

**AN INVESTIGATION OF THE TEACHING OF READING IN ISIXHOSA IN  
THREE GRADE 1 CLASSROOMS IN THE EASTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA**

**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of**

**DOCTOR OF EDUCATION**

**(Language Education)**

**RHODES UNIVERSITY**

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**DECLARATION**

I, **NOLUTHANDO MAGADLA**, sincerely declare that the thesis hereby submitted by me for the Doctoral Degree at Rhodes University is the result of my independent work through the professional guidance of the recognized supervisor **PROFESSOR EMMANUEL MFANAFUTHI MGQWASHU**, except the information from other sources where references are acknowledged and indicated. I have not submitted this dissertation at any other institution before.

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## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to my late father Wellington Kholisile Magadla who wanted me to be what I am today, my mother Virginia Ntombekhaya (Noweaving) Magadla, to my daughters Lulamela, Lusanda, Ziphindile, my son Siseko and my son -in -law Ayanda. You have been such an inspiration throughout this research. Lastly, to my grand-children Lelethu, Unabantu, Mihlali, Imitha, Lelam and Ziviwe who missed me when I was engaged in this study.

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**ACRONYMS USED IN THIS STUDY**

ANNA	: Annual National Assessment
AS	: Assessment Standards
BICS	: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills
CALP	: Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
CAPS	: Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
DBE	:

UNESCO : United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural  
Organization

UWC : University of Western Cape

WSU : Walter Sisulu University

ZPD : Zone of Proximal Development

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**ABSTRACT**

Drawing from the Hallidayan theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics, this study examined the role that focusing on learning language; learning through language; and learning about language in the process of teaching reading plays in literacy development in isiXhosa at 3 Grade 1 classrooms. The research sites were 3 primary schools: the rural school, the Black Township school in an urban area and the school that was the former Model C School in a sub-urban area. All the schools were in Mount Frere District, the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. As study participants, three Grade 1 teachers across the 3 schools were selected. Located within the qualitative research approach, the study used classroom observation, documentary evidence and semi-structured interviews as research instruments. Research findings reveal that the literacy development of learners in a rural context seemed more advanced than that of learners at the former Model C School. Part of the reason seems to be the fact that their homes and communities are surrounded by isiXhosa more readily than the former Model C and Black Township schools. Though reading was conducted in isiXhosa in the former Model C School as well, it was done by a teacher who did not speak isiXhosa as the First Language and with learners whose home environments are surrounded by English. Learners in a Black Township, owing to an environment increasingly surrounded by the English language, their reading in isiXhosa was not as impressive as learners in a rural school.

culture

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND FOR THE STUDY**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

This study was part of the Cape Consortium Research Project, a component of the larger project known as the European Union Foundation Phase Project. The Cape Consortium Research Project was made up of a collection of four universities: Rhodes University (RU), Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU), Walter Sisulu University (WSU) and the University of the Western Cape (UWC). The main goal of the Consortium within the Eastern Cape province was to develop isiXhosa as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in the Foundation Phase (FP). The study reported in this PhD thesis used Systemic Functional Linguistics as the theoretical lense and analytical framework to understand and interpret how teachers in the FP at the 3 schools: 1 in a rural area, 1 in a Black Township, and 1 from a former Model C school (historically for white-only leaners) in the Eastern Cape Province teach reading in isiXhosa.

Research on the development of the LoLT in the FP within the South African democratic dispensation period beginning from 1994, includes a range of attempts by the new government to improve literacy levels in the country. Various literacy and reading campaigns have been part of such attempts, including upgrading schools that were under-resourced during the apartheid government (1948 to 1994). Such campaigns included the provision of in-service teacher training in the form of a series of workshops. Despite all these initiatives, reports still indicate low literacy rates among FP learners in South Africa.

T *Education for All Assessment* (2000) based on records from the 1999 *South African Monitoring Learning Achievement* (MLA) in literacy, mathematics and life skills, for example, found that the average score of Grade 4 children was below 50% (Chisholm, 2004). Meanwhile, results from the *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study* (TIMSS) in 1995 and in 1998 showed that South African children performed more poorly than any other participating country. In the TIMSS of 2003 South Africa scored lowest of all countries in primary school mathematics, and in the bottom quintile for literacy (Department of Education [DoE], 2008a). This means our children are struggling with reading, writing, and counting.

The *Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality* II and III (SACMEQ) studies focused on Grade 6 reading and mathematics. The report showed that most South African children, mainly in Eastern Cape Province, dropped between levels 2 (emergent skills) and 3 (basic skills) in both reading and mathematics (SACMEQ, 2010). Furthermore, the *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study* (PIRLS), an international study that compared the performance of South African Grade 4 and 5 children in reading literacy, revealed in 2006 that 78% of Grade 5 children in South Africa had not achieved the 24 basic reading skills required for learning. PIRLS positioned the literacy levels of South African Grade 4 and 5 children as the lowest of the 40 participating countries, which indicates that the national average reading proficiency in South Africa is far lower than the international standard (Chisholm 2004; Howie, Venter, van Staden, Zimmerman, Long, Scherman & Archer, 2007). The *National Systemic Evaluation* conducted in Grade 3 in 2001, as well as in 2007, and in Grade 6 in 2005, revealed that the overall average performance in both literacy and mathematics was still low, at 36% and 35%, respectively.

In addition, the Department of Basic Education [DBE] reported that the 2011 *Annual National Assessment* (ANA) results had declined since testing began in 2008. In that year, 36% of Grade 3s scored under 35% in literacy, while in 2011 the figure increased to 45%. A comparison between the 2008 Grade 3 results and the 2011 Grade 6 results also suggests deterioration in student performance. For example, while 36% of 2008 Grade 3s scored less than 35% in literacy, in 2011, 57% of the Grade 6s scored under 35% (DBE, 2010, 2011 & 2012). Learners who performed well were those who were assessed in English, even though it was not their home language (Pretorius & Mokhwesana, 2009). On the other hand, Spaul (2016) further declares that the results of the pre-PIRLS assessment of 2011 show that 58% of the Grade 4 learners who were assessed could not read for meaning in any language, and that 29% of Grade 4 learners were illiterate. Spaul (2013) further states that these figures vary drastically among provinces, with only 11% of learners in the Western Cape being considered illiterate, compared to 50% in Limpopo. In the North West province, 29% of learners were illiterate, and 66% of them performed at a level that indicated that they could not read for meaning in any context (Spaul, 2013). Those learners tested in African languages performed worse in all of these assessments.

the foundation years where we fail to provide children with the basis of scientific literacy and

Furthermore, Taylor, Fleisch and Shindler

(2008, p. 43) argue

ineffective in teaching reading, they are not teaching their learners to read in either their

unfavorable policies and practices of apartheid education gave rise to an extremely dysfunctional education system, symbolised by a number of negative features, such as: poor

teaching; a reliance on rote teaching and learning; low competency levels in the medium of tuition; poor school management; low levels of professionalism, and few resources.

It is against this background that this study drew from the Hallidayan theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics to examine the role that focusing on learning language; learning through language; and learning about language in the process of teaching reading plays in literacy development in isiXhosa at 3 Grade 1 classrooms. As will be explored in later chapters, Halliday (1972) identified these three components as crucial in the Language Art Curriculum. As Mqgwashu (2011, p. 161) argues,

In the same

vein, research in several fields, including cognitive psychology, medicine, linguistics and education, has deepened our knowledge of how students learn to read, and the negative role learning in an additional plays in instances where some learners encounter difficulties (Allington, 2005, p. 29; Au, 2003, p. 30; Burns, Griffin & Snow, 1999, p. 38; Cunningham, 2005, p. 52; Graves, Juel & Dykstra, 2007, p. 12; Gray & McCutchen, 2006, p. 35; Johnson, 2001, p. 16; Kuhn & Stahl, 2003, pp. 3-19; McDonald, 2007, p. 50; Strickland & Morrow, 2006, p. 18; Xu, 2003, p. 27). In these studies, for example, a dominant theme is that teaching secluded skills, such as letter names and specific sound-letter relations (based on the belief that these will amount to the deeper ability of reading), is no longer considered a serious educational suggestion.

However, Block and Johnson (2002, p. 76) contend,

therefore responsible for the effectiveness of the method that is used. This also means that

the relative accomplishment or malfunction of any teaching method depends on the teacher applying it, how they implement it, and how it supports the learners to ascertain the meaning of what they read. This insight is telling, given the reports about the poor performance of South African learners referred to above, especially in cases where the tests were conducted in isiXhosa. Brock Utne (2002), for instance, observed in terms of the Western Cape schools that isiXhosa-speaking children learn better when instructed in their home language. Other studies, furthermore (Murray, 2007; Heugh, Benson, Bogale & Yohannes, 2007; Dutcher, LoLT at the primary level gives rise to better academic performance than for learners who start school using a Second Language.

home language should be encouraged, but also because research into mother tongue education has proven that it has a lot of benefits for the learning additional languages. Mpanza (2015) further states that a home language should be understood as the primary language of a learner: the language they use at home and for everyday communication needs. A home language, therefore, is the language that a learner first acquires, which in the case of the majority of learners in mainly black schools, is one of the nine indigenous African languages that have been Constitutionally recognized and promoted as the official languages of South Africa since 1996 (Mpanza, 2015; Thomson & Stakhnevich, 2010). At issue for this present study, then, is the question of why in spite of the use of isiXhosa in Grade 1 at the research sites performance remains low. The study thus uses Systemic Functional Linguistics as the theoretical lens and analytical framework to understand ways in which teachers in the FP teach isiXhosa reading.

## 1.1 Situating the study

### 1.1.1 The literacy landscape in South Africa

As revealed above, South Africa is regarded as one of the lowest performing of the 40 countries that were assessed in the previous years in the foundation and intermediate phases. This kind of performance, particularly in reading assessments, became a disquieting matter in South African educational circles. Pang, Muaka, Bernhardt and Kamil (2003) suggest that it is invaluable to learn to read, as it is a primary educational focus that all children need to be well-read. Thus, there is a need for foundation phase teachers to conform to the 1997 *Language in Education Policy* (LiEP), which demands that children are taught in the language that they will understand. Furthermore, teachers as disseminators of knowledge are expected to be more knowledgeable, and well equipped with effective teaching skills.

The 2006 *Progress in International Literacy Study* (PIRLS) revealed that South Africa achieved the lowest score among the 40 countries that were assessed (Howie, et al., 2007). Furthermore, isiXhosa learners were viewed as the worst performers in the Annual National Assessment results that were published in 2011 (DBE, 2010, 2011, 2012). This points to the fact that students who have English and Afrikaans as their first languages have been experiencing and enjoying epistemological access since primary education (Mgqwashu, 2011): that is why they performed better than any other language speakers in these tests. Morrow (2007) claims that within the context of formal education anywhere in the world, teaching and learning mediated through the mother tongue of those receiving tuition is the precondition for access to epistemological and skills that the curriculum and syllabus are designed to impart. Mgqwashu (2011), furthermore, states that the absence of this attitude

and syllabus developers, and classroom and lecture hall instructors, naturally results in high failure, drop out and exclusion rates, and slow academic progress for the majority of students.

### **1.1.2 Situating the study in the Eastern Cape**

The study was based in schools within the Muthusamy District of the Eastern Cape Province. The Eastern Cape is a largely rural province packed with remote schools, and it is among the poorest provinces in South Africa: the unemployment rate is one of the highest in the country, infrastructure (including school buildings) is underdeveloped, and household poverty is high. The influence of these rural elements will be one of the areas of investigation of my study. Rural education lags behind educational development in other more urbanised parts of the country. This is despite the fact that the huge majority of schooling children in South Africa live in rural areas. The poverty of education in rural areas is centrally associated to insufficient employment, infrastructure, nutrition and health, rest, exercise and entertainment for the rural poor and other vulnerable groups in rural areas. However, what is most pertinent to the present study is that isiXhosa is the language of learning and teaching in foundation phase classrooms in the area, making it an ideal site to investigate why teachers struggle to employ mother tongue instruction and develop poor reading performances.

### **1.2 Teacher training offered in Eastern Cape**

The Eastern Cape always lags behind in terms of both ANA and Grade 12 academic results. Some studies indicate that Eastern Cape teachers, particularly those in rural schools, are disadvantaged by the South African education system. Wright (2012), for instance, reveals that some Eastern Cape teachers lack sufficient training in the teaching of literacy. This is despite the fact that the majority of teachers attend regular workshops facilitated by the DoE. These workshops are meant to support teachers by giving them guidelines and methods on teaching literacy. Wright (2012) argues that instead of receiving such skills, teachers receive

insufficient training around teaching in isiXhosa at scheduled workshops. In-service training, which includes these workshops and other courses, both short (a few hours) and long (more than a year) in duration, is regarded as professional development, and is offered whenever there are changes in the curriculum. However, the provincial facilitators conducting these workshops and training courses are often not well versed in the material, and are uncertain about their facilitation (Wright, 2012).

Part of the problem, furthermore, is that the workshops are usually conducted in one week, and the teachers are expected to put into practice the year-long information that has been offered to them in one week. This alone implies that teachers might not produce quality-teaching practices to assist and develop learners to be competent readers. Furthermore, Bloch (2000) also witnesses that in Western Cape schools where she conducted her research, language teachers (including isiXhosa teachers) agreed that they were not trained to teach in their mother tongue

childhood literacy specialists" (Bloch, 2000, p. 8). The fact that some South African teachers are poorly trained is distressing. In light of the above statement, it is impossible to execute the expected tasks if people are not well equipped to perform better in their workplaces. In the DG Murray Trust (with Jackie Dornbrack) publication, *A Short Guide to Incorporating Reading for Pleasure in the Classroom* (2015), it is avowed that when children are not able to read, or read well, they cannot grasp what is being presented to them. In fact, if they cannot understand what is being communicated to them, they cannot internalise this information: in other words, they cannot learn effectively.

Most studies have thus shown that despite interventions like teacher training (such as the workshops conducted by the DoE to enhance teaching inability to read still exists. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore and understand the teaching of reading in isiXhosa practices employed by teachers in the Eastern Cape, with an intention to identify why learners persist to underperform.

### **1.3 Professional development**

Training for curriculum implementation might be seen as a type of professional development. Singh (2011) states that the professional development of South African teachers has been irregular. Lessing and de Witt (2007), moreover, emphasise the inconsistencies of curriculum policies. In view of the fact that professional development is necessary when the curriculum changes, Luneta (2012) has identified five characteristics of effective professional development, which are as follows:

- ❖ Alignment with the goals of the Department of Education and the Curriculum Assessment;
- ❖ development needs;
- ❖ Focus on knowledge bases and the effective instructional approaches appropriate for high learning outcomes;
- ❖ Inclusion of learning opportunities for acquiring new instructional strategies;
- ❖ Provision of opportunities for reflection and collaboration among teachers; and,
- ❖ Inclusion of built-in follow up and continuous feedback.

Additionally, Luneta (2012) emphasises that even if professional development takes the form of workshops or communities of practice (CoP), there remain some factors that will determine its success or failure. For instance, it must be pertinent to the teachers' situations and constructed in such a way that they can gain from the experience. Furthermore, it is argued that effective training needs to be continuous, so that any knowledge gained can be attempted in the classrooms and then taken back to the training to be developed further. Therefore, continuous professional development is imperative to all teachers regardless of the phase or grade they are teaching in, as it is necessary to ensure effective implementation of the curriculum.

#### **1.4 Foundation phase literacy curriculum**

The South African curriculum expects that at the end of each grade, children must be able to read according to their grade level (DoE, 2002). In 2004, the South African Department of Education (DoE) recognised reading literacy as one of the most pressing concerns in education. Therefore, in the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) more emphasis was placed on reading skills. However, as stated by the DoE (2003a), in the foundation phase, the reading outcome is bundled together with other expected language outcomes associated with overall language competency.

The expected outcome for the Language Learning Area in OBE, in terms of the reading curriculum, specified th

(DoE, 2002, p. 20). Forty percent of teaching time in the FP was therefore devoted to literacy. It was accepted that all learners needed to be taught strategies that would support them to read with understanding, and that would help them to unlock the code of written text, to

summarise and build their own understandings, to adapt what they learn and demonstrate what they learn from their reading in the learning process.

genuine purposes and giving attention to phonics (DoE, 2002, p. 23). At the level of Grades R

2002, pp. 32-33) required the following of the learner:

- ❖ Is able to use visual cues to make meaning (Grades R-3);
- ❖ Is able to role-play reading (Grades R-1);
- ❖ Is able to make meaning of written text (Grades R-3);
- ❖ Develops phonic awareness (Grades 1 and 2);
- ❖ Recognise letters and words and makes meaning of written text (Grade 1); and,
- ❖ Reads for information and enjoyment (Grades 1-3).

A CAP (2012) was designed to promote different methods of the teaching of reading, with the end goal of enabling learners to read fluently with comprehension (DBE, 2012). The

many teachers do not actually know what this means according to Pretorius, Jackson, McKay, Murray and Spaul (2016). In their study, they aimed at developing teachers to have a better understanding of what the reading process brings about and what it means to adopt a balanced approach to reading, and how to attain this successfully in daily classroom activities (Pretorius et al., 2016). These researchers also aver that if teachers can understand what reading entails, it can help to reduce misconceptions about reading that lead to ineffective

classroom practices (Pretorius et al., 2016). The CAPS rubric for the foundation phase is very precise concerning reading, and breaks up the requirements as follows:

- ❖ Shared Reading (including Shared Writing);
- ❖ Group Guided Reading;
- ❖ Paired / Independent Reading; and,
- ❖ Phonics, including Phonemic (P)-3wareness.

UnPr CAPS, muc38(c)4( )-29()-12(A)22(P)-3(S)

close the gap between schools. According to Pretorius et al. (2016), it is commonly noticed that teachers struggle with these approaches since, as a norm, teacher development institutions have not built these approaches into their curricula. The fact that the CAPS curriculum recalls related problems from previous curricula can create negative attitudes amongst teachers towards the current curriculum, since they feel they will once more experience the same feelings of disorientation.

The CAPS curriculum also puts emphasis on the importance of oral work in the learning of reading, proposing that oral work should be done at the beginning of the day (DBE, 2012). The CAPS document sets expectations that teachers should be unambiguous about the area of focus when they are preparing for reading instruction. It is endorsed that children should be given time to talk and retell stories to improve their language of communication, as well as to develop their vocabulary and phonemic awareness (DBE, 2012).

### **1. 5 Oracy**

Ong (1982) declares that, as cultural historians have delved more and more into prehistory, it has become clear that humans made verbalised records before written ones. In his book, he distinguishes between two types of orality: primary and secondary orality. He describes primary orality as the orality of persons who are unable to read and write, and secondary orality as that of present-day high exposure in the world of technology with the sustainability of telephones, radio, television and other means of writing (Ong, 1982). Tannen (1982) notes -communicative function as the elaboration of social relationships among communicators. In the past, there was no reading before it was developed. Cultures passed along their cultural traditions, including their history, identity and religion, through stories, proverbs, poems, songs and riddles (Read Education Trust

Programme, 2001). Through these stories, children improve the way they interact with others before their period of schooling, and are capable of telling stories through listening. In some instances, they tell stories through picture readings even before they go to school, and so by the time they are exposed to reading words, they read confidently.

According to Corson (1988), a number of educators believe that achievement in reading

is necessary in the beginning stages, as it improves the communication skills among children who are learning to read before they become proficient readers. Although oral education is held to be important for language and literacy development in early years, it needs to be counterbalanced with literacy practices and if that is neglected, since the child is expected to read fluently in the schooling environment, they will be left behind. Teaching reading at an early stage is essential for children learning to read.

indicator of educational potential, especially if there are other indicators that reinforce teacher , lack of parental interest in the school, or

that teachers can interact with children with the intention of selecting the appropriate approach to introduce a ne

(2003) assert that children develop their oral language through storytelling and show-and-tell activities, which then lead to an appropriate basis for learning to read.

Dugaw (2009), meanwhile, suggests that oral and writing discourses are inseparable in our daily lives. What is recorded in a form of writing is made verbally in the beginning. Literacy learned at home brings the child to school with the culture and social perspectives and knowledge skills first acquired at home. The child does not enter a school as a tabula rasa: she/he has an existing knowledge base that needs to be developed by a professional teacher to realise their full potential. Through child and teacher interaction, it becomes easy for the understand the way the teacher communicates. Reddy (2012), in the same vein, believes that early progress in reading depends on oral language development. Learning to read is a different process because it involves learning about a symbolic system (writing) used to represent speech. Before children begin to learn to associate the written form with speech, they need to learn the vocabulary, grammar and sound systems of oral language.

### **1.6 English and isiXhosa orthography**

Most of the existing literature surrounding literacy is based on English studies (Pang et al., 2003), and very little about isiXhosa: hence the reason for conducting this study. Although isiXhosa and English are qualitatively different, isiXhosa teachers are generally suspected to use English teaching practices to teach their isiXhosa learners. It is not quite known whether the pedagogies that support English reading practices are compatible with isiXhosa reading practices. Studies reveal that English and isiXhosa have meaningful dissimilarities. should therefore be advantageous for them to learn to read in their mother tongue, yet isiXhosa learners are still underperforming in this regard (Crystal, 2004).

The phonology of these languages is not the same. Piasta, S.B. & Wagner, R.K. (2010) stipulate that English has fifty sounds and twenty-six letters of alphabet. It has only two- and three-letter and functional units (tch, dg, ch, and sh), which are known as minimal units in English, whereas isiXhosa also holds four- to five-letter units (ntsh, ntshw, ngcw). Koch (2009) asserts that isiXhosa has a transparent orthography (regular) and English has an opaque orthography (irregular).

may not communicate the basic orthography of the isiXhosa language effectively and this inappropriate teaching of what is expected may result in the poor performance of learners. For a learner to read proficiently depends on their ability to decode phonic sounds: these are the basics of reading ability. The teaching of the correct spelling or the correct pronunciation of the language of learning and teaching may possibly improve the reading ability of learners.

orthography.

### **1. 7 Why the ‘reading’ aspect of literacy?**

During the instigation of this research project in 2011, certain focus areas were set for researchers to choose from. Among these themes, literacy was one of the main concerns identified. For the purposes of the study reported in this PhD thesis, I chose literacy, and specifically practices surrounding the teaching of isiXhosa reading. This decision was prompted by the underperformance of FP learners in rural areas. This trend does not end in FP classrooms: it also affects learners in all the next phases, from intermediate phase (IP) to

senior phase (SP) and up to tertiary level. The research question for the study reported in this PhD thesis was:

- ❖ What role does focusing on learning language; learning through language; and learning about language in the process of the teaching of reading play in literacy development in three Grade 1 classrooms?

How teachers approach the teaching of reading in isiXhosa using the Hallidayan (1972) suggestion ~~the~~ *the* Language Arts Curriculum should contain (learning language, learning through language and learning about language) in the process of teaching language was the focus of the study reported in this thesis. Christie (2004, p. 18) clearly defines these three Language Arts Curriculum components as follows:

- ❖ language: mastering the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing;
- ❖ Learning through language refers to the important activities of learning about of relationships as well as an awareness of ways to express experience; and
- ❖ Learning about language refers to taking language itself as an object of study: learning about (i) its grammatical systems, in terms of its meanings, vocabulary, phonology and writing systems; (ii) its status as an institution, as aspects of community and culture; and (iii) its varieties, in terms of register and dialect variations.

In the context of this study, the three components are understood in sequence, so that learning about language is seen as building upon the learning of language in the other two senses.

### **1.8 Outline of the study**

This thesis is comprised of seven chapters. The first chapter introduces the study by providing its contextual background. Chapter Two presents literature related to literacy development in South Africa. Chapter Three outlines the literature review pertinent to the theories of phenomenon under investigation, viz. the teaching of reading in isiXhosa in three Grade 1 classrooms where isiXhosa is the LoLT. The focus is on the practices employed by teachers to promote reading ability in novice learners. The findings revealed by several researchers in relation to this phenomenon, where and how their studies were conducted, are outlined in this chapter. Theoretical and conceptual lenses are explored in Chapter Four, where Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) theory and the RtL pedagogy framing this study are detailed.

The research methodology and designs employed by this study are presented in Chapter Five. The selection of sites where the research was conducted, the selection of research participants e also presented in Chapter Five. Data were gathered by means of interviews, semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and documentary evidence. The use of multiple methods was to ensure the validity and reliability of the collected data. Data analysis is presented in Chapter Six. The discussion of results, the interpretation of the analysed data and the summary of the major findings are also presented in Chapter Six. Finally, the summary of the whole study concerning the teaching of isiXhosa reading practices, limitations of the study, recommendations for future research and conclusion will be detailed in Chapter Seven.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERACY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICAN LEARNERS

#### 2.0 Introduction

Chapter 1 presented in detail the contextual issues and factors that gave rise to this study. It argued for the urgency for a study of this nature to be conducted, particularly given continued low literacy levels plugging the FP. Chapter 2 builds on Chapter 1, but the focus in this Chapter is on issues concerning literacy developments in South Africa. It begins with a discussion of *Language in Education Policy* (LiEP) and the principles that shaped its construction. Secondly, it explores the shifts in paradigms and practices that have shaped, over the years, studies on and approaches to literacy development. Thirdly, chapter concludes with a discussion on the relationship between the lack of literacy development at home and formal learning.

#### 2.1 The Language in Education Policy of 1997

country (DoE. *Language in Education Policy*, 1997). IsiXhosa was one of these previously marginalised languages, not recognised as a valid language of learning and teaching during the apartheid years. Kotze, Van der Westhuizen and Barnard (2017) emphasise that the injustice of apartheid, emphasising multilingualism and the rights of indigenous languages

(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996).

According to Kotze et al. (2017), this acknowledgement of the eleven official languages,   
  
ommodate the diverse needs of learners,   
  
including the need for education in their home language. These researchers further note that most teachers experience a lack of knowledge and skills regarding the diverse use of languages to be offered as the LoLT in the classroom in order to support these learners (see Chataika, McKenzie, Swart & Lyner-Cleophas, 2012; Engelbrecht, 2006; Engelbrecht, Swart & Eloff, 2001).

South Africa was regarded as a bilingual country with only English and Afrikaans as the officially acknowledged languages, while isiXhosa and other African languages were African languages still have extremely low status, particularly as languages in print. Naledi Pandor, in her speech in 2004, highlighted that the Department of Education should strive to ensure that the future history of indigenous languages, those spoken by most black people in South Africa and previously neglected and underdeveloped, move from the margins into the centre stage of education. The neglect of indigenous languages caused a lot of problems among the children of South Africa, in that some isiXhosa-speaking children (and their parents) decided to choose English as their language of learning, and now as a result they struggle to read isiXhosa texts fluently. Their poor spelling in their home language exacerbates this phenomenon.

The then-Minister of Education, on July 14, 1997, announced a new language in education policy for public schools in South Africa that was aimed at promoting multilingualism. Another purpose of this language policy was to elevate the status of the previously

marginalised African languages, including isiXhosa, to be equal with Afrikaans and English, recognising the value of mother tongue tuition in improving learning, the Department of Education (DoE) adopted a Language in Education Policy (LiEP) that encourages learners to be taught in their mother tongue for the first nine years of schooling.

As mentioned, Kotze et al. (2017) declare that, according to the Constitution of South Africa (1996), every child has the right to receive education in their home language or the language of their choice. However, these researchers further complain that many learners are often placed in schools where the language of learning and teaching is English and/or Afrikaans (i.e. necessary, but not sufficient requirement for transfiguring the attitudes of people and the status of languages in any society. The LiEP, in recognising the use of mother tongue as the LoLT, includes a number of aims:

- ❖ to promote full participation in society and the economy through equitable and meaningful access to education;
- ❖ to pursue the language policy most supportive of general conceptual growth amongst learners, and to establish additive multilingualism as an approach to language in education;
- ❖ to promote and develop all official languages;
- ❖ to support the teaching and learning of all other languages required by learners or used by communities in South Africa;
- ❖ to counter disadvantages resulting from different kinds of mismatches between home languages and languages of learning and teaching; and,
- ❖ to redress the problems of previously disadvantaged languages.

Fleisch (2008) observes that the majority of children enter school with proficiency in one or even several languages used in their homes and in their communities. And their home language, such as isiXhosa in the Eastern Cape, from there is merely taught as one school subject, although it is the main language spoken by 83,4% of people in the province (DoE, 2006). This is one of the contributing factors to the diminishing status of isiXhosa, especially in the reading component of subsequent schooling. Furthermore, Kotze et al. (2017) discussing the insights of Owen-Smith (2010) support the view that a learner who cannot access education in his/her home language is disadvantaged, and unlikely to be able to perform to the best of their ability and reach their full potential. It could well be that the low status of the language in higher grades may have an impact on the teaching practices of the language in early grades. Such hypotheses could be investigated in future research projects.

Fleisch (2008) also believes that when the children enter school they have high expectations of being taught in their mother tongue, and of extending this language knowledge into formal academic contexts, such as learning to read and write in their home language. While these children begin schooling with an adequate knowledge of the language of their home and community, the shift to a second language means that they never master the knowledge and skills required by the schooling system (Fleisch, 2008).

A 1999 UNICEF report, together with one compiled by UNESCO (1953), assert that there is enough research to indicate that students are quicker to read and to acquire other academic skills when first taught in their mother tongue. It is also believed that if students are initially taught in their mother tongue, it is easier for them to later learn and master a second language. Given this widespread conviction that learners should be taught in their mother

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to read and write is what triggered my research into the teaching of reading practices in the foundation phase.

It may be possible that teachers are still devaluing the importance of teaching reading in isiXhosa (as stipulated by the DoE), and that is why learners are not doing well in isiXhosa assessments. In addition, empirical studies on the impact of the language of instruction in South Africa are scarce. Most existing studies have been small-scale qualitative studies. Brock-Utne (2002), for example, shows by using observations from two classes that isiXhosa-speaking children learn better when being instructed in their home language. Meanwhile, Vorster, Mayet and Taylor (2013) use a nationally representative dataset (albeit excluding one of the nine provinces) to estimate the disadvantages of writing a test in English

Systemic evaluation first revealed the low performance of learners (DoE, 2003a). Systemic evaluation of the foundation phase was described by the then-Minister of Education Professor Kader Asmal as a historic milestone in the transformation of the South African education system (Fleisch, 2008). Systemic evaluation conducted in 2001 revealed, from randomly selected Grade 3 results, that in the literacy ta

broken into three domains, namely oral, reading and writing. The Grade 3 systemic evaluation also revealed that the average child in the foundation phase was struggling with numeracy and barely coping with the demands of learning to read and write (McDougall, 2010). McDougall (2010) concurs that the most significant task of primary-level teachers has traditionally been teaching children to be proficient readers. Bloch (2006), in the same vein as McDougall (2004), suggests that large numbers of children in South Africa do not learn to read in either their mother tongue or any other language.

According to Joubert, Bester, Meyer, Evans and Phatudi (2015), it is surprising how children begin to speak the language they are exposed to, and theories about how language is acquired are complex and controversial. These researchers further state that over generations, a number of interesting and sometimes conflicting studies and experiments have been done on how human beings learn or acquire a language. This means that teachers striving to make learners acquire any language of learning and teaching face a challenging task. Joubert et al. (2015) summarise what was observed through previously conducted studies and experiments as follows:

- ❖ Language acquisition cannot take place in isolation. Language is about communication, and the richer the input from the environment in which the young child interacts, the greater will be his or her communicative competence;
- ❖ Children learn to construct and produce unique utterances each time they speak. They also understand sentences they have never heard before;
- ❖ Words are stored in the brain in a jumbled fashion, but are strung together coherently in sentences;
- ❖ Children learn the social use of language appropriate to their culture, e.g. taboo words, greetings, and polite forms of words;
- ❖ Language rules are never taught. Children seem to be equipped with a perfect theory of language that matures over a period of time;
- ❖ It is virtually impossible for deaf children to learn to speak naturally;
- ❖ At each age, children can understand much more than they can say;
- ❖ Language and thought are intertwined;
- ❖ All languages involve production of vowels and consonants;

- ❖ Being able to speak one language seems to provide the foundation for learning any additional languages; and,
- ❖ The way in which additional languages are learnt differs significantly from the way a first language is acquired, and there is a critical period for acquisition.

It is therefore not easy for some children to become literate even in their mother tongue, and the attainment of a second obligatory language may prove too difficult, especially for those who are in remote areas not exposed to other languages (areas such as where this research project is located).

etc.), reading has been confirmed as a challenge for most foundation phase learners within South Africa, in whatever language the children were assessed. The inability of learners to read is a scandalous issue in this country. Therefore, this study which seeks to understand how Grade 1 teachers teach the reading of isiXhosa is also interested in understanding how teachers assess the lea

And, related to this, is an interest in understanding how the teachers themselves perceive their classroom practices.

In South Africa, minimal research has been done into the teaching of reading in isiXhosa in Grade 1. Most studies into the development of initial literacy have been carried out in English

done into the language play and experience of isiXhosa or isiZulu speaking children and how

instruction and alphabetic knowledge are the basic requirements in the development of

learners in order for them to master reading

awareness are likely to have an easier time to learn to read and spell than children who do

phonics and the pacing and sequencing of reading in isiXhosa classrooms has been done, studies have not yet been conducted into the teaching of reading the whole word and the reading of the whole sentence with meaning and understanding.

hamstown district, looking at the pacing and sequencing of reading in Grade 1 classrooms where isiXhosa is the language of learning and teaching, revealed that teachers relate their practices to their own history and experiences, where there was no focus on the teaching of phonics in Grade 1. Teachers agreed that they were not trained to teach phonics in Grade 1; they relied only on oral language. It is therefore assumed that they might be importing English teaching principles to teach isiXhosa, although these languages are different (particularly at the orthographic level, as previously discussed). This could be one of the predicaments facing the education system, as the educational target is that children gain reading proficiency in Grade 1 to form the basis of all future classroom work.

The most fundamental element for beginner learners, and a targeted goal for every learner enrolled in a Grade 1 school classroom, is to be competent in reading independently and with understanding. Motshekga, the Minister of Basic Education (quoted in *The Star*, 2010, p. 2),

abilities in order to accomplish success for the rest of their school careers as well as for their later e

from previous studies are discussed in this chapter, as well as the historical and social

evolution of the foundation phase curriculum, OBE, as presented in Curriculum 2005 RNCS, NCS and CAPS.

## **2.2 Shifts in paradigms and practices**

Bloch, Guzula and Nkence (2009) assert that their experience of working with teachers at Sibulele and Lotus Avenue Primary Schools, two schools they visited in the Western Cape, shows that change is never easy, and that all South African teachers have had more than their fair share of it since 1994 including, most notably, a complex and contradictory curriculum-

terms of what they are supposed to do and what they are not supposed to do. Moreover, insufficient knowledge or skills to implement the new curriculum during the time of implementation, as well as the inability to use the new recommended resources and other educational materials, can frustrate teachers and lead to ineffective teaching practices.

Each curriculum has its own demands and its own terminologies (Bloch et al., 2009), which sometimes can complicate things for teachers. Teachers may struggle to understand and to use the new terms effectively, and hence the government is required to expose teachers to various trainings that fully support them as the implementers of the new curriculum. When Bloch and colleagues visited these schools, teachers complained about the inhabitable classrooms and the insufficient material provided for isiXhosa readers. They could not teach meritoriously because of the large numbers of students in the classrooms and the deficiency of their teaching material. The lack of isiXhosa resources, particularly, raised negative attitudes amongst the teachers and this might be a contributing factor in a number of schools in almost all of the provinces, not only in the Western Cape. Although some of the teachers still resist mother tongue (MT) instruction, it is another thing to be under-equipped to implement it. As discussed, the reality is that children need to master their mother tongue

learning first only thereafter will they be able to learn in their first additional language. It is, furthermore, advocated in the curriculum that instruction in mother tongue should be given priority to allow the learners to feel free to talk and participate in classroom activities.

### **2.3 Lack of literacy development in the home**

Studies into the literacy development of young children in various social classes and cultural

use and produce reading and writing in their lives (Heath, 1983; Goodman, 1984). Teachers

interactions with the adults at home and their other community members. In some cases,

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so many factors like poverty, rurality, urban disparities and contrasting cultural linguistic practices. These factors can prohibit children to begin to use or to comprehend the uses of print materials in any language during their pre-school years. Many children are born and grown up in rural areas, where exposure to reading is rare, or at least not part of the daily

es. Usually, they are only exposed to reading and other literacy activities when they commence their early grades. This challenge can be overcome if knowledgeable and skilled teachers play their part: there have been countless cases where children who grew up in homes where their parents were unable to read and write succeeded in school because they were taught by teachers who were multi-skilled, and who performed their duties with enthusiasm.

However, the manner in which literacy teaching now takes place in many schools displays a problematic mixture of historical, political and educational factors inherited in Africa, which combine to present youngest children with a highly decontextualised and often meaningless introduction to literacy. It is not an exaggeration to say that at the end of Grade 3, or the completion of the foundation phase (Grades R-

is still a matter of miming what is being said by the teacher, or a matter of browsing through texts without understanding the meaning of one word (let alone the entire text).

For most children, the lack of quality literacy teaching practices in tandem with the constant lack of reading materials, particularly in African languages make encounters with books rare, and reading is often taught without reference to actual books at all (Bloch, 2000). Furthermore, low socio-economic status (SES) and indigenous students are still strongly over-represented among students with the lowest standards of reading at primary schools (Rusznyak, 2010). Rusznyak concludes that the lack of improvement, despite significant investment of financial and human resources over many decades, suggests that the problem of literacy is intractable (Rusznyak, 2010).

It is widely accepted that normalising and promoting the use of the home languages of children for learning, particularly pedagogic concerns about the approach that sees South African children being introduced to reading at school in their early grades, depends on the governmental programme introduced in that specific period. Bloch (2000) maintains that some of the children do not receive support from their families, as many parents are unable to read themselves and do not bother to buy reading books for their children, nor do not they have access to libraries close to their homes. While those who can read often do not create opportunities to read to their children as part of their daily activities: they feel it is the

to provide them with reading materials.

Teachers, meanwhile, hold miscellaneous beliefs about how reading should be taught, and how various factors are responsible for shaping these beliefs. For instance, the training they received from training colleges, the in-service teacher training programmes they were introduced to, even their own experiences of how they were taught to read in their early grades can influence the way they, themselves, teach reading. The belief systems of teachers are crucial to the goal of improving both professional development and, thereafter, teaching proficiency (Garcia & Rueda, 1994). Thus, any study investigating the teaching of reading, whether in any language, should emphasise this aspect of teacher belief systems.

#### **2.4. Poverty and Education**

The Minister of Basic Education, remarking on the 2011 ANA results, stated that our learners lack proper foundation in literacy. Researchers like Fleisch (2008), Pretorius and Mokhwesana (2009) and Wright (2012) maintain that poverty is hindering the success of education in South Africa. Most children come from illiterate homes that do not facilitate epistemological access. Meanwhile, many teachers are first-generation literates who themselves possess scant knowledge of utilising the available resources in schools (Taylor & Vinjevold, 1999). The unfavourable policies and practices of apartheid gave rise to an extremely dysfunctional education system symbolised by poor teaching; a reliance on rote teaching and learning; low competency levels in the medium of tuition; poor school management; low levels of professionalism, and few resources.

A study conducted by the HIRSCH team led by Reeves, Heugh and Prinsloo in Limpopo in 2007/ 2008 into the poor literacy performance of South African children pointed to a range of reading habits, learner attitude towards reading, self-concept and out-of-school activity. Furthermore, in schools where reading is supposed to take place children have no access to books, and there are insufficient teaching strategies and imperfect classroom practices hindering the success of early literacy development.

In the OBE curriculum, the expected outcome for the Language Learning Area specified that the learner be able to read and view for information and enjoyment. OBE was a learner-centred approach which focused on what the learners should know, comprehend, establish and acquire, rather than focusing on what the teacher should accomplish. Many teachers condemned this approach. Some common OBE problems that the study noted were affecting confusing curriculum; it required a lot of administrative work; problems with OBE were exacerbated by a lack of resources that were in demand at the time. In a study conducted by Williamson (2000), comparing OBE in Australia and South Africa, Australia is shown to be a country well-resourced and politically and economically stable, with at least 10 years of experience of OBE at the time of the study. Williamson (2000) further states that classroom sizes, support structures and teacher aides have enhanced the implementation of OBE in Australia. On the other hand, the findings also indicate similar problems emerging in both countries concerning the structure of OBE, its assessment and reporting, and the extra workload associated with the implementation of OBE. This suggests that there are innate problems within the system of OBE (Williamson, 2000).

Some of the problems of OBE that were identified by the DoE (1997, p. 6) included:

- ❖ it was a rigidly structured curriculum process without any stakeholder participation in the decision-making process;
- ❖ it laid an emphasis on academic education which resulted in the development of skills being neglected;
- ❖ it was an inflexible and prescriptive curriculum;
- ❖ it was norm-referenced whereby learner achievement was compared to that of other learners and this resulted in excessive competition;
- ❖ there was a gap between formal education and training for a career;
- ❖

## **2.5 Foundation phase curriculum**

cy crisis is the fact that teachers seem to be confused by the various curricula that have been introduced, as well as by the fact that their methods are constantly expected to change.

### **2.5.1 Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS)**

The 2005 Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS or C2005) very much introduced a skills-

curriculum as a contextualised social process, where the context shapes the curriculum, C2005 failed to provide education because it did not improve quality education for every learner; instead, it was only working for schools that already had well-developed infrastructures. The fact that C2005 was deteriorating became a crisis that the Department of Education faced, revising and simplifying the curriculum because teachers found it too mystifying to continue working with, and the revised version became known the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). Explicit learning outcomes (LO) and assessment standards (AS) were provided to guide learner achievements in each grade. The values underpinning C2005 were carried over to the NCS, as they were ultimately perceived to be upholding the principles of the South African Constitution: [The NCS] is an embodiment of social values and its expectations of roles, rights and responsibilities of the democratic South African citizen. As expressed in the Constitution, Developmental Outcomes is the underlying educational philosophy. (DoE, 2003, p. 33).

### **2.5.2 National Curriculum Statement (NCS)**

In 2006, when the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) was introduced, it was with the hope that there would be an improvement in learner performance, specifically with regard to reading, since C2005 had failed in this respect. Tyobeka, the Deputy Director of General Education and Training for the Department of Education, in an open letter to all Primary School principals published in *The Mail and Guardian*, wrote that since the introduction of the NCS many teachers had begun to believe that they did not have to teach reading anymore. This statement indicated that teachers ignored the teaching of reading in the lower classes; hence, results persisted to be poor. In this open letter, she also highlighted the five critical areas that teachers should focus on for the effective teaching of reading: the same that are highlighted in the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement of 2012.

### **2.5.3 Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)**

The Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) was introduced to improve the status of literacy in South Africa, which had been proven by a number of researchers to be in crisis by 2012. CAPS encouraged that learners must explicitly be taught how to read in schools, commencing in the foundation phase (DBE, 2011). Further, it stipulated that the focus should be on five important components of reading, namely phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension.

To support teachers in this endeavour, the DBE allocated classroom time to the teaching of reading: for shared reading, fifteen minutes per day for three days of the week, and for group reading, thirty minutes for two groups (DBE, 2012). Hadebe-Ndlovu (2016) asserts that the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement shows the importance of adequate teacher training, as its success depends on teachers being knowledgeable about content and skilled

enough to put the curriculum into practice. Hadebe-Ndlovu (2016) further states that it is imperative for teachers to use effective teaching strategies in order to have effective teaching outcomes, and therefore also that they understand and become aware of all the components of the curricular spider web and how these concepts are connected to each other. Thus, in the context of CAPS, for successful teaching to occur it is vital that teachers use the teaching strategies that are proposed to teach isiXhosa reading.

In the FP, the skills defined in the Home Language CAPS document are:

- ❖ Listening and speaking;
- ❖ Reading and Phonics; and,
- ❖ Writing and handwriting.

Integrated into all the above language skills are skills relating to (i) Thinking and Reasoning and (ii) Language Structure and Use. The Department of Basic Education does not prescribe to teachers how to break down classroom time into the different components, although the following are suggested as minimum amounts for Grade 1 (DBE, 2011):

**Table 1: The suggested break down minimum amounts for Grade 1 (DBE, 2011).**

Grade 1 Home Language		Total Per Week
Listening and Speaking	15 minutes per day for 3 days	45 minutes
Reading and Phonics	Phonics: 15 minutes per day for 5 days (1 hour 15 minutes) Shared Reading: 15 minutes Group Reading: 30 minutes per day (2 groups each for 15 minutes) for 5 days (2 hrs 30 minutes)	4 hrs 30 minutes
Handwriting	15 minutes per day for 4 days	1 hour
Writing	15 minutes per day for 3 days	45 minutes
	Total per week	7 hours

## 2.6 Summary of the chapter

In this chapter, the synopsis of the purpose of the acknowledgement of the eleven official languages which was to redress the imbalance of the apartheid error and that everyone has the right to receive education in the language of their choices is clearly defined. Out of these languages IsiXhosa that was only taught as a subject prior to 1994, until 1997 where it was recognised, as a language that can be used, as the LoLT is one of the languages that were acknowledged. Chapter Two also provides the evidence that the poor literacy performance of learners is caused by a few factors that hinder the reading development of beginner learners. This Chapter also detailed the constant changes of the FP curriculum and how this affects the effectiveness of teaching.

## CHAPTER 3

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE PERTINENT TO THE TEACHING OF READING

#### 3.0 Introduction

Chapter 2 discussed the LiEP and further argues that the poor relationship and/or alignment between this policy and issues around LoLT remain hindrances in the literacy development efforts in South Africa. It also revealed how the lack of knowledge and skills for the implementation of the new curriculum affects the teaching of reading. Chapter 3 outlines the pertinent literature to the teaching of reading. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) state that literature reviews describe theoretical perspectives and previous research findings concerning the problem at hand. According to Galvan (2006), a literature review is defined as a critical analysis of the relationship between the work of different authors relating to a specific topic. Okoli (2010) further states that a literature review provides an understanding of what existing research has to say on a particular scholarly matter, and Meda (2013) asserts that among other reasons, a literature review is done is to delimit the problem and to gain a deep understanding of what is known and what is unknown within

Thus, this chapter

#### 3.1 Understanding literacy

Literacy is a complex construct and concepts of what it entails are affected by cultural, complex models and language and literacy codes that it constitutes (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). Most dictionaries define literacy as the ability to read and write that is, the ability to understand and communicate written symbols. It is often divided hierarchically into basic

literacy (the ability to recognise, decode and understand printed signs, symbols and words), proficient literacy (the ability to extend ideas, make inferences, draw conclusions and make connections to personal experiences from written texts) and, more controversially, advanced literacy, which refers to the ability to use language to solve problems and to extend cognitive development (Klemp, 1999).

Literacy is what Gee (1996) calls a secondary discourse (the ability to function in a discursive community), which is distinct from the home or primary discourse. School-going students are literate in their primary discourse (i.e. they have the ability to function in their home environment), and this literacy provides the framework for the acquisition of other discourses and/or literacies later in life. Street, Gee and others involved in New Literacy Studies (NLS)

p. 233). This mastery is gained by understanding that literacies are pluralistic, and that literacy can involve a number of genres and styles that change depending on the specific social context in which they occur. From this perspective, literacy may usefully be defined as a tool by means of which our values, attitudes, aspirations, opinions, dreams, goals and ideas about the world are constructed, shared, represented, reconstructed and deconstructed (Street, 1984; Luke, 1997; Gee, 2002; Barton, Hamilton & Ivanic, 2000; Lankshear & Knobel, 2003; Winch et al., 2006).

On the other hand, UNESCO (2005) defines literacy as the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. This definition supports the notion that literacy is simply the ability to read and write. Moreover, UNESCO recognises literacy as a basic requirement for one to be able

-2012 document,

the UN announced that those who use literacy take it for granted, but those who cannot use it can best appreciate the notion of literacy as Freedom. In this light, for a child to be literate means to be free from fears and sorrows, empowered to enter social spaces where illiterate children simply cannot. Finally, in 2004 in Ontario, Canada, a panel made up of educators and researchers into literacy in Grades 4-6 defined the concept as follows: (*A Guide to Effective Instruction In Reading, Kindergarten to Grade 3*, 2003)

- ❖ The ability to use language and images in rich and varied forms to read, write, listen, speak, view, represent and think critically about ideas;
- ❖ Enabling us to share information to interact with others, and to make meaning;
- ❖ A complex concept that involves building on prior knowledge, culture, and experiences in order to develop new knowledge and deeper understanding;
- ❖ Connecting individuals and communities; and
- ❖ An essential tool for personal growth and active participation in a democratic society.

In view of these contrasting definitions of literacy, it is clear that the concept has no universally accepted meaning. NLS, however, seem to offer what may be considered as

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### **3. 2 New Literacy Studies**

"New Literacy Studies" (NLS), a school of thought that emerged in the 1970s and 80s and quickly established a new convention in considering the nature of literacy, focusses not so much on the acquisition of skills, as in the dominant approaches of the day, but rather on

what it means to think of literacy as a social practice (Street, 1984). It asks vital questions (Gee, 1996, p. 39):

- ❖ What is literacy?
- ❖ What is it good for?

The NLS school of thought, first introduced by theorists like Gee (1990) and Street (1995), acknowledge, as mentioned above, the pluralistic nature of literacy, with different literacies forming part of different areas of social activity. However, New Literacy theorists do not suggest an unthinking apprenticeship of students into the hegemonic academy; rather, they attempt to probe the contradictions and silences within disciplinary discourses (Kapp, 2004).

First, they break down the assumptions of the autonomous model of literacy, viz. that literacy practices are common, neutral and transferrable. Secondly, they show how literacy results from formal and informal power structures, with some literacies being more powerful than others and in so doing, they show how literacies are historical constructs. In addition, they  
, 2000 p  
279).

Each of the socially embedded literacies that these theorists describe has its own specific outcomes, and individuals can be totally proficient in one literacy and deficient in another. Gee (2002) shows that, although learners are socialised towards an academy and may appear to be acquiring the skills of the dominant type of discourse, this discourse is not standardised.

Instead, learners need to recognise the competing discourses within each academy and switch identity and practices when appropriate.

their own voice and identity among the competing voices and identities that constitute the academy. This view of literacy is, however, far from universal. Institutions the world over still hold the view that if learners could only internalise a few discrete skills, they would be

a number of theorists hold firm to the belief that literacy cannot be defined without considering its social and cultural context. This study, therefore, will proceed to discuss literacy both in terms of cognitive skills and in terms of social practice.

### **3. 3 Literacy as a Social Practice**

writing are seen as technical skills, usually learned through formal education and independent

contexts, which are themselves embedded in broader social purposes and cultural practices, as well as social change. In this view, new literacy practices are introduced and acquired through processes of informal learning and sense-

contexts. This mode

be independent of cultural and social influences: they are expressions of particular social practices. In other words, being literate means different things in diverse cultures. People are socialised into specific ways of reading and writing, and genres of reading and writing, because of the ideological beliefs of their communities. For instance, in the field of farming, people who would, in terms of dominant norms, be associated with illiteracy, might well be able to read the official records that must be kept to identify livestock and track their movements (Jones in Barton et al., 2000, p. 3). F

1979 study of the role of literacy in nineteenth-century Canada, which shows that disadvantaged classes and ethnic groups were, as a whole, further oppressed through literacy. Greater literacy did not produce greater equality and democracy, nor better conditions for the working class.

Literacy as proposed by Street (1984) is not context free and content free, rather it is always socially and culturally embedded. Social practice as defined by Barton et al. (2000) is an approach to social life that seeks to integrate the individual with their surrounding environment, context and culture relative to the actions and practices of the individual. These theorists argue that literacy practices change in modern society in

cultural phenomena, they have their roots in the past. People in any given society perform social and cultural rituals tracing back through the history of their society. As the practices of society shift through space and time they do not vanish as if they did not ever exist.

In light of these insights, Barton et al. (2000, p. 8) put forward six propositions about the nature of literacy as social practice:

- ❖ Literacy is best understood as a set of social practices; these can be inferred from events which are mediated by written texts;
- ❖ There are different literacies associated with different domains of life;
- ❖ Literacy practices are patterned by social institutions and power relationships, and some literacies are more dominant, visible and influential than others;
- ❖ Literacy practices are purposeful and embedded in broader social goals and cultural practices;
- ❖ Literacy is historically situated; and,
- ❖ Literacy practices change, and new ones are frequently acquired through processes of informal learning and sense-making.

Winch et al. (2006) support the view that literacy is embedded in the practices of our daily lives: that whenever we use literacy, we do so in the context of a social situation where literacy plays the central part. Winch et al. (2006) advise that there are culturally accepted ways of engaging in social practices and these can vary across cultures and over time. Finally, Lankshear and Knobel (2003) also promote the concept of literacy as a social practice, and argue that research into literacy has three purposes:

- ❖ to document parent-child interactions in print;
- ❖  
better understand transition; and,
- ❖ to respond to what are seen as the limitations of emergent literacy studies that do not  
  
literacy learning trajectories, both at home and at school.

### **3.4 Literacy as a cognitive skill**

Street (1984), viewed the cognitive skill concept of literacy as being synonymous with the  
  
nal and mental

according to Street (1984), the accomplishment of literacy is regarded as a skill that is acquired by an individual, particularly in an educational context, by using oral language as a basis that ultimately affects cognitive development. In other, the cognitive skill concept of literacy focuses on aspects relating to the individual, rather than their social context.

As mentioned previously, UNESCO (2005) simply defines literacy as the ability to read and write. This could be interpreted as tacit support for the cognitive skills model of literacy and as Perez (2004) argues, this view of literacy as a set of autonomous, transferable basic reading and writing skills has given way within a socio-cultural framework to a more functional, constructivist and culturally relative notion of literacy as social practice. However, Goettel (2011) also agrees that literacy in its simplest definition is the ability to read and write. The concept that literacy is a cognitive skill denotes that for a person to be literate, she/he must simply acquire literacy skills.

The view of literacy as a skill also promotes the belief that literacy is neutral. This is antithetical to the social practice view of literacy, which holds that literacy is not an autonomous cognitive skill, but an interactive process where orality plays a significant role in defining and negotiating meaning, as readers and writers transact with a variety of texts in a socio-cultural environment. In the Unesco Education for All Global Monitoring Report of 2005, it was documented that the most common understanding of literacy is the cognitive skills model: that it is a set of tangible skills, particularly the cognitive skills of reading and writing, that are independent of the context in which they are acquired and the background of the person who acquires these skills.

According to Winch et al. (2006), literacy also includes the recognition of numbers and basic mathematical signs and symbols within texts. These researchers contend that whatever definition of literacy is put forward, it must include those facets of literacy as it is known today – not only the basic view of literacy as the ability to read and write, but also those aspects termed social literacy, critical literacy, mathematical literacy and technological literacy. For Winch et al. (2006), literacy is the ability to make and share meaning by constructing and interpreting texts. These texts may be oral or written, contain graphic elements, such as images, maps or tables, and be paper-based or electronic. These researchers assert that literacy also includes an understanding of the relationship between text and context and involves the integration of speaking, listening and critical thinking with reading and writing (Winch et al., 2006).

There is, furthermore, a claim that literacy leads to higher-order cognitive skills. This claim emerged from the work of Vygotsky and Luria in Soviet-controlled Central Asia in the 1930s. In the 1930s, the area was in the midst of collectivisation, a policy introduced in the

1920s and which involved the consolidation of individual land and labour into co-operatives (Luria, 1976 cited in Ong, 1982). Many previously non-literate people were hastily introduced to literacy and the other practices and skills of a modern technological society. Vygotsky and Luria compared non-literate and newly literate people using a series of reasoning tasks. They concluded that major differences exist between literate and non-literate people in their use of abstract reasoning processes. In other words, literate people have higher cognitive skills than non-literate people do.

However, the ground breaking work involving the Vai people of Liberia by Scribner and Cole (1981) redefined the cognitive effects of literacy. These researchers found three different literacies operating among the population group: 1) English literacy acquired in school settings; 2) an indigenous script acquired outside of school settings; and 3) Arabic literacy acquired outside of school settings. Each of these literacies had a certain context for its use. Some Vai were observed to have only one of these kinds of literacy; others had two or more. There were still others who were found to be illiterate.

In their research, Scribner and Cole (1981) managed to separate the various effects of literacy from the effects of schooling. They found that: a) only the English literates were affected by schooling, and b) illiterate adults, particularly in urban areas, shared some of the skills and attitudes usually only associated with literate persons. If literacy is what affects cognitive skills, then all literates should show the same effects, but if schooling is responsible, then only schooled literates would show the effects. Based on their findings, the researchers concluded that cognitive attributes were the outcome of precise social practices, such as schooling, and not the direct results of the acquisition of literacy (1981).

However, the work of Moll (1984) challenges the work of Scribner and Cole. Moll (1984) maintains that Vygotsky and Luria do, indeed, have substantial evidence that literacy contributes to cognitive development. In his MA thesis, Moll compares the theories of Piaget and Vygotsky. He states that Piaget falsely ignores the socio-economic contents of cognition in his account of formal operational thought

and impeaches him for losing sight of the social construction of cognition.

Vygotsky emphasises that one cannot talk of the structures of cognition independently of their location in the socio-historical processes of human life. In other words, Vygotsky claims that the development of cognitive skills has a connection with schooled literacy. According to Street (1984), the autonomous model tends to define what counts as literacy, and then constructs its lack in terms of deficiency i.e. those who do not have it are seen as imperfect at the cognitive level and they suffer from the stigma of illiteracy. This obscures other practices and forms of literacy, and perpetuates the notion of literacy as solely an individual performance.

This deficit construction of non-literate people is similar to audism and other forms of language produce negative evaluations of speakers of those varieties. There has been a tendency to carry over something like the civilised/primitive binary to the domain of language, as a prejudicial way of contrasting between lower status socioeconomic groups and mainstream groups within modern urban societies.

In contradiction of this pernicious idea, the work of American linguist and founder of the *Black English* -class black youths speak a rule-governed and elegant dialect of English, and that their speech has all of the qualities generally associated with logical thought" (Gee in Maybin, 1994, p. 170). At the same time, Labov showed that much middle-class speech should rightly be considered rambling and disorganised (Gee in Maybin, 1994, p. 170; Fromkin & Rodman, 1993, pp. 287-290). However, non-standard varieties do not have the elite status of the dominant standard variety.

Thus, although there are various authors with dissimilar definitions of literacy, it is clear that any definition must involve the ability to read and write, and the ability to interact and share

there is no clear definition of literacy available: it is, simply, a phenomenon that forms a central part of our daily lives.

### **3.5 Conceptualising reading**

To assess the extent to which teachers apply appropriate methods of teaching reading, we first need to understand what reading is. According to the Reading Rockets document dated (2011), reading is a multifaceted process involving word recognition, comprehension, fluency and motivation. Reading also means making meaning from print. Leipzig (2001) agrees with the statement in the Reading Rockets document dated (2011) when defining reading as a complex process requiring identification of words in print (recognition); construction of an

understanding from them (comprehension); and co-ordination of these words so that reading is automatic and accurate.

This achievement is known as fluency. According to Leipzig, reading in its fullest sense involves weaving together word recognition and comprehension in a fluent manner. It is a means of language acquisition that promotes communication and the sharing of information and ideas, and the complex interaction between the text and the reader is shaped by the s prior knowledge, experiences, attitude and the language community in which they are culturally and socially situated (Leipzig, 2001). According to Lutrin and Pincus (2006,

researchers emphasise that reading written text with comprehension can never be replaced by anything, even in this age of technology, and they pinpoint some of the benefits of reading:

- ❖ Reading provides entertainment and enjoyment;
- ❖ It provides information
- ❖ It fires the imagination and expands the power of visualisation;
- ❖ s it active;
- ❖
- ❖ It develops the l
- ❖ ; and,
- ❖

(Lutrin & Pincus, 2006, p. 68).

On the other hand, Goodman (1967) associates reading with progressive development. It begins with a parent reading to a child, then a child reading to a teacher or peer group and

then, lastly, the pleasure derived from silent reading. This seems to be supported by the fact that, in the beginning, books are usually age- and stage-related, but later become interest-related. Goodman (1967) argues that reading is also a psycholinguistic guessing game, as it involves an interaction between thought and language. Efficient reading does not result from precise perception and identification of all the elements of a text, but from skill in selecting the fewest, most productive cues necessary to produce guesses that are right the first time.

The ability to anticipate that which has not been seen, of course, is vital in reading, just as the ability to anticipate what has not yet been heard is vital in listening (Goodman, 1967). Reading as a socio-psycholinguistic process engages a writer, a text and a reader, since a writer writes for real social reasons: to persuade, inform, entertain or record. In order to increase the likelihood of their particular message being understood by readers, writers encode their message in whichever vocabulary, language pattern, text pattern and genre seems most fit for the purpose.

Moreover, writers cannot write exhaustive texts. They expect readers to use their own knowledge of the world, and of language and the context of the text to infer its implicit meanings. Readers bring their own knowledge, experiences and interests to every act of reading, always trying to figure out why a writer wrote the text, and to identify textual patterns, wording and assumptions the writer has made about shared knowledge. Reading is, therefore, an active socio-psycholinguistic process, whose "meaning is in the reader and the writer, not in the text" (Goodman, 2003 [1994], p. 4).

Johnson (1973), meanwhile, describes reading according to four conceptual levels. The first one, or reading at its lowest level, is the interpretation of printed or written symbols into speech or its mental equivalent. The second conceptual level of reading incorporates the idea of literal meaning. The reader must not only be able to read aloud the words on the page if called on to do so, but must also be able, if necessary, to react to them in the same way as if they had been spoken to them. The third conceptual level involves an active, outgoing attitude on the part of the reader, as they seek out texts as a way to communicate with others. The last conceptual level of reading is personal meaning: the sense that a particular book may resonate with the life experiences of a specific person (Johnson, 1973). Gee (1990) believes that reading, at the very least, is an ability to interpret print (not just the ability to call out the names of letters). However, to interpret print symbols involves a viewpoint, and viewpoints are always embedded in a discourse: hence the irreducibly social aspect of reading.

Finally, Lutrin and Pincus (2006) highlight that reading involves many complex skills that have to come together in order for the reader to be successful. Proficient readers recognise the purpose of reading; approach the reading with that purpose in mind; use strategies that have proven successful to them in the past when reading similar texts for similar purposes; monitor their comprehension of the text in the light of the purpose for reading; and, if needed, adjust their strategies (Lutrin & Pincus, 2006). These authors believe that proficient readers know when unknown words will interfere with achieving their purpose for reading and when they will not. When unknown words arise and their meaning is needed for comprehension, to decode the meaning of the words to the extent that they are needed to achieve the purpose for reading (Lutrin & Pincus, 2006).

### **3.6 Theories of reading**

This study has also benefitted from investigating some of the theoretical ways in which the teaching of reading has been understood by researchers. Vaezi (2001) acknowledges the three most important theories of reading. These theories are (i) the traditional view, (ii) the point is on the printed form of a text; the cognitive view focuses on the role of background knowledge, as well as what is visible on the printed page; while the metacognitive view is based on the control and manipulation that a reader can have over the act of understanding a text.

Dole, Duffy, Roehler and Pearson (1991), show that in the traditional view of reading, beginner readers attain a set of hierarchically ordered sub-skills that consecutively build towards capable understanding. Having mastered these skills, readers are viewed as experts who understand what they read. According to Nunan (1991), as it is a language-based process, the traditional view is a 'bottom-

a series of written symbols into their aural equivalents in the mission of making sense of the text. According to Harris (2006a), the bottom-up theories assert that meaning is entrenched in characterises reading as beginning from letters that form printed words, which in turn form sentences that in turn form entire texts. The steps here make clear that, in this view, the merging of small parts will ultimately form a whole text from which meaning will appear. According to this theory, the reading process comprises a number of different skills, and children need to be taught to be able to hear and identify sounds in words (phonemic awareness), match sounds and letters (phonics) and recognise words in isolation with automaticity (Moller, 2013).



predominantly a meaning-making process that is embedded in the top-down view, it also requires that readers focus on skills that they are aware of possessing a position more aligned to a bottom-up view of reading. Readers, in this view, can be taught to adjust their reading strategies in a flexible manner, and to choose the best strategy to meet the purpose of the current text and their purpose of reading it. If approached correctly, each of these views of reading can help to develop the reading capacity of learners. All three theories are integrated and used in the training of teachers in South African schools.

### **3. 7 Teaching as a social practice**

2000). According

provide people with fresh insights, that will challenge the accepted ways of seeing the world of teaching and have important implications for faculty development. A social practice needs to be understood in terms of purpose, context and a complex range of norms. For them a social practice is, firstly, a form of activity that has developed out of universal needs within a community to achieve certain purposes.

Secondly, a social practice involves shared and mutually understood ways of behaving or acting; and thirdly, these patterns of action are guided by a multifaceted collection of norms

et al., 2000). These authors highlight that norms exert control because people conform with them willingly, and that they are shaped and reshaped in and through the relations of those involved in the practice. These norms provide reasons for the actions or behaviours of individuals.

that precise community, and that their purpose can only be explained in relation to the guiding norms. Teaching is an activity that has grown out of the need within a community to pass on its knowledge, mores and behaviours. To view teaching as a social practice is to acknowledge, primarily, the expectations society has for teaching; or, in other words, the actual purposes of teaching (D

These researchers affirm that the second feature of a social practice matches that aspect of teaching involving common patterns of action or behavior: explaining, showing, questioning, justifying, judging, correcting and other typical activities of teaching are not simply characteristics of teaching. Rather, they are activities directed towards helping people to learn: they constitute the social practice of teaching.

t al. argue, is evident in the practice of teaching (2000). A number of formally stipulated rules from government and professional associations mandate certain kinds of action in teaching. Social norms, too, by custom and social pressure, exert considerable authority over teaching behaviour. For instance, norms help teachers to explain what they mean, or to provide reasons doing certain activities. Garcia, Sanchez and Escuredo (2002) reiterate that to enter a practice like teaching implies an obligation to accept the set standards and to operate within a framework of given norms.

### **3.8 Teaching reading as a social practice**

Shalem and Slonimsky (2010) argue that the teaching of reading is connected to rules that have developed over time. This idea, that the practice of the teaching of reading has a history, means that the behaviours associated with it are determined by its community of practitioners, particularly by those who have achieved excellence in the practice, or who have been shown to follow the rules that give effective shape to that practice.

According to Jackson (2000), a social practice requires the democratisation of the relationship between creative practitioners and their community. It involves the valuing of difference as well as the need for shared understanding and agreement; and focuses on the skills, knowledge and understanding that people own in their private, family, community and working lives (Jackson, 2000). Therefore, for the teaching of reading to be a successful social practice, various strategies need to be applied, such as reading aloud, shared reading, silent reading, group reading and other techniques.

Traditionally, the purpose of learning to read in a language has been to have access to the literature written in that language. In language instruction, reading materials have conventionally been chosen from literacy texts that present higher forms of culture. This approach assumes that students learn to read a language by studying its vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure, not by actually reading it. In this approach, lower-level learners read only sentences and paragraphs generated by textbook writers and instructors. The reading of authentic materials (such as the works of great authors) is reserved for upper-level students who have developed the language skills needed to read them.

However, the communicative approach to language teaching has given instructors a different understanding of the role of reading in the language classroom and the types of texts that can be use

reading should encompass a balance of teaching strategies, including an orderly approach to phonics and other word reading strategies, and a significant emphasis on children experiencing a wide range of texts. Young children need more than phonics to read words accurately. For teaching to be a successful social practice, teachers are expected to be as knowledgeable as possible and to be enthusiastic about literature for children so that they can recommend and inspire their classes as well as individual learners.

### **3.9 Teaching reading in early grades**

McLaughlin (2012) defines the teaching of reading as a complex process that involves multiple factors, including decoding and integrating background experiences, having view, skills and strategies will be acquired by children through the teaching of reading by teachers who are properly trained and well informed about what is supposed to be taught in the beginning phases of reading. Shulman (1986) states that comprehension is fundamental to the teaching of reading. He further explains that a teacher must first understand what they should teach and, when possible, to understand it in various ways that will enable them to teach reading effectively.

McLaughlin (2012) further claims that the goal of literacy professionals is to teach children to become active, engaged readers, while Reddy (2012) believes that the teaching of reading should encompass a balance of teaching strategies, including a systematic approach to phonics and other word-reading strategies. Reddy also points out that focusing on phonics is

an important component in the teaching of reading. Finally, Moats (1993) recommends that classroom teaching is the critical factor in preventing reading problems amongst learners in early grades.

### **3.10 Approaches to literacy regarded as effective**

A number of approaches that are used in t

The language experience approach, according to Joubert et al. (2008) is a reading method where the learner emphasises the whole language approach, which is based on the notion that children acquire the ability to read and write, while an emergent perspective of literacy, according to Crawford (1995), is an approach based largely upon the cognitive construction of knowledge. For them, the learning of literacy is not viewed as the achievement of a series of reading capabilities, but rather as an active, continuing process that begins long before children begin formal schooling.

Another important theory in the learning of literacy is social constructivism, based mainly on Vygotskian theory, which views language and literacy as cultural tools capable of changing behaviours as they become internalised. Rather than passing through a series of engagement within a specific cultural and social context (Vygotsky, 1978). Joubert et al. (2008) view the thematic approach as a way to integrate learning experiences or learning easier to understand. Flanagan (1995) posits a process writing approach as a way of acquiring a level of and understandings that are burgeoning in the mind of the child learning to read.

### **3.11 Language for learning**

Cummins (1980) in Joubert et al. (2015) distinguishes between language children use for personal and social purposes, and a special kind of language proficiency that learners need to use to perform school learning tasks (Joubert et al., 2015). Cummins (1980) thus differentiates between Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive

Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) as the two languages that children need in their schooling life (Joubert et al., 2015).

### **3.11.1 Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS)**

For children to be able to interact socially they need to acquire BICS, which are language skills not associated with academic performance (Joubert et al., 2015). Rather, they are the language skills that a child carries to school from the first day of enrolment; and as such, BICS act as the building block of academic language. A child obtains BICS through the daily language that is used in the context where the child belongs. Joubert et al. (2015) further highlight that the achievement of BICS depends on face-to-face conversations, following directions, laughing at jokes, informal interactions, transactions in a shop, telephone conversations, writing short notes or reading a newspaper.

It is possible that if a child is not involved in all of these social interactions, the acquisition of academic (or any additional) language will be challenging. In the context of my research, a teacher could initiate a conversation in isiXhosa as a means to interact with the learners, thereby building on their knowledge of BICS and familiarising them with the isiXhosa language that will be used in the classroom environment.

BICS does not only apply to mother tongue learning, but to second language acquisition as well (although not all contexts are similarly rich). Joubert et al. (2015) point out that all situations are context-rich, embedded with interpersonal cues such as gestures, facial expressions and intonation or other paralinguistic features, all of which help to facilitate understanding and effective communication. These researchers assert that if a learner is

exposed to high quality input in their home language, it can help to develop conversational fluency and other BICS skills in another language (Joubert et al., 2015).

### **3.11.2 Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)**

CALP is the language expertise acquired in formal situations, and it is a cognitively demanding language acquisition. Joubert et al. (2015) emphasise that CALP includes demonstrations, calculations, explanations and experimentation, all the different aspects of taught content. CALP is, therefore, the language that a learner acquires in the classroom setting, and involves skills such as comparing, classifying, synthesising, evaluating and inferring. These academic language tasks are generally context-reduced, meaning that a child does not necessarily learn more about what is happening outside the classroom. For a child to achieve CALP, they are required to learn for and to write examinations; to listen to their and to process technical jargon and concepts (Joubert et al., 2015).

Furthermore, Joubert et al. (2015) believe that the attainment of CALP becomes more challenging when the language of instruction is not the language that the learner has mastered completely. Cummins (1980) in Joubert et al. (2015) also discusses the common underlying proficiency (CUP) between two languages. According to Cummins (1980), if there is a solid first-language foundation, skills and concepts learnt in the first language are transferred more successfully to the second language. Thus, Cummins (1980) agrees that a learner performs better if they receive mother tongue instruction in the early ages of schooling.

### **3.12 Understanding the Reading to Learn (RtL) pedagogy**

The Reading to Learn (RtL) pedagogy is a literacy methodology and professional learning program that has been developed over the past decades and was first designed by David Rose.

The RtL programme is based on three core principles as pointed out by Carbines, Wyatt and Robb (2005) and Rose (2006). They state that reading is a fundamental mode of learning in primary and secondary schools. Therefore, explicit teaching of reading needs to be integrated with the teaching of the curriculum at all levels, and all teachers need to have the skills to teach reading and writing in their subject areas. Secondly, all students can and should be taught the same level of skills in reading and writing across the school curriculum so that the gap between more and less successful students narrows, instead of widens, over the school years (Rose, 2006). Finally, learning takes place when teachers support students to do learning tasks that are beyond their independently assessed abilities, facilitating learning activities that support all students to succeed at the same high level.

Its objective, as Culican (2006, p. 9) mentions in her 2003-

all students in accessing the academic-literate discourses of schooling, using quality, challenging and age appropriate texts linked to mainstream curriculum and assessment application and employment of this methodology in isiXhosa classrooms.

As Rose declares, RtL strategies are suitably designed to be implemented as part of normal teaching practices in whole classes, and can also be used for additional support in small groups working separately on RtL activities within the mainstream class setting. This indicates that RtL is intended as a literacy pedagogy in both intervention and mainstream learning environments, and that it is flexible enough to adapt to different student groupings.

Looking through the lens of the RtL literacy pedagogy allowed me to identify the shortfalls of teachers striving to implement the prescribed curriculum in the FP classrooms under

learners who are educationally disadvantaged, particularly in the area where my study was situated.

### 3.12.1 Understanding scaffolding

-child talk in the early years of development (Bruner, 1986). It is based on a view of human development and learning as a social, rather than individual, cognitive process, and a view of language as intertwined in social and cultural contexts (Vygotsky, 1978). On the other hand, Hammond (1994) asserts that scaffolding is now widely used.

In the field of language and literacy, scaffolding activities normally focus on making explicit the literacy demands and learning expectations embedded in texts and tasks required for

knowledge between teachers and students (Gibbons, 2001). In other words, scaffolding enables the learners to learn to become independent, competent readers through their interactions with adults.

This perspective on learning was crucial to my study of the development of reading ability amongst isiXhosa students in the rural Eastern Cape, not least of all because scaffolding is often used to bridge learning gaps (i.e. the difference between what students have learned and what they are expected to know and be able to do at a certain point in their education). One of the main goals of scaffolding mentioned in the Glossary of Education (2014) is that it reduces the negative emotions and self-perceptions that students may experience when they get frustrated, intimidated or discouraged when attempting a difficult task without the assistance, direction or understanding they need to complete it.

### **3.12.2 Scaffolding versus differentiation**

As a general instructional strategy, scaffolding shares many similarities with differentiation, a school of practice that refers to a wide variety of teaching techniques and lesson adaptations that educators use to instruct a diverse group of students, with diverse learning needs, within the same course, classroom or learning environment. Because scaffolding and differentiation techniques are used to achieve similar instructional goals (i.e. moving student learning and understanding from where it is to where it needs to be), the two approaches may be blended together in some classrooms to the point of being indistinguishable.

That said, the two approaches are distinct in several ways. When teachers scaffold instruction, they typically break up the learning experience, concept or skill into discrete parts, and then give students the assistance they need to learn each part. For example, teachers may give students an excerpt of a longer text to read, engage them in a discussion of the excerpt to improve their understanding of its purpose and teach them the vocabulary they need to comprehend the text before engaging them with the full reading.

Alternatively, when teachers differentiate instruction, they might give some students an entirely different reading (to better match their reading level and ability); give the entire class the option to choose from several different texts (so each student can pick the one that interests them most); or give the class several options for completing a related assignment (for example, the students might be allowed to write a traditional essay, draw an illustrated essay in a comic-book style, create a slideshow essay with text and images, deliver an oral presentation, etc.).

Alber (2014) supports this distinction, but points out that for students who are still struggling even after a teacher has attempted to scaffold their learning, differentiation by modifying an assignment and/or making accommodations (for example, by choosing more accessible text and/or assigning an alternative project) may be necessary.

Some examples of scaffolding strategies found in Alber (2014) and in the Glossary of Education (2014) are listed in the next two sections.

### **3.12.3 Examples of scaffolding strategies extracted from the Glossary of Education (2014)**

- ❖ The teacher gives students a simplified version of a lesson, assignment, or reading, and then gradually increases the complexity, difficulty or sophistication over time;
- ❖ The teacher describes or illustrates the concept, problem, or process they are teaching in multiple ways to ensure understanding;
- ❖ Students are given an exemplar or model of an assignment they will be asked to complete;
- ❖ Students are given a vocabulary lesson before they read a difficult text;
- ❖ The teacher clearly describes the purpose of a learning activity, the directions students need to follow and the learning goals they are expected to achieve; and,
- ❖ The teacher explicitly describes how the new lesson builds on the knowledge and skills students were taught in a previous lesson, either through building on prior knowledge or connecting to prior knowledge.

### **3.12.4 Scaffolding strategies extracted from Alber (2014)**

- ❖ Show and tell: according to Alber (2014), modeling for students is a cornerstone of scaffolding. Students learn better what they have seen than what they have heard;
- ❖ Tap into prior knowledge: students can be allowed to share their own experiences, hunches and ideas about the content of study and may be permitted to relate and connect it to their own lives. Alber suggests that launching classroom learning from the prior knowledge of the students, and using this as a framework for lessons, is not only a scaffolding technique: it is simply good teaching;
- ❖ Give time to talk: Alber emphasises that all learners need time to process new ideas and information. They also need time to verbally make sense of and articulate their

learning within the community of learners who are engaged in the same experience and journey;

- ❖ Pre-teach vocabulary: most teachers do not use this strategy, as Alber (2014) suggests. Teachers are guilty of sending students all alone down a challenging learning path, booby-trapped with difficult vocabulary (Alber, 2014). Alber asserts that pre-teaching vocabulary does not mean that pulling a dozen words from the chapter and having kids look up definitions and write them out. She suggests that it is vital to introduce the words to students in photos, or in context with things they know and are interested in. A teacher can use analogies and metaphors and invite students to create a symbol or drawing for each word, and they must be given time for discussion of the words (in small groups and the whole class). Dictionary definitions can be used to compare with those definitions they have already discovered on their own;
- ❖ Use visual aids: pictures and charts can all serve as scaffolding tools; and,
- ❖ Pause, Ask Questions, Pause, Review: Alber recommends this strategy as an effective way to monitor the student's understanding of a concept or content area.

### **3.12.5 Vygotsky: Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and More Knowledgeable Other (MKO)**

-cultural theory is that children learn through their associations with other people, particularly through dialogue with a more knowledgeable person (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky emphasises the importance of interactions with family, other adults and more capable peers, and asserts that learning occurs first on the social level and then on an individual level.

Vygotsky, in his socio-cultural theory of learning, brings into play three major themes: the zone of proximal development (ZPD), social interactions (scaffolding), and the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO). Fo

productive ways of thinking about the practices of teaching reading and the acquisition of reading skills on the part of learners, not least of all because his thoughts have contributed to the development of constructivist theory, school curricula and the teaching strategies found therein.

The ZPD is the distance between what a child can do independently (their actual level) and what the child can do with assistance from an MKO (their potential level). Vygotsky argued that children learn best in everyday situations, when they encounter tasks that are neither too simple nor too advanced, but are just slightly more challenging than their abilities allow them to solve on their own. Children, through close collaboration (scaffolding) with a more experienced instructor (the MKO), are stimulated to reach a more advance level of performance (Steinberg, 2008).

This indicates that Vygotsky was not only concerned about what more knowledgeable others brought to the interaction, but also about what the child themselves brought to the interaction, as well as how the broader cultural and historical setting shaped the interaction (Tudge & Scrimsher, 2003).

He was, moreover, concerned with the unity and interdependence of learning and development, proposing that:

velopment processes that can operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and

learning results in mental development and sets in motion a variety of developmental processes that would be impossible apart from learning. Thus, learning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing

90)

In light of this, the ZPD, according to Vygotsky (1978), serves as a better, more dynamic and relative indicator of cognitive development than what children can achieve independently. Constructive relations, in his view, are those that orient instruction towards the ZPD: otherwise,

that learning must precede development, and hence from a Vygotskian point of view, cognitive development is best studied by investigating the processes that one partakes in when committed to shared actions, and how this commitment influences engagement in other activities. This aspect of Vygotskian theory aligns closely with the concept of scaffolding discussed in the previous section.

Vygotsky argues that those children are social beings who develop and learn through their interactions with teachers and parents. The main implication of this claim is that learners need opportunities to learn new information from skilled teachers, and this supports the supposition of this thesis, which stresses that the role of the teacher is vital to the literacy development of Grade 1 learners.

### **3.13 Theoretical Lens for this Study: Systematic Functional Linguistics**

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) was used in this study as the theoretical framework analytical tool. As defined by Coffin and Donohue (2012), SFL is a theory of language that highlights the relationship between language, text and context. Its scope is wide in that it sets out to explain how humans make meaning through language and other semiotic resources (written, visual, spoken), and to understand the relationship between language and society (Coffin & Donohue, 2012

be a tactical tool and a guide to action: a means of responding to everyday, real-life language-related issues in diverse social, professional and academic contexts.

According to Berr

anthropology, as well as the influence of ethnography on Halliday (1967) and Saussurian

langu

To explain

briefly, the systemic view of language as possibilities for doing, and the attempt to define behaviour potential in relation to a context of culture, are part of a systemic interest in the sociological aspects of language. In terms of SFL theory, the identification and explanation of the elements of metafunction and stratification of language are key exercises in the process of tracing the sociological aspects of spoken or written textual construction and production.

As the name suggests, SFL refers to language in terms of both its function and its system.

The question of function draws our attention to the purposes for which language is used in

reveal languag

linguistic structures in functional terms, we have to proceed from the outside inwards,

conceptual framework, meaning making becomes a located practice within much broader

Arts: Content and Teaching Strategies, Hoskisson and Tompkins refer to the Language Arts

components of a Language Arts Curriculum: (a) learning language; (b) learning through language; and

As is the case with this study, SFL has a strong commitment to the view that language study should focus on meaning, and on the way people exercise choices in order to make meaning with

. With respect to

textual. The first function of language (the ideational) encompasses experiential and logical meaning, by means of which language represents our experience of the world (Unsworth, used.

However, the purpose for which we use language is to accomplish certain things and, because of this, we are constantly enacting social roles and relationships by means of it, and thus language remains a form of interaction. This is the second (and equally important) meta-

function of language (the interpersonal), which can be illustrated with reference to speech functions. When we use language to interact, we engage in an activity of exchange through (the exchange of information or goods and services). This gives rise to the four basic speech functions: statements, questions, offers and commands (Jordens, 2002; Martin, 1989, 1996).

When we use language, it is not usually possible to make all the meanings we wish to make through the act of meaning: that is, to the organisation of ideational and interpersonal meanings as language unfolds in time. Furthermore, not only can language refer to the world outside of itself, but it can also refer to the semiotic reality that it creates as it unfolds. Thus, the textual metafunction also accounts for the important ability of language to organise itself. Martin (1989, p 16) offers the following explanation of how textual meaning negotiates social relationships, ideational meaning construes the picture of the world around us we see as natural, and textual meaning phases these together into consumable packages.

An important point to note in relation to the three metafunctions of language is that all three occur simultaneously when we use language for meaning making. In other words, language functions simultaneously to construe experience, to enact social relations and (because it unfolds in time) compose itself in a particular way. This means we can analyse language alternately from the standpoint of each metafunction, but each perspective on any given linguistic act of meaning is always possible. Within the context of this study, this aspect of SFL theory allows critical engagement with specific linguistic acts that may have been influenced by hidden dynamics other than the ones available to the researcher during the time

of the interviews, classroom observation, or analysis of documentary evidence. In the process of investigating the role of (a) learning language, (b) learning through language and (c) learning about language in the teaching of reading in three Grade 1 isiXhosa classrooms in the Eastern Cape, South Africa, SFL was used to engage with the types (fictional, factual) of texts being taught; the genre (narrative, exposition) of these texts; and the meaning potential of the words that such texts contain.

### 3.13.1 Working with SFL theory

As mentioned, SFL theory offers a greatly enhanced insight into text (written, spoken and visual), the right instruments to analyse aspects related to form and content, and it concentrates on functions or purposes of the text (Lirola, 2010). Its functional model asserts

, with every choice made in terms

of the potential choices not made. These choices, though not conscious, are learned and provide various ways to get things done in a given culture.

Eggs (2004), in the first chapter of her book *An Introduction to* ~~OB Co~~ *on DeSunntroduced*

language, it places its function as centrally important (i.e. what language does, and how it does it), as opposed to more structural approaches, which focus on the elements of language and their combinations. SFL starts at the social context, and looks at how language both acts upon and is constrained by this social context. This makes this framework very appropriate for my study of isiXhosa language teaching, as it must account for the distinctive and often deviatonal formal and organisational semantic aspects of this non-dominant language.

The unit of analysis for SFL linguists is the text, because the functional meaning potential of language (i.e. what a language user can do with it) is realised in units no smaller than texts. Of course, the study of texts is typically performed by examining elements of lexicogrammar and phonology (or graphology), but these smaller units must be viewed from the perspective of their contribution to the meaning(s) expressed by the total text in context.

For Butt et al. (2003), the length of the text is not important, and it can be either spoken or written (although for the purpose of this analysis, any reference to text is to the written form). The important factor is that it is a pleasant-sounding collection of meanings appropriate to its context. This unity gives a text both texture and structure: texture comes from coherence in the way that the meanings fit together, and structure from certain obligatory elements appropriate to the purpose and context of the specific text (Butt et al., 2003). In this view, inseparable (Butt et al., 2003, p. 257).

### **3.13.2 SFL, genre theory and literacy development**

SFL theorists assert that language is realised through text. This means that texts do not have fundamental meanings, since meaning emerges as the way texts are used in social contexts. Moreover, the language chosen to express a specific meaning determines the way in which that meaning is perceived. Thus, Christie (2005) agrees that when looking at language from an SFL point of view, what emerges is an understanding of how speakers express meaning through the utilisation of linguistic resources, and how these resources are shaped by contextual factors. For this reason, language instruction should present the language to learners in a way that facilitates the understanding of the relations between both linguistic and extralinguistic factors, and at the same time encourages functional practice with the language.

This is why, according to Christie, SFL has a crucial role to play in literacy development. It offers the instruments for the analysis of grammatical features in written texts, such as the different stages of texts, theme and theme position, lexical choices (e.g. technical vocabulary, descriptive vocabulary, vocabulary of judgement or attitude), types of verbs and noun groups. Christie (2005) also maintains that SFL is an effective theoretical framework for helping students to improve their reading skills for several reasons.

Firstly, when teachers employ SFL to inform their teaching practices, they ensure that students become aware of the different genres they can use depending on their communicative purpose; the audience; the level of formality, etc. In this way, students see how members of a culture use written texts as part of their social lives, and can conclude that the purpose of a genre determines its shape (i.e. its schematic structure). This genre theory also helps students to develop their understanding of the language they are learning and helps them to use it effectively. Secondly, SFL focuses on the relationship between texts and the

contexts in which those texts occur, and offers tools for the analysis of texts. The educational application of this is that it teaches students to produce oral and written texts in social contexts depending on their social needs. This assists students to learn that texts cannot be considered autonomously because they always go together with historical, social or other factors.

In addition to these two points, students become aware of the different meaning potentials (all the different choices that can be made) within a culture, and exhibit varying degrees of control over the meaning potential of (for example) isiXhosa, because they are provided the opportunity of using this language in different situations, always taking into account the different contexts involved. In other words, SFL can help learners understand the relationship between language use, culture and society. Moreover, students will observe that language use is critical in shaping the different types of context in which it is used.

Therefore, SFL theory both as a framework for the study and the analytical tool is suitable to this study for both the interpretation of text and context and language learning and development environment (the classroom in this study). It can be applied to the analysis of texts in order to help learners to read better, and it can be performed in the language classroom, where individuals can experiment with communication. As a framework to analyse learner performance, it can allow a teacher to pay more consideration to the importance of the organisation of information at the text level, and to observe the text as a social product reflecting the social context in which it is written.

### **3.13.3 Summary**

This chapter has reviewed useful theories pertaining to the teaching of reading, as well as to professional development and its importance in the context of curriculum change. This chapter has also reviewed effective strategies that teachers may employ in the teaching of reading. That literacy is the umbrella body of all the literacy activities such as listening and speaking, reading and viewing, writing and handwriting, it is conceptualised in this chapter. The focus of the study is to understand the teaching of isiXhosa reading in the FP phase therefore theories underpinning the teaching of reading are provided in Chapter three. Chapter three shed some light on the theoretical and conceptual lenses that underpin this research study. The chapter concluded by discussing the theoretical and conceptual lenses through which my research study was framed and conceptualised. To this end, SFL was introduced as the overarching theoretical framework, offering tools to help structure and analyse the research. The following chapter will be outlining the research methodology used in the study: the design of the research will be discussed, as well as the research participants, the site selection and the instruments employed in the process of data collection.

**CHAPTER 4****RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN****4.0. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter describes the design of the research project, incorporating certain theories, the sampling of participants, and processes for data generation. This study followed a qualitative approach in the form of a case study that explores and describes the approaches that Grade 1 isiXhosa teachers use to teach reading. The Hallidayan perspective on what constitutes the Language Arts Curriulum framed this exploration: learning language, learning about language and learning through language (Halliday, 1972). This is the reason the research question was:

- ❖ What role does focusing on learning language; learning through language; and learning about language in the process of the teaching of reading play in literacy development in three Grade 1 classrooms?

Within the qualitative research approach adopted in this study, an interpretive approach which was used practices and experiences.

The approach was chosen because of its naturalistic character, privileging the study of participants in their natural setting, rather than in isolated, artificial spaces. As part of the exploration, teachers were observed within the context of practice, but also as members in a community of practice. This was designed to understand the nature and reasons for their pedagogic choices. A qualitative approach thus enabled the study to generate data through documentary evidence. It is in this way that the qualitative approach enables researchers to

describe and analyze individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions about the phenomenon under study (Snape & Spencer, 2003; Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2007).

Qualitative research presents an alternative to the traditional form of quantitative research,

46). A qualitative approach was deemed suitable for this study, as teachers were required to interpret and understand their teaching actions from their own point of view. Qualitative research approaches seek to gain a better understanding of a phenomenon from the

reporting by using

verbatim accounts to express actual conversations (Burke & Larry, 2008). In this study the participating teachers interpreted their teaching by reflecting on their lesson planning, teaching the lesson in the classroom, monitoring their teaching actions, and evaluating learner behaviour. Learner behaviour

decipher the effectiveness of the teaching. This was achieved by videotaping these actions and then watching the video later to interpret them. Re-viewing the videos with the teachers was designed to allow an interpretation of the effectiveness of lesson delivery enabled revision and reconstruction of their teaching that hopefully culminated in improving their teaching of isiXhosa reading after the study was completed.

The researcher adopted the q

flexibility in the process of conducting research, an orientation towards the teaching process rather than the outcome, an account of context-regarding behaviour and the situation as

linked to facilitating metacognitive experiences. These focus areas are in line with

The strength of qualitative research is that it generates detailed data that helps the participants to better understand the situation concerned. Babbie and Mouton (2007, p. 49) note that qualitative research is inductive in that it is data-driven; findings and conclusions are specifically drawn from the data collected; and the research data is regarded as constructed within a specific context rather than as an objective reflection of reality (which is the case with quantitative research). Data was collected by unobtrusively observing, analysing and narrating the participants understanding of reading practices, beliefs, perceptions, behaviours,

babbie & Mouton, 2004, p. 281).

#### **4.1 INTERPRETIVE ORIENTATION**

This study is situated in the interpretive research paradigm. This design focuses on observing situations as they act out and interpreting them. Its main strength is to seek to understand why things happen the way they do. It also seeks to get the meaning

this study (De Villiers, 2012). An interpretive approach permits a focus on individual teacher experiences within their natural setting, because it is concerned with interpreting and understanding human action. Cohen et al. (2007) suggest that this paradigm affords a researcher an opportunity to understand a situation by being in the shoes of the subjects, in their life world, and learning through the interpretations, and the meanings that they give to their actions.

In the interpretivist paradigm, there is no objective and subjective world. Interpretivists believe that there is only one real existing world that is both objective and subjective. This one existing world may be experienced differently and hence understood differently by people, depending on their individual experiences (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Individuals process their experiences and make them meaningful and real to themselves. Clark (2011) suggests that in the process, individuals construct meaning, making social reality as they interact personally with the situation. Interpretivists hold the belief that reality consists of people

interaction between people and their external world (environment). An external world (environment) presents certain experiences that people interpret subjectively to create their own knowledge (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Clark, 2011).

This suggests that what people experience in life becomes what they know; that is, how people interpret their personal life experiences creates and constitutes their subjective knowledge; so,

themselves from what they know and feel about something, as presented or imposed by their internalized and, as time goes by, they constitute what and who they are. Influenced by this paradigm, the researcher here interviewed and observed the participants, allowing them to present and interpret their teaching experiences.

Interpretivists assume that knowledge is constructed intersubjectively through meanings and understandings that are developed experientially and socially (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Interpretivists believe that knowledge and truth are negotiated through social dialogue, thus

facilitating the rethinking and revision of common approaches and practice. Taken-for-granted teaching practices and activities were questioned vigorously in this research.

Epistemologically, interpretivists believe that there is no single correct route or particular method to knowledge construction. Reality is socially constructed, and therefore there are no universally correct or incorrect theories. Theories are judged according to the strength of the interest of the researcher and participant

## **4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Babbie and Mouton (2004, p. 55) describe a research design as a plan or scheme of how one anticipates conducting research (see also McMillan & Schumacher 2006, p. 22). It encapsulates the procedure for conducting the study including when, from whom and under what conditions the data will be obtained. It is also a general plan of how the research is set up, what happens to the subjects and what methods of data generation are used. Creswell

As mentioned above, a case study design was used. This design was selected because of its ability to enable research activity to identify and understand the phenomenon as perceived by the actors (teachers) in the research context. Case study makes possible the study of experi

their approach to the teaching of reading, and their pedagogic practice explained the otherwise inaccessible meanings they attach to their classroom activities and experiences.

Creswell (2008, p. 475) defines a case study as an in-depth exploration of a bounded system based on extensive data generation. In a case study, an individual, programme or event is studied in depth for a defined time. Case study may focus on a programme, event or activity involving individuals rather than a group (Creswell, 2005, p. 465). According to Neale, Thapa and Boyce (2006), a case study is a story about something unique, special, or interesting stories can be about individuals, organisations, processes, programs, neighbourhoods, institutions, and even events. It gives the story behind the result by capturing what happened to bring it about, and can be a good opportunity to highlight a

might be selected because they are highly effective, representative, typical, or of special interest. Case studies are appropriate when there is a unique or interesting story to be told. Case studies are often used to provide context for other data (such as outcome data), offering a more complete picture of what happened in the program and why (Yin, 2003).

The primary advantage of a case study is that it can provide much more detailed information than what is available through other methods, such as surveys. Case studies also allow one to present data collected from multiple methods (i.e., surveys, interviews, document review and observation) in order to provide a complete story. They involve investigating a situation within its context; as Cohen and Manion (2000, p. 181) and Anderson (2002, p. 153) say, it involves a holistic investigation of a phenomenon without divorcing it from the larger context with which it interconnects. Case studies therefore offer any researcher a unique opportunity to study real people in real situations, enabling readers to comprehend ideas more intimately than simply by representing them through abstract theories or principles (Adelman et al., cited in Cohen & Manion, 2000, p.181). In the case of this study, it was hoped that the data collected would give a clear indication of whether the educational policies for Grade 1 are

reflected in practice in the three

-of-

observations, interviews, field notes and video recordings, so that the reader can follow the analysis and come to the stated conclusion (Anderson, 2002).

#### **4.2.1 Case study process: Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL)**

Theoretically, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory was used to inform data generation processes and analysis. In this Case Study, SFL was central in the following comprehensive data generation processes (Neale et al, 2006, p. 5).

Process Planning:

- ❖ Identify stakeholders who will be involved;
- ❖ Brainstorm a case study topic, considering types of cases and why they are unique or of interest;
- ❖ Identify what information is needed and from whom;
- ❖ Identify any documents needed for review;
- ❖ List stakeholders to be interviewed or surveyed (national, facility, and beneficiary levels) and determine sample if necessary; and,
- ❖ Ensure research will follow international and national ethical research standards, including review by ethical research committees.

The aim of conducting this study was not only to explore how teachers teach isiXhosa in a general sense, but also to understand the techniques and approaches they use to develop literacy/reading abilities, with SFL theory as the lense to read what was happening in the three Grade 1 classrooms. SFL theory was thus used to construct the insights that emerged

through the analysis both of verbal and written texts that emerged from the three research sites. Research presents SFL as one of the effective tools to analyse form and content of both spoken and written texts (Lirola, 2010).

choice made in terms of the potential choices not made, which are learned and provide various ways to get things done in a given culture. It also helped in revealing the extent to which teachers in the research sites implemented the prescribed curriculum (CAPS) in the FP classroom.

The deterioration of literacy results, especially in FP classes, prompted my interest in investigating teaching and reading practices using three SFL principles (as discussed in chapter 3). A practical desire to remedy the situation prompted the case study design. There was close collaboration between the researcher and the participants. That proximity permitted the participants to freely narrate their different stories and ideas about the phenomenon under study. Through these stories and ideas, the participants were able to describe their different views of reality, and this made it possible for the researcher to understand the teaching practices of the three different teachers in relation to their different contexts.

In this study, SFL theory proved a useful framework of analysis when it came to assessing teachers teaching reading or evaluating children learning the isiXhosa language. SFL theory focuses on linguistic links across sentences and textual coherence. Language has a conveys a picture of reality. It also has an interpersonal function and is used to encode interaction and to show how defensible the different propositions are believed to be. Thus, it allows for encoding the meanings of attitudes, interaction and relationships. SFL has a

decisive role in literacy since it focuses on the production and analysis of texts in a specified language (Butt et al., 2003).

#### **4.2.3 Important elements of a multiple Case Study**

one case was being examined). A collective case (also known as a multiple case) allows the researcher to analyse within each setting and across settings (Baxter & Jack, 2008). I was able to compare multiple cases to gain insight into the teaching of reading teaching practices in three selected primary schools in Mount Frere D

programmes to develop reading teaching strategies and improve reading levels in Eastern Cape primary schools.

Levin and Rock (2003) argue that interpretive social research emphasizes the complexity of human beings, and attempts to construct and understand their worlds. Working within this case study design meant that I was investigating teachers within their context and attempting to make sense of their interpretation and experience of teaching reading to beginner learners in FP classrooms. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003), the central purpose in the interpretive paradigm is to understand subjective human experience. In sum, the case study characteristics that I found to be appropriate to this study are as follows (from Cohen & Manion, 2000, p. 182):

- ❖ It is concerned with a rich description of events relevant to the case;
- ❖ It has geographical parameters or boundaries;

- ❖ It focuses on individual actors and seeks to understand their perceptions of events; and,
- ❖ The researcher is integrally involved in the cases.

#### **4.2.4 Limitations of the case study**

Yin (2003) points out that a case study can be defined in two ways. First, it investigates a -world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clear. Secondly, a case study will typically have more variables than data points. Data triangulation helps to address this distinctive technical condition.

According to Yin (2003), doing case study research properly means addressing five traditional concerns about case studies: by conducting the research rigorously, avoiding confusion, knowing how to arrive at generalised conclusions if desired, carefully managing the level of effort, and understanding the comparative advantage of case study research. Yin highlights that the over

A possible weakness is that I, as the principal data generator, might not be sufficiently skilled at observation and interviewing. On that note, I had to depend on my own instincts and ability throughout the research. I had to make sure that I understood as much as possible about these methods before going into the field to conduct research. Moreover, I had to be vigilant about

situation, to catch the close-

of thoughts about, and feelings for a situation (Cohen & Manion, 2000, p. 182), it must be

remembered that the case in question is not necessarily representative of similar cases. Hence I had to be careful not to generalise from this research to include all Grade 1 classes, whether in the Eastern Cape or throughout south Africa (Hancock, 2005).

Case studies are also criticised for their lack of reliability (Anderson, 2002), in the sense that a different researcher can produce different results despite studying the same phenomenon at similar sites. I therefore ensured that all data collected from the interviews, field notes, video recordings and observations were precisely transcribed to maximise trustworthiness.

#### **4.3 SITE SELECTION AND LOCATION**

This study was part of the Cape Consortium Research Project. The research team selected eight districts in the Eastern Cape Province: Libode, Mount Fletcher, Mount Frere, Butterworth, Dutywa, East London, Cradock and Grahamstown. For my study, one rural school, one township school and a former Model C school in the Mount Frere district, all of which used isiXhosa as a LoLT, were chosen as a sample. Three isiXhosa teachers at the three schools were selected by means of contextual profiling at the centre where information about all the teachers in the region was recorded.

Data con

questionnaire designed by Cape Consortium Research Project members and administered to the teachers involved in the project prior to the main research. The contextual profiling supported the researcher in selecting the relevant teachers. The Department of Education conducts nationwide evaluations of learners, especially in the learning areas of Language, Mathematics and Natural Sciences. The study was conducted in three differently located schools not for purposes of comparison but to assess the teaching strategies employed in

relation to the different contexts. The aim was to understand the shortcomings of the learners, teachers and managements in those underperforming schools.

**Table 2: Comparative overall school pass rates**

Type of School	Language	Mathematics	Natural Sciences
	Pass rate %	Pass rate%	Pass rate%
Urban	64	46	58
Township	40	26	42
Rural	29	22	35
Remote rural	23	19	30
Farm	34	24	37

Source: National Department of Education (2005)

These figures were used to consider ways of putting together a policy to bring the performance of learners in different kinds of schools up to an equal standard, as it should be. All learners in South African schools should in theory perform in an equivalent way. No

research, three primary schools were purposefully selected from the same district of the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa. They were also all conveniently located for the purpose of the study. All the schools were well established in the community. The following Table 3 shows the number of learners of three classrooms from the selected schools:

**Table 3: Numbers of learners in three selected classroom sites**

Name of the school	Total number of learners	Boys	Girls
School A	60	22	38
School B	45	13	32
School C	31	12	19

Of the three schools, two – the former Model C School and the township school – were better resourced than the other one, the rural school. Almost all the learners at the township school and the rural school walked to school, as the schools were in local areas. All the learners were Xhosa speaking. Some of the learners in the former Model C School were using transport hired by the parents as many of them were staying in areas far away from the school. These three schools had a better-than-average reputation in the area and had a good supportive partnership with the immediate neighbouring community.

At the township school and the former Model C School, the playgrounds were well maintained, neat and tidy, and the buildings were securely fenced. The only difference between the township school and the former Model C School was the number of learners enrolled in each school. The township school had a huge number of learners, and the school yard was full of classrooms and temporary structures erected to accommodate all the learners. The Grade 1 class was divided into three classrooms. Three teachers were teaching in these classrooms and they were responsible for all the subjects, unlike at the rural school where there was a subject teaching method. Two of these teachers were black and the other was a white woman of middle age. She was also teaching all the subjects in this grade including isiXhosa as a subject.

The rural school, on the other hand, was not properly fenced and had no well-maintained playgrounds. Infrastructure was not in an encouraging condition, either externally or internally. Nevertheless, discipline was sustained, and the principle of healthy work and co-operation was evident in all the schools. The mission and vision statements of the three schools demonstrated sound educational and moral values. The principals and teachers in all the schools were supportive and showed interest in the research study.

Two of the teachers selected were permanently employed for the Grade by the Eastern Cape Department of Education, even though they were not trained for the grade they were teaching. The teacher at former Model C School held an SGB post. The township school and the former Model C School had a seemingly stimulating environment: the classrooms were well built, well-furnished and well maintained. The Grade 1 classroom in a rural school was over-crowded with learners and, besides being congested, its walls were dilapidated walls and there was a shortage of furniture. Due to this condition, the learners had to be divided into two groups for learning and teaching to be effective. Yet, although they were thus divided, they were sitting in threes to a table. The socio-economic status of the parents in these three schools ranged from unemployed, dependent on social welfare payments, self-employed or lower income, to some professional classes.

### 5. 5.1 Criteria for selection of participants and sampling method

The Table 4 below features some information about the study participants, who were all teaching isiXhosa reading to Grade 1s in the three selected schools:

**Table 4: Depiction of participants' educational qualifications and experience**

Name of the participant	Gender	Qualification	Years of experience in grade 1
Teacher A (change to C)	Female	CHED	1 year
Teacher B	Female	JPTD	15 years
Teacher C (change to A)	Female	SPED	3 years

As Table 4 shows that one of the Grade 1 teacher participants obtained the College Higher Education Diploma (CHED). This means that she was not trained to teach in this grade, a not

uncommon phenomenon in the case of FP posts (Bloch, 2000). It was her first year of teaching Grade 1 learners, after 19 years of teaching in the Senior Phase. Teacher C in school C has a Senior Primary Education Diploma. This also indicates that she has not qualified to teach the grade she is teaching. Lemmer and Manyike (2012) regard the issue of under-qualified teachers as the main cause of learners struggling to produce the required results.

Grade 1 classes and Grade 1 teachers were chosen because of concern at low literacy levels, specifically reading capabilities in isiXhosa in the FP. Grade 1 is where the teaching of reading commences, a vital adventure for beginner learners. In this study, three FP isiXhosa Grade 1 teachers from three different schools in the Eastern Cape were selected. These three schools were purposively selected as isiXhosa is the language of learning and teaching and a compulsory subject in the first three years of schooling. The selected schools were conveniently placed and well set to provide the required information about the phenomenon under investigation. The convenience method of purposive sampling was employed to select  
inion, the sample was appropriate for reliable data analysis in a qualitative research project of this nature.

The purposive sampling method, as defined by McMillan and Schumacher (2001), is a strategy to choose small groups or individuals likely to be well informed and instructive about the phenomenon under study. In a case study, the sampling process is inevitably purposive rather than random (Babbie & Mouton, 2004). For this study the researcher selected cases that were likely to yield contrasting data (De Vos, Delport, Fouche & Strydom, 2002). The purpose of the case study is to learn, understand and discover. This was what this study hoped to do; to explore and describe the phenomenon in question, using detailed, in-depth data generation methods involving multiple, information-rich sources. These included

appropriate for the Grade being taught, the written work of learners and classroom observation. As Babbie a researchers in contrast with grounded theorists, seek to enter the field with knowledge of the study.

## **5.6 DATA GENERATION INSTRUMENTS AND TRIANGULATION**

Data generation instruments are the tools of research. Because this is a case study the researcher used more than one data generation instrument, an important way of increasing the validity of the research. This kind of data generation is also known as triangulation. Bryman (2008) quotes Denzin (1970) to the effect that triangulation is a way of making sure that research results are true and valid

- ❖ Theory triangulation employs many different theories to explain the conclusions of the research; and,
- ❖ Methodological triangulation that is a combination of more than one method for gathering information. This is another method that was used in this study.

In this study, the researcher used three instruments for data generation: semi-structured interview

lesson plans, assessment record sheets, subject content, set-works, NCS document, and

In general terms, Schuh and Upcraft (2001) suggest that classroom observation is an important method for generating qualitative data, particularly in natural settings. It plays an important role in the process of gaining insight into various dynamics within the research context as it covers events in real time and on the site of the activity concerned, as well as the context of events in non-structured environments. Non-participant observation and participant observation are typically distinguished in the research context (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000).

Participant observation, which is also known as simple observation, was used. The purpose of being a participant observer is that I wanted to observe and understand how teachers engage learners in teaching beginning reading. I was introduced to the learners upon my arrival and the purpose of my presence in the classroom was explained. In some instances, the group that was being observed was not aware that they were being observed for research purposes. In non-participant observation, the researcher is inactive, that is, he or she does not participate but observes as a bystander. I was more of a participant observer, responsive and closer to the build a good relationship with me as a researcher and this enabled them to participate fully,

considering me as one of their teachers. Non-participant observation signifies a more objective approach to data generation. For ease of reference during the analysis of data generated through classroom observation, video recording of the lessons and note taking also occurred.

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with the three Grade 1 teachers after they were observed in their natural setting. Each teacher was observed for five days per week for three weeks, fifteen lessons observed per teacher. Interviewing is a way of collecting data as well as gaining knowledge from individuals. For Schuh and Upcraft (2001), interviewing is a vital assessment tool because it permits the respondent to share their experiences, attitudes, and beliefs using their own words.

interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest; [the interview] sees the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production, and emphasizes

and talking about their views. The interviewer can proceed to discuss the participant perception and interpretation regarding a given situation. As Cohen, Manion and Morrison

I used semi-structured interviews because they enabled the study participants to interact with the researcher freely, while allowing the researcher to ask follow-up or probing questions (Du Plooy, 2009, p. 198). The three teachers were interviewed about, first, the choices made in the construction of the lesson plans, secondly, the pedagogic choices used during the

execution of the lesson plans, and thirdly, the deviations (if any) and/or modifications from the original lesson plans in executing such lesson plans. Another aspect of the interviews

Language Arts Curriculum principles of (a) learning language; (b) learning through language; and (c) learning about language; and the extent to which observing or deviating from such

To triangulate the research findings, documentary evidence was used. Such documentary evidence incl

reading tasks, subject content, set-

These sources enabled the study to generate further data about officially documented expressed intentions (NCS document), plans set up to realize such intentions (lesson plans),

work). Interviews and classroom observations are insufficient to generate such data. Data from these documents thus functioned to corroborate data generated through classroom observation and semi-structured interviews.

Every action that might have appeared confusing during the classroom observation, or any claim made during the interviews, was tested against such documentary data. The documentary evidence was analyzed, another form of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted by the researcher to give voice and meaning to the phenomenon under study (Schuh & Upcraft, 2001). Analyzing documentary evidence also incorporated coding content into themes, similar to the way in which interview transcripts are analyzed.

## **5.7 Interviews**

context of implementing the curriculum. An interviewer should try to understand the world as seen through the eyes of the respondent, and develop meaning from their experiences (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2009). The aim of an interview, according to Lantz (2013), is to mirror the respondent, or to describe what happened between the respondent and the interviewer perceptions to dominate. The aim is not to make presumptions about the content of the interview but to critically reflect upon what was communicated at the time. Interviews are thus ideal for attempting to gain an understanding a certain phenomenon. In the present context, the interview can crucial part of that, as they constitute the biggest enabling factor of government education policy.

Another useful attribute of interviews is the flexibility of the process (Bell, 2007). The interviewer can follow up with interesting topics and clarify answers where needed; the intonation, pauses and gestures of the respondent might convey a clearer sense of his or her feelings. A negative aspect of interviews is the amount of time needed for preparation as well as afterwards, for transcription. The questions must be carefully formulated and asked in a natural sequence. Bell (2007) also points to the risk of being biased; one can unwittingly pressurize the interviewed person to answer in a certain way, making assumptions or distorting emphasis. To avoid this, it is important to be aware of the risk of bias and try to work against it by making sure that any opinions ventured can be supported by facts and by constantly questioning the findings. In this study, an issue might be the relationship between the interviewed person and me as we are both representatives of our respective countries and

cultures. This can exert pressure on the respondent to feel subordinate. For that reason, it will be important that I maintain good contact with the interviewed person and show that I respect them.

According to Babbie and Mouton (2004, p. 113), in the best of all wo design should bring more than one research method to bear on the topic. A study becomes vulnerable when a researcher employs only one data collecting method. To evade this weakness, as De Vos et al. (2004, p. 296) suggest, in addition to observation and document analysis, this study made use of semi-structured interviews as a means of gaining a detailed

The interview schedule consisted of open-ended questions that were set independently to each of the three teachers (see Appendix E).

The other focus of interviews was to understand the impact of the SFL Curriculum and current SA Curriculum (CAPS) on the teaching of reading in schools. The participants were interviewed before and after each lesson presentation. Such interviews were based on the choices made in the construction of the lesson plans, the pedagogic choices that would have been made during the execution of the lesson plans, and the deviations from and/or modifications of the original lesson plans that were made in executing the lesson plans. Semi-structured interviews were used, because they enabled the participants to interact with the researcher freely and allowed the researcher to ask follow-up or probing questions (Du Plooy, 2009, p. 198).

Questions centred on ways in which the teaching of reading draws on the Language Arts Curriculum principles of learning language; learning through language; and learning about

reading

abilities in Grade 1 classrooms. For Schuh and Upcraft (2001), semi-structured interviews involve some planning, but one has the liberty to divert the course of the interview according

-recorded and later transcribed.

The responses given to the questions were analysed in line with Systemic Functional Linguistics. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) concerns itself with meaning that people construct when they communicate through spoken or written texts. In particular, the SFL mood analysis was used to analyse the data generated through semi- structured interviews.

### **5.8 Classroom observations**

I based the observation process on the research questions, concentrating on the SFL and CAPS curricula. Five classroom observation sessions per teacher were conducted. Qualitative field observation, according to McMillan & Schumacher (2001, p. 42), results in detailed descriptions of events, people, actions and objects in settings. The researcher carefully

notes of everything taking place during the lesson. Schuh and Upcraft (2001) suggest that classroom observation is another important method for generating qualitative data. The main purpose of the observation was to generate data in its natural setting and in real time. The classroom observation schedule in Figure 1, below, indicates the aspects on which classroom observation focused:

**Table 5: Classroom observation schedule**

<p><b>Seating arrangement:</b></p> <p><b>Classroom:</b></p> <p>Communication between teacher and learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the teacher employ the learning language, learning through language, learning about language principles in his/her teaching of reading, explanation of plot, phrases and individual words?</li> <li>• Are the learners adequately scaffolded through the learning language, learning through language, learning about language principles used by the teacher?</li> <li>• How do the learning language, learning through language, learning about language principles used</li> <li>• In what way do the learning language, learning through language, learning about language principles enable the teacher to assist learners learn to use read knowledge in the process of constructing written texts?</li> </ul>
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### 5.8.1 Participant Observation

Both participant observation and non-participant observation can be used in qualitative research (Gay, 1987; Borg & Gall, 1989). According to Gay (1987), ethnographic studies are characterized by some kind of participant observation at an overt level. In data generation, the ethnographer employs a variety of strategies in conjunction with observation, both verbal and non-verbal (Pelto & Pelto, 1978). Verbal strategies include the interview, both structured and unstructured, in which there is interaction between researcher and participants in order to obtain the necessary data. Non-verbal strategies consist of, for example, tape recorders, field notes, and diaries, which for Gay (1987) are less disruptive and less likely to influence the behavior being studied. To the extent that I interacted with the teachers, I used participant observation (also known as simple observation), though during the actual lessons I was a non-participant observer.

Participant observation is one of the main methods used in ethnographic research (Skager & e and the details of the approach are often modified as the research carries on. The reason for this is

that the researcher who initiates the investigation with a specific hypothesis may introduce misconceptions into the setting (Robson, 1995) that are subsequently discarded. On the other hand, the participants define the setting and their view cannot be known until the investigation has been conducted (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Walker, 1985; Gay, 1987). The observer becomes a part of the field in which the subjects are observed, thus being able to provide a view from the inside and the view from within may be very different from the view from without (Gay, 1987; Bouma & Atkinson; 1995).

The role of the observer is not straightforward. There are degrees of participation in participant observation, depending on the purpose of the study. Observation may be covert or overt (Gay, 1987; Smith et al., 1994). The overt situation, according to Gay (1987), is one in which the observer is nearby, and the permission of the subject is sought. In contrast, the

Researchers who want to do this kind of research have to be well prepared and well trained before starting the investigation (Gay, 1987). Much reading needs to be done in preparation, so that the researcher can perceive and respond appropriately to the events and situations encountered in the observation. As far as the site of the study is concerned, Bouma and Atkinson (1995) suggest that (if indeed there is a choice) researchers should choose a site where the participants are strangers: knowing beforehand the people to be investigated can influence their behavior and responses. It is better to investigate a setting of which the researcher has no experience from the point of view of impartiality (Bouma & Atkinson, 1995).

Participant observation can yield valid findings and useful data (Gay, 1987) as it provides an accurate measurement and assessment of immediate experience in terms of settings and

events happening or occurring. According to Robson (1995), participant observation is the most appropriate technique for gaining access to real-life situations. Furthermore, it has a lack of dishonesty compared to other techniques and a high potential for providing insight (Gay, 1987). The possibility of obtaining good reliability and validity is higher in the case of formal observation (Robson; 1995). The length of time spent on the observation can help develop a more intimate and informal relationship between the observer and the informant (Cohen and Manion, 1989). The more time spent, the more data can be gathered, the more information gained.

Some researchers have questioned the validity of information and data obtained in this way (Skager & Weinberg, 1971; Gay, 1987). Participant observation has often been criticized as subjective, biased, generalized, and lacking in quantifiable measurement (Cohen & Manion, 2000). Observing people, especially without their knowledge, requires a high ethical standard of behavior, especially when one is recording their words and behavior (Gay, 1987; Borg & Gall, 1989; Robson, 1995). The setting and behavior of the participant may also of course be affected by the presence of the observer (Borg & Gall, 1989).

biased (Gay, 1987; Robson, 1995). The observation method is also more time-consuming than other methods of data collecting (Borg & Gall, 1989; Gall et al., 1996). Time must be spent in the field to get the information from informants, recording all the activities and behavior occurring takes time. Time must also be spent on analyzing the data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). When people are used as an instrument, allowance must be made for some bias (Cohen & Manion, 2000; Robson, 1995). Attention may be given to some aspects of the surroundings rather than others. Personal factors such as interest, experiences, expectations,

knowledge etc. may influence the observation. The possibility of becoming emotionally involved with the study and the group members is higher in participant observation (Skager & Weinberg, 1971). This can detract from the objectivity of the study.

I also joined the participants in informal settings, such as the school staffrooms, to observe (Higson-Smith, 2000). The rural school was an exception: I was unable to join the participant in the staffroom setting or any other school activities. She was always in the classroom, engaged with either one of two groups of learners. By two groups of learners I mean that the Grade 1 classroom in School A was divided into two groups because of the large numbers of learners. The classroom was too small to accommodate all the learners simultaneously, so there was Grade 1A and Grade 1 B.

classrooms. One teacher was teaching isiXhosa and Mathematics and the other was teaching English and Life skills, in alternating periods. Nevertheless, it was calm and pleasant to observe two different groups in different periods taught by one teacher with enthusiasm. The teachers effectively used the time allocated in the CAPS document for teaching and learning. Field notes were taken during observation and the lessons were video recorded to avoid the loss and misinterpretation of data. While conducting observations and interviews, I recorded all relevant information for the study. I also made informal notes, then reviewed these in terms of my research purpose, objectives and questions. In other words, I analysed the notes and triangulated the information via the overall purpose of the study.

The participants provided print-rich classrooms: The classrooms of two participants were print-rich. The print has the work done by the learners as well as work done by the participants. This gives learners the opportunity to read and familiarise themselves with spelling and the concepts learnt. However, the classroom of the third participant was not print-rich. Participants used teaching aids: Two participants understood the importance of using visual and audio aids. They used representational tools which revolved around formal and informal language. These tools evoke images familiar to children. They enhance the

during lessons except the chalkboard.

## **5.9 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE**

guides, learner assessment record sheets, policies with subject content, set-works, NCS  
ch cannot rely  
solely on the voices of the research participants, it was important to employ documentary evidence to generate supplementary data for the purposes of triangulation (Hadebe-Ndlovu, 2016).

To analyse formal documents this study used the SFL register analysis of field, tenor and mode. Field is the range of topics or what the text is about. Tenor denotes the role language plays in constructing relationships among participants. Mode refers to the method chosen by language users to share information. The two official documents that were found in the  
document that guides the participant

on the curriculum to be covered in the grade 1 class. The second document was a list of lesson plans written by the participants in line.

### **5.10 DATA ANALYSIS**

De Vos et al. (2004, p. 333) define data analysis as the process of bringing sequence, arrangement and meaning to the collected data. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), in qualitative research data analysis is a continuing process that usually begins during the data generation process and is inductive, identifying themes that emerge from the data. The data collected from the interviews, classroom lesson observations and documents was identified, coded and then grouped to form themes. The SFL was consistently used to articulate the themes that emerged from data. I was analysing data on a regular basis as it was recorded and transcribed. Written field notes and interview transcriptions were frequently read and re-read in order to identify the patterns, categories and relationships present, using SFL concepts discussed in Chapter Three. Responses were categorised according to the research question, enabling me to categorise each response I received accordingly. This strategy also facilitated the relation of actions performed by the participants during observation to the relevant category.

SFL concerns itself with meanings constructed by people when they communicate through spoken or written texts. This meaning can only be constructed by using a number of words and sentences together. In SFL there is register which is presented in three semiotic functions called field, tenor and mode. Field is the physical reality within which the text occurs. Tenor is the relationship between the author of the text and the recipient. Mode is the way in which the communication is done, it can be spoken or written (Garcia Montes, et al., 2014; Banks, 2002).

Within the semantic component there are three meta-functions called ideational, interpersonal and textual meta-functions. The ideational meta-function focuses on the part of meaning that describes the way external reality is presented in the text. The interpersonal meta-function deals with the relationship between the speaker and the listener and between the writer and his/her message. The textual meta-function is the part of meaning that identifies a text as a text, not just a group of words or sentences. There is therefore a close connection between the semiotic functions and semantic meta-functions. For the purpose of this study the SFL interpersonal meta-function was used. Within the interpersonal meta-function, mood analysis was chosen. It was preferred because it is an interesting analytical framework which is useful for analysing spoken and written texts (Banks, 2002). There is a connection between the semiotic parameters of register and the semantic meta-functions of genre:

**Table 6: Semantic and Semiotic functions**

SEMIOTIC FUNCTIONS (REGISTER)	SEMANTIC FUNCTIONS (GENRE)
Field	Ideational/Experiential meta-function
Tenor	Interpersonal meta-function
Mode	Textual meta-function

The semiotic functions are meant to explain the natural understanding people have of language. Field refers to the range of topics or what the text is about. Tenor refers to the role language plays in constructing relationships among participants. Mode refers to the method chosen by language users to share information. On the other hand, when focus is on language itself, SFL describes a tristratal model of language with three levels. The levels are discourse-semantics, lexico- grammar and phonology, graphology or orthography. Discourse- semantics has three meta-functions that are ideational meta-function, interpersonal meta-function and textual meta-function. These have been described already.

The semiotic functions and the semantic functions fall under the umbrella of context, a very important concept of the SFL theory. The context of culture is all the approaches in which language can be used to communicate meaning in socially recognized ways. The context of situation is the immediate environment in which the text occurs. For analysis of documents this study used the SFL Register analysis of field, tenor and mode. This analytical framework helped the researcher to analyse the formal documents found in the portfolios of the participants (Schulze, 2015; Almurashi, 2016; Butt et al., 2003).

### **5.12. Reliability and validity of the study**

Validity is a measure of the truth or falseness of the data acquired through using the research instrument(s). Formally defined, validity refers to the degree to which a study accurately measures or assesses the specific concepts that the researcher is attempting to measure (McMillan & Schumacher, 2009). To enhance the validity of the data collected, this study made use of triangulation (more than one data generation method) (Neuman, 2002). The lengthy periods spent in the field also contributed to the validity of the study. I met the participants for several days to discuss the study, clarify what they did not understand about the study, and then interviewed them.

Furthermore, I sought to ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of this study by member the interviews and at the end of the interviews to check that their words matched what they intended. I also permitted each interviewee to listen to the video recording and establish whether their meanings had been accurately captured. The data collected was also made available to colleagues to check the categories and themes that were available.

Bender (2004) suggests that determining the validity of research results involves issues of truth that can largely be resolved by checking the findings and, crucially, reviewing the data analysis methods to avoid selective perception and predisposed interpretations. I used various methods and techniques for measuring the same variables, and these measuring instruments yielded identical results, thus creating greater confidence in all the instruments used. The main advantage of this type of research is that if there were to be only one measuring instrument for the same phenomenon, the investigation would be no less reliable and valid (Neuman, 2002).

In addition to these measures, the piloting of the research instruments in the fourth term of 2014 ensured that what the study set out to investigate was indeed what was investigated. Data was generated over a two-year period, which also contributes to the validity of the findings. If the same methods and techniques are used over a long period for measuring the same variables, there is a greater chance of the findings being accurate and credible.

### **5.13. Ethical considerations**

For research to be conducted at any institution, such as a university or school, permission and approval for conducting the research should be obtained beforehand (McMillan & Shumacher 2001, p. 195). Therefore, before I visited the schools, the permission from the relevant administrative authorities to gain entry and carry out the research was sought out by the principal investigator of the project and the project coordinators in all institutions as to obtain the ethical clearance.

Because this study formed part of the Cape Consortium Research Project, the project coordinator had already obtained permission to conduct the research from the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), the Department of Education (DoE) Eastern Cape, the District Offices in Mount Frere District, and the School Principals, as the gatekeepers of the schools where research was to be carried out. This was necessary because the study included observing the teachers during school hours and conducting the interviews at a convenient time that would not interrupt teaching and learning time or the school programme. All the District Officials and the Principals of the schools concerned that were called in a form of a meeting signed the attendance register as a proof of permission that they agreed for the research to be conducted in their district and schools. The research team from the two universities included in the project (WSU and Rhodes University) visited all the selected schools in Mount Frere before the actual research was conducted, for contextual profiling. Through the contextual profiling, I selected three schools where I intended to collect the data.

I then visited the principals of these schools with the letter of approval from the Eastern Cape Education Department

signed a document indicating that they agreed that the research could be conducted in their school. The teachers concerned were also informed about the research that was to be conducted among them. Co-operation and collaboration had been emphasised as fundamental throughout the research process. The participants had already been assured that there would be no harm during the data generation processes. They were also assured about the maintenance of confidentiality and anonymity: the names of the schools and the teachers were not to be included, and pseudonyms would be used throughout. All the participants were requested to complete the consent form that outlined the nature and purpose of the research.

Permission was granted on condition that official programmes and classes were not going to be disrupted. Participants were duly informed that participation in the study was voluntary and that they could pull out from the research at any time they wished without negative consequences. Grade 1 teachers received formal letters stating that they had the option of declining to participate in the study, should they so wish. The letter clearly indicated that, if, for any reason, the participants felt that collaborating with the researcher was compromising them in any way, they were free to cease participating without notice. The APA (2002) believes that researchers have an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values and desires of the participants.

#### **5.14. Preparatory measures before the study**

The researcher engaged in two preparatory, pre-study activities to increase the probability of the study succeeding. First, I piloted the research instruments and, second, I introduced the three study participants (Grade 1 teachers) to a selection of seminal works on SFL. During the last term of 2014, a pilot of the research instruments was conducted in two primary schools that did not form part of the actual study. The schools nevertheless shared many characteristics with the research sites for the study, in terms of location, the number of teachers and the community to which the learners belong. This was an important exercise in terms of testing the effectiveness of the research instruments before they were used in the research proper. The process also allowed for modifications and adjustments to the research in order to ensure the success of the study.

#### **5.15 CONCLUSION**

This chapter provides a discussion of the research methodology, including the research paradigm and the data generation instruments used. The sample size and procedure, data

analysis, validity and reliability, trustworthiness, limitations of the study and ethical considerations were presented and discussed. The next chapter presents the data and discusses the results.

## CHAPTER 6

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### 6.0 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter describes the research design and the methods employed for data gathering and data analysis. This chapter presents data generated through the semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and documentary evidence. It begins with the analysis of lessons observed. Then semi- structured interviews are analysed, followed by the analysis of documentary evidence. The purpose of analysing all the observed data in the classroom, interview data and data generated through documentary evidence was to reveal how the study

Curriculum components as discussed. These components are:

- ❖ mastering the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing;
- ❖ world through the resource of language; shaping and articulating a sense of relationships as well as an awareness of ways to express experience; and
- ❖ Learning about language: taking language itself as an object of study: learning about (i) its grammatical systems, in terms of its meanings, vocabulary, phonology and writing systems; (ii) its status as an institution, as aspects of community and culture; and (iii) its varieties, in terms of register and dialect variations.

The chapter is organised into four sections. The first section is the analysis of data generated through classroom observation. The second section is the analysis of data generated through semi-structured interviews. The third section is an analysis of data generated through documentary evidence.

## **6.1 ANALYSIS OF OBSERVED LESSONS**

Each participant was observed five times and the total number of observed lessons was 15. A classroom observation tool was designed, the purpose for which was to see if the teachers' approach to teaching reading in isiXhosa is aligned to the Hallidayan Language Arts Curriculum components: learning language, learning about language, and learning through language. The three Language Arts Curriculum components emerged during classroom observations, and this speaks to the research question asked by this study.

This section is organised into four sub-sections. The first sub-section deals with the summary of lessons observed. The second sub-section is a brief discussion of the three themes from the lessons observed. The third sub-section deals with the analysis of lessons observed for each participant. The fourth provides a summary of the analysed lessons.

### **6.1.2 Brief Discussion of the Emergent Themes**

This sub-section discusses the reasons for choosing the three themes as essential for this study. Since the goal of this study was to investigate the practices employed by educators who taught reading in isiXhosa in three Grade 1 classrooms in the Eastern Cape, observing the lessons helped the researcher to see how they used the three Hallidayan Language Arts Curriculum components as listed above. As discussed in Chapter Three, scaffolding is a term used to describe the support given to learners in the teaching-learning process to understand

new concepts and new abilities. The participants scaffolded their learners by providing print-rich classrooms, using teaching aids during the lessons and by repeating concepts repeatedly until the learners mastered them. Reading is a multifaceted process involving word recognition, comprehension, fluency and motivation (Leipzig, 2001). The focus of learning language, through language and about language emerged in the classrooms.

### 6.1.3 Analysis of Lessons for Each Participant

This sub-section focuses on the observed lessons of the three participants.

**Table 7: Summary of Teacher A's observed lessons**

PARTICIPANT: TEACHER A		LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM	THEMES EMERGING
LESSON 1	Literacy Guided Reading	Learning language	Listening, speaking, reading and writing
LESSON 2	Shared Reading	Learning through language	world through the resource of language
LESSON 3	Word Reading	Learning about language	Taking language itself as an object of study
LESSON 4	Shared Writing	Learning about language	Taking language itself as an object of study
LESSON 5	Spelling	Learning language	Listening, speaking, reading and writing

Teacher A teaches in a rural context and was observed during the teaching of five lessons. In all the five lessons, her main focus was on the Learning through language component of the Language Arts Curriculum. She scaffolded her learners through the reading process in ways that revealed the advantage created by the fact that she shared the socio-cultural background and context with learners: she comes from the rural community where the majority of learners come and speaks isiXhosa fluently. She scaffolded the learners by providing a classroom that had pictures, charts and letters of the alphabet on the walls. This gave her learners the opportunity to see written words continuously and to remember the concepts they had been

taught by the participant in previous lessons. During the lessons observed, she used teaching aids that simplified the lessons to the learners.

On the second day of observation, the teacher was using a big book that was placed in front of the chalkboard in a way that would be visible to everyone in the classroom. The teacher started by introducing the cover page of the book that had a title and pictures that guided the learners for prediction. Before she opened the book that was the storybook, she read the title of the book and the learners were listening attentively. The teacher then allowed the learners to read the title after her. After that, she asked them to say what they thought about the book through viewing the cover page. The learners would look at the pictures and say whatever they wanted to say about the book, relating the title to the pictures and estimating the inside story before beginning to read with their teacher.

Teacher A did not use just one strategy. She effectively used almost all the teaching strategies that she cited during the interview. She mentioned that before she introduced a book to the learners, she first showed the class the key words on flash cards or chalkboard summary. Teacher A indeed began by writing words on the chalkboard for the learners to read, but these were words from the previous lesson that learners should have been able to read. The process exposed them to environmental print. Secondly, the participant introduced the phonics before she introduced the key words extracted from the big book she was going to use in shared reading with the learners. In shared book reading, teachers talk through a picture storybook with their class, telling them what it is about and using terms that they can all understand before and while reading aloud to them. Buckingham et al. (2013) note that phonics instruction is one essential component of a comprehensive initial reading program, necessary but not sufficient on its own.

The teacher started to introduce reading all the key words from the using a pointer to point at the words in the big book. She instructed the learners to point at the words with their fingers and she made them read simultaneously as a class, then read as groups and later read individually. Secondly, the learners read sentence by sentence while she gave meanings of words. The detailed explanation enabled learners to understand the text, the paragraphs, the sentences as well as the words in the passage. Thirdly, while the learners read, she attended to reading cues like punctuation, voice projection and animation.

The theme of writing appeared during two of the lessons observed. She then prepared learners before writing by allowing them to cut up strips of sentences from the story and to rebuild the story. They also filled in missing words and practiced spelling. After this activity, the teacher supported learners as the whole class in reconstruction the completely new story that was similar to the story for that week; only the characters and the setting were changed. The learners took turns to write on the chalkboard and later in their exercise books. The fact that she used the story the learners had been reading helped them to write in proper sequence and correct spelling. Rose (2006) further affirms that, when students are actively recognising wordings for themselves, these reading skills transfer to other contexts over time. Once students can read and understand a text, they are prepared to write by spelling words and writing sentences from it, or by taking notes from it (Rose, 2006). This corresponds with what the participants said they did in their classes after teaching their learners, they assessed them by having them spell the words or read alone for other learners in the classroom using reading books, flash cards with single words or sentence strips. The learners were then asked to combine the flash cards to construct the sentence strips on their own. That way the teacher was able to recognise the learners who were still struggling to read. Pretorius et al. (2016) emphasise that teachers should be able to quickly and accurately assess where children are in

their reading development and plan instruction accordingly. These researchers further contend that any child experiencing difficulty in learning to read needs to be identified as early as possible and given support. This is crucial, since those who get off to a poor start seldom catch up.

Because literacy skills developed.

Her learners were able to recognize what a text is about and how it is organised, how words are arranged in phrases, and the meanings of words. They were also able to write the letters of the alphabet, words and construct simple sentences during the writing exercises. Below is an example of the teaching aids she used:



**Figure 1: Teaching aid used by teacher A and a fill in the blank task**

The benefit that stood out, furthermore, had to do with the fact that both learners and teachers spoke isiXhosa fluently. IsiXhosa is also the language of the home, the community and the classroom. There was thus a clear continuity between these spaces for learners. As discussed in Chapter Two, this is an example of the advantages of having a shared social practice between learners and the teacher. In this classroom, I observed shared and mutually

understood ways of behaving or acting; and these patterns of action were guided by a multifaceted collection of norms that might also be called rules, standards, principles, guidelines and unwritten policies, as (2000) remind us. As the lesson went on, it was clear that the teacher offered learners the instruments for the analysis of grammatical features in the story, such as the different stages of texts, theme and theme position, lexical choices (e.g. technical vocabulary, descriptive vocabulary, vocabulary of judgement or attitude), types of verbs and noun groups. Done in the shared indigenous, all these often complicated language competencies were rendered effectively and enhanced learners literacy development.

Lesson observation with Teacher B was as interesting. Teacher B is in a Black Township school where, even though both the teacher and learners speak isiXhosa, the influence of social media on learners is beginning to negatively affect their isiXhosa language and/or cultural identities. The Table below attempts to present what went on in the classroom:

**Table 10: Summary of Teacher B's observed lessons**

PARTICIPANT: TEACHER A		LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM	THEMES EMERGING
LESSON 1	Literacy Guided Reading	Learning language	Listening, speaking, reading and writing
LESSON 2	Shared Reading	Learning through language	world through the resource of language
LESSON 3	Word Reading	Learning about language	Taking language itself as an object of study
LESSON 4	Shared Writing	Learning about language	Taking language itself as an object of study
LESSON 5	Spelling	Learning language	Listening, speaking, reading and writing

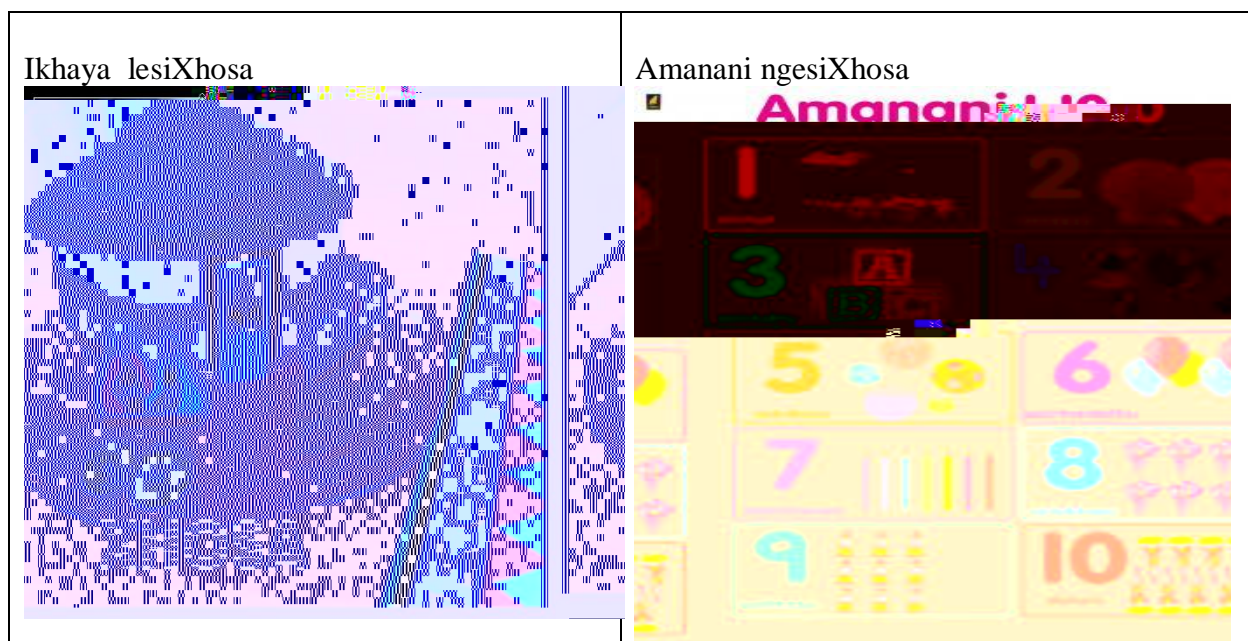
I observed five lessons taught by this teacher. The Reading theme was available in all the five lessons observed. The scaffolding theme was visible in all the five lessons and writing was done in two lessons. During step 1 the teacher prepared learners before reading by

showing learners pictures and asked them to mention the images on the picture. The learners would then be asked to describe the images and predict what the story is about as in school A. This step gave the learners the opportunity to express themselves in isiXhosa and it expanded their vocabulary. She then went into a detailed reading of the story as learners were listening. After that, she read and they read after her. Then she read with the learners and finally she let the learners read on their own. The learners were instructed to point at the words with their fingers while reading. There were two writing lessons during which learners were prepared to write before the actual writing exercise in isiXhosa. The learners were given a chance to practice spelling. The teacher wrote words on the chalkboard and cut them into syllables. Learners then spelt these words with the teacher and afterwards the words were wiped off the board and learners were tasked to write them in their exercise books, each word was to be written three times.

Scaffolding was done during all the five lessons. The teacher placed charts, pictures and models which were relevant for the learning situation in her class. This afforded the learners the chance to visually imagine the events in the stories and the concepts learnt. Also, the teacher used teaching aids when she taught. In addition, teacher B repeated concepts over and over. These actions supported the learners as they grappled with the cognitive issues in class. During the classroom observation, all the teachers assessed their learners through reading groups and independent reading or in the form of written work. They scaffolded the learners effectively if they discovered that they were lagging behind during reading. The scaffolding process is very important in the teaching of reading as it provides a number of strategies to students who are struggling: a teacher (or MKO) may need to differentiate by modifying an

assignment and/or making accommodations (for example, by choosing more accessible text and/or assigning an alternative project).

My observations revealed that the SFL components used by Teacher B developed the organized, how words are arranged in phrases, and the meanings of words. They were also able to write the letters of the alphabet, words and construct simple sentences during the writing exercises. Below is an example of the textual images they used during the lesson:



**Figure 2: Teaching aid and a chart for counting used by teacher B.**

fact that (i) language use is functional; (ii) its function is to make meanings; (iii) these meanings are influenced by the social and cultural context in which they are exchanged; and (iv) the process of using language is a semiotic process, a process of making meaning by choosing. These four points, that language use is functional, semantic, contextual and

semiotic were summarised by the teacher by describing the approach as a functional-semantic approach to language. It is in this way that the teacher used SFL to show how syntactic structure of language places its function as centrally important (i.e. what language does and how it does it), as opposed to more structural approaches, which focus on the elements of language and their combinations. This proved too helpful in enabling learning reading in isiXhosa for the majority of learners.

Table 11

PARTICIPANT: TEACHER A		LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM	THEMES EMERGING
LESSON 1	Literacy Guided Reading	Learning language	Listening, speaking, reading and writing
LESSON 2	Shared Reading	Learning through language	world through the resource of language
LESSON 3	Word Reading	Learning about language	Taking language itself as an object of study
LESSON 4	Shared Writing	Learning about language	Taking language itself as an object of study
LESSON 5	Spelling	Learning language	Listening, speaking, reading and writing

The Table above shows a summary of the lessons taught by Teacher C in an ex-Model C school (former whites-only school) which were observed by the researcher. Five lessons were observed. The theme of reading appeared in all the five lessons, the theme of writing appeared in two lessons while the scaffolding theme was in all the five lessons. When it was time to teach word reading, teacher C read the story with the learners, then from that story she guided them to come up with a list of words. The meanings of those words were discussed in the context of the sentences and paragraphs in which they were extracted. Then after that the learners were instructed to construct sentences in which they used those words. The first part of the lesson assisted the teacher to lead the learners in a discussion, the oral aspect of the lesson. The second part of the lesson enabled learners to read the passage and the selected words with meaning.

During the writing lessons the teacher used the story the class had been reading to create a new passage. The whole class wrote a new story, changing the characters and the setting of the original story. After that, the learners created new stories in their groups; they changed the characters and the setting of the original story and the whole class story. These activities gave them support and prepared them for the hand writing exercise. For the hand writing exercise each learner drew pictures and wrote their own story. They were to copy the style of writing that the teacher had modelled.

In all these lessons the teacher

Even though the learners in the class of Teacher C were able to recognize what a text was about and how it is organized, how words are arranged in phrases, and the meanings of words, the fact that isiXhosa is only spoken in the classroom, and not at home and/or communities where learners come affected the learning in ways that were not in the other two contexts. However, Teacher C identified a problem that detrimentally affected learner development in learning how to read in isiXhosa as a mother tongue. She had to extend the time for the teaching of reading to introduce isiXhosa as the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) in her classroom, since the school was a Former Model C School. She indicated that because English was the LoLT in the school, several learners had problems with pronouncing isiXhosa words. Learners were grappling to learn in isiXhosa, and were not being supported by their parents, who according to the teacher were against the use of isiXhosa as the LoLT in the school. Bloch (2000), as discussed in Chapter Two, maintains that most children lack parental support from homes where reading actually commences in some cases.

During the interview Teacher C revealed that even though she taught the learners using isiXhosa, when it was their turn to read alone, they pronounced some of the words in English, the language they were used to. Therefore, she had to extend the time scheduled for reading to inculcate the basics of reading before proceeding to the word level. Although this teacher employed a top-down approach, she recognised that the learners could not master reading without acquiring the reading basics. Switching to isiXhosa as the LoLT in this school was thus still a challenge during the data generation period.

Therefore, in some instances the teacher had to use English to explain different aspects of the texts, especially when it came to numbers.

#### **6.1.4 Summary of Lessons Observed**

Literacy is a complex construct and concepts of what it entails are affected by cultural, linguistic, environmental and socio-economic diversity (Banda, 2004), as well as the multiple complex models and language and literacy codes that it constitutes (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). One of the challenges faced by the education system in South Africa is literacy. This study sought to investigate how the reading and writing skills of learners in grade 1 classes were enhanced by the use of SFL theory.

The reading and writing skills of learners in the three classrooms improved because the three teachers' approaches to teaching language were aligned with the three Language Arts components of SFL theory. The learners were able to read, to comprehend and to sequence the events in the stories they read. They were also able to write their own stories, write simple sentences and spell words with stories they had read. Their vocabulary increased and their spoken isiXhosa was also enhanced.

A major factor that made it possible for the literacy skills of the learners to improve is the scaffolding technique employed by the participants in all the lessons observed. In all the lessons, it was clear that the:

- ❖ Learning involved the use of basic resources of the learners' first language and relied mainly on the mastery of the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing;

- ❖ Learning was characterised by learning activities geared towards learning sense of relationships as well as an awareness of ways to express experience; and,
- ❖ Learning involved taking language itself as an object of study, with a focus on grammatical systems in terms of meanings, vocabulary, phonology and writing systems.

Even the learners whose zone of proximal development (ZPD) was very low; the approach by all the three teachers supported all learners until their ZPD became the zone of actual development. Therefore, the scaffolding received by the learners during the lessons played a huge role in improving the literacy skills of the learners. This was more pronounced in the rural school though, in comparison to the Black Township and urban school. As the observed data revealed, the fact that learners and teachers in the rural school shared community and language backgrounds meant that communication was easier than in the Black Township and urban area, where this was not necessarily the case between teachers and learners.

## **6.2 ANALYSIS OF SEMI- STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS**

### **6.2.1 An Overview of the Analysis Process**

The other data-generating instrument used in this study was the semi-structured interviews.

The purpose of analysing semi-

Arts Curriculum principles of (a) learning language; (b) learning through language; and (c) learning about language; and the extent to which observing or deviating from such principles

Semi- structured interviews were conducted after the lessons presented by the participants. This means each participant was interviewed five times, bringing the total number of interviews to 15. The questions asked during the interviews aimed at responding to the overall questions asked by the study. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) concerns itself with meaning which is constructed by people when they communicate through spoken or written texts. It is classified into the semiotic functions which are field, tenor and mode; as well as the semantic meta-functions which are ideational meta- function, interpersonal meta-function and textual meta- function.

This study analysed the semi- structured interviews and the documents through the use of SFL mood analysis which is an analytical framework useful for analysing spoken and written texts. The chronological order of the subject and the finite in a clause determine the mood of the clause. The finite expresses the tense of the clause and most importantly, it determines the view of the presenter or author of the text (Garcia Montes, et al., 2014; Banks, 2002; Mehwish et al., 2015).

### **6.2. 2 Mood Choices Made by the participants during Semi- Structured Interviews**

Below is a Table that shows the mood choices made by the participants during semi-structured interviews.

**Table 8: Mood choices- Adapted from Adetomokun, 2012**

<b>PARTICIPANT</b>	<b>DECLARATIVE MOOD</b>	<b>IMPERATIVE MOOD</b>	<b>INTERROGATIVE MOOD</b>	<b>INDIVIDUAL TOTAL</b>
TEACHER A	20	-	-	20
TEACHER B	25	-	-	25
TEACHER C	19	-	1	20
GROSS TOTAL	54	0	1	65
PERCENTAGE	83.1%	0	1.538%	100%

The table above displays the mood choices made by participants during semi- structured interviews. There were 65 clauses and only one clause was in the interrogative mood, which constitutes 1.54% of the overall. 64 clauses were in the declarative form, which makes up 83.1 % of the 65 clauses. This suggests that the participants were confident about what the SFL theory can do for grade 1 IsiXhosa home language learners. One of the features of the declarative mood is that the speaker gives information. Since the participants were giving information in interview settings, it is normal to have the declarative mood dominate the interviews. They also show with confidence the manner in which they help their learners to learn reading and writing.

### **6.2.3 Analysis of responses by individual participants**

This section deals with the individual responses from the three participants. The responses are arranged in terms of the 3 interview questions I asked each study participant. For each question, the response from each participant is analysed.

### 6.2.3.1 Responses to question 1: What strategies do you use to develop the learners' ability to read?

#### TEACHER A

Clause 1: I make sure all of them have access to the story we are reading.

I	Make sure	All of them	Have access to the story we are reading
Subject	finite	Predicator	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

Clause 2: Since we have a shortage of books,

Since	We	have	A shortage of books
Adjunct: conjunctive	subject	finite	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

Clause 3: I use the big story book to read stories with them

I	Use	The big story book	To read stories with them
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

Clause 4: The first step is that I make them look at pictures in the big story book

The first step is that	I	make	Them look at pictures	In the big story book
Adjunct: conjunctive	Subject	finite	Predicator	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue		

Clause 5: and tell me what they see

And	Tell	Me	What they see
Adjunct: conjunctive	Finite	Predicator	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE                      residue			

Clause 6: The second step is that I tell them the story we are about to read

The second step is that	I	Tell	Them	the story we are about to read
Adjunct: conjunctive	subject	finite	Predicator	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE                                      residue				

Clause 7: I discovered that when the learners know the story it becomes easier for them to read

I	Discovered that	When the learners know the story	It becomes easier for them to read
Subject	Finite	predicator	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE                      residue			

*TEACHER B*

**Clause 1: I read the story for them first while they listen and look at the words....**

**Clause 3: I make them point at the words they are reading, so that they can recognize the letters**

I	Make them point	At the words they are reading	So that they can recognize the letters
Subject	Finite	predicator	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

**Clause 4: Even when they read on their own**

Even when	They	Read	On their own
Adjunct: circumstantial	Subject	Finite	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

**Clause 5: I want them to point with their fingers**

I	Want	Them to point	With their fingers
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

**Clause 6: Pointing helps them to recognise the words**

Pointing	Helps	Them to recognize	The words
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

**Clause 7: next time they read the same words in a different story**

Next time	They	read	The same words in a different story
Adjunct: conjunctive	subject	finite	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

**Clause 8: So, pointing with the finger helps them develop reading ability**

So	Pointing	With the finger	Helps them develop reading ability
Adjunct: conjunctive	Finite	predicator	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

*TEACHER C***Clause 1: When I guide them to read the story over and over**

When	I	guide	Them to read the story over and over
Adjunct: conjunctive	Subject	finite	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

**Clause 2: even the slow learners learn the words**

Even	The slow learners	Learn	The words
Adjunct: conjunctive	Subject	Finite	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

**Clause 3: RTl says I must make the learners read after me**

RtL	Says	I must make the learners	Read after me
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

**Clause 4: then they must read in their groups and all of them as a class**

Then	they	Must read	In their groups	And all of them as a class
Adjunct: conjunctive	subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue		

**Clause 5: This is done several times until the learners can recognize the words**

This	Is done	Several times	Until the learners can recognize the words
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

In the first question asked during the semi-structured interviews, the researcher asked the first participants said she first provides reading material for her learners. She indicated that there are not enough books in her school, but she tried to provide for them. Pertinent learner support material plays an important role in the reading performance of learners. For reading instruction to be successful numerous sources are required. Sufficient numbers of reading books, especially in the foundation phase, can drastically change the attitude of learners as well as of teachers in the classroom situation. This finding shows how the shortage of books, textbooks as well as readers, is still critical in some South African schools. A lack of resources renders many schools dysfunctional. When this happens the school tends to be ignored by the community, since it is failing their children and the poor performance of learners is blamed on the staff.

Lockheed and Verspoor (1991) agree that research conducted in various countries, including South Africa, showed that the improvement of learners depends on the availability of textbooks in all subjects. Sedibe (2011) believes that where resources are inadequate and unequally distributed, a culture of teaching and learning may decline, as the only source of information will be the teachers. Books help learners to develop language structure, syntax and style, deepen their understanding of punctuation and expand their vocabulary. Furthermore, when learners are exposed to many texts, they develop knowledge of language

structures, phonology, decoding and sight word recognition, while improving the inferential skills they need for critical reading.

After that she talks about the SFL approaches that she uses to teach reading and seems to be satisfied with the reading ability of her learners. She responds to this question with seven declarative mood clauses. The second participant talks about her scaffolding techniques. She begins by reading the story for them while they listen. Then she advocates for the pointing of the story with the fingers. In her opinion the learners acquire the skill to read when they point at the words. This strategy identified by the second participant is one of the strategies that align itself with SFL. She sounds happy about her learners reading skills. She responds to the question asked in eight clauses in the declarative mood.

The third participant mentions the fact that she uses the SFL theory to teach reading. She then emphasises the repetition of concepts and in her opinion it is the repetition of concepts that helps her learners to read. She responds to this question in five declarative mood clauses. So the three participants draw from different Language Arts Curriculum components as to teach their learners how to read. They are all happy with the reading ability of their learners. The SFL components they make mention of are (a) learning language; (b) learning through language; and (c) learning about language. They also talk about repetition which is a scaffolding trend of the pedagogy. Learners are scaffolded through repetition of concepts.

6.2.3.2 Responses to question 2: How do you try to expand the comprehension skills of the learners and their vocabulary?

*TEACHER A*

**Clause 1: When we have read the story many times and the reading skill has been mastered**

When	We	Have read	The story many times	and the reading skill has been mastered
Adjunct: conjunctive	subject	Finite	predicator	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE			residue	

**Clause 2: I go through the meaning of the story**

I	Go	Through the meaning	Of the story
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

**Clause 3: I ask the learners questions to check if the meaning of the whole story has been understood**

I	Ask	The learners questions	To check if the meaning of the whole story has been understood
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

**Clause 4: After that I ask questions on each paragraph of the story**

After that	I	ask	Questions on each paragraph of the story
Subject	Finite	predicator	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

**Clause 5: this is to help them understand how that paragraph fits into the whole story, who it is about, what is happening in the paragraph, etc.**

This is to help	them	understand	How that paragraph fits
Adjunct: conjunctive	subject	Finite	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

**Clause 6: This helps them comprehend the lesson learnt**

This helps	Them	Comprehend	The lesson learnt
Adjunct: conjunctive	Subject	Finite	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

**Clause 7: On vocabulary, I usually choose words that are not familiar in the story and explain them**

On vocabulary	I	Usually choose	Words that are not familiar in the story and explain them
Adjunct: conjunctive	subject	Finite	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

*TEACHER B*

**Clause 1: During the detailed reading time, I usually pick unfamiliar words and explain them**

During the detailed reading time	I	Usually pick	Unfamiliar words and explain them
Adjunct: conjunctive	Subject	Finite	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

**Clause 2: For example, many learners do not know what a rainbow is in isiXhosa**

For example	Many learners	Do not know	What a rainbow is in isiXhosa
Subject	Finite	predicator	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

**Clause 3: so, I asked them what a rainbow is in isiXhosa and they said, “Yirainbow”**

So	I	Asked	Them what a rainbow is in isiXhosa	And they said,
Adjunct: conjunctive	Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue		

**Clause 4: This is an English word which is used when isiXhosa is spoken**

This	Is	An English word	Which is used when isiXhosa is spoken
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

**Clause 5: we place the prefix in front of the English word to make it Xhosa**

We	Place	The prefix in front of the English word	To make it Xhosa
Subject	Finite		

**Clause 7: Only one learner knew the word, it is “Umnyama”**

Only	One learner	knew	
Adjunct: conjunctive	Subject	finite	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

**Clause 8: For comprehension, I ask learners questions that guide them through the story**

For comprehension	I	ask	Learners questions that guide them through the story
Adjunct: conjunctive	subject	finite	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

**Clause 9: I ask questions like, “who is doing the action in this sentence? What is he doing? Are the other people happy with this action”?**

I	Ask	Questions like	
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

**Clause 10: such questions give them full understanding of the passage covered**

Such questions	Give	Them a full understanding	Of the passage covered
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

## TEACHER C

**Clause 1: When we read the story in detail, I explain difficult words in each sentence**

When	We	read	The story in detail	I explain difficult words in each sentence
Adjunct: conjunctive	subject	Finite	predicator	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE			residue	

**Clause 2: I make sure the learners understand the meaning of a word**

I	Make sure	The learners	Understand the meaning of a word
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

**Clause 3: and the role played by that word in the sentence**

And the role	Played	By that word	In the sentence
Adjunct: conjunctive	Finite	subject	Complement
MOOD: INTERROGATIVE PASSIVE VOICE			residue

**Clause 4: In this way my learners understand the events in the story**

In this way	My learners	understand	The events in the story
Adjunct: conjunctive	Subject	finite	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE			residue

**Clause 5: and at the same time their vocabulary grows**

And at the same time	Their vocabulary	Grows
Adjunct: conjunctive	Subject	Finite
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		

In response to the question on how the participant expands the vocabulary and comprehension skills of the learners, the first participant focuses on the reading skill then she deals with meaning. She deals with meaning making at the level of the text, at the level of the sentence and at the level of the word. She responds in seven clauses which are in the declarative mood.

Teacher B deals with vocabulary during detailed reading. She concerns herself with when there are indigenous Xhosa words. She also deals with meaning making mainly at the level of the sentence. Her response is given in ten clauses all in the declarative mood.

Teacher C responds by stating that she deals with vocabulary during the detailed reading time. She even deals with meaning making as she makes the learners know the meaning of words and the role the words play in sentences. Her response is in five clauses. Four of them are in the declarative mood and one of them is in the interrogative mood. This mood suggests that she is asking a questions. However, in this case, teacher C was not asking a question. The clause is in the passive voice that is why the subject comes after the finite.

The three participants expand the vocabulary of the learners and comprehension skills by using the three Language Arts Curriculum components as discussed in the early chapters. They use learning language, learning about language and learning through language to pframe their approaches to teaching reading.

## 6.2.3.3 Responses to question 3: In what way do you teach your learners to write?

TEACHER A

**Clause 1: Writing used to be the most difficult skill to teach**

Writing	Used to be	The most difficult skill to teach
Subject	Finite	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue

**Clause 2: but now I just use the story we have been reading to teach writing**

But now	I	Just use	The story we have been reading	To teach writing
Adjunct: conjunctive	subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue		

**Clause 3: During step 3, I teach simple grammatical concepts like verbs and nouns**

During step 3	I	teach	Simple grammatical concepts like verbs and nouns
Adjunct: conjunctive	Subject	finite	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

**Clause 4: These are picked from the story and learners who struggle also get to understand**

These	Are picked	From the story	And learners who struggle also get to understand
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

**Clause 5: The learners are given tasks that require them to write**

The learners	Are given	Tasks	That require them to write
Subject	Finite	predicator	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

**Clause 6: The word lists on the walls and the spelling exercises we do help them to write properly**

The word lists on the walls	And the spelling exercises we do	Help them	To write properly
Subject	Adjunct: conjunctive	finite	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

*b. TEACHER B***Clause 1: When we get to step 4 of RtL cycle we write a new story on the chalkboard as a class**

When	We	get	
Adjunct: conjunctive	Subject	finite	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

**Clause 2: We only change the characters and the setting of the original story**

We	Only change	The characters and the setting	Of the original story
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

**Clause 3: The learners enjoy this activity**

The learners	Enjoy	This activity
Subject	Finite	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue

**Clause 4: They take turns to write on the chalkboard**

They	Take turns	to write in the chalkboard
Subject	Finite	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue

**Clause 5: After that they write stories in their groups which are also based on the original story**

After that	They	Write stories	In their groups which are also based on the original story
Adjunct: conjunctive	Subject	Finite	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

**Clause 6: Since by this time the learners know the story very well and they have learnt words**

Since by this time	The learners	know	The story very well	And they have learnt words
Adjunct: conjunctive	Subject	finite	predicator	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue		

**Clause 7: It becomes easy for them to construct proper sentences and to write correct spelling**

It becomes easy	For them	To construct	Proper sentences and write correct spelling
Adjunct: conjunctive	subject	Finite	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

*TEACHER C***Clause 1: Step 3 of RtL says prepare before writing**

Step 3 of RtL	Says	Prepare before writing
Subject	Finite	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue

**Clause 2: During that step I do whole class activities like fill in the blank spaces**

During that step	I	Do	Whole class activities like fill in the blank spaces
Adjunct: conjunctive	subject	Finite	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

**Clause 3: For the learners to fill in, they need to read the flash cards I place on the table**

For	The learners	To fill in	They need to read the flash cards I place on the table
Adjunct: conjunctive	subject	Finite	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

**Clause 4: This activity helps them to recognise words**

This activity	Helps	them	To recognize words
Subject	Finite	predicator	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

**Clause 5: Then I practice spelling with them**

Then	I	Practice	Spelling with them
Adjunct: conjunctive	Subject	Finite	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

**Clause 6: I make them write the correct spelling three times in their books**

I	Make	them write	Correct spelling in their books
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

**Clause 7: This activity helps them master spelling**

This activity	helps	them	Master spelling
Subject	finite	predicator	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

**Clause 8: All these activities are done through the use of the story that the class has been reading**

All these activities	Are done	Through the use	Of the story that the class has been reading
Subject	finite	predicator	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

**Clause 9: We also practice hand writing**

We	Also practice	Hand writing
Subject	Finite	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue

**Clause 10: They copy what I write on the chalkboard**

they	Copy	What I write	On the chalkboard
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
MOOD: DECLARATIVE		residue	

Teacher A seems to have gone through a transition in her life. She states that the teaching of writing was the most difficult task for her. She does not state that her troubles ended when she began using the pedagogy, but it is implied in her response. She talks about teaching grammar through the use of SFL and other functions. Her response is in six clauses in the declarative mood.

Teacher B explains how she uses the pedagogy to teach writing. She talks about the activity most enjoyed by her learners. Her learners writing skills have developed because they write about what they have read. She replies in seven clauses in the declarative mood.

Teacher C talks about the activities her learners are engaged in which help them to learn how to write. Activities such as fill in the blank spaces and spelling exercises prepare them for writing. In addition, she teaches her learners handwriting, which is one of the concepts taught in grade one classes. Her response is in ten declarative mood clauses.

### **6.3 ANALYSIS OF DOCUMENTS**

To analyse formal documents this study used the SFL register analysis of field, tenor and mode. Field is the range of topics or what the text is about. Tenor denotes the role language plays in constructing relationships among participants. Mode refers to the method chosen by

semantic resources that the member of a culture type

(Halliday, 1978: 111). The CAPS document used by the educators to cover the syllabus in

formal documents. The two documents are analysed together in line with SFL register analysis of field, tenor and mode. This section has three sub-sections. The first sub-section is the analysis of field, tenor and mode. The second sub-section is analysis of context and style. The third sub-section summarises document analysis.

#### **6.3.1. Comparative Analysis of Field, Tenor and Mode**

study were CAPS document that guides the participant on the curriculum to be covered in the grade 1 class. The second document was a list of lesson plans written by the participants in line with the three Language Arts Curriculum components. The table below compares these two documents (Butt et al., 2003).

**Table 13: Comparative analysis of docs. Using SFL Register analysis (adapted from Butt et al., 2003)**

REGISTER	EXPLANATION	CAPS DOCUMENT	LESSON PLANS
FIELD	the range of topics or what the text is about	A formal document that gives guidelines as to what is to be taught in a grade 1, IsiXhosa classroom	A formal document that tabulates the genre or concept the teacher intends to teach during a period of a number of periods
TENOR	The role language plays in constructing relationships among participants.	Information written here is for a specific audience; grade 1 teachers. It is written in an orderly format and formal language is used. The audience is expected to follow the instructions laid out.  The interpersonal relationship distances the reader, there is no emotional connection with the readers.  The authors takes an authoritative stance	Information is written for a specific audience. The author of the lesson plan may have written it for him/herself. It may be a generic lesson plan written by the department of education (DBE) for teachers to use. It has been written for a specific purpose, to teach a grade 1 class.  The interpersonal relationship is professional, no emotions are evoked between the author and the reader.  The author takes an authoritative stance
MODE	Mode refers to the method chosen by language users to share information.	Written text, using declaratives to give information.  Lexicogrammatical choices do not encourage a response from the reader. Coherence achieved by a consistent linking of elements of field and tenor.	Written text, using declaratives to give information.  Lexicogrammatical choices do not encourage a response from the reader. Coherence achieved by a consistent linking of elements of field and tenor.

**6.3.2. Comparative Analysis of Context and Style**

The two texts under analysis are similar in style. They are both written for grade 1 teachers. The vocabulary used is formal, employing the jargon of the teaching- learning discipline. However, there are some differences in terms of context and style between the two documents. The CAPS document outlines the topics to be covered by the teacher in the grade 1 class over a period of one academic year. On the other hand, the lesson plans written by the participants covered one or two topics per lesson plan. They were aligned to cover lessons for a few days.

Secondly, CAPS document had a list of what the teacher is expected to teach, but there was no specified support for the teacher as to how he/she should teach the area outlined. On the

educational goals set by the Department of Education. The documents were analysed using SFL register analysis.

#### **6.4. CONCLUSION**

This chapter analysed and discussed data generated from classroom observations, semi-structured interviews and documents. The three Language Arts Curriculum components emerged from the lessons observed. In response to the questions asked by this study the participants used the three Language Arts Curriculum components as part of the strategies to develop the reading skills of the learners. They used approaches exercised in the pedagogy to expand the comprehension skills and vocabulary of the learners. They also used written texts that the learners read in class to teach writing. To analyse the semi-structured interviews, the SFL mood analysis was used. The declarative mood chosen by the participants when they responded to the questions asked revealed their confidence and their satisfaction about their

Data implies that all the three teachers employ the three Language Arts Curriculum components in their classrooms in order to teach their learners how to read. They also use these three Language Arts Curriculum components in their pedagogy to expand the comprehension abilities and vocabulary of their learners. These components further impact on their pedagogy to teach writing.

The documents that were analysed for the purposes of this study were CAPS document and lesson plans written by the participants in line with the Hallidayan Language Arts Curriculum components seem to have had an influence. The two documents were analysed through SFL register analysis of field tenor and mode. The comparison of the two documents revealed that even though they are both meant for the teachers of grade 1 learners, CAPS document only outlines the cognitive matter to be covered, while the three Language Arts Curriculum

components styled lesson plans give the teacher a systematic guideline of the teaching-learning process.

It can be argued, based on the analysis of classroom observations, semi- structured interviews and documents, that the three Language Arts Curriculum components as espoused in the SFL theory enables learners to read with understanding and it expands their vocabulary and enables them to write at grade appropriate levels.

## CHAPTER 7

### RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

#### 7.1 THE GOAL OF THE STUDY

The goal of this study was to explore and understand the pedagogic approach used by grade 1 teachers to enhance the reading and writing skills of the learners. Of particular interest to the study was to explore the manner in which the three Language Arts Curriculum components as suggested by Halliday impact on pedagogy, and whether or not this improves the learners reading, writing and comprehension skills. It sorts to see the impact the pedagogy has on the literacy skills of grade 1-isiXhosa learners. To accomplish this goal this study was guided by the following research question:

- ❖ What role does focusing on learning language; learning through language; and learning about language in the process of the teaching of reading play in literacy development in three Grade 1 classrooms?

#### 7.2 KEY FINDINGS

##### 7.2.1. SFL develops the Reading Skills of Learners

Through classroom observations, semi- structured interviews and documents analysis the research established that when the teachers use the three Language Arts Curriculum components in their pedagogy they develop the reading ability of the learners. Each participant was observed five times which totalled to 15 observed lessons altogether. In all the 15 lessons the participants employed taught reading drawing from three Language Arts Curriculum components.

The participants used the detailed reading to explain sequences, concepts and challenges in the texts read during observed lessons. During the semi-structured interviews, the participants detailed the way in which they ask probing questions to motivate the learners to stretch their comprehension skills. Documentary evidence revealed that CAPS document expects learners to read with understanding, but it does not provide the approach to achieving that outcome. The lesson plans written by the participants were written in line with three Language Arts Curriculum components.

If the teaching of reading is framed within the three Language Arts Curriculum components, teachers are able to identify words in texts in ways that enable learners learn how to read stories with understanding. This is because these words were explained in the context of the word itself, in the context of the sentence and in the context of the text. During interviews they confirmed that they focus on increasing the vocabulary of the learners. The lesson plans attested to that fact in that one of the steps in the lesson plans was on vocabulary.

Learning about language (word reading and shared writing) and (spelling) component gave the learners opportunities to write as a whole class, write as groups in preparation for learning language component (individual spelling) where the learners wrote as individuals. What makes the three Language Arts Curriculum components as suggested by SFL theory stands out is the use of read material to write assignments. These techniques enabled learners to have content to write and to construct proper written texts with accurate spelling.

The classroom observations and semi- structured interviews answered the same question asked by the study and the findings in one research instrument were confirmed in the other. The formal documents did not answer the same questions. However, the lesson plans gave

evidence that the three Language Arts Curriculum components as suggested by SFL theory was being used in the classrooms of the participants.

### **7.3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations are made:

#### **7.3.1. Recommendations on professional development**

Through classroom observation, semi- structured interviews and document analysis, this study has established the fact that if the three Language Arts Curriculum components are used to shape the lesson plans and pedagogic approach, literacy levels of learners improves. The participants in this study were able to develop the reading skills of the learners, expand the comprehension of the learners, increase the vocabulary of the learners in the target language, isiXhosa in this case, and enhance the writing skills of the learners. Considering the poor reading and writing scores of South African learners in International and National reading and writing assessments, it is safe to assume that is the adoption of three Language Arts Curriculum components to phrame pedagogic approach in the FP could improve outcomes in the FP.

It is therefore the recommendation of this study that in-service workshops need to dra ge Arts Curriculum components to re-train FP teachers. The Department of Education in South Africa can take the initiative of finding skilled personnel to train educators in workshops until they are ready to use it in the classroom.

**7.3.2 Recommendations on the Training of Teachers to Teach Reading**

Among the many causes of poor reading and writing proficiencies in South African schools are poor teaching methods. To curb this challenge this study recommends that the universities and colleges of education, prepare prospective teachers with pedagogic approaches that will speak to the needs of our country. To achieve this, the adoption of the three Language Arts Curriculum components could be useful as it

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