessary for self-fulfilment, and meaningful participation in society as citizens of a free country". One can go further to identify the following social needs prioritised by the CAPS: "equality", "needs of the workplace", "global imperatives", "social transformation", "social and environmental justice", "human rights" and "valuing of indigenous knowledge systems".

With the critique of low academic standards often lodged against curricula focusing on social adaptation and social reconstruction, the subtheme of academic excellence also surfaces in the presentation of the CAPS aims. Exemplars are: "providing an education that is comparable in quality, breadth and depth to those of other countries", "high knowledge and high skills" and "provide access to higher education".

Other historical factors and their influence on the aims and directives presented in the CAPS are evident from the following exemplars: "active and critical learning" can be seen as in

reaction to the apartheid curriculum which was characterised by traditional forms of assessment such as memory recall and rote learning (discussed in section 2.1.1.3); and the inclusion of the principle of "progression" can be seen as in reaction to the product approach of C2005 which described curriculum objectives as 'learning outcomes', but directives on how to reach these were not clearly defined (discussed in section 2.1.1.3).

The Shape of the Australian Curriculum starts with the *Introduction* section (The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, 2011:1-2). From a briefly stated aim of directing language curricula development and a brief summary, it proceeds to describe what new positive contributions this curriculum brings to language learning. For me, this section boiled down to the following specific aims:

- commitment to disadvantaged local languages;
- addressing inclusivity by allowing for learner diversity through the identified key variables of learner background and time on task; and
- recognising that curricula should be language specific, and proceeding to define the curriculum based on language-specific achievement standards.

The Shape of the Australian Curriculum goes on to list some factors in the wider educational environment which need to come alongside a quality language curriculum in order to produce quality language learning, which, in essence, was discussed under the theme of History.

When comparing the Australian and South African documents in terms of their aims, it was clear that each country's unique educational landscape and history had informed its current priorities. As South Africans we can never distance ourselves from our apartheid past and its persistent influence on our present situation. The identified curriculum value orientations behind the CAPS of Social adaptation and Social reconstruction as well as Personal relevance therefore remain relevant to this day. However, when the result of curriculum development is tunnel vision, with curriculum aims supported by research and proven by experience as identified by the Australians not being debated and considered in our South African context, we as South Africans are being held back by our past and are not benefitting from current developments. Such important aims, for example, are development of language-specific

curricula as well as the addressing of the related issues of inclusivity, learner diversity, learner background and time on task. These aims are discussed as they relate to curriculum affordances in the directed content analysis section of this chapter.

     c)   Recognition of the value of languages

"Recognition by the school and the wider community of the value of languages" was identified by the Australians as an essential condition for language programmes to work (mentioned under the History theme). Three consecutive sections of the Shape of the Australian Curriculum can be grouped under this umbrella.

The first section, *Rationale for learning languages* (The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, 2011:6-7), is presented with reference to globalisation, personal benefits and country-specific benefits.

In the *Languages as a learning area* in the Shape of the Australian Curriculum (The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, 2011:8-10) the curriculum writers explain the value of languages by specifically discussing second-language learning in Australia. The benefit, history and approach to second-language learning in Australia is explored, with specific mention of the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages, Classical languages and Auslan (the language of the Australian deaf community). There is a distinctive recognition of the uniqueness of different languages and the need for the development of language-specific curricula. Such an approach will incorporate "recognition of features that languages share and also the distinctiveness of particular languages" (The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, 2011:8).

The last section, *Language, culture and learning* (The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, 2011:11-19), builds on the understanding that "language learning is defined as an intercultural process, focussed on interpreting and creating meaning". The individual concepts of Language, Culture and Learning are described as key concepts that inform language education in Australia. Other related aspects are also discussed: Language learning and knowledge or content; Language learning as an intercultural process; Language learning and literacy development; and Learning Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages.

It seems that Australia has identified the 'promotion' of the learning of a second language in addition to English as a high and strategic priority. The effort and money invested in the recent National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP) and the establishment of "Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia" as one of the current three cross-curriculum priorities across all learning areas (see discussion in section 4.2.2) put Asian languages right at the top of this second-language list.

The South African ideal of multilingualism and the challenges faced in practice were explored extensively in the literature survey. In order to relate the priority given in Australia to the promotion of bilingualism to the South African context, I would argue that statistics on English Home language speakers in the two countries may be very revealing. According to South African 2012 statistics, 9,6% of South Africans speak English as Home Language (Table 2.1); according to the Australian 2011 census, 76,8% of Australians speak only English at home (Australian Bureau of Statistics). Given the importance of English as a common means of communication across the world, it is also common to find a lack of interest in studying other languages among monolingual speakers of English (Tinsley & Board, 2014:4). This complacency is aptly described in the section *Background* in the Shape of the Australian Curriculum (The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, 2011:4):

> Perspectives on the place languages should occupy in the curriculum vary. For some, the value of learning another language is self-evident. For others, languages have never been part of their personal or social experience and they may not see their relevance.

It follows that promoting bilingualism may be an Australian priority which would be taken for granted in South Africa. In South Africa, exposure to more than one language is common; our primary challenge is to negotiate literacy development amongst these languages as essential strategy to improve students' overall academic achievement.

Only as a secondary aim do we need to identify those additional foreign languages most strategic for our students to study. Considering the strong opposition to the initial presentation of the introduction of Mandarin Chinese into South African schools as discussed in section 2.3.3, the need for active promotion of the study of Chinese may be a strategic priority in our context. "Recognition by the school and the wider community of the value of Chinese" may be an essential condition for Mandarin Chinese language

programmes to work in South Africa. Both of the following affordances as related to this concept are discussed in section 4.4: Principle of redress and Multilingualism versus Home Language.

d) Learner characteristics

Besides describing the general aims, purposes and principles, section 1.3 *General aims of the South African Curriculum* of the CAPS also describes the knowledge and skills the curriculum aims to effect in learners.

A section entitled *Language Learners* is also found in the Shape of the Australian Curriculum (The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, 2011:20-21), but there is a crucial difference between the two: the Australian curriculum describes the type of learner who enters the language classroom whereas the South African curriculum describes the type of learner the curriculum aims to send out of the classroom.

From a pedagogical stance, one could argue in favour of either one. One could argue that a curriculum needs to be forward-looking to say what the end product should be. This product approach can be traced back to the OBE roots of C2005 that formed the basis for the current South African CAPS curriculum as discussed in section 2.1.1.3. Opposition to this approach at the time was primarily centred on its lack of direction regarding the process mode, which has been largely addressed by the inclusion of detailed teaching plans in the CAPS. The product approach of the South African CAPS relates to one of the affordances of the South African Educational landscape, namely Neoliberal market-led forces discussed in section 4.4.

One could also argue that a curriculum needs to take the diversity of its student population into consideration and aim to cater for each individual student as best as possible. The extent to which the Australian curriculum allows for learner diversity is evident in its provision of three different Mandarin Chinese curricula or 'pathways', as they label it, all three of which are described in section 4.2.2. As the section explains, the spectrum of pathways has been a result of adjusting to changes in the characteristics of learners studying Chinese in Australia over the last number of decades. Such a diversified curriculum may be overambitious for us in South Africa as we start to introduce Chinese in our schools. I would

like to argue, though, that learner diversity is an important factor which should be considered already now with the implementation of the first South African Mandarin Chinese curriculum. Allowing for learner diversity is discussed further in section 4.4.2.4 of this chapter as one of the language-specific curriculum affordances.

e) Instructional time for all subjects

The last subsection, 1.4 *Time allocation*, as found in the CAPS gives a detailed description of instructional time for all school subjects in the different phases. Table 4.3 summarises the information as it relates to languages:

Table 4.3: Instructional time in hours per week for language subjects

SUBJECT	GRADE R	GRADE 1-2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4-6	GRADE 7-9	GRADE 10-12
Home language	10	8/7	8/7	6	5	4,5
First additional language		2/3	3/4	5	4	4.5
TOTAL	10	10	11	11	9	9

Source: Mandarin Second Additional Language (2014a:7-9)

For the sake of Mandarin Chinese it is important to note that no time is allocated for second additional languages at Intermediate and Senior Phase in the hours set out for a normal school week. The CAPS, however, allows instructional time at FET Phase (Grade 10-12) for second additional languages as one of the three subjects selected from group B: Annexure B, Group B, Table B4 in the policy document, *National policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12* (Department of Basic Education, 2011:56-57). In terms of teaching second additional languages from grade 3 to 9, the CAPS (Mandarin Second Additional Language, 2014a:9) then specifies that:

> The allocated time per week may be utilised only for the minimum required NCS subjects as specified, and may not be used for additional subjects added to the list of minimum subjects. Should a learner wish to offer additional subjects, additional time must be allocated for the offering of these subjects.

This implies that schools most probably will have to lengthen their school day in order to offer a second additional language, or it could be taught as an extra-curricular subject during after-school hours. The Australian document, being language-specific, does not have this section.

It is ironic that the inclusion of this information in the CAPS explicitly shows the omission of provision for instructional time for second additional languages at Intermediate and Senior Phase. One needs to see it in the light of a crowded curriculum as it relates to one of the affordances of the South African landscape, namely Multilingualism versus Home Language and English. At present, the common practice in South African schools is to start the study of a second additional language at the beginning of grade 8 in the high school. It seems that primary schools find it difficult to negotiate another subject because of the strict guidelines and loaded curriculum prescribed by the Department of Basic Education, but high schools seem to be able to negotiate it better. The omission of provision for instructional time for second additional languages at Intermediate and Senior Phase is an example of a serious policy-practice gap in the current CAPS Mandarin SAL discussed in detail as one of the landscape affordances Policy-practice gap. The whole issue and possible solutions are further explored under the language-specific affordance Allowance for learner diversity.

4.3.2.2 Analysis and comparison of language-specific curriculum aspects

The CAPS Section 2 *Introduction to Second additional language in the Intermediate Phase* is related to the last sections of the Shape of the Australian Curriculum. All of these cover language-specific curriculum aspects as part of the document introductions. The result of conventional content analysis applied to these parts of the documents is summarised in Table 4.4: the numbers in column one below refer to the numbering of the CAPS. The identified themes are discussed in the rest of this section.

Table 4.4: Language-specific curriculum themes as incorporated in the CAPS Mandarin SAL and the Shape of the Australian Curriculum

CAPS	AUSTRALIAN	IDENTIFIED CATEGORY
2.1.2 Language Skills	Design of the Australian Curriculum: Languages	Language skills and competencies
2.1.1 Language Levels	Structuring the Australian Curriculum: Languages: Learner pathways, Program types Describing the Australian Curriculum: Languages: Curriculum content, Achievement standards	Language levels
2.1.3 Language teaching approaches		Language teaching approaches
2.2 Time allocation	Structuring the Australian Curriculum: Languages: Time on task	Instructional time for languages
	Describing the Australian Curriculum: Languages: General cross curriculum capabilities and languages, Cross-curriculum priorities Further considerations in developing the Australian Curriculum: Languages	Links with other curricula
2.3 Learning and Teaching support materials		Resources

Sources: Mandarin Second Additional Language (2014a:10-19); The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages (2011:22)

a) Language skills and competencies

The CAPS explains its aim of developing four language skills: Listening and Speaking, Reading and Viewing, Writing and Presenting, and Language Structure and Conventions (see Extract 1 under subsection 4.3.3.1). Conventional content analysis as applied to this section of the curriculum document identified three sub-themes recurring in the discussion of the different language skills:

- Reliance on process approach

    Development of all four skills is explained primarily from the perspective of the

process approach: a considerable portion of this section describes how to apply this approach for the development of each language skill.

- Use of text-based approach

  The text-based approach is mostly described as method for teaching Language Structures and Conventions, but brief references relating to the other three language skills are also found.

- Underlying assumption of transfer

  The concept of transfer is evident from the use of exemplars such as "writing… speeds up language acquisition" and "learners will take more notice of words and grammatical structures they are already familiar with". As discussed in section 2.2.3 Unique nature of Mandarin Chinese, the distance between English and Chinese in terms of language families weakens the concept of transfer considerably: what African learners know about reading and writing in their home and first additional languages is of little use in learning to read and write Chinese characters. The implications thereof are discussed in section 4.4 of this chapter under the language-specific affordances of Language families and General aim and expected proficiency level.

The related Australian concept is strands: in the *Design of the Australian Curriculum: Languages* section of the Australian document it is described as the three aims that direct language learning, namely Communicating, Understanding, and Reciprocating (The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, 2011:22-26).

- Communicating

  This strand is described as involving "various combinations of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills" and incorporating "diverse text types and task types". This is applied in the Australian Chinese Curriculum by describing the following purposes of the language as sub strands: Socialising, Informing, Creating, Translating and Reflecting (see Extract 2 under subsection 4.3.3.2).

- Understanding

  In this strand, the focus is on "the many dimensions of languages, cultures and learning". An understanding is developed for the following sub strands as identified

by the Australian Chinese Curriculum: Systems of language, Language variation and change and Role of language and culture (see Extract 2 under subsection 4.3.3.2).

- Reciprocating

  The aim of this strand is to allow students to "reflect on and interpret self in relation to others in communication and learning". The reciprocal processes can impact on meaning making and identity formation. In the Australian Chinese Curriculum it is incorporated in the Communicating strand as the sub strand 'Reflecting' (see Extract 2 under subsection 4.3.3.2).

At first glance it might appear that 'Communicating' in the Australian Chinese Curriculum could align with the language skills of Speaking and Writing and Presenting in the CAPS Mandarin SAL; 'Understanding' could be related to the language skills of Listening and Reading and Viewing; and 'Reciprocating' could refer to communicating in some or other sense. However, the description of these strands as presented here makes it clear that they mean something quite different. This difference is explored in the analysis of the Australian Scope and Sequence, section 4.3.3.2.

These language skills are subsequently used to organise the respective curricula: in the case of South Africa the curriculum presents 'Content and Teaching Plans' (see Extract 1 under subsection 4.3.3.1) and in the case of Australia 'Scope and Sequence' are provided (see Extract 2 under subsection 4.3.3.2). These are important differences in curriculum design which are discussed in detail in section 4.3.3 where conventional content analysis is applied to the document bodies.

b) Language levels

The South African curriculum section 2.1.1 *Language levels* and the Australian curriculum sections *Structuring the Australian Curriculum Languages: Learner pathways and Program types* and *Describing the Australian Curriculum Languages: Curriculum content, Achievement standards* (The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, 2011:27-34) describe the respective levels at which languages are offered in the two countries. The three levels offered for language learning in South Africa as presented here: Home Language, First Additional Language and Second Additional Language are discussed in section 2.1.1.4.

Mandarin Chinese is offered only at Second Additional Language level. The three pathways offered in Australia as presented here: Second Language Learner Pathway, Background Language Learner Pathway and First Language Learner Pathway are discussed in section 4.2.2. Mandarin Chinese is offered as either of these pathways in Australia.

On top of the general description of the three language levels, this part of the South African curriculum also includes two subsections that provide more insight into the CAPS approach to teaching second additional languages: 2.1.1.1 *Specific aims of learning Second Additional Languages* and 2.1.1.2 *Teaching the Second Additional Language*. Conventional content analysis applied to these two sections identified two subthemes found to correlate with the three aims presented here for grade 4 to 6 specifically. The two subthemes as they related to the three aims are:

- The primary aim is basic interpersonal communication.
  "There is a strong focus on Listening and Speaking."
- The aim is to grow students' language competence further at all four skill levels.
  "There is a continued support for the development of vocabulary, sentence and paragraph construction, and grammar in context."
  "Learners work with a variety of texts, including visual texts. These texts increase in difficulty as they move through the grades."

The text-based approach is again described in the CAPS as the primary method of teaching, with specific reference here to grade-appropriate oral, written and visual texts. Another pedagogic implication of this approach presented here is thematic lesson plans coupled with the text chosen for the two-weekly lesson plan. The CAPS further seeks to enable learners to eventually access authentic texts in the target language, and the curriculum writers link this to "information literacy as a vital skill in the information age". The use of such language points to the influence of global neoliberalism to be discussed as one of the landscape affordances, namely Neoliberal market-led forces (section 4.4.1.3)*.* The concept of transfer underlying the text-based approach is clear from statements such as: "They also apply the oral and literacy skills they have already learned in their Home and First Additional Languages" and "Research shows that the best way to develop a wide vocabulary is through reading of appropriate texts". Section 4.4 presents further elaboration on this concept,

through the language-specific affordances of Language families and General aim and expected proficiency level.

The CAPS further states in this section that learners must be able to "use their imagination" and "express emotions" as well as "experiences" about "themselves and the different cultures and the world around them" in the target language. With these aims identical for all three of the phases (Mandarin Second Additional Language, 2014a:12; Mandarin Second Additional Language, 2014b:11-12; Mandarin Second Additional Language, 2014c:12), one can conclude that these higher-level aims would primarily be realised in the higher grades. I would like to close this initial analysis of language levels offered in South Africa and Australia with the following important conclusion: in South Africa, Mandarin Chinese is only offered at Second Additional Language level, whereas Mandarin Chinese is offered as either one of the three pathways in Australia. Within each pathway the Australian curriculum further allows for entry in different years of schooling. This significant difference in allowance for learner diversity is discussed further in section 4.4.2.4.

c) Language teaching approaches

In the subsection titled *Language teaching approaches*, the CAPS describes three interrelated approaches to teaching languages which guide the curriculum: the communicative approach; text-based approach; and process approach.

- Communicative approach

    In communicative language teaching, "the focus lies in using language, not in language usage" (Jacobs & Farrel, 2003:16). It is based on communicative competence, this being the "knowledge necessary to use language for communication that is culturally, socially and contextually appropriate" (Everson, 2011b:6). It comes in opposition to a one-size-fits-all approach by opting for an approach where teachers design meaningful tasks that fit the varied needs of students (Jacobs & Farrel, 2003:9), a central aim of all South African curricula rooted in their learner-centred OBE origins (section 2.1.1.3). The CAPS reference to the communicative approach is sparse, with only two sentences stating the need for optimal exposure to practise and opportunity to produce the language (Mandarin

Second Additional Language, 2014a:17). The text-based and process approaches can be seen as derivatives having evolved from the communicative approach.

- Text-based approach

This approach structures language teaching around oral, written and visual texts: reading, writing, listening, speaking and grammar are taught through the mastery of texts rather than in isolation (Richards & Rodgers, 2014:200). The CAPS alignment with this approach is clear from the following exemplar in this section: "authentic texts are the main source of content and context for the … learning and teaching of languages" (Mandarin Second Additional Language, 2014a:17). This section further includes a whole paragraph on ways to approach the teaching of texts, namely "Approaches to teaching literature/working with texts". In a later section of the CAPS (section 3.3 *Spread of texts across Grade 4-6*), the South African curriculum goes on to include a series of tables to support this approach (discussed in section 4.3.3.1). Based on the amount of detail included in the CAPS for the support of the text-based approach, it is clear that this approach stands firmly at the centre of the CAPS strategy for the teaching of second additional languages. The implications of this approach for Mandarin Chinese are unpacked in section 4.4 as part of the affordances Language families and General aim and expected proficiency level.

- Process approach

This approach originated in the 1970s as a new way of teaching writing: instead of concentrating on the writing that students produced and making critical comments on it, the teachers' aim shifted to helping students in the actual process of writing (Caudery, 1995). This section includes the following exemplar: "the teaching of writing does not focus on the product only but also focusses on the purpose and process of writing". The interpretation of the process approach in the CAPS extends through to all four language skills, as presented in the discussion on the theme Languages skills. "Reliance on process approach" was identified as sub-theme there, presenting the process approach as an important approach to language teaching throughout the CAPS curriculum. One can trace the origin of this approach back to the CAPS as curriculum developed in reaction to C2005 and its product approach (discussed in section 2.1.1.3).

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There is no specific reference to the term 'language teaching approach' in the Shape of the Australian curriculum. It could be that either the Australian curriculum tries not to impose a particular approach or it just assumes that everybody is using an approach that is so self-evident that it does not need to be mentioned. My analysis of the document reveals the following method or approach to language learning, and its working out through the aim, focus and structure of the curriculum.

- Language learning approach

  Learning additional languages is understood "not only as a mental phenomenon, but also as a social, interactive and collaborative one". Language learning is defined as an 'intercultural process', focusing on interpreting and creating meaning (The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, 2011:11,13-15).

- Aim of learning

  The aim of learning is subsequently described as not only to communicate, but also to develop an intercultural capability in communication which includes an understanding of oneself as communicator (The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, 2011:22-23).

- Focus in the curriculum

  The focus in the curriculum thus "is on experience and experiential learning… to capture the real-life processes of action or interaction, analysis, and reflection that are integral to human experience, communication and learning" (The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, 2011:23).

- The curriculum

  The three strands of the Australian Chinese Curriculum are therefore structured in such a manner as to present these aims and focuses (The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, 2011:23-26).

My interpretation of this Australian approach to language learning, is that it is a version of the communicative approach with a strong emphasis on language learning as an intercultural process. In comparison with the South African approach, the Australian approach encompasses the South African communicative approach with derivatives of the text-based approach and process approach. In order to develop this argument, I turn to Jacobs and Farrell's (2003:10-23) description of the communicative approach. Each of the

eight characteristics associated with the communicative approach can also be linked to the Australian intercultural approach: the social nature of learning, diversity, meaning, learner autonomy, thinking skills, curricular integration, alternative assessment and teachers as co-learners. The Australian approach of defining language learning as an intercultural process extends to include important elements not included in the South African approach, however. This is explored further when the structure of the Australian curriculum is analysed (section 4.3.3.2) and then specifically as the affordance Culture (section 4.4.2.3).

d) Instructional time for languages

The South African curriculum section 2.2 *Time allocation* and the Australian section *Structuring the Australian Curriculum: Languages* (The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, 2011:27-31) describe their respective recommended teaching times as summarised in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Recommended teaching times for Mandarin Chinese as set out in the CAPS Mandarin SAL and the Shape of the Australian Curriculum

PHASE	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL TEACHING TIME	DESCRIPTION
Australian Foundation to Year 6	5%	350 hours of learning undertaken across Foundation to Year 6
South African Intermediate Phase Grade 4-6	5%	1,5 hours/week of a 29 hour week (27,5+1,5)
Australian Year 7-10	8%	320 hours of learning undertaken across Year 7 to 10
South African Senior Phase Grade 7-9	7%	2 hours/week of a 29,5 hour week (27,5+2)
Australian Year 11-12	10-12%*	200-240 hours of learning undertaken across Year 11 and 12
South African FET Phase Grade 10-12	14,5%	4 hours/week of a 27,5 hour week

* Not specified as percentage in Australian document, percentage calculation based on the assumption that total hours of learning is consistent for grade 7 to 12.

Sources: Mandarin Second Additional Language (2014a:18; 2014b:15; 2014c:20); The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages (2011:28)

Table 4.5 shows that the percentage of total teaching time for Mandarin Chinese is quite similar for the two curricula, with the last 2/3 years of schooling presenting the only significant difference: South African students have more teaching time for Mandarin Chinese at this stage. It is difficult for me to say why: one could attribute it to a difference at this stage in the total number of subjects and the weight attributed to each inevitably affecting the amount of teaching time allocated to individual subjects. As the present study focuses on the initial teaching of Mandarin Chinese in both countries, further investigation of this falls outside the scope of the current study.

The study has presented "time on task" together with "learner background" as key variables for addressing inclusivity, with the Shape of the Australian Curriculum further stating "appropriate time allocation: language learning requires significant time, regularity and continuity" as one of the conditions essential for language programmes to work in Australia (discussed under the themes of History and Aims in section 4.3.2.1). Although Table 4.5 clearly shows that appropriate time allocation for second language learning is in theory also prioritised in South Africa, in practice it remains a problem (discussed as one of the landscape affordances Policy-practice gap in South Africa, section 4.4.1.4).

e)   Links with other curricula

The Australian document finally describes how general cross-curriculum capabilities and priorities are realised in the language learning area and closes by giving direction for the subsequent process of individual language curricula development (The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, 2011:32-36) . There is no reference to such aspects in the South African document.

- General capabilities

    The following capabilities have been identified as integral dimensions of learning in all learning areas of the Australian curriculum: Literacy, Numeracy, Information and communication technology competence, Critical and creative thinking, Ethical behaviour, Personal and social competence and Intercultural understanding. This

section of the curriculum document describes the ways in which they are realised in the Language learning area.

- Cross-curriculum priorities

  The following have been established as priorities to be considered in all learning areas of the Australian curriculum: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia and Sustainability. This section of the curriculum document describes how they are prioritised in the Language learning area.

- Further considerations for language curricula development

  Pointers are given for the subsequent processes of the development of the individual language curricula.

f) Resources

Section two of the CAPS Mandarin SAL closes with a list of suggested learning and teaching support materials, by specifying what materials each learner should have as well as what materials each teacher should have. One could argue that including such specifics in all second language curricula is a result of the unique educational environment in South Africa. Persistent inequalities in schools as discussed in section 2.1.2.1 manifest themselves in a lack of textbooks and learner support materials prevalent in the majority of South African schools. This section of the CAPS seeks to pre-empt the challenge.

The Australian curriculum does identify the following related factor as a key condition for language programmes to work: "How to manage resources to ensure the provision of qualified teachers of languages as well as quality teaching and appropriate learning materials" (listed as one of the key themes in the discussion on the History theme).

Developing and providing resources such as learning and teaching support materials as well as qualified teachers will inevitably be an important factor for the successful introduction of Mandarin Chinese into the South African schooling system. With the piloting of the curriculum since 2016 (discussed in section 2.3.2), steps have been taken for the development of learning and teaching materials. Supply of adequate numbers of trained teachers is another issue also under discussion: in a follow-up mini-conference (the first one

held on 6 June 2014 was mentioned in section 2.3.1) in Pretoria on 27 May 2016, this was one of the main points of discussion. An action point as follow up to this meeting was the sending of South African teachers for training to China during the 2016 June/July holidays (discussed in section 2.3.2).

The issue of resources is discussed in greater depth in both of the landscape affordances: Principle of redress and Multilingualism versus Home Language and English.

With the introductory sections of both curricula having provided guidance and contexts for the development of the respective curricula as discussed here, the rest of the curriculum documents proceed to implement these in the form of Content and Teaching Plans for South Africa and Scope and Sequences for Australia, which are analysed and compared below.

4.3.3 Conventional content analysis applied to document bodies

The term 'document body' refers to the rest of the curriculum document. For South Africa, this specifically refers to the CAPS Mandarin SAL section 3 *Content and Teaching Plans for Language Skills* and section 4 *Assessment in Second Additional Language*. For Australia, we turn to the second document, namely the *Australian Curriculum Languages Chinese, 2013: Second Language Learner Pathway, Foundation to Year 10 Sequence, Year 3 to 4 Band* (referred to as the Australian Chinese Curriculum). The South African and Australian documents are analysed separately at this stage.

4.3.3.1 Structure of document body: South African Mandarin Chinese curriculum

For the purpose of the research, the body of the CAPS Mandarin SAL is divided into three main sections: Introduction to Content and Teaching Plans (sections 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 of the document); Content and Teaching Plans (sections 3.4 and 3.5 of the document); and

Assessment (section 4 of the document). As motivated in section 1.4, assessment is not analysed for the purpose of this study.

4.3.3.1.i Introduction to Content and Teaching Plans

This comprises sections 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 of the CAPS Mandarin SAL. This whole section of the CAPS Senior and FET Phases are organised differently from the Intermediate Phase: in the Senior and FET Phases the language skills serves as organising principles for the curriculum. In my opinion it is a simpler, more practical and logical introduction to the Content and Teaching Plans. As the following discussion shows, this section of the Intermediate Phase curriculum appears haphazard and without structure:

a) *Overview of skills, content and strategies* (section 3.1 of the CAPS Mandarin SAL)
The CAPS seeks to develop four language skills as discussed under Language Skills in this chapter. This section of the CAPS Mandarin SAL provides a tabular compilation of all the texts applicable to each skill as included in the Content and Teaching Plans and some rather haphazard 'related' teaching strategies connected to each language skill. I would like to point to the fact that this subsection is an almost direct copy of the CAPS English Generic SAL with the sole addition of two lone Chinese language features: "Basic characters writing with correct strokes and stroke order" added under Writing and Presenting; and "Characters" replacing "Spelling" under Language Structure and Conventions. I would like to argue that this is a general and uncritical presentation of the development of the language skills as they apply to Mandarin Chinese. It does not take the unique nature of the Chinese language and pedagogic implications thereof into consideration. The implications hereof are explored in depth in section 4.4 under the language-specific affordance of General aim and expected proficiency level.
The three CAPS Mandarin Chinese curricula all include a similar Language Structure and Conventions - Reference List as part of section 3.1. By looking only at the Intermediate Phase CAPS, one could easily assume that all of these language structures need to be taught from grade 4 to 6, but it is a reference list for all of the three phases with the structures "to be introduced progressively throughout the

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grades" (Mandarin Second Additional Language, 2014a:22). The included language structures are Chinese language specific.

b) *Expressions used in conversational Chinese* (section 3.2 of the CAPS Mandarin SAL)

This reference list is present in all three of the CAPS curricula, and is presented again in the Intermediate Phase with the expressions to be taught progressively throughout all the phases. Although the expressions are in Chinese, the choice of expressions that are included is similar for all second additional languages, thus framed against the Western cultural norms of the CAPS English Generic SAL. This raises the question of culturally appropriate curricula, which is discussed further in section 4.4 of this chapter under the language-specific affordance of Culture.

The CAPS FET Phase includes a *Pinyin (Chinese Phonetic Alphabet) - Reference List* and *The Chinese writing system: Characters - Reference List* not included in the Intermediate or Senior Phases. Inclusion of these in the other phases may also be helpful, especially as Pinyin and Characters are learned progressively through all the phases.

c) *Spread of texts across Grade 4 to 6* (first part of section 3.3 of the CAPS Mandarin SAL)

Three tables pertaining to the text-based approach are included:

- *Spread of text table*

   This is a table of the needed texts as they fit into the two-weekly teaching plans: learners can engage with the texts in different ways: "they will listen to or present orally or read or write" (Mandarin Second Additional Language, 2014a:28). It is a helpful tool to assist teachers in the timely collection of the necessary texts.

- *Summary of text types*

   This table lists the "range of text types that learners should be taught to write in Grades 4-6" (Mandarin Second Additional Language, 2014a:31) with corresponding language structures to be taught in context.

   Without taking the Content and Teaching Plans into consideration just yet, my first impression of this section in the Intermediate Phase was that the emphasis put on writing as presented here at the initial stages of learning Chinese does not

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take the unique nature of the Chinese language (as discussed in section 2.2.3) into account. This is explored from all possible angles as one of the language-specific affordances of General aim and expected proficiency level, section 4.4.2.2. It, furthermore, is an almost direct copy of the CAPS English Generic SAL with language-specific items omitted (verb tenses, for instance, which are not relevant to Chinese language study), but without language-specific items included (like measure words). Again, the curriculum writers may have been led by the English generic curriculum and not the Chinese language.

- *Description of Information, Literary and Social/Functional texts*
  This table presents a short explanation of what information, literary and social/functional texts are.

d) *Spread of texts across Grade 4-6* (second part of section 3.3 of the CAPS Mandarin SAL)
The second part comprises sections 3.3.2, 3.3.3 and 3.3.4. The first two sections quantify the level of proficiency to be attained for Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing summarised in Table 4.6. Section 3.3.4 is not analysed here, but as part of the recommendations in the final chapter.

Although the study focused on the initial teaching of Mandarin Chinese and thereby was limited to the analysis of the Intermediate Phase CAPS, the following discussion also comments on aspects of the Senior and FET Phases. This was deemed necessary as comments on expected proficiency levels need to take the whole spectrum from beginning to end into consideration.

The comparison presented in Table 4.6 clearly reveals huge inconsistencies across the three phases; in order to properly analyse the results, I, however, present Table 4.7 and comment on these two tables together.

Table 4.6: Length of texts for second additional language as specified by the CAPS Mandarin SAL

	INTERMEDIATE PHASE			SENIOR PHASE			FET PHASE		
	Gr 4	Gr 5	Gr 6	Gr 7	Gr 8	Gr 9	Gr 10	Gr 11	G 12
Listening: characters Listening: minutes	150-200 5	200-300 5	300-400 5	0.5	0.75	1	50 1	200 1.5	250 2
Speaking: minutes (3 story-telling, relating events)	3	3	3-4	2	2	2	3	3	3
Reading: characters (comprehension)	100-150 in Pinyin	150-200 in Pinyin	200-250 in Pinyin	60-90	90-120	120-150	100-133	133-166	166-200
Writing: characters (paragraph or essay)	20-30 in Pinyin	30-50 in Pinyin	40-60 in Pinyin	40	50	60	200-250	250-300	300-400

Sources: Mandarin Second Additional Language (2014a:33-34; 2014b:18,20,26,29; 2014c:29-30,36,43)

As the Australian Chinese Curriculum does not include any specific reference to the expected final level of proficiency, it is useful for purposes of comparison to refer to some comparative Mandarin Chinese Language examinations available to South Africans at this stage, as presented in Table 4.7. For ease of comparison one should recognise that the South African Second Additional Language level relates to the international Foreign Language level.

Table 4.7: Level of proficiency in all four language skills as expected by the CAPS Mandarin SAL Grade 12, the IEB Chinese Grade 12 Examination, the Cambridge IGCSE Chinese Foreign Language Examination and the Edexcel GCSE Chinese Examination

	CAPS GRADE 12	IEB[4] 2018	CAMBRIDGE IGCSE FOREIGN LANGUAGE	EDEXCEL GCSE CHINESE HL
Listening: characters Listening: minutes	250 2	Not prescribed	200	200
Speaking: minutes (relating events)	1-2 prepared 3-5 interview	Not prescribed	5 prepared 3 questions	2-3 prepared 2-3 questions
Reading: characters (comprehension)	166-200	175 (if two texts)	200	180
Writing: characters (paragraph or essay)	300-400	120-150	150	100-150

Sources: Mandarin Second Additional Language (2014c:29-30,36,43); Mowatt (2016); Cambridge International Examinations (2015); Edexcel GCSE Chinese (2009)

An explication of Tables 4.6 and 4.7 hereby follows, primarily on sequencing of the different language skills as proficiency is extended from grade 4 through to grade 12. This discussion is taken further in section 5.4.2.1 with recommendations for possible changes.

- With regard to Listening and Speaking, the Senior and FET Phases are sequenced, except for the grade 10 listening requirement in terms of amount of characters, which may be a typing error (Table 4.6); and the proficiency level reached at the end of grade 12 relates favourably to those of the other examinations (Table 4.7). The Listening and Speaking aims put forward for the Intermediate Phase are not in line with these, however, and clearly are overstated: the expected length for orals produced by students (specifically storytelling or relating events) are exactly the same for grade 4 and 12: three minutes; the expected length of a listening comprehension for students to engage with is five minutes for grade 4 and two minutes for grade 12.

- With regard to Reading and Writing proficiency in the Intermediate Phase, it is important to note that it is expressed in Pinyin as presented in Table 4.6. At this

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[4] The IEB has been given the responsibility to set all non-official languages examinations for the National Senior Certificate, so these are also the specifications for the first National Senior Certificate Mandarin SAL exam to be written in 2018 (Mowatt, 2016).

stage I should like to make the following two comments. Firstly I should like to point to the fact that even though the proficiency is expressed in Pinyin where one could reason the philosophy of transfer applies, it should be expected to be lower than for other second languages as students are still limited by the relative slower development of their ability in Listening and Speaking. As motivated in the literature survey, Reading and Writing should also not be the emphasis of the beginner phase curriculum (discussed in section 2.2.3).

- With regard to proficiency in Reading and Writing in the Senior and FET Phases, it is expressed in characters as presented in Table 4.6. This implies that there is a shift from depending on Pinyin to read and write in the Intermediate Phase to using characters from the Senior Phase onwards. I would have liked to see a clearer explanation of the specific teaching strategy employed for the shift from Pinyin to characters here or somewhere else in the curriculum.

The decrease in Reading and Writing proficiency at the beginning of grade 7 is to be expected with the challenge of shifting to characters. The majority of phases are further sequenced throughout these grades as presented in Table 4.6; it is only the writing proficiency expected in the FET Phase which is not in line with the others. Table 4.7 clearly shows that the CAPS Grade 12 level of proficiency in the area of writing can be described as vastly overambitious: all the comparative examinations expect a written essay of around 100 to 150 characters, whereas the CAPS requirement is an essay of 300 to 400 characters.

4.3.3.1.ii Content and Teaching Plans

This comprises sections 3.4 and 3.5 of the CAPS Mandarin SAL. Section 3.4 leads into the teaching plans with a brief discussion mainly on the use of texts. As discussed in section 4.3.2.2 theme Language skills and competencies, the CAPS Mandarin SAL uses the four language skills it aims to develop to organise the curriculum in the form of Content and Teaching Plans, namely Listening and Speaking, Reading and Viewing, Writing and Presenting, and Language Structure and Conventions. See Extract 1 (Table 4.8) for the Grade 4 Content and Teaching Plans, weeks 1 to 2 of term 1.

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Table 4.8: Extract 1: Content and Teaching Plans from CAPS Mandarin SAL

GRADE 4 TERM 1				
Week	Listening and Speaking (ORAL)	Reading and Viewing	Writing and Presenting	Language Structures and Conventions
1-2	**Listening and Speaking basic conversation in target language (e.g. greetings)** Answers simple questions Names characters in the story Code switches if necessary **Practises Listening and Speaking** Emphasize the practice of phonics	**Reading** Reads words based on written conversation Answers basic questions about the text Expresses feelings about the text Discusses new vocabulary from the read text Spells five words from read text in pinyin	**Introduce script** **Writes basic words in pinyin** Writes words about the story Writes 1-2 characters	**Working with pinyin** Builds basic phonic knowledge of simple finals and four tones **Working with character** Writes 1-2 characters about the story **Vocabulary in context**

Source: Mandarin Second Additional Language (2014a:38)

The Content and Teaching Plans are comprehensive programmes of work with very detailed teaching plans in a two-weekly cycle. On initial examining and in comparison with curricula from other countries, this may seem overly structured and prescriptive. In the interview with one of the Chinese curriculum writers, this issue was also discussed. In Professor Ding's opinion she almost saw the current curriculum as including readymade lesson plans, and raised a valid objection to such an approach: as individual teachers know their students and circumstances best, one should think it most appropriate for them to take responsibility for lesson planning (Ding, 2016). However as discussed in section 2.1.1.3, this structured nature of the CAPS makes sense considering the background to the South African curriculum: the CAPS is a curriculum written in reaction to C2005 in which outcomes were overly specified and teaching processes very vague. When we consider the South African schooling context, it must also be remembered that the majority of schools have been deprived of opportunities in the past and are still slowly recovering from it, especially with regard to knowledgeable teachers. A detailed programme is therefore recommended. With Chinese being a new language taught in South African schools and teachers varying with regard to background, experience, training and level of skill, such a detailed programme seems even more appropriate and advisable.

Structurally, the CAPS Mandarin SAL is written with the CAPS English Generic SAL as guidance. In comparison, the Mandarin Content and Teaching Plans are exactly the same as the English Content and Teaching Plans; only the discussion on characters and Pinyin is language specific. The trend of having the CAPS Mandarin SAL guided by the CAPS English Generic SAL has repeatedly been identified in the analysis and comparison of the structure of the curricula. The implications of this situation are discussed in detail as part of the directed content analysis in section 4.4 of this chapter.

Having analysed the body of the CAPS Mandarin SAL, the research proceeded to follow the same process for the analysis of the comparative sections in the Australian Chinese Curriculum.

4.3.3.2 Structure of document body: Australian Mandarin Chinese curriculum

For the purpose of the research, the body of the Australian Chinese Curriculum is also divided into two main sections: an introduction to the Scope and Sequence which is called the Chinese context statement, and the actual Scope and Sequence.

4.3.3.2.i Introduction to Scope and Sequence: Chinese context statement

The Chinese context statement forms the introduction to the Australian Scope and Sequence and includes the following topics: The place of Chinese language and culture in Australia and the World; The place of Chinese language in Australian education; The nature of Chinese language learning; and The diversity of learners of Chinese.

All of these aspects were discussed previously:

- The place of Chinese language and culture in Australia and the World, The place of Chinese language in Australian education and The diversity of learners of Chinese are discussed in section 4.2.2 Context and Motivation for the Australian Mandarin Chinese curriculum.
- The nature of Chinese language learning is discussed in section 2.2.3 Unique nature of Mandarin Chinese.

One can relate these aspects of the Australian curriculum, all of which are not found in the South African curriculum, to one of the identified themes in the Shape of the Australian Curriculum, namely Recognition of the value of languages (as discussed in section 4.3.2.1). Introducing our own South African curriculum with such a context statement that also doubles as promoting the study of Chinese, would seem to have merit. This is discussed in the landscape affordance Principle of redress.

4.3.3.2.ii Scope and Sequence

The Scope and Sequence for each specific language learner pathway is introduced with a Band Description for each of the bands or year groups included in the pathway. For each band, this includes: The nature of the learner; Chinese language learning and use; Contexts of interaction; Text and resources; Features of Chinese language use; Level of support and role of English; and Discussion of the three strands. The Scope and Sequence then closes with the Band achievement standards. This section of the curriculum is very informative as it places the curriculum plans within the learner, teacher and environmental context and facilitates comparison between the different bands. Such comparison then, for instance, guides the teacher in how to implement scaffolding and how to use English in the class, and gives a clear Pinyin-character policy not present in the CAPS Mandarin SAL (elaborated on in section 5.4.2.4). Close analysis of this section supports the conclusion of the theme Language teaching approaches (identified in section 4.3.2.2)*:* the primary approach of the Australian Chinese Curriculum to teaching and learning languages, labelled intercultural approach, encompasses the communicative approach and its derivative text-based approach and process approach also central to the CAPS Mandarin SAL.

The Scope and Sequence for the specific Language Learner Pathway is presented in discussion format and summarised in table format. As mentioned in section 4.3.2.2, theme Language skills and competencies, the guidance given to Australian language curricula is to use three strands, namely Communicating, Understanding, and Reciprocating to organise the teaching activities. In practice, the Australian Chinese Curriculum only uses Communicating and Understanding in their Scope and Sequence, as seen in Extract 2. The Reciprocating strand is incorporated within the Communication strand as a subsection of

Reflecting. See Extract 2 (Table 4.9) for part of the Scope and Sequence of the Second Language Learner pathway: the full Scope and Sequence covers Foundation to Year 10; the extract is for Foundation to Year 6.

Table 4.9: Extract 2: Scope and Sequence: Second Language Learner Pathway, Foundation to Year 6

COMMUNICATING					
Using language for communicative purposes in interpreting, creating and exchanging meaning					
Sub-strand	**Description**	**Thread**	**F - Year 2**	**Years 3 – 4**	**Years 5 - 6**
S O C I A L I S I N G	Interacting orally and in writing to exchange ideas, opinions, experiences, thoughts and feelings; and participating in shared activities through planning, negotiating, deciding, arranging and taking action.	Oral	Interact with teachers and peers to participate in class routines, structured conversations and activities using modelled Chinese tones, syllables and rhythms	Interact with teachers and peers to share personal and class experiences and experiment with the use of tone and intonation	Interact with peers and familiar adults to organise shared experiences and vary speaking conventions according to formality and needs of a specific audience
		Written	Examine simple written texts about familiar experiences and found in familiar settings to share thoughts with the class	Exchange simple correspondence with teachers and peers to share personal information and pay attention to how individual characters and their components are organised	Exchange correspondence and simple written promotional material with known others to plan daily tasks, activities and events and apply knowledge of Chinese script sequences and compound characters

I N F O R M I N G	Obtaining, processing, interpreting and conveying information through a range of oral, written and multimodal texts.	Oral – Obtaining and processing	Recognise words and names of familiar objects using tone, actions and gestures to deliver short presentation to peers	Identify and request information about people, places and things using learnt phrases and key words	Identify how key words and phrases relating to number, times, places and people are chunked in spoken exchanges and apply this knowledge to select and sequence appropriate content for identified audiences
		Written Obtaining and processing	Practise learned characters related to everyday situations, personal interests and topics taught at school	Identify how simple information texts are organised depending on the topic and select these features and learned characters to construct simple information texts	Identify the meaning of words and phrases used in information texts and use this information for different purposes such as posters, charts and maps

C R E A T I N G	Engaging with imaginative experience by participating in, responding to and creating a range of texts, such as stories, songs, drama and music.	Oral – Imaginative experience	Join in with Chinese stories, songs and rhymes by reproducing rhythm and sound patterns to express feelings	Perform familiar, simple songs, poems and stories using voice, rhythm, and appropriate gesture and action	Identify characters, events and viewpoints in short imaginative texts and express personal opinions about them with peers
		Written Imaginative experience	Contribute to the sharing of stories using illustrations and images	Create short stories to entertain peers writing in simple characters or short sentences	Describe imagined characters and sequences of events, using modelled texts or word lists for support

T R A N S L A T I N G	Moving between languages and cultures orally and in writing, evaluating and explaining how meaning works.	Oral – Creating Chinese translations	Identify words and phrases spoken in Chinese and English from familiar contexts that have similar meaning or purpose	Consider contextual cues to infer the meanings of words in a range of predictable spoken contexts	Identify common spoken Chinese expressions and discuss examples of words and phrases that do not readily translate into English
		Written Creating Chinese translations	Identify high frequency words in Chinese characters and Pinyin through the use of some basic contextual cues	Connect the English/Pinyin equivalent of common expressions in Chinese for family and friends	Interpret and translate simple texts encountered every day for family and friends

R E F L E C T I N G	Reflecting on intercultural language use and how language and culture shape identity.	Reflecting	Observe how relationships with others influence language choices	Compare how aspects of personal identity are expressed in Australian and Chinese contexts	Compare how Chinese and English language and culture differ and identify how this knowledge can help communication

UNDERSTANDING					
Analysing and understanding language and culture as resources for interpreting and shaping meaning in intercultural exchange					
Sub-strand	**Description**	**Thread**	**F - Year 2**	**Years 3 – 4**	**Years 5 - 6**
S Y S T E M S O F L A N G U A G E	Understanding the language system, including sound, writing, grammar and text.	Phono-logy	Identify the four tones, pronunciation of sounds, and rhythm	Recognise the tone-syllable nature of spoken language, and compare Chinese and English sounds	Discriminate between similar or related syllables and words by listening with attention to tone, stress and phrasing
		Ortho-graphy	Recognise Chinese characters as a form of writing and Pinyin as the spelled-out sounds of spoken Chinese	Explore features of Chinese characters (such as stroke types and sequences, and component forms and their arrangement) and associate character forms with their meaning	Identify how character structure, position and component sequences relate the form of a character to its particular sound and meaning
		Morph-ology	Describe how each syllable in a word has a meaning	Know that Chinese words are made up of syllable-morphemes and identify key morphemes in words of related meaning	Use knowledge of morphemes to identify and recall the meanings of words in context
		Syntax	Identify that Chinese sentences have a particular word order	Use nouns, adjectives and simple sentences to record observations	Form sentences to express details, such as time, place and manner of an action, and to sequence ideas
		Text	Engage with familiar text types in Chinese to predict gist	Identify structure and features of simple texts presented in Chinese	Analyse how the features of text organisation vary according to audience and purpose

V A R I A T I O N	& C H A N G E	Under-standing how the nature and function of language varies according to context, purpose, audience and mode, the dynamic nature of language; and varieties of language.	Chinese and its variants	Know that Chinese is a major community language in Australia	Know that Chinese is spoken by communities in many countries	Recognise that Chinese is characterised by diversity in spoken and written forms
			Register	Identify the features of formal language used at school	Identify the different features of informal and formal conversation	Experiment with register with different people in different situations
R O L E O F L A N G U A G E	A N D C U L T U R E	Analysing and under-standing how language and culture shape meaning.	Language choices	Describe how people use different languages to communicate and participate in intercultural experiences	Compare how terms are used to indicate relationships and express cultural values that may be different from their own	Explore the impact of tangible variables such as age, gender, and social position on choice of language used in interactions
			Dyna-mics of lang-uage, culture and place	Identify the way languages are used to tell them about peoples' traditions, cultures and places	Explain the role languages play in passing on traditions and cultures that come from a particular place	Compare the traditions of language and culture that influence the way people interact with the place where they live and its people

Source: Australian Curriculum Languages Chinese (2013)

The critical difference between the two curricula lies in the fact that the South African curriculum comprises a detailed two-weekly teaching plan for the year as already discussed, whereas the Australian curriculum describes what learners should be able to do by the end of a two- or three-year phase. As such, the Australian curriculum is presented in a format which leaves more scope for interpretation by the teacher and makes allowance for learner diversity. However, as argued in the discussion of the CAPS Mandarin SAL Content and Teaching plans (section 4.3.3.1), the present unique educational environment in South Africa necessitated a detailed plan of work. One could see this as a strength of the South

African curriculum and a weakness of the Australian curriculum: with the Australian Chinese Curriculum being very vague when it comes to guiding the teacher from week to week, inexperienced and novice teachers may struggle.

Another differentiating feature between the two curricula concerns the fact that, in addition to the more common achievement standards of Socialising, Informing and Creating of the Communication strand, which relates to the South African language skills of Listening and Speaking, Reading and Viewing as well as Writing and Presenting; the Australian curriculum also includes a Translating and a Reflecting achievement standard, which finds no reference in the CAPS Mandarin SAL. As discussed under the theme of Language skills, the Reflecting achievement standard seeks to develop reciprocal processes that can have an impact on meaning making and identity formation. In the Scope and Sequence it is specifically defined as asking students to be able to "reflect on intercultural language use and how language and culture shape identity". The Translating achievement standard incorporates aspects such as comparison and finding meaning from context both oral and written. Both of these achievement standards are a direct result of the Australian curriculum's approach to language learning as an intercultural process, with its corresponding focus on experience and reflection (identified in the theme Language teaching approaches*)*.

The Understanding strand of the Australian Chinese Curriculum also incorporates some elements shared by the CAPS Mandarin SAL, namely the achievement standard of Systems of language. Here the focus is on understanding the language system which is presented by phonology (sound), orthography and morphology (writing), syntax (sentence structure) and text. The Systems of language relates to the South African language skill of Language Structure and Conventions. Other elements of the Understanding strand, such as Language variation and change and Role of language and culture, however, are foreign to the CAPS Mandarin SAL. The aim of Language variation and change is understanding how the nature and function of language varies according to context, purpose, audience and mode. The aim of the Role of languages and culture is analysing and understanding how language and culture shape meaning.

It is insightful at this stage to refer back to the "Five basic orientations to the curriculum" by Elliot Eisner (1985:276-286) as discussed under Aims (section 4.3.2.1). In the particular

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section, the curriculum value orientations informing the CAPS Mandarin SAL were identified as Social adaptation and Social reconstruction, closely associated with Personal relevance. The discussion here on the three achievement standards of Translating, Reflecting and Language variation and change, makes it clear that one of the primary value orientations informing the Australian Chinese Curriculum is Development of Cognitive processes, with the aim not only on teaching content, but the ability to use a variety of cognitive processes.

The achievement standards of Reflecting and Role of language and culture points to other aspects central to the Australian curriculum but foreign to the South African curriculum, namely culture and how it relates to identity formation; variations in language; and meaning in language. This is discussed in depth in section 4.4 of this chapter under the language-specific affordance of Culture.

4.4 Analysis and comparison of curricula on the basis of the conceptual map

Complementary to conventional content analysis, the findings of which were presented in the preceding section, directed content analysis was chosen as research method to provide an even richer and more nuanced analysis of the data. For this deductive research method, the language and landscape affordances identified through the literature survey and organised in the conceptual map (section 2.4) were used as themes directing the analysis. As opposed to conventional content analysis which identifies categories from the data, the directed method uses existing theory to develop the initial codes or categories which are then applied for document analysis and comparison (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008:109).

4.4.1 Directed content analysis using educational landscape affordances

South African educational landscape themes and connected language priorities were integrated into four affordances as they relate to each other (section 2.4.2). These South African educational landscape affordances allow for contextualised implementation of the CAPS Mandarin SAL, in line with Le Grange's appeal for situated enquiry (section 2.1). They further have a direct effect on how South Africans will perceive and accept Mandarin Chinese as it enters the South African educational environment.

The following affordances as determined by the unique nature of the South African education landscape are hereby presented, and applied for the purpose of directed content analysis.

4.4.1.1 Principle of redress

The operational question that must be considered is: How does the constitutional commitment to the redress of historical injustices and inequalities affect the welcoming of Mandarin Chinese into the language teaching landscape of South Africa?

Principles such as social justice and equality and the recognition of individual rights stand firmly at the centre of the new South Africa, its Constitution and policy documents. For this to materialise, there has been a drive to undo the injustices and inequalities of the apartheid past seen. Chapter 2, section 2.1.1.1 focused on the subsequent recognition of 11 official languages in the South African Constitution; and section 2.1.1.4 presented the recent IIAL policy for the introduction of the minoritised African languages as compulsory first additional language in South African schools. This situation has left less space for Mandarin Chinese to enter the South African educational landscape as it needs to compete with other subjects for teaching time and teaching resources such as teachers and learning materials. This is complicated by the already persistent inequalities in schools discussed in section 2.1.2.1.

Even with Australia being a country that has allocated extensive resources to Chinese language study in schools and has gathered a wealth of experience over the course of more

than 60 years, as discussed in section 4.2.2, the Shape of the Australian Curriculum (2011:1,2,4) still repeatedly identifies the need for and management of resources such as qualified teachers; quality teaching; appropriate learning materials; and appropriate time allocation in a crowded curriculum.

It is clear that money to prioritise these scarce resources is needed for the entry of Mandarin Chinese into the South African schooling system. It seems that the Department of Basic Education does not have the money for a large-scale introduction of Mandarin Chinese into South African state schools, which is evident from their inability to implement the IIAL as discussed in section 2.1.1.4. Whether China will see this as a strategic priority and invest the necessary resources, only the future will tell. There are positive signs, however, such as China's involvement with the piloting of the CAPS Mandarin SAL as discussed in section 2.3.2.

Given the lack of realisation of the IIAL policy and subsequent delay in the introduction of African languages as compulsory first additional language, one could understand South Africa's negative response to the announcement of the introduction of Mandarin Chinese planned for 2015 (discussed in section 2.3.3). Assuming that South Africa finds the resources, though, I would argue strongly for the active promotion of Chinese in South African schools. My perception furthermore is that the normal South African does not understand why, in our already complicated language context, we need to introduce another language and is therefore left with a feeling of unease and mistrust. This misunderstanding may also be complicated by the general perception that China is colonising and exploiting Africa noted in section 2.2.2 on China's involvement in Africa and South Africa.

When we promote Chinese, we need to be serious about addressing the issues concerning which languages should be taught and why, and about language ownership and whether to limit or sustain the diversity of languages to be taught in schools. These are issues that Australia with its large immigrant population and disadvantaged and minoritised groups and languages has also identified as key (The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, 2011:17-19). In this context, they have set a good example of promoting the learning of languages (discussed under the theme Recognition of the value of languages), and

incorporating the different role players in the process (discussed under the theme History). We are reminded to address these issues with sensitivity to our own South African context and to determine our specific language aims as these relate to the study of Mandarin Chinese (discussed in depth in the conventional content analysis themes of History and Aims, section 4.3.2.1).

In conclusion we see that the principle of redress has created a contested space for the entry of Mandarin Chinese into South African schools. We recognise that we can work towards opening up this space by addressing the issue of money as it relates to resources for the implementation of Mandarin Chinese and by promoting the value of Mandarin Chinese in the school and the wider community.

4.4.1.2 Multilingualism versus Home Language and English

Here the operational question is: How does the competition between the constitutional recognition of cultural diversity with multilingualism as a means to this end, on the one hand, and individual language rights with a focus on home languages and English, on the other, affect the viability of Mandarin Chinese?

In section 2.1.1.2 the pro-multilingualism ethos of the Constitution and its LiEP which aims for nation-building with recognition of cultural diversity were identified. In line with this ideal of multilingualism, Mandarin Chinese is allowed to enter the South African education landscape as a optional second additional language.

However, the challenges surrounding education in a home language and the protection of this right against the need to acquire good English as discussed in the literature survey leaves less space for Mandarin Chinese. Though stated in principle, education in the home language is complicated in practice, as discussed in sections 2.1.1.4 and 2.1.2.3. It is assumed that learners enter grade 1 able to speak and understand the taught home language, whereas limitations in terms of what languages schools in reality offer may make this impossible; and schools further find it necessary to transition away from home language to English as LoLT as early as in grade 4. Academics point out that the early exit from mother-tongue teaching and straight-for-English policies are not giving the majority of South

African learners the opportunity to draw on their home language for learning and blame this transition for South African learners' poor performance.

With regard to the implementation of Mandarin Chinese, this means that scarce educational resources are in the first instance prioritised for building students' competence in the LoLT; and fewer resources are available for this optional language. The resource of money and how it affects the provision of qualified teachers and appropriate teaching materials have been discussed under the affordance Principle of redress. It is envisioned therefore that Chinese will at first be taught in well-off schools or where specific Mainland China sponsored programmes are run in poorer schools. As far as the resource of time is concerned, the CAPS in its guidelines regarding the instructional time for the different subjects in the different phases allows no time for second additional languages in the Intermediate and Senior Phases (discussed as themes Instructional time for all subjects and Instructional time for languages in sections 4.3.2.1 and 4.3.2.2). It is envisioned therefore that Chinese at Intermediate Phase level will be taught as an after-school subject. Student capacity is another scarce resource. Where students struggle with competence in home language and first additional language, the addition of another language seems contested.

With reference again to the operational question, the promotion of multilingualism as stated in the LiEP opens the door for Mandarin Chinese; whereas individual language rights and the complexities around home-language education in South Africa tend to force this door closed. For these initial stages we will have to be content with the crack that is left open. Whereas it is unfortunate that Chinese will not initially be accessible to everyone with the Department of Basic Education not in the position to provide it at present, it is to be commended for making a start: some South Africans will get the opportunity to study Mandarin Chinese and we as a country will be able to extend our skills set to include citizens competent in Chinese.

4.4.1.3 Neoliberal market-led forces

The operational question in this instance is: How does the influence of global neoliberalism on the South African educational system affect the opening for Mandarin Chinese?

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Globalisation describes those changes which have created a world more interconnected than ever before, now often referred to as a global village. Advances for instance in transportation and communication information technologies, supported by more open economic policies have been instrumental in this change. As Christie further explains (2008:49):

> Discourses of globalisation may easily become 'grand narratives' – overarching explanations of everything. These kinds of narratives often assume that there is a single, universal experience that people share – or should share. They have limited value for understanding local experiences, and local possibilities or action.

Such a grand narrative is the ideology of neoliberalism, which holds that "the unfettered market, not democratic institutions, should be the organizing agent for nearly all political, social, economic, even personal decisions" (Sloan, 2008:557). It is seen in the dominance of corporate values such as privatisation and commercialisation and business ideals of cost-effectiveness and productivity entering even public domains such as education.

Worldwide there is a growing interdependence in economic relations – trade, investment, finance and the organisation of production globally – but also a growing political interaction (Christie, 2008:47). South Africa is by no means excluded from this interconnectedness. The growing political, economic and cultural cooperation between South Africa and China over the past six years since August 2010, as discussed in section 2.2.2, is an example of such a relationship resulting in the introduction of Mandarin Chinese in South African schools.

The South African educational system is not only influenced from the outside but the effect of global neoliberalism is also felt from within. The analysis in Chapter 2 of our Constitution, LiEP, and the foundational OBE curriculum, as well as the consequent discussion on the Competing discourses of transformation and the market economy as one of the factors that contribute to the complexity of the South African educational landscape (section 2.1.2.2), identified these neoliberal market-led policies as a key feature of the transition to democracy in South Africa also affecting education. On top of that, the literature survey has pointed out that School Governing Bodies mostly made up of parents are powerful voices in the governance of South African schools. This democratic means of governance is opening up the door for neoliberal economic forces to enter South African schools, as it invites role

players from the private sector. These parents are often the ones who deem Mandarin Chinese a valuable asset for their children in a globalised world, thus opening the door for Mandarin Chinese as global economic language by, for instance, voting for school governing posts for additional teachers.

Signs of the influence of global neoliberalism then is evident in the CAPS Mandarin SAL. As expected, one can identify it in the aims (Mandarin Second Additional Language, 2014a:5), evident from the following exemplars: "being sensitive to global imperatives" and "facilitating the transition of learners from education institutions to the workplace" and "providing employers with a sufficient profile of a learners' competence". Identified language teaching approaches which lie at the heart of the CAPS Mandarin SAL also hint at this influence: the text-based approach with its use of authentic texts in order to prepare students for real-life use of the language and the communicative approach which aims to engage learners in authentic communication (discussed under the themes Language Levels and Language Teaching Approaches of section 4.3.2.2). Opting to describe learners in terms of "products" as discussed under the theme Learner characteristics (section 4.3.2.1) is another clear sign of the influence global neoliberalism has on South African curricula.

I do not see global neoliberalism as all negative or all positive, but as a reality which we as educators can manage positively if we are alert and aware of its influences and effects. In this sense it has brought Mandarin Chinese to our doorstep; we are now in the position to welcome it with grace and wisdom.

4.4.1.4 Policy-practice gap in South Africa

The operational question is: How does our understanding of the very real policy-practice gap in the South African educational system affect contextualised implementation of the CAPS Mandarin SAL?

The complexity of the South African educational landscape is painted in section 2.1.2 in referring to inequalities persisting in South African schools; the competing discourses of transformation and the market economy; as well as the academic discourses of secondary language acquisition theory. These complexities have resulted in a scenario where that

which is planned by the Department of Basic Education is not necessarily implemented in schools. In our search for the ideal Mandarin Chinese curriculum, we should recognise this policy-practice gap in South Africa, understand the reasons for it and work towards narrowing it as we engage with the subject of Mandarin Chinese.

Signs of this policy-practice gap are alarmingly evident in the CAPS Mandarin SAL, of which instructional time is one such issue. As presented in Tables 4.3 and 4.5 and discussed under the themes Instructional time for all subjects and Instructional time for languages, the curriculum specifies adequate time for the teaching of Chinese at Second Additional Language level throughout all three phases, whereas at Intermediate and Senior Phase no provision is made within the bigger context of all the school subjects.

The issue of instructional time ties in with continuity across phases: the CAPS Mandarin SAL is structured to enter the schooling system in grade 4; whereas South African schools in practice start the study of second additional languages in grade 8 at the beginning of high school (see discussion under theme Instructional time for all subjects, section 4.3.2.1, for possible reasons).

Having identified instructional time and continuity across phases as very real examples where there is a gap between the CAPS Mandarin SAL policy and the practice of implementing it in schools, we should not sit back, but seek to adjust the curriculum to fit the practice better. This issue and possible solutions are discussed in more depth as part of the language-specific affordance Allowance for learner diversity in 4.4.2.4.

4.4.2 Directed content analysis using Chinese language-specific affordances

It is clear from the literature survey (section 2.2.3) that the specific nature of Mandarin Chinese places particular demands on curriculum writers. The following affordances determined by the unique nature of the Mandarin Chinese language have been identified, and are hereby applied for the purpose of directed content analysis.

4.4.2.1 Language families

The operational question in this case is: How does the curriculum accommodate the fact that, in terms of distance, Mandarin Chinese from the Sino-Tibetan language family and English from the Indo-European language family are on separate branches of the language family tree?

The concept of distance between language families has many implications for the teaching of Chinese. As discussed in section 2.2.3, Chinese is one of the most difficult languages for speakers from the Indo-European language family to learn. Aspects such as writing, reading, tones in speaking and cultural differences have been discussed as specific aspects contributing to this challenge.

Referring back to the literature survey, the CAPS English Generic SAL serves as generic curriculum for all other CAPS second additional languages (section 2.1.1.3 South African Curricula as implementation of the LiEP).   Using a distanced language such as English as template for the development of the Chinese curriculum brings us to the issue of language-specific curricula. The writers of the Australian curriculum identify the necessity of language curricula to be language specific as one of the salient features for success and subsequently incorporates it into their current language directives (identified under the themes Aims, Recognition of the value of languages and Language levels). In the Shape of the Australian Curriculum (2011:8), language-specific curricula are specified as recognising:

- features that languages share through the use of common terms, key concepts, ways of elaborating curriculum content, and achievement standards; as well as
- the distinctiveness of particular languages as described through language-specific curriculum content and achievement standards.

Analysing the CAPS Mandarin SAL within this context of language families highlights the following issues. The CAPS Mandarin SAL approaches second additional language learning with the underlying philosophy of transfer as exercised through the use of the text-based approach. The research so far (conventional content analysis applied to the document introduction as well as the document body) has found this to be true: all three of the language-specific themes (Language skills, Language levels and Language teaching approaches) found this philosophy and strategy to be central to the teaching of second

additional languages in the CAPS and the analysis of the document body revealed a substantial portion of content allocated to the implementation of the text-based approach, with three tables related to this philosophy and strategy included in section 3.3 of the CAPS Mandarin SAL.

As discussed in the literature survey section 2.2.3 Unique nature of Mandarin Chinese, South African students' experience of the study of their first languages has limited reference to the study of Chinese as a truly foreign language, with specifically no reference to the study of reading and writing Chinese characters. Within this context, the philosophy of transfer needs to be applied wisely. Also discussed in the literature survey is the concept of a skills mix which holds that reading Chinese texts in characters (being the authentic version) is not a method one can use to help one's speaking ability or develop vocabulary. Because of distance in language families, both the philosophy of transfer and the use of the text-based approach therefore need to be looked at critically for the study of Mandarin Chinese as second additional language. The next section (4.4.2.2) proceeds to do exactly this.

4.4.2.2 General aim and expected proficiency level

The operational question in this section is: What does the curriculum want to equip the learners to do and, flowing from this aim, what level of proficiency is expected of the learners and how is it developed?

The previous discussion holds that, for the study of a second additional language, if from the same language family as one's first (i.e. where the philosophy of transfer is applicable), proficiency development will proceed at a quicker pace, especially in the areas of reading and writing. The development of these skills will then benefit one's speaking ability. Second language curricula with this underlying philosophy will therefore emphasise the development of reading and writing skills right from the beginning, proceed at a rapid pace in these areas, and reasoning holds that a text-based approach will be desirable.

As basis for subsequent discussion on language proficiency, we first need to make sure that we are clear on the aims and focuses of the CAPS Mandarin SAL. In comparison with home

language and first additional language curricula, the CAPS Mandarin SAL is presented as focusing on: "developing learners' ability to understand and speak the language – basic interpersonal communication skills" (Mandarin Second Additional Language, 2014a:11). As the student progresses through to Senior and FET Phases, the aim of the second additional language curriculum is further presented as extending to grow students' language competence in all four skill areas, building both oral and literacy skills (Mandarin Second Additional Language, 2014a:11,13). Conventional content analysis as applied in the Language levels theme also identified these two central aims of the CAPS Mandarin SAL (Section 4.3.2.2).

An analysis of the expected proficiency level is subsequently discussed, first as presented in the South African and then as presented in the Australian curriculum.

4.4.2.2.i Expected proficiency level in the CAPS Mandarin SAL

The proficiency level expected in the CAPS for all four language skills is hereby analysed with reference to the following sections in the curriculum: *Language skills*, section 2.1.2; *Lengths of texts for Second Additional Language*, Tables 3.3.2 to 3.3.3; and *Content and Teaching Plans*, section 3.5.

a) Listening and Speaking

In principle, the CAPS identifies the skills of Listening and Speaking as the primary focus of second additional language learning with the longer-term aim of growing competence in all four skill areas, as discussed. Recognition of the fact that students have had no prior exposure to the language is stated in the introduction of this skill: "listening and speaking skills to communicate at a basic level", "learners' spoken language still needs to be scaffolded", "modelled and supported, for example with vocabulary and sentence frames" and "tailor speaking opportunities to the level of the individual child" (Mandarin Second Additional Language, 2014a:13).

The Content and Teaching Plans expect quite advanced levels of listening and speaking right from the start, however: in weeks 5 to 6 of the first term, students for instance are expected to listen to a story and answer simple questions, name characters in the story correctly and

use words to express feelings about the story. At other times during the first term students, after listening to a story, are expected to predict what will happen next and relate it to their own experience. The curriculum does state that code switching is allowed.

The oral texts used in the second term comprise realistic fiction/traditional stories/personal accounts/adventures/real-life stories including informational texts like a conversation at the supermarket and recipe or instruction for doing something. The third and fourth terms include listening to information contained in a poster, participating in a short conversation, short announcements, factual accounts or narratives and dialogues from radio or TV. These texts correspond with the summary thereof in Table 3.3 *Spread of texts across grade 4-6* of the CAPS Mandarin SAL (Mandarin Second Additional Language, 2014a:28-30). It is important to recognise that the choice focuses on authentic real-life texts, which is in line with the identified communicative approach aiming to engage learners in authentic communication (discussed in theme Language teaching approaches of section 4.3.2.2) as well as the identified CAPS aim of information literacy preparing students to function in the information age (identified in theme Language levels of section 4.3.2.2). In my opinion, the use of such a spectrum of authentic real-life texts necessitates skilled presentation for beginner-level language students.

My initial comment is that the use of the text-based approach and the subsequent choice of oral texts are forcing the curriculum to operate at quite an advanced level in the beginning stages of studying Listening and Speaking during which explicit, structured teaching with teacher modelling and scaffolding may be more appropriate. This stance is in line with previous findings: section 4.3.3.1.i provided an analysis of the introduction to the South African Content and Teaching plans and found that the presentation of the Listening and Speaking skill aims in terms of length of orals to be produced by students and length of listening comprehension for students to engage with at Intermediate Phase level is vastly overambitious.

b) Reading and Viewing

When analysing the CAPS in terms of this language skill, it is clear that extensive Reading and Viewing is encouraged right from the beginning. This is to be expected due to the guiding philosophy of transfer in the CAPS Mandarin SAL. It is clear from exemplars in the

introduction of this skill such as "use shared reading at the beginning of Grade 4 to guide learners into this phase" (Mandarin Second Additional Language, 2014a:14), as well as from the Content and Teaching Plans which indicate that the students are expected to read and analyse a written conversation, even to the extent of expressing feelings about the text within the first two weeks (Mandarin Second Additional Language, 2014a:39).

Further analysis of the Content and Teaching Plans shows:

- The Content and Teaching Plans provide no indication whether read texts are in characters or Pinyin, or both. *Lengths of texts for Second Additional Language* as presented in Table 3.3.3 in the document sheds some light on this question: one can deduce from it that texts for reading should be in Pinyin at Intermediate Phase level (Mandarin Second Additional Language, 2014a:34). A clear directive policy as to the use of Pinyin and characters is however lacking.

- The first term's reading texts includes a conversation, a story, a recipe/instruction and a poem; the other terms further include information texts with visuals (pictures, maps, drawings, photographs and cartoons), posters and songs and by the end of the year includes contemporary/traditional/real life stories, personal accounts and adventures. Grades 5 and 6 basically alternate stories with these other texts. Here my biggest concern is with the CAPS Mandarin SAL emphasis on the use of "authentic text as main source of content and context for the communicative, integrated learning and teaching of languages" (Mandarin Second Additional Language, 2014a:17). Authentic texts are in Chinese characters, which beginner level students won't be able to read. Such authentic texts needs to be adapted by adding Pinyin to the characters which limits teachers to prepared material or otherwise require a lot of extra work. Taking into consideration the slower pace at which listening and speaking is developing at this stage, very few authentic texts are furthermore appropriate. As a consequence beginner level Chinese readers are normally specifically developed for its users.

- Analysing the text is done orally in the first year and the option of either oral or written comprehension activities are given for the second and third years.

- In grade 4 one text is done per two week cycle with accompanying comprehension activities. Other reading practice is also encouraged: for the bigger part of the year

repetition of the studied text, but towards the end of the year also including independent or pair reading. In grade 5 and 6 the scope stays basically the same; for enrichment now and again one extra short text is specified per two week cycle. The last term of grade 6 closes with two texts with comprehension activities per cycle.

Before commenting on the expected proficiency for Reading, I would like to point out the following two complicating factors. The philosophy of transfer has limited applicable to the study of Mandarin Chinese as argued in the discussion on the curriculum affordance Language families section 4.4.2.1: especially for Reading and Writing totally new skills need to be mastered by South African students. As a consequence reading will go slower in Chinese than for the first literary language; and reading of authentic Chinese texts in characters will not be a means for developing vocabulary or furthering speaking skills at beginner level (the concept of a skills mix discussed in section 2.2.3).

A further complicating factor is the two-system Pinyin and characters presentation of written Chinese text. As discussed in section 2.2.3, literacy development in Chinese necessitates a systematic progressive strategy whereby Pinyin (the Romanized from of writing characters) as means of transitioning towards Chinese characters, is employed (Halliday, 2014:3; Jorden & Walton, 1987:117). As also discussed, this is a contested area where an individual curriculum needs to give clear guidance on the specific approach taken. The Pinyin-character strategy in the CAPS Content and Teaching Plans in terms of reading is not specified. The only clue to be found in the CAPS Mandarin SAL is in the *Spread of texts across Grade 4-6* section 3.3: there is a sudden change from depending on Pinyin to read and write in the Intermediate Phase to using characters from the Senior Phase onwards (presented in Table 4.6 and discussed in section 4.3.3.1.i). This is a major gap in the current CAPS Mandarin SAL that needs to be addressed.

Considering then that for reading Chinese as a totally foreign language South African students do not have the benefit of transfer and are working with a two-system Pinyin and character presentation, the place and pace of learning to read Chinese needs serious consideration in the CAPS. Keeping strictly to the CAPS English Generic SAL would not be wise. Unfortunately this is exactly what the conventional content analysis repeatedly found: large parts of section 3 *Content and Teaching plans for Language skills* of the CAPS Mandarin SAL are nothing more than a direct copy of the CAPS English Generic SAL. I would

like to argue that this is an overgeneralised and uncritical presentation of the development of the language skill of Reading as it applies to Mandarin Chinese. It does not take the unique nature of the Chinese language and pedagogic implications thereof into consideration.

A conversation with one of the curriculum writers on 6 July 2016 at the East China Normal University Shanghai shed further light on this matter. Professor Ding was one of the Chinese curriculum experts sent to South African to develop the CAPS Mandarin SAL. In the talk with Professor Ding, it was clear that they as expert Chinese curriculum writers found the instruction to use the CAPS English Generic SAL as template for the development of the CAPS Mandarin SAL very challenging. Their perceived responsibility was to keep strictly to the structure of the generic curriculum, and put Chinese content into it (Ding, 2016).

In conclusion I would like to comment on the expected proficiency for Reading and Viewing as follows. As the place and pace of Reading and Viewing is presented from an Indo-European language family perspective, the following features come as no surprise: the programme stands strong on Reading, with considerable reading activities expected at beginner level; it makes use of quite advanced authentic texts, and progresses rapidly from there on. Even if one would do all of this in Pinyin, the pace is still too fast considering the foreignness of Chinese in other areas such as speaking and culture; it is further complicated by the use of authentic texts; and not desirable in principle, as beginners should focus on speaking as motivated in the literature survey (section 2.2.3 *Unique nature of Mandarin Chinese*).

   c)   Writing and Presenting

The skill of Writing and Presenting is introduced, recognising the need for scaffolding in grade 4 to 6, as is clear from the following exemplars: "careful support and guidance" and "initially using writing frames"(Mandarin Second Additional Language, 2014a:15).

Analysis of the Content and Teaching Plans shows:

- Every two week cycle throughout the first three years introduces 1-2 new characters to recognise and write
- The basics of Pinyin is taught in the first term of grade 4 with the second term integrating it, the third term combining two syllables in a word and the fourth term

focusing on multiple syllables in a word. The first term of grade 5 still requires specific Pinyin instruction (sentence stress and intonation), but no explicit instruction thereafter.

- In grade 4, student writing is only expected in Pinyin, first by filling in words and then starting to complete a frame of two to three sentences or a speech bubble, and also labelling, for example a map. In grade 5, students' writing is still primarily in Pinyin, but they are encouraged to use learnt characters, if possible; frames are still primarily used to write a longer paragraph or even two and some simple writing without frames is also practised. In grade 6, the basic requirements are the same, with a lot of practise: two to three writing assignments per week.

- The length of texts as presented in Table 4.6 specifies the writing of paragraphs in Pinyin: Gr4 20-30, Gr5 30-50 and Gr6 40-60 characters in Pinyin.

Writing and Presenting is the part of the Content and Teaching Plans which is unique to the Chinese curriculum as becomes clear when comparing it with the English generic curriculum. It seems that this is the area in which the Chinese curriculum experts could express themselves more freely and one finds that is presented appropriately in terms of pace and strategy.

d) Language structure and conventions

For the skill of Language structure and conventions, the CAPS Mandarin SAL aims to teach what is referred to as the basics of language (grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation), primarily in context, but also by means of explicit teaching (Mandarin Second Additional Language, 2014a:16). From Table 3.3.1 in the CAPS it seems that students' own writing should be used extensively as context to teach this aspect (Mandarin Second Additional Language, 2014a:31-32).

4.4.2.2.ii Expected proficiency level in the Australian Chinese Curriculum

A comparison with the Australian Chinese Curriculum is revealing when proficiency levels are analysed. In terms of general aim, the Australian Year 3 to 4 band seems to correspond with that of the CAPS Mandarin SAL: "Engagement with Chinese language is primarily through listening and speaking". It is important, however, to note that the CAPS states this

focus of basic interpersonal communication skills as central to all three Phases of the curriculum, while this is only the focus for this one band within the Second Language Learner Pathway Foundation to Year 10 Sequence in Australia.

The next step is to also analyse the Australian curriculum with regard to the expected proficiency level for all four language skills (Australian Curriculum Languages Chinese, 2013):

a)   Listening and Speaking

With English being the primary language of instruction in the previous band, and Chinese the primary language of instruction in the next band; the Year 3 to 4 band is the transition phase. Frequent and consistent teacher modelling of correct Chinese is the main source of oral language acquisition, so that students' Chinese "is scaffolded and prompted by the teacher", and used in combination with English as well as mime and gesture. Such scaffolding is further described as students' understanding of Chinese depends on "context, teacher gestures, facial expression and intonation".

Concerning producing oral texts, the expectation is for students to "respond consistently" in the "exchange of simple personal information and experiences" relating to "information about people, places and things using learnt phrases and key words". Students also learn to "perform simple songs, poems and stories". Students are expected to "pay attention to correct pronunciation and tone and use appropriate gesture and movement".

b)   Reading and Viewing

On first impression it seems that reading is absent from the curriculum. Closer inspection shows that reading is present: reading digital communication such as "contributing in an on-line discussion with sister school friends" and analysing simple information texts "to identify key words in for example a floor plan, map or calendar" are examples. It is clear that reading is not the emphasis of the program, but presents itself naturally.

c)   Nature of texts

Students are "exposed to a wide range of Chinese voices and settings through the use of multimedia texts, simulations and performances". As such they engage with a variety of Chinese language texts including "short audio-visual texts, plays, legends, rhymes, songs and dance". The Communication strand further describes oral texts to include in addition to

"structured and scaffolded situations" modelled by the teacher, additional "short predictable texts, correspondence and photo biographies".

   d) Features of Chinese language use/ Pinyin-character policy

Printed texts are in Pinyin with corresponding characters (the years 5 to 6 focus shifts, with texts being in characters and "generally also glossed in Pinyin", whereas years 7 to 8 use characters and encourage students to "develop strategies to interpret meaning where not all characters are known"). Except for oral texts, there also is an expectation for students to "produce short written texts". Students mostly use Pinyin to write, and also recognise its use as means to practice syllables and tones when they encounter new words. They know characters are the real form of writing and they explore characters and their strokes, sequence and components by producing simple, short, predictable texts, supported by teacher modelling, scaffolding and computers. Simple correspondence such as notes, postcards, text messages and short digital stories are produced in characters. This is in preparation for the next band where "students write in characters to correspond with others in letters and use Pinyin input systems to generate a variety of texts in digital format". It is important to note that Pinyin as resource to support learning is used for independent exploratory writing such as to "record and learn new vocabulary" and "prepare drafts of spoken texts". One could summarise saying that writing focuses on the teaching of characters; not overly but in contrast to Pinyin. Pinyin is seen more as a tool to support learning of speaking.

   e) Grammatical features

Grammatical features such as morphemes and sentence structure are explored, but one can see again that this is not the emphasis of the programme.

It is clear from the analysis of the expected proficiency level in both the CAPS Mandarin SAL and the Australian Chinese Curriculum that there is scope for changes within the South African curriculum. Suggestions for such changes are presented in section 5.4.2.1 of the final chapter.

4.4.2.3 Culture

The operational question is: How is culture taught and what emphasis is put on it?

The literature survey identified the importance of gaining cultural skills for competency in a foreign language and identified this as a shift in thinking from the traditional, structure-based approaches to learning a new language to more holistic, communicative-based approaches. The challenging nature of learning Chinese culture was further described in terms of a marked social distance between Chinese and English (see section 2.2.3).

I could find no reference to culture and teaching cultural aspects in the CAPS Mandarin SAL; only omission thereof, such as the *Expressions used in conversational Chinese-Reference list* section 3.2, which is framed against the English cultural norms of the CAPS English Generic SAL (discussed in section 4.3.3.1).

The Shape of the Australian Curriculum portrays culture as in integral part of teaching language in Australia. In the section entitled *Language, Culture and Learning*, the relationship between language, culture and learning is described as key concepts that inform language education in Australia (The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, 2011:11-19). This has been discussed as one of the identified general curriculum themes, Recognition of the value of languages, section 4.3.3.1.

The Australian Chinese Curriculum not only identifies the importance of teaching culture in language learning, but proceeds to incorporate it into the Australian Scope and Sequence as two sub-strands: Reflecting and Role of language and culture. These were identified in section 4.3.2.2 in theme Language skills and discussed through the conventional content analysis of the Australian Scope and Sequence in section 4.3.3.2. The Role of languages and culture strand seeks to help students to develop an understanding of "ways in which meaning is established and exchanged within and across languages and cultures"; with the Reflecting strand aiming to help students to understand how identity is shaped by language and culture to "develop metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness of themselves as intercultural communicators and develop self-awareness of who they are in relation to others" (The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, 2011:25). The extract that follows presents specific ways in which the curriculum aims to see these achievement standards taught (Australian Curriculum Languages Chinese, 2013).

Reflecting is realised in comparing how aspects of personal identity are expressed in Australian and Chinese contexts:

- preparing a self-introduction and discussing the concept of 'self'/我, exploring questions such as 'what makes me special in my family? In my class? In my school?

- prioritising information when talking about self, for example, 我叫 Kate before 我八岁。

-sharing information about one's zodiac animal sign in Chinese and discussing in English the cultural significance of such information, for example 我属龙。"

The roles of language and culture are realised by comparing how terms are used to indicate relationships and express cultural values that may be different from their own:

- participating in exchanging good wishes in celebrations such as 龙年快乐 and comparing cultural practices of celebration from around the world

- exploring the use of language and symbolic images during cultural events, and describing the cultural meaning presented, for example, looking at the use of the colour red during Chinese New Year and in good wishes of 红红火火 and asking why red is so widely used in celebrations in China. What is the cultural connotation of red?

- discussing possible reasons why Chinese family names are placed before personal names; exploring various Chinese names to learn the cultural meaning of these names for example, 静明

- exploring the more complicated Chinese kinship relationships, learning to address families with a title rather than using their names, for example draw a family tree, discuss and label them with their titles in Chinese

The roles of language and culture are further realised by explaining the role languages play in passing on traditions and cultures that come from a particular place:

- explore Chinese and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representations of 'sacred places'

- compare languages from across the Asia region to the Chinese language to show that language and cultural practices are rich, and vary depending on where people live

- describe how traditional ways of life have been sustained through the use of language, traditions and customs, and how ways of life reflect a valuing of place, e.g. care of place transmitted through story telling.

It is clear from this extract that such cultural awareness can greatly enhance the ability of second language learners to communicate appropriately as they move between their native culture and the culture of the new language.

South Africa prides itself on being a rainbow nation. As discussed in section 2.1.1.2, recognition of this cultural diversity plays out in the South African Constitution through the LiEP aim of promoting multilingualism. In introducing our children to the international language of Mandarin Chinese and its culture, we are presented with an opportunity: an opportunity to help them understand themselves and their own culture better in relation to the world around them. As teachers we can help them conceptualise that which they will intuitively experience as they learn this unique new language and the culture it represents, and in the process raise a generation prepared for global citizenship.

4.4.2.4 Allowance for learner diversity

The operational question asked here is: How does the programme allow for learner diversity in terms of Chinese background, time on task and continuity across phases?

Central to this discussion stands the concept of inclusivity. The CAPS Mandarin SAL directs inclusivity as required to "become a central part of the organisation, planning and teaching of each school". Its reference to inclusivity mentions planning for diversity, but focuses on identifying and addressing barriers to learning, which is to be executed at both organisational and classroom level. It directs teachers to the "Guidelines for Inclusive Teaching and Learning (2010)" document (Mandarin Second Additional Language, 2014a:6). Prioritising barriers to learning makes sense considering the South African educational landscape affordance of Principle of redress as discussed in section 4.4.1.1.

It is clear from the debates around, and priorities identified for the current Australian curriculum, that it interprets inclusivity as planning for diversity. The Shape of the Australian Curriculum as discussed under the themes History and Aims (section 4.3.2.1) presented the following as one of the current key issues in the Australian debate on language education and policy: "How to recognise the language learning experience of different groups of students such as first language, second language, and background language learners". One of the new distinctive features of the subsequent curriculum which is expected to make a

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difference to language education in Australia is: "a structure and organisation of the curriculum that addresses the complexity of learning languages in relation to the two key variables: learner background in the target language and time on task (hours of study)" (The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, 2011:1,4).

How then do the two curricula work these priorities and principles of inclusivity out in terms of allowing for diversity? An important difference needs to be noted: Mandarin Chinese is only offered at Second Additional Language level in South Africa, whereas Mandarin Chinese is offered as either one of the three pathways in Australia (discussed in section 4.2.2). Within each pathway, the Australian curriculum further allows for entry at different years of schooling. Whereas the Shape of the Australian Curriculum proposes numerous entry levels, additional Chinese curricula in practice have only been developed for entry at year 7 in both the Second Language Learner and the Background Language Learner Pathways as presented in Table 4.10. It is also clear from Table 4.10 that first language learners can only start Chinese studies in Australia in year 7; there is no provision for curricula from Foundation Phase level. This curriculum development is in line with the pathway been defined as catering for students who have had their primary schooling in Chinese (Australian Curriculum Languages Chinese, 2013: context statement). The five options of Mandarin Chinese study in Australian schools are in sharp contrast to the single option in South African schools, resulting in a significant difference when allowing for learner diversity within the two countries.

Table 4.10: Summary of Mandarin Chinese curricula available in Australian schools

	SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNER PATHWAY	**BACKGROUND LANGUAGE LEARNER PATHWAY**	**FIRST LANGUAGE LEARNER PATHWAY**
Foundation to Year 10 sequence	Yes	Yes	No
Year 7 to 10 sequence (Year 7 Entry)	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: Australian Curriculum Languages Chinese (2013)

Having looked at both the South African and the Australian attitude to inclusivity and its working out in terms of planning for diversity, I should like to identify this aspect as strategic to the success of both curricula. One could argue that, for South Africa' first attempt at a Chinese curriculum, developing five sets of curricula such as in Australia is expecting too much. I should like to argue that learner diversity is a challenge we will have to face right from the start and navigate as best as possible in South Africa. In this context, we have to look at three variables: learner background, time on task and continuity across phases.

Learner background was identified as one of the distinctive features of the current curriculum which is expected to make a difference to language education in Australia (The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages: 2011:1). As presented here in Table 4.10 the Australian Chinese Curriculum presents three different pathways. As South Africans we need to be realistic and accept that students interested in taking Chinese in South African will also include any one of these three groups: those who have had no exposure to Chinese, those who have had exposure only at home and those who have received their primary schooling in China. As in Australia, we may find that second language learners with no Chinese background drop out of Chinese programmes early because they have to compete with students from a Chinese background in the same class and for entry into university (discussed in section 4.2.2).

Besides learner background, time on task or hours of study is another key variable that is incorporated into the structure of the current Australian curriculum and is expected to make a difference (The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, 2011:1). As presented here in Table 4.10, the Australian Chinese Curriculum allows for entry into the programme at foundation or year seven levels. The CAPS Mandarin SAL assumes that all students will start their Chinese language study in grade 4 and makes no allowance for entry at a later stage. In terms of amount of time allocated for each phase, the CAPS Mandarin SAL and the Shape of the Australian Curriculum allow a comparable amount of hours, as discussed under the theme Instructional time for languages (section 4.3.2.2 and Table 4.5). However, in practice no time is indicated for Mandarin Chinese study at the Intermediate and Senior Phase levels in South Africa, forcing schools to offer Mandarin after school hours, as discussed under the theme Instructional time for all subjects (section 4.3.2.1 and Table 4.3).

The Shape of the Australian Curriculum presents continuity across phases as one of the current key issues in the Australian debate around language education and policy: "How to manage transition in learning and articulation between different phases of schooling" (The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, 2011:4). When looking at the South African situation, continuity across phases is also very relevant. The current CAPS Mandarin SAL is designed for grades 4 to 12. South African students change schools at the end of grade 7, however, when they transition from primary school to high school. Primary school students disperse to a variety of high schools, forming totally new cohorts of students. As the study of a second additional language is optional, different high schools offer different second additional languages or even none. Because of this discontinuity between phases with the added challenge of overcrowded primary school curricula, most schools in South Africa opt to start the study of a second additional language at the beginning of high school, in grade 8.

In conclusion, it is important to remind oneself again of the 'foreignness' of Mandarin Chinese and the challenges it poses for non-Asian students. It is for this reason that the provision of "continuous, appropriately sequenced, and educationally challenging pathways through the curriculum so students make worthwhile gains in language learning" (The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages, 2011:4) should also be debated in South Africa as we introduce Mandarin Chinese into our educational environment.

4.5 Conclusion

Having presented the results of both conventional and directed content analysis in this chapter, the research has identified both strengths and weaknesses of the CAPS Mandarin SAL.

It is not wise to make any simplistic conclusions about this first Mandarin Chinese curriculum for South African state schools at this stage in the research process. The next chapter will endeavour to answer the research questions and offer recommendations based on the findings of the study, with regard to both policy making and curriculum development.

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It is however already clear at this stage that the current CAPS Mandarin SAL could greatly benefit from a revision. It is the hope that the current study could contribute to such a process.

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Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Introduction

The release of the first Mandarin Chinese curriculum for South African schools by the Department of Basic Education in 2014 provided the context for this study. This curriculum is known officially as the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) Grades 4-12: Mandarin Second Additional Language* (Mandarin Second Additional Language, 2014a-c), but is referred to in the study as the CAPS Mandarin SAL. Mandarin Chinese was listed as a non-official language in the Government Gazette of 20 March 2015, with 2016 stated as the year for implementation of the new curriculum (Department of Basic Education, 2015:5).

The study was set out to analyse this new Mandarin Chinese curriculum. Except for the Chinese Government-sponsored programme mentioned in section 2.3.2, Mandarin Chinese has yet to be widely introduced in South African schools. This can be attributed to many external factors, as is evident form the study's analysis of affordances of the South African educational landscape related to the teaching and learning of Mandarin Chinese (section 4.4.1). With the further analysis of the curriculum based on specific characteristics of the Chinese language (section 4.4.2), all of the eight affordances identified major areas of concern. This chapter therefore proceeds with some answers and recommendations in order to facilitate an appropriate, effective curriculum to be widely introduced and productively teaching Chinese to South African students.

Within this context, the central research questions were formulated as follows:

1. How does the South African CAPS curriculum conceptualise the initial teaching of Mandarin Chinese as a second additional language in terms of document structure and in terms of affordances of the South African educational landscape and the Chinese language?
2. How does the South African curriculum compare with the Australian curriculum in terms of document structure and these affordances?

5.2 Procedures followed

With the central research questions as guidance, the literature survey sketched the context within which this curriculum is to function, as reported in Chapter 2. The South African educational landscape was discussed focusing on policy documents directing language learning in South African schools. The following factors contributing to the complexity of this landscape were also investigated: persistent inequalities in schools; competing discourses of transformation and the market economy; and academic discourses of secondary language acquisition theory. The literature survey also explored China and the Chinese language in a worldwide context as well as the African and South African contexts and concluded this section by focusing on the characteristics which set Mandarin Chinese apart as a truly foreign language. The history of Mandarin Chinese in South African schools was investigated with reference to the development of the curriculum, its implementation strategy and the opposition expressed on account of these developments. A conceptual map depicting factors which relate to the implementation of the study of Mandarin Chinese in South African schools, as identified from the literature survey, concluded the chapter.

Chapter 3 presented a description of the methodology underpinning the study, as well as the research method employed. The coding process and types of validity strengthening trustworthiness as employed in the study were reported in detail. The execution and findings of the study were presented in Chapter 4. Both conventional and directed content analysis were used in answering the central research questions. A coding strategy requiring immersion in the data was employed for conventional content analysis. Initial coding resulted in detection of patterns and identification of themes (Saldanha, 2013:4; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1279). The educational landscape and language affordances were used for directed content analysis. These affordances were derived from the literature survey: qualities of the South African educational landscape as well as qualities of the Mandarin Chinese language which either promote or hinder the implementation of the CAPS Mandarin SAL. Findings were again related to existing theory (identified through the literature survey) and prior research (analysis of the structure of the documents with conventional content analysis). The study aimed to not only describe the phenomenon, but also to create understanding (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008:111).

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5.3 Conclusions and answers to the research questions

What does the study conclude regarding the conceptualisation of the initial teaching of Mandarin Chinese in the CAPS Mandarin SAL as it is compared to the Australian curricula? A brief summary of the identified themes and affordances discussed in the analysis and comparison, and a discussion of the light shed on the research questions, follows.

The aim of conventional content analysis is to identify themes running through the document under analysis. How can this help us to understand the conceptualisation of the teaching of Mandarin Chinese in the CAPS Mandarin SAL? These themes or codes in the form of "a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient and/or essence-capturing attributive for a portion of language-based data" (Saldanha, 2013:3), not only describe a phenomenon, but can also increase understanding and generate knowledge (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008:111). In the case of this study, the identified themes provided the required understanding of how the CAPS Mandarin SAL conceptualises the teaching of Mandarin Chinese in comparison with the Australian curriculum, and thereby shed light on possibilities for action in the future.

Conventional content analysis as applied to the South African and Australian curricula was presented separately as it relates to the introductions as well as the bodies of the documents. The analysis of the introductions of the South African and Australian curricula identified the following general curriculum themes: History, Aims, Recognition of the value of languages, Learner characteristics and Instructional time for all subjects; as well as the following language-specific curriculum themes: Language skills and competencies, Language levels, Language teaching approaches, Instructional time for languages, Links with other curricula, and Resources. The analysis of the document bodies compared the South African Content and Teaching plans with the Australian Scope and Sequence.

The aim of directed content analysis is to analyse the document under investigation on the basis of pre-defined themes or codes, which are deemed important/relevant in existing theory (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1281). Again, such a discussion of themes not only describes, but also develops understanding and provides us with the necessary knowledge to improve the CAPS Mandarin SAL (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008:111). The two curricula were

analysed with reference to the following South African educational landscape affordances: Principle of redress, Multilingualism versus Home Language and English, Neoliberal market-led forces, and Policy-practice gap in South Africa; as well as Chinese language-specific affordances: Language families, General aim and expected proficiency level, Culture, and Allowance for learner diversity.

The following possible answers to research question one were crystallised from the directed and conventional content analysis.

a) The CAPS Mandarin SAL conceptualises the initial teaching of Mandarin Chinese as if Mandarin Chinese is related to English by using the CAPS English Generic SAL as template for the versioning of the Mandarin curriculum. In doing so, standardisation among South African second additional language curricula is ensured, but it does not allow for the unique nature of the Chinese language and the very specific pacing and progression that is needed for its teaching. As unpacked in detail in one of the Chinese language-specific affordances, General aim and expected proficiency level (section 4.4.2.2), the South African curriculum builds on the philosophy of transfer while making excessive use of the text-based approach and therefore progresses too fast in terms of listening and speaking, and puts too much emphasis on reading at beginner level.

b) The new CAPS curriculum conceptualises the initial teaching of Mandarin Chinese as a second additional language against South Africa's unique historical background. Mandarin Chinese therefore enters an educational environment where multilingualism is valued opening a door for this new language; but where English and home languages, as well as African and European languages, compete for recognition. These contesting forces have resulted in opposition to the introduction of Mandarin Chinese and in Mandarin Chinese having to compete with these other languages in terms of scarce educational resources. In the discussion on the theme Aims in section 4.3.2.1, three curriculum value orientations were identified in the CAPS: Social adaptation, Social reconstruction and Personal relevance. These value orientations are a result of South Africa's unique historical background. Although this is relevant to the South African educational landscape, analysis has shown that it keeps us from other important issues such as the development of language-specific

curricula, as well as addressing the related issues of inclusivity, learner diversity, learner background and time on task. It is however important to note that such a conceptualisation also positively contributes to the new CAPS curriculum: in order to avoid repetition of the mistakes of the previous curriculum, the CAPS incorporates two-weekly teaching plans which are comprehensive programmes of work for the whole year, aptly named Content and Teaching Plans.

c) The CAPS Mandarin SAL conceptualises the initial teaching of Mandarin Chinese in the context of the policy-practice gap evident in South African curricula. The biggest concern here lies with the lack of provision of adequate teaching time and lack of continuity between different phases of schooling (discussed in section 4.4.1.4).

In terms of research question two, it is clear that there are particular similarities and differences between the two curricula.

a) In contrast to the South African curriculum modelling itself against the English generic curriculum, the Australian curriculum identifies the need for the development of language- specific curricula and therefore prioritises the development of listening and speaking over reading and writing at beginner level, and systematically builds student listening and speaking competencies by means of teacher modelling and scaffolding.

b) The two countries share elements of demographic makeup, with minority groups bringing unique challenges to the language table. Whereas the Australians have set an example of active involvement of all role players in policy making, the top-down manner in which Mandarin Chinese has been introduced has resulted in opposition from the ground and negativity in South Africa.

c) The Australian curriculum is far more focused on meeting the needs of a diverse student population, with different groups starting at different times in their schooling. The South African curriculum falls short in not providing appropriately sequenced and educationally challenging pathways for a diverse cohort of learners.

d) Because the South African curriculum has been versioned from the English curriculum, Chinese cultural elements are not taken into account. The Australians approach language learning as an intercultural process in which the aim is not only

      to communicate but also to develop an intercultural capacity by focusing on

      experience and experiential learning.

Based on these answers to the research questions, the following recommendations are proposed.

5.4 Recommendations based on the findings of the study

5.4.1 Recommendations for policy making

When policy makers are sensitive to local contexts, local language repertoires and local language ideologies (Plüddemann, 2015:188), they work towards narrowing the gap between policy and practice as it applies to language curricula. This sections presents some recommendations for policy making based on the findings of the study.

5.4.1.1 The need to develop a language-specific curriculum for South Africa

The discussion on the conventional content analysis themes History and Aims (section 4.3.2.1) identified the challenge for South African education to finally break free from the issues of the past. It comes as no surprise considering the complicated educational landscape we are faced with, discussed in section 2.1.2. As we engage with the introduction of yet another language, we therefore need to be aware of the characteristics and challenges of such a landscape and introduce the new language with sensitivity and wisdom.

Mandarin Chinese (the unique nature of which was explored in section 2.2.3) is a language unlike any known to South Africans. A simple 'versioning' of the CAPS English Generic SAL as the basis for the CAPS Mandarin SAL does not seem the best route to take. The need for the development of language-specific curricula as stressed by the Australians (discussed in section 4.4.2.1) becomes even more important considering the foreignness of Chinese in the western context. As discussions with one of the curriculum writers and the analysis of the expected proficiency level highlight, the current CAPS Mandarin SAL is not a very good

example of a language-specific curriculum (section 4.4.2.2.i, General aim and expected proficiency level). The prescriptive use of the CAPS English Generic SAL as template for the development of the CAPS Mandarin SAL with uncritical acceptance of the underlying philosophy of transfer and apparent lack of awareness of language-specific aspects in Chinese, such as the concept of a skills mix; challenges faced in learning to write in Pinyin/Chinese characters and speak Chinese tones; as well as the foreignness of Chinese cultural aspects, leaves us with a weak curriculum that is difficult to implement.

We live in a complex local environment into which we aim to bring a totally foreign language. My hope is that this study will create awareness among both South African curriculum experts of the uniqueness of Mandarin Chinese and Chinese curriculum experts of the uniqueness of the South African educational environment.

5.4.1.2 The need to promote Mandarin Chinese
 The literature survey has identified Mandarin Chinese as one of the most strategic foreign languages for South Africans to study (section 2.2). Conventional content analysis however flagged the need for the promotion of the strategic nature of Mandarin Chinese in South Africa, discussed in the theme Recognition of the value of languages (section 4.3.2.1). The need for promotion is sketched within the context of both positive and negative forces affecting the window of opportunity for Mandarin Chinese in South Africa. As the landscape affordances of Principle of redress, Multilingualism versus Home Language and English and Neoliberal market-led forces (sections 4.4.1.1 to 4.4.1.3) reminded us, we will have to contend with a limited opportunity at present. This, however, does not mean that the opportunity could not be extended to include increasing numbers of South African students in future.
The Australian curriculum provides an example of promoting the learning of additional languages by involving all relevant role players and including discussions on the issues of which languages to teach and why, language ownership, and whether to limit or sustain the diversity of languages to be taught in schools (discussed as one of the landscape affordances of Principle of redress in 4.4.1.1). This process is not to be conducted at policy making level only, but also in schools and communities. As modelled by the Australians the issues

surrounding the introduction of a language are important, not only for the introduction of Mandarin Chinese into South African schools at present, but should also be revisited periodically as educational environments change and language teaching approaches develop.

5.4.1.3 The need to iron out policy-practice gaps and allow for learner diversity

Although the guidelines for instructional time for Mandarin Chinese as second additional language compare favourably with the Australian guidelines, no time is allocated in practice for the study of Mandarin in the Intermediate and Senior Phases (see Tables 4.3 and 4.5). Interestingly, practice shows that South African schools do find time to offer second additional languages in the Senior Phase (grade 7 to 9).

This is not the only policy-practice gap in the current curriculum: as identified in the landscape affordances of Policy-practice gap in South Africa (section 4.4.1.4) there is an issue of continuity across phases. With new cohorts of students formed in grade 8 when South African students enter high school, it is very difficult to ensure continuity of Mandarin Chinese study from primary school to high school.

The policy-practice gap ties in with the issue of learner diversity as discussed in section 4.4.1.4. There is only one Mandarin Chinese curriculum in South Africa. It allows for entrance in grade 4 and continues all the way to grade 12. In comparison with the single Mandarin Chinese curriculum in South African, Australia offers five options: three different pathways with two different entry levels for two of these (see Table 4.10). Considering the time and money invested in the study of Chinese in Australian schools, it is true that one should not expect too much of the first attempt at a Mandarin Chinese curriculum in South Africa. As South Africans we will however have to manage the complexity of a mix of first language learners, learners from a Chinese background, as well as second language learners in one class.

Based on the interrelated issues of instructional time and continuity across phases, I should like to propose the following solution which addresses all of these factors:

Allowing a grade 8 entry level. This will necessitate the development of a second curriculum for this proposed grade 8 to 12 sequence (including a Senior Phase and a FET Phase curriculum document). In doing so the problem of continuity across phases is addressed as students are given an option to start studying Mandarin Chinese in grade 8. The difficulty of the lack of instructional time in the Intermediate Phase is mediated as, again, the study of Mandarin Chinese can be started in grade 8 where schools seem to find the time.

Lastly, first language learners and learners from a Chinese background will be able to join the current grade 4 to 12 programme in grade 8 when second language learners who started the programme in grade 4 have been given a head start. It is for this reason and also because I feel strongly that the earlier one can start with the challenging task of learning Chinese the better, that I support the longer grade 4 to 12 sequence set out in the CAPS Mandarin SAL in addition to my suggested shorter grade 8 to 12 sequence.

In summary: second language learners will have two options: either to follow a grade 4 to 12 programme or a grade 8 to 12 programme; first language and learners from a Chinese background will have only one option: to join the grade 4 to 12 programme at some stage after grade 7. To position these two proposed curricula within the current structure of Home, First Additional and Second Additional Language, the grade 4 to 12 sequence could be labelled First Additional Language and the 8 to 12 sequence Second Additional Language.

5.4.2 Recommendations for curriculum development

This sections presents some recommendations for curriculum development based on the findings of the study.

5.4.2.1 The need to adjust the expected proficiency
The affordance of General aim and expected proficiency level (section 4.4.2.2) identified the need to adjust the expected proficiency of the different language skills as directed by the CAPS Mandarin SAL. This sections presents some recommendations in terms of vocabulary as well as listening, speaking, reading and writing proficiency.

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5.4.2.1.i Expected proficiency in terms of vocabulary

The research report now turns to section 3.3.4 of the CAPS Mandarin SAL not analysed yet. It specifies the vocabulary to be achieved in terms of total amount of read characters, read pinyin words and spoken words. Table 5.1 summarises suggested changes.

Table 5.1: Cumulative amount of vocabulary to be achieved by second additional language learners as specified by the CAPS Mandarin SAL with suggested changes in bold and underlined

	INTERMEDIATE PHASE		
	Gr 4	Gr 5	Gr 6
Written characters	**30**	**60**	**90**
Read characters	40-50 **50**	80-90 **90**	120-130 **130**
Spoken words	50-60 **60-100**	90-100 **120-180**	130-150 **180-260**

Source: Mandarin Second Additional Language (2014a:34-35) and author's suggested additions

a) Written and read characters

Figure 5.1 shows that written vocabulary is a limited subset of both the listening-speaking and reading vocabulary. The reason is that one proceeds from passive reading to active writing skills in a learner centred, text-based approach: there is no reason to make the students write everything they can read, neither need we withhold reading texts from students just in order to wait for their writing capacity to catch up (Ning, 2011:50).
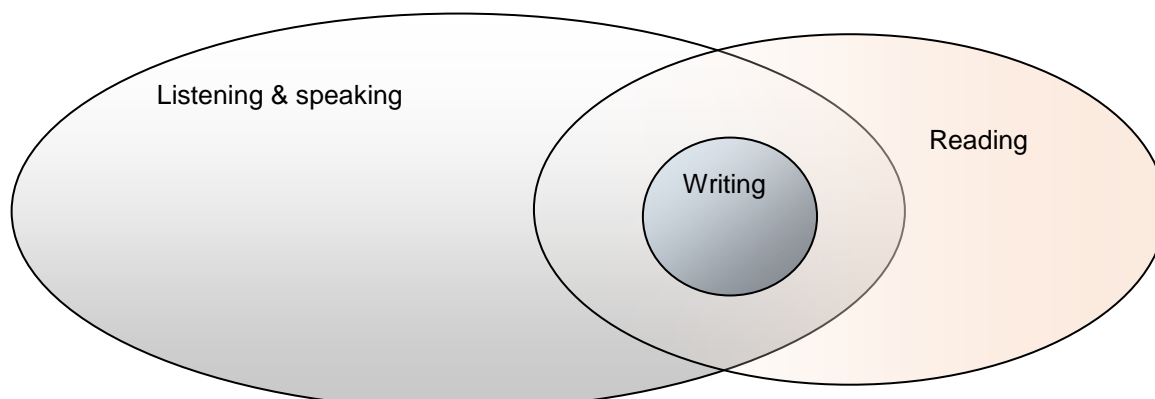
Figure 5.1: Relationship between Listening & speaking, Reading and Writing vocabulary (Ning, 2011:51)

The Content and Teaching Plans for the writing of characters show that 1-2 characters are studied per two-week cycle of which there are 18 per year: this gives a conservative estimate of 20-30 characters per year per grade, increasing the total amount with 30 characters per year as presented in Table 5.1.

Based on Figure 5.1, I further suggest that vocabulary to be mastered in terms of number of read characters should include those for written characters with the written characters being the more conservative number. The cumulative amounts as presented in Table 5.1 therefore show a mastering of 30 written characters per year and a few more read characters. One could perhaps ask for the inclusion of a list of the specific characters the students need to recognise and another list of the specific characters the students need to write for each year. One could argue that these go beyond the scope of a curriculum, but considering the detailed nature of the CAPS Mandarin SAL, the inclusion of such tables could fit in with the CAPS approach.

b) Spoken words

In my opinion, the specification for the number of vocabulary items to be mastered in terms of number of spoken words presented in section 3.3.4 of the CAPS is understated. A curriculum with a communicative approach should see exponential growth in spoken vocabulary during the beginning stages. Figure 5.1 clearly shows that of all the vocabulary, the listening-speaking vocabulary should be extensive, maybe double that of the reading vocabulary (Ning, 2011:50-51).

My suggestion for a speaking vocabulary therefore is that it should be about double that of the reading vocabulary as presented in Table 5.1.

c) Written and read Pinyin words

Section 3.3.4 of the CAPS Mandarin SAL also includes recommendations for written and read Pinyin words. Based on the philosophy of transfer, I should like to argue that students should be able to write the total of their spoken vocabulary in Pinyin, given that one does not expect one hundred percent accuracy in Pinyin spelling right from the beginning. Unfortunately the CAPS Mandarin SAL does not specify any specific Pinyin-character policy, but taking the approach of the Australian curriculum that prescribes using Pinyin as tool to

support learning to speak and mastery of characters as the real focus of writing, I do not see any need to specify the expected proficiency in terms of the number of written and read pinyin words.

5.4.2.1.ii Expected proficiency in terms of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Sections 3.3.2 and 3.3.3 of the CAPS Mandarin SAL are summarised in Table 4.6. The discussion in section 4.3.3.1.i identified some inconsistencies which were further explored in the discussion on the CAPS Content and Teaching Plans (section 4.4.2.2.i). Table 5.2 follows on from these discussions by presenting suggestions in terms of possible changes regarding expected proficiency in terms of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Table 5.2: Length of texts for second additional language as specified by the CAPS Mandarin SAL with suggested changes in bold and underlined

	INTERMEDIATE PHASE			SENIOR PHASE			FET PHASE		
	Gr 4	Gr 5	Gr 6	Gr 7	Gr 8	Gr 9	Gr 10	Gr 11	G 12
Listening: minutes	5 **3-4 sentences**	5 **5-6 sentences**	5 **7-10 sentences**	0.5	0.75	1	1	1.5	2
Speaking: minutes (storytelling/relating events)	3 **2-3 sentences**	3 **4-5 sentences**	3 **6-8 sentences**	2	2	2	3	3	3
Reading: characters in text	100-150 in pinyin **none**	150-200 in pinyin **none**	200-250 in pinyin **none**	60-90	90-120	120-150	100-133	133-166	166-200
Writing: characters (paragraph or essay)	20-30 in pinyin **none**	30-50 In pinyin **None**	40-60 In pinyin **none**	40	50	60	200-250 **80-100**	250-300 **100-120**	300-400 **120-150**

Source: Mandarin Second Additional Language (2014a:33-34; 2014b:18,20,26,29; 2014c:29-30,36,43)

a) Listening and speaking

With the vocabulary to be achieved in terms of number of spoken words already specified in the CAPS (discussion in the previous section), a better way to further describe listening and

speaking proficiency at Intermediate Phase level may be in terms of number of sentences. Speaking, again, should be a slightly smaller subset of listening proficiency as portrayed in Figure 5.1. A subsequent conservative suggestion for listening would be 3-4 sentences in grade 4, 5-6 sentences in grade 5 and 7-10 sentences in grade 6; and for speaking 2-3 sentences in grade 4, 4-5 sentences in grade 5 and 6-8 sentences in grade 6.

b) Reading and writing

Students would find it difficult to read a comprehension text of 100-150 words in Pinyin in grade 4 even with the increased speaking vocabulary aim of 60-100 words (as proposed in section 5.4.2.1.i). The same would apply to reading 150-200 words in grade 5 or 200-250 in grade 6. I however propose there to be no specifications for proficiency in this area as it should not be the focus of beginner level Chinese study. In this regard the specification for amount of written and read characters to be mastered (Table 5.1) is all that is needed.

And finally, commenting on inconsistencies in the FET Phase as identified in section 4.3.3.1.i Table 4.6: conservative changes for expectations relating to the writing of a paragraph or essay in the FET Phase could be 80-100 characters for grade 10, 100-120 characters for grade 11 and 120-150 characters for grade 12, which would correspond with other final examinations as presented in Table 4.7.

With regard to the shift from Pinyin to characters in terms of reading and writing in grade 7, as presented in Table 5.2, I should like to reason as follows. Assuming that one enters grade 7 able to write 90 characters and read about 130 (see Table 5.1), one could be able to learn to write 50 more characters during the course of the year (studying three characters per two-week cycle), bringing the total amount one can write to 140 characters, and read to 200 characters by the end of grade 7. Is it then acceptable to expect students to write a paragraph of 40 characters and read a paragraph of 60-90 characters? It could be possible, bringing the proficiency aims of the Intermediate and Senior Phase in line with each other.

The recommendations in terms of expected proficiency as presented in this section is quite comprehensive and do point to the need for some adjustments to the CAPS Mandarin SAL.

5.4.2.2 The need to focus on listening and speaking in the Intermediate Phase

Both the CAPS Mandarin SAL and the Australian Chinese Curriculum state that the focus is on listening and speaking as discussed in the directed content analysis language affordances of General aim and expected proficiency level (section 4.4.2.2). As also identified there, the focus in the CAPS on basic interpersonal communication skills is stated as being central to the whole Second Additional Language curriculum; while the Australian curriculum focuses on interpersonal communication specifically as priority for the grade 3 to 4 band, which fits into the wider Second Language Learner Pathway Foundation to Year 10 Sequence.

In reality, the CAPS Mandarin SAL does not prioritise the development of listening and speaking in the Intermediate Phase where the study of Chinese commences. Even if teachers want to, the high level of proficiency expected in the other skills right from the onset of study (as discussed in section 4.4.2.2) makes it impossible. It is here that we need to remember what the literature survey revealed: literature is united in suggesting that speaking and listening skills should be established in the study of Mandarin Chinese before working on reading and writing; and learning of speech should not be held back by the speed at which the written system is mastered (section 2.2.3).

It is not that the study of Mandarin as a second additional language should not work towards high levels of competence for reading and writing; the question is when. So, with the example of the Australian curriculum in which writing expectations at the beginner level are limited, reading is almost non-existent, and grammar teaching is exploratory as revealed in section 4.4.2.2.ii, I would like to propose that the CAPS Mandarin SAL should focus on listening and speaking in the initial stages of Chinese language study in grades 4-6 and should tone down expectations for reading and writing as well as grammar.

5.4.2.3 The need to adjust the text-based approach in the Intermediate Phase

Conventional content analysis identified that both the CAPS Mandarin SAL and the Australian Chinese Curriculum follow text-based approaches (identified in theme Language teaching approaches of section 4.3.2.2).

In the discussion on the language affordances of General aim and expected proficiency level (section 4.4.2.2), I made an initial, quite critical comment on the text-based approach as it is

employed in teaching listening and speaking in the CAPS Mandarin SAL. I concluded that it forces teachers to expect quite advanced levels of competence for listening and speaking in the initial stages of language learning. After analysing the Australian curriculum I had to reconsider as they seem to manage to use a text-based approach and still pitch the teaching of listening and speaking appropriately. This was an exciting discovery! The text-based approach in the CAPS Mandarin SAL is so central to the structure of the document that one would never be able to change it, but one may be able to adapt it.

The question now is: how does the Australian curriculum apply the text-based approach differently? Although both include authentic texts, the Australian curriculum clearly emphasises structured and scaffolded situations created and modelled by teachers as primary source of learning to speak and write, with authentic texts being used to supplement these. This is clear from this extract: "teacher modelling of correct language use is the main source of oral and written language acquisition" (Australian Curriculum Languages Chinese, 2013: Second Language Learner Pathway, Foundation to Year 10 Sequence, Year 3 to 4 band, Band description). Only in the next phase, year 5-6, does the speaking expectation for instance extend to include the following: "Learners ask and answer questions, describe people and objects and recount events", as they now, although still "with teacher support, begin to initiate use of Chinese to communicate their own ideas" (Australian Curriculum Languages Chinese, 2013: Second Language Learner Pathway, Foundation to Year 10 Sequence, Year 5 to 6 band, Band description).

There also is a difference in the type of authentic texts used by the two curricula. The oral texts prescribed for use by the CAPS Mandarin SAL include realistic fiction/traditional stories/personal accounts/adventures/real life stories; whereas oral texts prescribed for use by the Australian Chinese Curriculum in addition to structured and scaffolded situations modelled by the teacher, include short audio-visual texts/plays/legends/rhymes/songs/dance. The latter, in addition to being oral, are also visual and kinaesthetic, providing further scaffolding for the learning of speaking. The CAPS indicates that teaching of listening and speaking should be scaffolded, but gives no real guidance and does not show it in their choice of texts as the Australians do.

Learning from the Australian curriculum, a positive adaption of the CAPS text-based approach would be to emphasise teacher-modelled speech as primary source of learning to speak specifically in the initial phase of learning Chinese (Intermediate Phase CAPS), with authentic texts of an oral, visual and kinaesthetic nature being used to supplement these.

5.4.2.4 The need to present and implement a clear Pinyin-character policy

I furthermore am of the opinion that the lack of a clear Pinyin-character policy with regard to reading is a significant gap in the current CAPS Mandarin SAL. As found in section 4.4.2.2.i, the CAPS Mandarin SAL does an excellent job of systematically teaching Pinyin and character writing, but this is totally lacking in the area of reading. In the interview with Professor Ding, one of the Chinese curriculum writers, the array of ideas on the place and progression of the teaching of characters and Pinyin again came to the foreground (Ding, 2016) (also discussed in section 2.2.3 of the literature survey). The Australian curriculum, for example, has a clear strategy for what to focus on at what stage in order to reach the desired level of proficiency for the reading of authentic Chinese texts in characters (section 4.4.2.2.ii).

I would further suggest that the clarity and purpose of the curriculum for both writing and reading could be greatly enhanced by incorporating general explanations on the philosophy behind and strategy for the teaching of reading and writing in both Pinyin and characters. The suggestion is to incorporate this for each phase, showing progression towards increased authenticity in terms of reading and writing in characters. Again we are reminded that Mandarin Chinese is a new language in South African schools, with inexperienced teachers a very possible reality.

5.4.2.5 The need to incorporate cultural aspects

There currently is a worldwide recognition for language study to also include the study of cultural aspects related to the language being studied. As Christensen (2011:20-21) explains, teaching culture in the language classroom incorporates more than achievement culture and information culture, it extends to also include behavioural culture. Behavioural culture

includes perception of how people perceive the world and practices based on these perceptions to get things done.

As revealed by the analysis (section 4.3.3.2), the Australian Chinese Curriculum not only describes the relationship between language, culture and learning - key concepts that inform language education in Australia –, but also proceeds to incorporate it into the Australian Scope and Sequence as two sub strands: Reflecting and Role of language and culture. These two sub strands have been explored in detail in the language-specific affordances of Culture (section 4.4.2.3).

Considering the current worldwide recognition for the inclusion of cultural aspects in the study of languages, it is of concern to find that there is no reference to culture and teaching of cultural aspects in the CAPS Mandarin SAL. I therefore strongly suggest the incorporation of the teaching of cultural aspects related to the study of Mandarin Chinese.

Based on the findings of the study, this section has recommended some crucial changes to the CAPS Mandarin SAL, with regard to both policy making and curriculum development.

5.5   Future research

With this study having conducted content analysis of the new Mandarin Chinese curriculum for South African schools, the next step would be to do a programme evaluation where the curriculum is implemented in a school. Such an empirical study would naturally extend the analysis and conclusions presented in this conceptual study. Considering the strong need identified by this research to make some important changes to the South African Mandarin Chinese curriculum in order to improve this 'policy' effectiveness in 'practice', I would however reason that that energy spent on a programme evaluation would be more effective if these conceptual problems in the curriculum document are addressed first.

5.6   Limitations of the study

The time allocated for the current study did not allow me to do formal interviews with experts in the field, which, for the current study, would ideally have included knowledgeable people not only from South Africa, but also Australia and China. Informal conversations were possible, however, and were used to strengthen the trustworthiness of the study where contact with such experts could be made (see section 3.5.2.4 on Peer debriefing).

My personal experience as a Chinese teacher is limited in terms of having only taught beginner level students. Although I have facilitated a Chinese programme for beginners through to advanced students at Xining International Academy in China, I have not personally taught students all the way through intermediate to advanced level. Questions regarding the process of Chinese language study are exactly what triggered my curiosity, however, and led me to do this research.

5.7   Personal retrospection

Having lived in China from 2000-2012, and not really keeping up with developments in South African education during that time, I really enjoyed doing the part of the literature survey for which I researched the history of the curriculum in South African since 1994. I enjoyed the literature survey and found it very insightful on the whole.

When I wrote the research proposal in 2015, I had to provide a brief description of the research methodology to be employed. I found myself at a complete loss. During that year I enrolled for the Educational Research 769 module, which really helped me when I had to write the chapter on research methodology in 2016.

The most challenging part of the research for me was the analysis and comparison of the two curricula. In starting out, I could not get a clear idea of where I was heading, and how I was to implement the content analysis method. Some parts like the analysis of the structure of the curricula took much more time than I expected, and I was thankful for the guidance I

had initially received on limiting the scope of my research. With directed content analysis, I found the narrowing down of the language and landscape affordances challenging. I had to create longer uninterrupted work sessions in order to maintain my trail of thought and concentrate as I was cross-referencing with the literature survey and findings from the conventional content analysis.

In the end I am very happy with the result and I can see how the process has increased my insight into the field of study. I would not have imagined coming to the recommendations I am making, but it just shows how revealing research can be. I have also come to know myself better. I did not start out as a Chinese language curriculum expert, nor am I a South African Department of Education curriculum expert. My field of expertise and personal life experience have given me insight into both of these fields, which have equipped me uniquely for this particular research project.

Chinese is not an easy language to learn. Considering all the possible foreign languages a South African child could choose to learn, it is however a very strategic one; a language that would not only give South Africans as individuals but also South Africa as a country the necessary edge to advance in the 21st Century. As educators our responsibility is to maximise the effort learners invest in the learning of Mandarin Chinese. My hope is that this study will assist in this process.

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