

**A Case Study of the Multiple Contextual
Factors that impact on the Reading
Competencies of Grade 3 non-mother
tongue speakers of English in a
Grahamstown Primary School in the
Eastern Cape, South Africa.**

Thesis

Submitted to Rhodes University
in fulfillment for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by

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January 2007

ABSTRACT

This study explores what happens in a reading class where grade 3 learners from specific cultural and ethnic backgrounds are taught to read in a language other than their mother-tongue.

The research takes place at a primary school in the Eastern Cape, South Africa where English is the Medium of Instruction (MOI). The report on the findings of this research reveals that the teaching strategies and reading theories of the teacher, the literacy backgrounds of the learners, as well as the language preferences of the parents, are some of the contextual factors that impact on reading.

One of the major findings in the study constitutes the debilitating effects of the learners' socio-economic circumstances on their reading performances in the classroom. The socio-political factors that impact on the learners, the teacher, and the school as a social unit, proved to be the factors that are remnants of the Apartheid segregation policies as well as the educational policies of the present government, especially, those pertaining to mother-tongue Instruction.

Although it is difficult to generalize from a small-scale study like this, its benefits lie in the evidence that confirms the influence of specific contextual factors on reading proficiencies, the evidence that identifies poor and effective teaching practices and the evidence that elucidate the implications of non-mother tongue instruction. This research may thus serve to raise the consciousness of practitioners in reading instruction, parents and policy makers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to gratefully acknowledge everyone who assisted and encouraged me during the course of this research, especially my supervisor, Ms Helen Alferts for her support and dedication.

I also wish to thank the principal, the Grade three teacher and the learners at the primary school where the research was undertaken, for their willingness and enthusiasm to participate in this project.

My sincere thanks go to Mr. Leon Hector who painstakingly edited my work and Ms Veronica Williams in the printing department at Rhodes University.

Lastly, I express my sincere gratitude to my family, colleagues and friends for their understanding and support.

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Pencil, ink marks and highlighting ruin books for other readers.

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CHAPTER 1.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY.

1.1 Introduction.

This chapter provides the background of the study undertaken at a Primary school in Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape, South Africa, where the researcher explored how reading is taught in a Grade three classroom. It begins with the context of the research and explains what prompted the researcher to conduct the research. It then moves on to describe the political context of the apartheid legacy and its linguistic consequences and finally, the goals and the structure of the study.

1.2. Context of the Research.

The rationale for this study developed from my personal experiences as an English language teacher at a Government High school in the Eastern Cape (South Africa).

In my Grade 8 classes, I find that many learners display reading abilities that are not commensurate with their age and level of education. They find it difficult to comprehend English texts, and are unable to relate to the deeper embedded meanings of texts or answer questions which require semantic parsing and reasoning. They can only answer simple lower order questions, quoting verbatim from the texts and showing little or no understanding of what they have read. These learners, Afrikaans-and Xhosa-

mother-tongue speakers, have been instructed in English from Grade one and are taught English as a first language. English has thus replaced the home language of the learners as Medium of Instruction (MOI).

As cited by Grabe and Stoller (2002:30), social factors that influence reading development include "literacy background and experiences, instructional practices, peer and sibling interaction and cultural and social inheritance." In this study, I aim to provide evidence of the instructional practices and techniques used in the reading classroom and the interaction between the teacher and the learners through a single case study observation. Other contextual factors, like the theories of reading underlying the instructional practices, (Smith 1984, Cummins 2001, Grabe and Stoller 2002), the attitudes of the learners and the teacher towards reading instruction, the choice of MOI and the socio-economic backgrounds of the learners are explicated against the backdrop of black education in South Africa and the apartheid legacy of South Africa (Hartshone 1992, Heugh 1995, Alexander 1989).

Similarities between the learners that I teach and second language learners in South Africa are reported by teachers and researchers in the field of language instruction. In a study commissioned by the National Department of Education of approximately 10 000 Grade 3 and 4 learners, it was found that the South African learners' average competence in literacy was the fourth lowest of the twelve countries involved in the study (Taylor, Muller, Vinjevold 2003), showing that learners in South Africa are performing below their grade counterparts from other countries in the literacy tests and below the curriculum requirements for their grades in sentence completion tasks and reading comprehension.

In my classes I find that learners struggle to read fluently, they skip difficult words, read word for word, mouth the words while reading and even use their fingers to follow the words.

According to Cooper (in Alderson and Urquhart: 1984:233),

Unsuccessful readers lose the meaning of sentences after they have decoded the text, they read word for word and are dependent on the text.

Pretorius (2002) feels that the problem for many of South African second language learners is that they struggle to comprehend the texts as they must first master the language in which the content is presented before they can master the content of the learning material itself.

As my grade 8 high school learners are taught to read at primary school in Grades one to three, I decided to explore how reading is taught at a feeder school in the Grahamstown area. However, as the grade one teachers did not volunteer to have the research done in their classes, I conducted the study with a grade three class where the teacher had volunteered. The argument can be made that when children reach grade three, the end of the phase, they should be able to read. Evidently, if their reading abilities are deficient in grade three, they would struggle in the grades that follow, including grade 8.

1.3. The Apartheid legacy and its Linguistic Consequences.

In the apartheid era, 1960 to 1994, government schools enrolled children from mono-lingual and mono-ethnic communities

unilaterally as the apartheid laws enforced segregation and unilateral socialization.

In this era, so-called * 'white' children went to 'white' schools and were educated by 'white' teachers only. The same applied to *'black' ' and *'colored' children and this trend continued at high schools, tertiary institutions and South African universities. Learners from different ethnic backgrounds were thus instructed in either Afrikaans or English as medium of instruction but not in any of the indigenous languages of the indigenous people. The children from so-called black government schools were forced to be instructed in English from Grade 3 onwards, relegating their home language to an inferior tool for instruction. Afrikaans, as the language of the dominant political party, was compulsory at all government schools. This language policy gave rise to political demonstrations and violence which culminated in the 1976 Soweto uprisings (Guus and Maartens 1998, Alexander 1989).

In the period 1998 to 2002, school- based research projects which were geared towards the failure of schools to educate children in public schools, highlighted the inequities in South African society, the different languages spoken and the socio-economic circumstances as some of the reasons why these learners fare so poorly (Taylor et.al. 2003:35).

According to the South African Bill of Rights (appendix 1- page 141), everyone has the right to receive education in the official language/s of their choice, while Policy number 4 of the South African Constitution, adopted on 8 May 1996, proclaim that the State should elevate the status of the indigenous, previously marginalized languages (Guus and Maartens 1998:24).

However, many parents reject this right as they consider their

mother tongue as socially, politically and economically inferior to English and the children are thus directly or indirectly forced to develop skills in a language which is regarded as superior (Heugh 1995).

Given the linguistic separation on racial grounds of the Apartheid legacy in South Africa, many non-mother tongue speakers of English opt for English as Medium of instruction in order to access education, well-paid jobs and political and economic power (Heugh1995:75). In 1979, the Education and Training Act stated that the medium of instruction should be mother-tongue at primary school but the wishes of the parents should be considered after grade four (Vinjevold 1999:210).

Given this scenario, authorities, language policy makers, educators, as well as parents and learners in South Africa, are inadvertently drawn into a “catch 22 situation” (Hartshorne 1992:57) – that is to opt for English as MOI or to opt for mother-tongue instruction. According to Guus and Maartens (1998:33), the dilemma of most of Africa since the 1960’s exists in,

the reality of language needs and the need to free the majority of inhabitants from the languages that were part of earlier imperialist political systems by developing the African languages.

However, the education system at present is said to be unsuccessful, given the continued poor results and the poor performance of South African pupils in international assessments. David Yutar (2004:1) states unequivocally that,

South Africa now has an education system which lacks accountability, promotes quantity at the cost of quality and produces pupils untrained in basic skills, such as reading, writing, and ill-equipped for the modern world.

The preference of English as MOI is seen as a major contextual factor that impacts on the classroom and it is explicated in order to ascertain whether learning is hampered or advantaged. In addition, the socio-economic milieu of the learners and their home literacy backgrounds impact on the classroom and classroom practices in diverse ways and need to be explored.

1.4. The Goals of the Research.

The purpose of the research is-

- To find out how reading is taught in a Grade 3 class at a feeder school of the high school where I am at present teaching, and to ascertain the pupils' reading abilities.
- To explore and analyze the theories of reading which inform and influence the teacher's pedagogical practices.
- To ascertain the teacher's and the pupils' attitude toward reading instruction.
- To find out which language the parents of the learners in the study prefer as MOI.
- To find out the learners' home literacy backgrounds in order to understand their reading performances.

1.5. The Structure of the Thesis.

This report consists of five chapters. The present chapter serves as an introduction, providing a rationale for the research and a

background to the research topic.

The second chapter explores literature on reading instruction, theories of reading, reading practices and the impact of non-mother-tongue instruction in educational settings. In addition, literature on case study research is explicated in order to provide a rationale for this mode of enquiry.

The third chapter presents the methodological procedures undertaken, that is, a single case study, incorporating observation, interviews and a questionnaire. It focuses on the teachers' teaching strategies and practices, the teacher and learners' attitudes towards reading instruction and the parents' preference for English as medium of instruction.

Chapter four discusses the findings and analyses of the lessons that were observed by the researcher, the open-structured interviews and the questionnaires. The interviews with the teacher provide evidence with regard to her methodologies and her theoretical stance pertaining to reading instruction. In the interviews with the learners, their attitudes to the teaching of reading and their level of comprehension are elucidated. The questionnaires provide quantitative data which ascertained the number of parents who preferred English as MOI.

The final chapter, chapter five, draws together the findings and the literature in order to conclude what role the contextual factors that had emerged from the study play on the reading competencies of grade 3 non-mother-tongue speakers of English. The value of the study, its implications and limitations are mentioned to encourage educational policy makers, teachers and parents to explore and understand the present educational set-up.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of Reading Research, focusing on the contemporary theories and models of reading which may impact on the teacher's teaching strategies in the reading classroom. As the teacher's pedagogical practices in this study are informed by and based on specific theories and models of reading as well as her prior knowledge and training, approaches to the teaching of reading and reading models serve to elucidate the teacher's methods. In this study I specifically focus on the approaches to reading instruction employed by the teacher in order to ascertain which reading ideologies she bases her teaching on.

In addition, the overview of apartheid education policies and its implications will serve to show the learners and the teacher in this study as typical products of the segregated education policies of South Africa.

The review of South African studies on the performance of black primary school children by the President's Education Initiative (PEI) researchers and the synopsis of work done by READ in In-service Training of Educators (INSET programs), will serve to highlight the problems of black primary school children and teachers in the South African set-up, as well as placing the

learners and teacher in this study within a specific educational domain.

2.2. Reading Research.

As the reader's cognitive processes are mostly unobservable and the meaning intended by the writer is encoded in print, the nature of reading has proven to be complex and obscure to research. Different theories about the nature of the reading process have thus been postulated.

Initially, in the 1800s reading instruction followed distinctive, discrete steps in linear fashion. The alphabet and sentence methods emanated from behaviorist principles that saw learning to read as a stimulus-response process, that is, the reader is stimulated by the lexis or the sentence to respond on the stimulus. The sentence method was further supported by Gestalt psychology and these proponents advocated 'eye reading- the ability to look over the written word with the least possible consciousness of the words but to fully comprehend the meaning of the sentence.

In the 1950s, R. Flesch (in Chall 1967:3) made the most important contribution to reading research in his book "*Why Johnny can't read?*". He challenged the then contemporary theories which emphasized sight methods and he advocated a return to the phonic approach.

From 1930 to 1960, the phonic approach was widely adopted as research had proved that direct teaching of sound-letter correspondence improves word learning and that phonics trained children are superior to sight-trained children and word-by-word reading hampers understanding (Chall 1967:115).

After this 'Phonic revolt", phonics approaches in beginner reading instruction were widely accepted. Reading approaches based on the phonics principles were as follows:

- Instruction in phonics is started slowly in grade 1, gathering momentum in grades 2 to 3, and should be spread over six years of elementary school.
- Drill in phonics in isolation should be avoided. Phonics should be integrated with meaningful reading.
- the child should not isolate sounds and blend them to words.
- Unknown words should be identified through visual analysis and substitution.

However, these approaches to reading instruction based on behaviorism proved to be unsuccessful. The problem of "Why Johnny can't read? has not been addressed by behaviorist approaches in reading instruction.

From 1950 to 1960, Psycho-linguistic approaches, based on Cognitive psychology, which accentuated meaning-making from the text, were advanced. According to Goodman (1967:2), reading is:

a 'psycho-linguistic' guessing game, where the reader is actively engaged in striving to reconstruct the author's message. He/she participates in an internal dialogue in which hypotheses are formed, predictions are made, doubts expressed, uncertainties clarified, new information grafted onto old, old views modified by new.

The objectivist model of reading had to make way for the subjectivist model which accentuates the reader as an active participant in the reading process. These theories are based on the premise that meaning cannot be derived by simple,

mechanistic processes as meaning lies beyond the sounds or printed marks of the language (Goodman 1967). From this premise, the schema theory evolved where the readers are not seen as 'blank slates' but as social beings, who interact with the texts, bringing with them 'rich and varied backgrounds (McCormick 1994:19). Texts are no longer seen as 'static' containers of meaning, but are read differently, depending on the reader's schemata and the socio-cultural context of the text.

Significantly, the present-day practices and models of reading have evolved from and are steeped within the Behaviorists' and Cognitive Psychological schools of thought. They are: the psycholinguistic theories espoused by Goodman (1967), the bottom-up and top-down theories espoused by Cummins (2001), the expressivist theories espoused by Goodman (1967) and the socio-cultural theories espoused by Gee (1990). According to Smith (1984:2), studies and approaches within the Behaviorist and Cognitive paradigm, have "left an indelible mark on most of the contemporary theories and methodologies."

A simplistic view of reading is that reading constitutes the ability to decode the written language at a reasonable rate and with good comprehension. Behaviorist methodologies epitomized this statement. However, this view was challenged by theorists like Goodman (1967) and Smith (1984), who state that the reader engages in an interactive process that occurs between the reader's cognitive functions and the message encoded in the text. This view is epitomized by the Cognitive methodologies. Schema theory, which evolved from the Cognitive tradition, however, sees reading as an interactive process between the reader's cognitive processes and his/her individual world experience. This world experience, according to the socio-culturalists and expressivists, constitutes the reader's social, individual and cultural milieu or background.

In my study it came to light that the teacher makes use of reading programs that incorporate the main tenets of socio-culturalism but often tends to revert to those steeped in the cognitive and behaviorist traditions, specifically, the phonic approach. It is thus imperative to ascertain which theoretical orientations underlie the teacher's classroom practices in reading instruction and why she incorporates specific methodologies.

2.3. Theories of Reading.

2.3.1. Behaviorism.

The Behavioral schools of thought in the field of reading instruction see reading as a result of a stimulus-response process. As early as 1963, Friest, a behavioral psychologist, described learning to read as, "simply a transfer of linguistic knowledge from the aural to the written meaning" (in Alderson and Urquhart 1984: preface). Perfetti (1984) sees reading as a passive bottom-up process where the reader decodes or reconstructs the author's intended meaning by recognizing letters, words and icons. The behaviorist models of reading instruction prioritize texts and are based on the premise that the capacity to read is primarily "the mastery of a hierarchy of skills that begin at micro level of word recognition then moves to more complex thinking and comprehension abilities" (McCormick 1994:16).

Behavioral psychologists like Watson, Skinner and Pavlov (in Alderson and Urquhart 1984) postulated that learning or learning to read is the result of stimulus-response conditioning or habit-formation. Theories of learning and behavior that were based on laboratory experiments with dogs-and focused on the kind of

learning that occurs as a consequence of stimuli, were advanced. In these studies, animals were trained to perform simple responses and conditioning took place or habits were learnt, through positive or negative reinforcement.

Instructional practices based on this theory are largely dependent on the reader's ability to decode the written symbols. After the reader has responded to the stimuli without much conscious cognitive effort, meaning is attached to the symbols and the text using semantic, syntactic and graphemic clues.

2.3.2. Behaviorist Approaches to Reading Instruction.

The decoding of sound-symbol relationships and mastering of oral dialogues led to a myriad of methodological approaches to the teaching of reading that evolved from these hypotheses and include the phonic approach, the sight-and sound approach as well as audio-lingual methods (Smith 1984, Larsen-Freeman 1984).

The phonic approach constitutes the learning and memorization of the phonemes of the language, while the sight-and-sound method entails recognizing and memorizing the sounds of words. The audio-lingual methods make use of recording machines or repetitive drills where students listen to sounds and graphemic units, memorize them and reproduce them automatically. The reader thus decodes the written or spoken word automatically and does not learn to develop meaning-making skills to process the text at a deeper level. This practice is observable in classrooms where teachers ask learners to repeat what they have learnt by chanting in sing-song fashion, or to do drilling exercises and repetition of question- and- answer cycles (Larsen-Freeman 1984).

Teaching strategies based on Behaviorism tend to be flawed in that comprehension of the text follows on the automatic memorization of graphemes or phonemes of the language. As these readers have to concentrate on the graphic clues while reading, they are not able to skip letters or words and make predictions about the text, nor are they able to activate their memory store to provide them with syntactic and semantic information about the text.

Vygotsky and Downing (in Johnson 1973:109), attributed this failure to the teaching of phonic rules, stating that "it reverses the natural process of concept development and produces empty verbalism". Such readers are then classified as poor or weak readers as their level of "automaticity", (Pretorius 2002:191), hamper their reading speed. Reading speed, according to Alderson (2000), involves the ability to recognize words rapidly and accurately and is a good predictor of reading ability. Alderson (2000:33) distinguishes poor readers from weak ones "not by the number of letters in a fixation, nor by the number of words fixated on the page, but by the speed of this fixation". The length of fixation thus determines reading speed or level of automaticity. It is suggested by Goodman (1967) that the reader, who fixates longer on the symbols of the print, loses the meaning of the text and is unable to make predictions or hypotheses about the text. Anderson (1999) states that reading at too slow a rate jeopardizes efficient comprehension and detracts from the enjoyment of reading.

The fact that a reader can reproduce what he/she has read does not necessarily imply that the reader has comprehended the message encoded in the text.

In this regard, theorists and researchers have found that behaviorist theories do not account for the 'cognitive nature' of the reading process or for the creativity of first-time readers.

Reading models based on behavioral premises could not account for the abilities of a child who learns a language for the first time, to produce and create novel and idiosyncratic versions of the language they are learning, from a limited amount of graphic information. Cognitive theories thus discounted the principle of mimicry or habit-formation.

2.3.3. Cognitivism.

The Cognitive view on the teaching of reading, aims to account for the creativity of a first-time language learner, by stating that reading or learning to read, involves the cognitive capacities of the participant and does not only entail empty verbalism or imitation. Gough (1972), a behaviorist, (in McCormick 1994:223) describes reading as a process, "where graphemes are perceived as words, words as forming sentences, sentences as forming paragraphs, and so on". This uni-directional approach to the teaching of reading is in direct contrast with the Cognitive and Transformational- generative tradition, which sees reading as a mental process whereby the readers form rules about language, using innatist abilities. Krashen (1978) refers to a Language acquisition device (LAD) in the brain of humans which allows them to acquire language naturally and intuitively.

Cognitive or Innatist theories postulated that learning or learning to read is a pure mental process whereby the learner makes sense from the text, using his/her cognitive abilities only. These theories originated from the Innatist or Chomskyian view that states that the child's cognitive and mental capacities regulate his/her ability to learn at different stages of development. Kellogg (1999:133) states that "encoding begins with the perceptual operation that leads to entry of information into short-term

memory". From this perceptual base the reader builds up the meaning of the text, decoding from the smallest units (at the bottom), to larger units at the top (phrases, clausal relations, intersentential linkages), relying on cognitive abilities.

Schema theorists, however, discounted the view that reading is dependent on cognitive abilities only. According to Piaget (1963) and Bartlett (1963), "Knowledge is presented in a dynamic mental structure called a schema" (in Kellogg 1999:12). Schema theorists postulate that the reader's schemata or background knowledge provides a framework within which the reader engages with the text. The reader does not only rely on the graphophonic system of the language in order to comprehend the encoded message. Thus, while reading, a good reader will skip words or sentences, make predictions, confirm and disconfirm assumptions, relying on his/her individual world experience. This experience, according to Carrell, Eskey and Devine (1988:3) constitutes the 'content schemata' that constitutes knowledge about the topic of the text. 'Formal schemata' represent all the knowledge a reader holds in his/her memory about the way information is organized in a text. The schema is thus used by the reader as a framework for understanding and processing new information. Carrell et.al. (1988:94) claimed that readers should be able to identify language symbols automatically, without much conscious effort, in order for them to concentrate on the message encoded in the text. Theorists like Goodman (1982) and Smith (1984), underscored this phenomenon which they termed 'automaticity'. It implies that the reader engages with the text, incorporating his/her (formal schemata), without conscious mental activity, leaving him/her free to incorporate knowledge about the world (content schemata) and relate the information to the text.

Although 'background knowledge' in the reading process was seen as important by earlier theorists like Piaget, Bartlett, and

Friest, it played no role in the methodological approaches and instructional theories that evolved from the behavioral or cognitive traditions in the early 1900s, that is: the phonic approach, the sight-and-sound approach, the sentence-method and the alphabet-method (Chall:1967). However, most of the contemporary models and approaches to reading, steeped within the cognitive tradition, are based on Schema theory.

2.3.4. Schema Theory - Approaches to Reading Instruction

Schema Theory or Background knowledge theory only gained ground in later years and was underscored by cognitive theorists like Andersen (1980), Carrell, et.al. (1988) and Grabe and Stoller (2002), who broke away from traditional teaching methods and espoused the 'Top-down' approach.

In the 'top-down approach,

reading is directed by the reader's goals and expectations about the text and the reader samples enough information about the text to reject or confirm expectations.

(Grabe and Stoller 2002:25)

Alderson and Urquhart (1984:192), researching the "fixations" of the eye, proved that the eye jumps four characters to the left of the point of fixation and up to 15 characters to the right. The reader then assigns interpretation to each word it fixates on, and fills in the gaps relying not so much on mental capacities, but on background knowledge or schemata to confirm suppositions and make predictions. This process is in direct contrast to a reader who decodes words and letters mechanically (behaviorist).

Teachers of reading and researchers in the field found that decoding per se, inhibits children's reading ability beyond the purely mechanical level. As stated by Chall (1967) initial reading instruction based on decoding, is successful when children have to master the graphophonics of the language only. However, readers who only rely on decoding the print are slower readers, and are usually those who cannot disambiguate the meaning from the text.

Carrel and Eisterhold (1983:84) describe the reading process as follows:

Reading can be seen as being a process in which an active reader uses both bottom-up and top-down strategies in order for the content and organizational knowledge he/she has, to interact with the information presented by the text so as to understand its meaning.

According to Carrell et.al. (1988:223), the terms 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' are merely metaphors for the complex mental processes of reading. 'Top' referring to the higher order mental concepts like the knowledge and expectations of the reader, and 'bottom', to the physical text on the page.

Theorists state that the reading process can be equated to a 'tapestry' where the two strands function interactively, the one strand being the decoding process, and the other, interpretive skills. The bottom-up (decoding) processes, and the top-down (interpreting) process, are thus complementary in the reading process, and the one cannot function without the other if successful reading is to be attained. These views gave rise to the Interactive-compensatory model of teaching reading as espoused by the schema theorists. This interactive nature of the reading process is defined as a 'synergy' that combines the words on the printed page with the reader's background knowledge (Andersen 1999:3). Methodologies based on this model emphasize group

work, pair work and co-operative learning. The higher order skills are taught and tested in conjunction with lower order skills within the same tasks and the child is taught to 'read' (ELET course book 1995).

Schema theory has thus attempted to make clear that efficient reading requires both top-down and bottom-up strategies, functioning interactively, and that teachers of reading should not only teach the graphemes of the language but should activate prior knowledge of the learners as well.

Schema theorists, particularly Grabe and Stoller (2002), make a definite distinction between higher order (top-down) and lower order (bottom-up) skills, and define them as follows:

Low-order skills.

1. Word-recognition abilities enhancing comprehension.
2. Syntactic parsing entailing extraction of grammatical formation.
3. Semantic proposition formation-where the reader combines meaning and grammatical information without much effort.
4. The effective, rapid and automatic co-ordination of information that leads to comprehension.
(Steps 1 to 3).

Higher-order skills.

1. Clause-level meanings are formed and added to the growing network of ideas of the text.

2. Through incorporation of background knowledge, the reader disambiguates word-level and clause-level meanings and builds a mental model of the text in order to interpret the message.

Adapted (Grabe and Stoller 2002:22).

Significantly the lower-order skills are those incorporated in behavioral methodologies, while the higher order skills are those incorporated in cognitive methodologies and those that emanated from the Cognitive tradition. Smith (1984:18) distinguishes between the 'deep' structure and the 'surface' structure of the language. He states that reading approaches steeped in the behaviorist tradition do not provide the reader with the conceptual, interpretive and appreciative skills that result in extricating the deeper embedded meaning from the text.

According to Schema theories, the simple identification skills that depend on the knowledge of the language (print), lead to basic interpersonal skills (BICS) (Cummins 2001). On the other hand, cognitive academic linguistic proficiency-(CALP) (Carrell and Eisterhold 1983, Cummins 2001 and Carrell et.al. 1988) enables the reader to extricate the embedded, contextualized meaning from the text using more of the higher order skills.

2.4. Contemporary Reading Models.

Contemporary reading models that evolved from the interactive model and in criticism to its shortcomings (dependence on Cognitive/Objective processing), the Socio-Cultural and Expressivist models, incorporate schema theory but bring in other aspects of the reading process.

The two models, Expressivist and Socio-Cultural, however, exist in a dialectical relationship, as each one acknowledges the importance of the reader, the text, and the larger social context in the reading situation. In addition, each model assigns different significations to each of these components. Thus, depending on the significations assigned to these components, the expressivist model emphasizes the reader as an individual, while the socio-cultural model emphasizes the social and cultural inheritance.

2.4.1. Expressivism.

Expressivist theorists (Smith 1984, Goodman 1987), privilege the reader's own life experiences, and consider all responses and interpretations of the text to be valid. McCormick (1994:40) states that, "readers must develop their own individual, authentic responses to texts based on their individual unique experiences of the world".

Strategies that are based on this model include 'free' writing and creative improvisations where learners' own interpretations are validated. In the teaching technique, "The Silent Way" developed by Gattegno, learners are encouraged to use language for self-expression and gain autonomy in their learning experience as their learning is dependent on what they know and experience as individuals (Larsen-Freeman 1984:63).

In this study, the teacher does not incorporate strategies based on this model, as her first aim is to teach reading to second language learners who are not yet able to express personal opinions in the second language. Expressivist theories are thus more applicable in advanced Language or Literature classes while socio-cultural theories are more applicable in this study as the

teacher has to cater for learners from different socio-cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

McCormick (1994:40) critiques the expressivist model, stating that the reader is not prepared for 'real world reading' and the use of personal response in the classroom may impede students 'reading' texts by "failing to give them the discourse necessary to conceive themselves as social subjects and social productions".

2.4.2. Socio-Culturalism.

The behaviorist or objectivist notion of the text as a container of meaning is challenged by the socio-cultural theorists. Gee (1990) and McCormick (1994), shift from an objectivist/cognitive conception of reading to a more culturally-oriented conception. According to Niven (2004:24), the socio-cultural model sees reading "less as a cognitive skill and more as a practice, a form of socially constructed behavior which is the result of complex cultural socialization".

This cultural and linguistic socialization the child acquires naturally in his/her home environment. Thus, the New Literacy theorists accentuate a social practices view of literacy instead of an instrumental or skills-based view where children are said to be 'taught' to read or write. Gee (1990) draws a definite distinction between primary and secondary Discourses. Through the primary Discourse, children are "apprenticed early in life during their primary socialization as members of particular families within their socio-cultural setting" (Gee 1990:137).

The secondary Discourse is defined as any one that is not the primary one, that is, the child acquires it through conscious learning by picking up rules for behavior through activities outside the home; culturally, socially and linguistically. Thus, children

who have not been apprenticed in their primary Discourse have to be given the opportunities to acquire such literacy practices in the secondary Discourses, either in school or in their communities.

Carrell et.al. (1988:13) criticize the behaviorist teaching models (phonics, audio-lingual, alphabet and sentence methods), stating that such a view of reading, work against learners becoming critical readers and do not facilitate the ability to read texts from “multiple perspectives” that is, from the multiple perspectives they need to be socialized in. Carrel and Eisterhold (1983:35), state that readers are sensitized to their own recognized perceptions through texts that explicate ‘real’ life experiences in ‘real’ cultural contexts, and this in itself, would make them aware of the power and value of their own world experiences.

McCormick (1994:4) reiterates that the reader as a “social subject and the text as a social production”, need to be explored and acknowledged by practitioners and theorists in educational environments as social and cultural factors influence reading development in diverse ways.

2.4.3. Socio-Cultural Approaches to Reading Instruction.

The Socio-culturalists, Heath (1983), Baynham (1995) and Gee (1990), agree that non-mainstream learners and those from different cultural backgrounds are disadvantaged at school as their literacy backgrounds and experiences do not provide the social scaffolding on which secondary Discourses can be acquired.

According to the socio-cultural model, comprehension is facilitated if the cultural content of the message can be related to the reader’s content schemata. Culturally familiar material will be read faster and recalled better, as the reader’s cultural knowledge

will facilitate prediction and verification, thus facilitating comprehension. If the content of the text is culturally unfamiliar, no amount of formal schemata would aid in the comprehension process.

This phenomenon has been proven by many researchers and teachers who repeatedly complain that students are able to 'read' the text but are unable to 'understand' it fully. Andersen, Reynolds and Goetz (in Grabe and Stoller 2002:24), proved this theory by giving students in a music class and a weight-lifting class a passage to read and found that, depending on their content schemata, the passage was interpreted differently by the two groups. Cross-cultural schema studies have shown that readers construct texts differently, depending on whether the text is from their own culture or not. For example, natives from India and natives from America were asked to read two different texts on weddings in their different cultures. As was predicted, the Americans could recall more about the text on American weddings, while the Indians were more successful with the text related to their own culture (Grabe and Stoller 2002).

McCormick (1994:59), reiterates that when readers are asked to read texts 'on their own', whether they are literary, historical, or scientific-texts, students are often overwhelmed or intimidated because they lack access to the cultural, historical or theoretical discourses that would enable them to construct meaning from the text and this can hamper comprehension.

Socio-cultural research identified the following factors that influence reading instruction: literacy background and experience, instructional practices, peer and sibling interaction, cultural and social inheritance, age, preferred reading strategies, relevance of texts, affective involvement, linguistic competence and purpose (Grabe and Stoller 2002). In addition, it is noted that, "the schema that will be brought to bear on the text, depends on the reader's

age, sex, race, religion, nationality occupation, in short,- it depends on the reader's culture" (Grabe and Stoller 2002:24).

These theorists state that:

Culturally appropriate schema may provide the ideational scaffolding that makes it easy to learn information,- ...information once learned, is more accessible because the schema is a structure that makes it easy to search memory.

According to the socio-culturalists, language is a social as well as a cognitive tool and speech, reading and writing are embedded in social and cultural contexts. The different significations assigned to the reader as a social being, the text and the larger social context, are integral in this theory. This may lead to different methodological practices that can address the failures and shortcomings of the earlier reading models and open avenues for exploration that have not been acknowledged in the field of reading instruction. However, although in line with modern thinking and emphasizing the social and cultural conceptions of reading and literacy per se, socio-culturalists have not succeeded in detracting from the acceptability and popularity of the approaches steeped in an objectivist and cognitive tradition.

2.6. Political and Social Context in South Africa.

In order to place the participants in this study within their particular socio-political milieu, salient social and political factors that will need to be explored in this study are: the segregated education policies of apartheid South Africa and the language preferences of the parents.

In the period 1998 – 2002, school-based research projects which explicated the failure of schools to educate children in public

schools were extensively undertaken. These studies highlighted the inequities in South African society, the different languages spoken and the socio-economic circumstances of the marginalized groups as some of the reasons why these learners fare so poorly at school (Taylor, Muller and Vinjevold 2003:35).

In an ethnographic study undertaken by Heath (1983), in the Piedmont Carolinas, she found that different communities impart different cultural ways to their children and this social and cultural inheritance predispose them to failure at school.

A study in South Africa undertaken by Niven (2004:26) showed that children educated under the Department of Education and Training (ex- DET schools) and coming from poor working class families, find it more difficult to acquire "university discourses as neither their homes nor their schools 'precursor' them for tertiary education". Although this study was done at tertiary level, it shows the mismatch between primary and secondary Discourses which prevails at school-level that 'precursor' these students to failure in mainstream institutionalized settings (Niven 2004:26).

In this study I am aware of the mismatch between the learner's primary and secondary Discourses, in particular, whether their home-based literacy practices impact negatively on their abilities to read, or the reading instruction they receive at school.

After 1994, when apartheid policies were abolished, the National Curriculum Framework was instituted with the main objective to,

provide learners with positive learning experiences by affirming their worth and demonstrating respect for their various languages, cultures and personal circumstances. (Taylor et.al. 2003:4).

According to the language policies contained in the South African Bill of Rights 1994, people have a right to choose their MOI as the government aimed to acknowledge and validate the indigenous languages.

However, many black parents eschew these rights encompassed by the constitution, as they consider their mother tongue as socially and economically inferior to English. Given the linguistic separation on racial grounds of the Apartheid legacy in South Africa, many non-mother tongue speakers of English opt for English as medium of instruction. Alexander (1989:86) states that the African people attach little value to their home languages and believe it to be "deficient or impoverished" in relation to English. The learning of indigenous languages is seen as part of the imperialist political systems of the past through which the African people were oppressed while English is seen as the tool to social, political and educational advancement (Guus and Maartens 1998:33). According to Heugh (1995:44), "people who speak low status languages are forced directly or indirectly to develop skills in a language of higher status in order to survive economically."

This black people were faced with this dilemma during the Apartheid regime and it still persists today (Guus and Maartens 1998, Heugh 1995). In the 1900s Apartheid policies were entrenched at government schools, specifically those pertaining to medium of instruction (Hartshorne 1992). From Grade 1 to 3, mother-tongue instruction was compulsory in all government schools. The black people saw it as a measure to exclude and disempower them, depriving them of the social and political advancement English could bring, as well as a measure to protect the supremacy of the white regime. In 1979, the Education and Training Act stated that the medium of instruction should be mother-tongue at primary school but the wishes of the parents should be considered after grade 4 (Taylor et.al. 2003).

Given this scenario the parents of the children in this study, are faced with a dilemma, that is, to opt for English as MOI that will afford them educational, social and political advancement, or to opt for their indigenous languages which will marginalize them and preclude them from the advantages English can bring.

From the data supplied through questionnaires sent to the parents, I have found that all the parents of the learners preferred English as medium of instruction while only some prefer that their children learn their mother tongue as an additional language, but that it should not be used as medium of instruction. However, many parents are not aware of the repercussions of their choice. Studies have proved that an impoverished home language background can impede the acquisition of a second language.

Vinjevold (1999:211), states that "the home language is the most powerful tool for cognitive development", while Cummins (2001), states that the second language learner needs up to five years to catch up academically with the native English speaker. The learner who does not have a solid home-language base is also less successful if he/she is instructed in a second language, as positive transfer of language skills acquired in the home language, cannot take place.

Cummins (2001) and Wong Fillmore (1985) make a clear distinction between conversational and academic aspects of language proficiency and state that each follows different developmental paths. Conversational fluency is often attained within two years of extensive exposure to English but this Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) cannot be equated to Cognitive Academic Language proficiency (CALP). Thus, parents who feel that their children can speak English fluently, do not realize that their scholastic development is hampered as they take longer to acquire the discourses and cognitive language proficiencies that come more easily to a first language speaker.

In the 1990s studies undertaken in South Africa, proved that the black South African students are put at a disadvantage through factors like language preference (English), institutional conditions, teacher knowledge and learning and teaching strategies (Taylor et.al. 2003). Studies in language and conceptual development by Macdonald (1990, 1991) in South African primary schools showed that black children spent most of their time in class listening to the teachers and that the dominant pattern of classroom interaction was oral input by teachers and pupils occasionally chanting in response. Questions were asked by the teacher throughout the lessons but these were aimed to check participation and not to elicit more challenging responses. Tasks were geared towards the acquisition of information rather than higher cognitive skills. Rote-learning and drilling were extensively used to 'teach' children to read. In addition, the pupils' language proficiency was so poor that the textbooks were too difficult for them to read.

Macdonald (1990) proposed three reasons why teachers resort to these specific classroom practices, namely: their English language training did not prepare them for instruction in English in a wide range of subjects, conceptual thought was not encouraged by tutors who only imparted knowledge and, teachers' lack of conceptual knowledge and reading skills engendered rote-learning and drilling strategies.

In line with these findings, the President's Education Initiative (PEI) research projects undertaken in the later 1990s highlighted teacher-centered practices and superficial engagement with pupils' conceptual development as the main reasons for pupils' poor performance.

The following practices were observed to be common:

- 1) Lessons are characterized by a lack of structure and the absence of activities which promote higher order skills such as investigation, understanding relationships, and curiosity.
- 2) Lessons are dominated by teacher talk and low level questions.
- 3) Real world examples are often used, but at a superficial level.
- 4) Little group work or other peer interaction occurs.
- 5) Little reading and writing is done by pupils.

(Adapted: Taylor, et.al. 2003:143)

Other factors identified were: institutional conditions, the attitudes of teachers, teacher knowledge, classroom practices and student learning. In my study I would thus examine those aspects that are salient and pertain to reading instruction in this particular school in order to conclude whether they impact on the reading performances of the learners under observation.

2.6.1. Factors pertaining to Reading.

Classroom observations by PEI researchers showed that pupils are not given enough opportunities to read nor are learners in group work activities provided with tasks that would promote peer interaction or interactive learning. Schollar (in Taylor et.al. 2003), found that only 4% of time was spent reading and that reading seemed to be incidental and sporadic rather than the principal focus of the lessons. In a specific study in which English reading materials were provided by non-governmental organizations (NGO's) it was found that 15% of pupil time was spent on reading and 3% on silent reading and that learners are not encouraged to develop strategies for reading independently. Teachers do not

engage in reading instruction as many of them do not know how to 'teach' reading.

Although the findings of the PEI are not generalisable to all primary government schools in South Africa, the factors that have been identified need to be examined in my study as the school is a microcosm of black primary schooling in South Africa.

2.6.2. Read Educational Trust

The teacher in this study has attended workshops and In-service training presented by READ, a non-governmental organization which has been providing educational service to marginalized schools and communities since 1979.

READ's focus is on schools in disadvantaged communities where the infrastructure and resources funded by the government are inadequate and learners are performing below the levels of those at better-resourced schools. They provide schools with reading and library facilities as well as writing, reading and language development programs. READ functions in conjunction with the Ministry of Education and implements an internationally resource-based approach which is consistent with the principles of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) and the National Revised Curriculum Statement (RNCS). The Learning for Living project (appendix 2-page 142) which the teacher in this study attended, had been offered to 13, 0000 teachers and 875,000 children and has proven to be successful as the reading ability of the learners improved by 19, 7% and their writing ability improved by 16, 7%.

The teacher in this study has participated in mentoring and monitoring projects presented by READ because in her own words: *"Our children are struggling with reading and the government does not supply the school with enough books"*. In

her reading class the teacher makes extensive use of the 'Learning for Living' course that provides her with books for the children to read, Big books for reading aloud and choral reading, graded readers for group work and silent reading (see appendix 3-pages 146 to 201) as well as books for leisure reading. The teacher uses the 'Learning for Living' teacher's guide which is based on the principles of OBE (see appendix 2 - page 142), focusing on knowledge integration and skills development. Many aspects of reading, that is, activating learners' prior knowledge, activating learner's own world experiences, enhancing creative writing and encouraging interactive learning through group- and pair work are dealt with.

The READ project implements a systematic In-service training for teachers as well as principals and guarantees improvement in performance levels of the learners, specifically in language learning, reading and writing skills, as well as information and communication skills. They attribute their success to the fact that their approach is holistic, custom-related, learner-centred and community-orientated. The teacher in this study feels strongly about equipping learners with the necessary skills that they will need in the future, that is, the ability to use, read, speak and write English. She therefore makes use of materials supplied by READ. The main aims of the READ projects are to:

- Improve language competence and learning.
- Entrench the skills of independent study.
- Enrich the educational experience of teachers and learners.
- Increase the confidence of the learners.
- Create a stimulating environment.
- Promote learner-centered teaching methods.

(Adapted from READ Annual Report: 2005
<file:///E/READ.htm>)

In my observations and interviews, I will thus investigate which methodologies and strategies the teacher employs to teach reading.

2.7. CONCLUSION.

This chapter has reviewed reading research, focusing on approaches to reading instruction that have evolved from the different theories and hypotheses. I have specifically focused on Behaviorism and Cognitivism and the influence of these theories on reading instruction as the teacher in this study makes extensive use of strategies based on them. The main tenets of contemporary reading instruction models were discussed so as to understand the teacher's methodologies.

The context of the classroom and the school was placed within their particular socio-economic milieu, against the backdrop of primary schooling in Apartheid South Africa. In addition, the language preference of the parents and learners was placed in its political context, so as to highlight the reasons for this preference.

I then gave a brief review of studies undertaken in South Africa that highlighted the problems teachers of reading face in primary government schools where learners are instructed in a language that is not their mother-tongue. A brief synopsis of the aims and work done by READ, a non-governmental organization, which addresses the educational problems of learners and problems pertaining to the teaching of reading in previously marginalized

schools, was given in order to guide my analyses of the teacher's methodologies that are based on the READ In-service training projects.

The research, projects and theories discussed in this chapter will not necessarily pertain to the participants in the case study I have undertaken, but will have a bearing on the findings and analyses of the research.

The next chapter outlines my research methodology.

CHAPTER 3.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.

3.1. Introduction.

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology, methods and techniques used by the researcher to explore what is happening during the reading lessons and to ascertain the participants' attitudes, and beliefs.

The case study within an interpretive paradigm, incorporating observation, provides the main qualitative methodological framework of the research. A rationale for the case study is followed by a rationale for the choice of site and participants. A brief description of the main instruments used for data collection is followed by an outline of the data collection procedures. In addition, the criteria for judging and evaluating research design are discussed in conjunction with the ways in which Reliability, Validity and Generalisability will be insured.

3.2. Qualitative paradigm.

As the purpose of my study is to explore the multiple contextual factors that impact on reading instruction in an English Grade 3 classroom, I will employ a qualitative case study within an interpretive paradigm with the aim to understand and interpret how reading is taught. Cohen and Manion (1980:23) believe that interpretive researchers "begin with individuals in order to understand their actions and interpretations of the world and their environment." The researcher works directly with the experiences

which emerge from the particular realities of individuals, that is, the real-life happenings in the classroom. In this research, the individuals' actions and experiences and attitudes will be highlighted in order to explain what is happening in the classroom. Bassey (1999:43), states that the term 'qualitative' can be used to describe data collected by interpretive researchers who explore and interpret the meanings of social phenomena. The quality of the research will lie within the detail and depth explained by the different instruments used to gather data.

This particular methodological framework will enable the researcher to investigate what occurs in this specific classroom and will elucidate the different factors that influence the success or failure of teaching reading in a primary school. These factors include the school and educational environment, learner-teacher interaction, learner and teacher attitudes, teaching strategies, as well as the theories of the teacher and others in the field of reading Instruction. These experiences of reality and theories that emerge from the phenomenon under study have to be grounded in the data. Data will be collected through observations, interviews and questionnaires as these instruments of investigation, fall within the interpretive, qualitative paradigm.

3.3. Case study research.

3.3.1. Rationale for Case study Research.

Cohen and Manion (1980:120) see the purpose of the case study is -

To probe deeply and to analyze intensively the multifarious phenomenon that constitute the life cycle of a unit with a view to establish generalizations about the wider population to which a unit belongs.

My objective to explore why grade 8 learners in my English classes are not proficient readers, would thus be revealed by describing and analyzing what happens in the class where the learners 'learn' to read and allow me to establish how reading is taught at the primary school where these learners come from.

The method of enquiry constitutes a single case study involving non-participant observation, field notes, audio recordings, interviews, questionnaires and class records. "The multiple sources of evidence" (Yin 1984:37) gathered through these methods will be triangulated so as to enable the researcher to respond to the different perspectives of the social unit under study. The case study thus represents the different and sometimes conflicting viewpoints of the informants and explicates the richness and complexity of their behavior. Through detailed study of the contexts of the situation, the researcher aims to uncover generic, universal features of the phenomenon under question.

In my research, evidence gained from observing the interactions between the teacher and the learners, the learners and their peers, as well as the interviews conducted with the different participants, will reveal the complexities of each situation and each participant. Thus, by incorporating triangulation, evidence is augmented, verified or disproved so as to give a truer account of the case.

Yin (1984:42), identifies 3 main rationales for conducting a single case study, namely, it could be descriptive, exploratory or revelatory. As my study aims to elucidate the factors that impinge on reading and reading instruction in the classroom, the case study method will provide the platform to reveal the teaching practices employed by the teacher as well as the interactions between the participants. Yin (1984:43), states that revelatory

purposes are served if the researcher is given the opportunity to observe and analyze a phenomenon that has not been previously accessible to scientific research.

According to Carspecken (1996:26), "Qualitative social research investigates human phenomenon that do not lend themselves by their very nature to quantitative measures". Attitudes, beliefs and experiences of human beings are non-quantifiable features of social life and can only be explored and investigated through qualitative, interpretive measures. A qualitative, interpretive study reveals the social patterns and subjective experiences that influence the actions and lives of human beings (Carspecken 1999). By elucidating the classroom interactions and attitudes of the participants through observations and personal interviews, I aim to ascertain the participants' attitudes and feelings towards reading instruction, and these in turn, will inform the analysis and interpretation of the data.

Bassey (1999:27) gives a definition of educational case study which fits this research perfectly:

Educational case study is where researchers are concerned neither with social theory nor with evaluative judgment, but rather with understanding of educational action.... They are concerned to enrich the thinking and discourse of educators either by the development of educational theory or by refinement of procedure through the systematic and reflective documentation of evidence.

Through this research, the latter option would be more viable as the researcher as well as other educators would be informed and guided by the findings and reflective analyses of this study. This case study can also be described as 'intrinsic', according to Stake (1995), as it is descriptive and I, as an English teacher, have an intrinsic interest to find out why my Grade 8 learners, who have

been taught reading at primary school, are not competent readers.

By embarking on a single case study of a reading class, I will thus aim to achieve what is cited in Cohen and Manion (1980:146) as the function of case study research, that is:

Case studies are 'a step to action' they begin in a world of action and contribute to it. Their insights may be directly interpreted and put to use for staff development, or individual self-development, for within institutional feedback, for formative evaluation and for policy making.

3.3.2. The Research Instruments.

3.3.2.1. Non-participant Observation:

The research question of what happens in the classroom and what strategies the teacher employs when teaching reading is best illuminated by activities in the classroom and the interactions between the participants. As naturalistic, authentic data is required to interpret the happenings; the researcher plays a passive role by not intervening or participating in the activities. Non-participant observation is used as the main procedure to investigate teacher-and-student interactions, both verbal and non-verbal. The non-participant observer stands aloof from the activities he/she is investigating, unlike the participant observer who engages in the activities, becoming part of the study. A non-participant researcher observes unobtrusively what normally happens in a setting, in order to negate observer bias and subjectivity. This type of observation will render a precise unbiased account of the unit under study

Cohen and Manion (1980) state that through observations the investigator is able to discern ongoing behavior as it occurs and

is able to make appropriate notes about salient features. Comprehensive field notes used in conjunction with an audio-recorder provides the researcher with authentic records from which to draw analyses and interpretations. These annotations are available for public scrutiny and should be accessible if the code of ethics is adhered to. Observations are conducted over an extended period of time which allows the researcher to develop a more intimate and informal relationship with the participants. Undertaking multiple observations over a period of time would also accommodate checking and verifying of initial interpretations, giving a truer account of the happenings.

3.3.2.2 Interviews

The interview is seen as “exploratory discourse” (Gillman 2000:2), which aims to obtain information and enable the researcher to understand issues that are relevant to the general aims and specific questions of the research project. Semi-structured, informal interviews where the questions do not follow a rigid, controlled order provide the researcher with scope to modify or expand questions as the interview progresses. The underlying and unconscious meanings of the participants are explored by adjusting and expanding the questions. This fluidity of semi-structured interviews affords the researcher the leeway to elicit detailed information and verify initial conclusions or assumptions.

Personal interviews offer participants, especially children, the opportunity to express their opinions, attitudes and feelings in a tension-free and undemanding atmosphere without leading or coercing them to answer. As the genuine responses of the participants are required, one-on-one interviews with the researcher provides the participants unrestrictive freedom to express themselves as well as giving them the assurance of confidentiality. Truthfulness is cultivated by the rapport that

exists between the researcher and the researched while the principle of research ethics is adhered to through the confidential relationship between the interviewee and the interviewer.

By using interviews in this research, I aim to validate the data collected from the observations as well as answering specific questions about the respondents' beliefs and attitudes which would not be revealed through the observations alone. The interviews also provide information with regard to the informants themselves, that is, their native or cultural knowledge which constitute their home background, practices and beliefs entrenched by their life worlds.

Through the interviews, I will be able to validate the data, cross-check personal background information and provide reasons for certain behaviors in the classroom.

3.3.2.3. Questionnaires

Although questionnaires are rarely used in qualitative research as they provide mostly quantitative data, questionnaires sent to the Xhosa-speaking parents provided verification with regard to the parents' choice of English as MOI which form an integral part of this research. The questionnaires also provided information regarding the children's home literacy backgrounds which could not be ascertained through observations.

3.4. Criteria for Assessing Research.

3.4.1 Introduction.

Traditional criticism against case study research is that "it lacks scientific quantification, it constitutes insufficient precision, objectivity and rigor and the researcher has little control over the

events” (Yin 1984:10). However, if the criteria to judge research and research design, validity, reliability, and generalisability are adhered to, most theorists, (Carspecken 1996, Cohen and Manion 1980), are in agreement that the research could be deemed valid and worthwhile.

In addition to these criteria, qualitative research adheres to a code of ethics which should form the basis of all the procedures, interpretations and findings. According to Mc Donough and Mc Donough (1997:54) research ethics work as follows:

- To protect the validity of the research, for example, the achievement of good data by recognizing that data provided by informants is owned by them, and its use is with their permission only; and,
- To protect the participants of the research through rules of confidentiality and consent to particular uses of data.

To comply with these criteria, the participants were briefed prior to the research to procure their permission and assure them of the confidentiality of the procedures and the findings. The research was undertaken on a voluntary basis and no information was or would be revealed without the prior permission of the participants. The participants were also given the option to withdraw from the research at any time.

3.4.1. Validity.

Validation is defined as “the state of being legally sound, displaying effectiveness, and relevance” (Roget’s Thesaurus) in short, it constitutes the accuracy of the data. Thus for a research

or a research design to meet this criteria, the soundness of the arguments presented, the relevance of the claims made and the effectiveness of the findings are of paramount importance. Carspecken (1996:56), defines 'validity' as "the ability of a statement to win the agreement of the community", meaning that other people could arrive at the same conclusions if the research is replicated. The term 'validity' is also used to signify research integrity pertaining to the researcher, the respondents and the research process. Respondent validation is gained if the written accounts of observations and interpretations are presented to them and validation is achieved when they and other parties recognize the authenticity of the qualitative interpretation.

Carspecken (1996:64) states that,

validity constitutes truth claims that are made against the presupposition that other people could observe in the same way as the observer, and arrive at an agreement with the statement.

Validity can be enhanced if the researcher provides "a thick description". (Yin 1984:37) of the field notes or rough data. By triangulating the data, reliability and dependability of the results are ensured as the lines of enquiry are streamlined. In addition, validity is enhanced through dense and descriptive fieldwork, triangulation, interview technique, referential adequacy and reflexivity (Janse van Rensburg 2001). I adhered to the principle of validity by providing multiple sources of data from real-life experiences, presenting true accounts of the happenings, and basing my assumptions and interpretations on authentic data collected over a period of time.

Van der Mescht (2002), states that:

The absence of scientific rigor is particularly evident in researchers' failure to engage critically with their work,

consider the ethics of positions as researchers, question the validity of their findings, and most importantly, acknowledge the shortcomings of the methods they have used.

In this case study, I have endeavored to adhere to the principles of rigor as far as possible by engaging critically with the work, acknowledging its methodological shortcomings and presenting an unbiased, true account of the unit under study.

3.4.2. Reliability.

The case study allows the researcher to embark on a multi-method approach that enhances validity and reliability. Interpretations and findings will be more reliable if triangulation of methods substantiates the same interpretations. A greater amount of evidence would negate subjectivity, researcher's bias and the lack of rigor and precision.

Research is deemed reliable if it can be replicated by a different researcher using the same research methods and produces the same results. The research should be as democratic, open, consultative and explicit as possible so as to give a reliable account of the participants' behaviors and beliefs. In this endeavor, I have met with the participants before embarking on the study in order to explain what the study would entail, procure their permission and pledge confidentiality. Reliability is maximized through consultation with the participants to verify and consolidate interpretations as the study progresses and negate respondents' bias that may affect the validity of data.

3.4.3. Generalisability.

Case studies represent little basis for scientific generalization but would be generalizable to theoretical propositions and across

specific social constructs. Generalisability or representativeness constitutes the extent to which the situation, the individuals, or the group as a whole, provides a measure of representation of the study. Where different methods of data collection yield the same results, generalizability could be augmented and the more the methods contrast with each other, the greater the researcher's confidence to generalize the findings and results across different social constructs with the same characteristics.

Cohen and Manion (1980:254), state that since the case study is so "strong in reality" it provides a natural basis for generalization. Thus, by observing the realities of the participants in one class, I aim to ascertain what is happening in the reading classes in general, at this particular school.

3.5. Description of the Research Process.

3.5.1. Rationale for establishing the research site.

The setting for my research I have chosen a school that is one of the feeder schools of the High school where I teach English. This means that the learners in my Grade 8 class, who cannot read or are struggling to read, have been 'taught' to read at this specific primary school. When seeking permission from the principal to conduct the research, I requested to do the research with Grade one learners who are supposedly 'taught' to read for the first time.

However, the English teachers of these grades did not comply with my request and the principal informed me that an English teacher, teaching Grade 3's, was keen to have the research conducted in her class. During the interviews with the teacher I learnt that she had attended In-service training programs on

reading and was interested in reading research and reading instruction. In undertaking the study, I hoped to get to the root of the reading problems of my grade 8's at High School and as the grade 3's eventually come through the system, I settled to do the research in the class where the teacher was willing and accommodating. I realized that doing the research with teachers that are reluctant or have to be coerced, would be problematic as I needed the full co-operation of the teacher in order to do a case study spanning several weeks. The fact that the teacher has attended In-service reading instruction programs, enhanced the study as the teacher made concerted efforts to teach reading while many other teachers would proclaim that 'learning' to read is incidental.

3.5.2. Participants in the study.

I sent formal letters of request to the principals of two feeder schools in my area, choosing schools near to mine as I would conduct the research during my free periods and during primary school hours. I stated that I wished to investigate the reading problems encountered by non-mother tongue speakers of English.

I met with both principals who agreed that the reading abilities of the non-mother tongue speakers of English are problematic at their schools. The principals then had meetings with the English teachers at the specific schools, but as previously stated many teachers were reluctant or tabled excuses for not allowing me to conduct the research.

I met the teacher of the Grade 3 class informally to discuss the aims and objectives of the research. As stated by Alasutari (1995:51), the key concept in research is rapport and "if the researcher makes friends with the informants and if the

informants trust the researcher, they will be honest". I outlined the code of ethics I will be bound to adhere to and the teacher reiterated that she would appreciate some investigation into the problems they are experiencing with regards to reading.

On a following occasion, I met with the grade 3 learners and explained that I would be observing them in the class for the following four weeks. I briefly explained that I was interested in what was happening in their reading class and that they should not be alarmed by my presence or the audio-recorder that I would be using.

Firstly, I undertook a pilot study in order to familiarize myself with the learning environment, the routines and procedures in the classroom as well as the overall atmosphere in the classroom. I observed two lessons to acquaint myself with certain research techniques and ascertain whether my sound equipment was adequate. I hoped to blend in with the setting so as not to be unduly disturbing or upsetting when the lessons were in progress. The pilot study proved to be fruitful as the children accepted me with enthusiasm and became oblivious to my presence and that of the audio-recorder after my second visit and it served the purpose of minimizing methodological mistakes.

After the pilot study, several situations that would have been problematic in the larger research project could be managed by the researcher. After having used the audio-recorder during the pilot study, I did not rely on it to procure comprehensive data as its sound quality was affected by the classes in progress and the number of learners in the class. Initially, my non-participant stance proved problematic as the learners who were only eight- to nine year old, tended to want to involve me by asking questions or seeking my approval. In the research proper I thus avoided this by studying them unobtrusively and paying attention to the note-

taking. I also realized that time constraints would not allow me to observe all the learners in the classroom as I initially planned. I therefore focused on a few individuals, specifically, those who displayed different levels of participation and reading abilities.

After the third observation, I identified six learners that I would observe more intensely and that I would interview to verify existing data and elicit their personal views. I asked permission to use one of the teacher's lessons and asked the learners to read individually from their readers. I then established their reading abilities based on the graded readers used by the teacher- that is: two good readers, two average readers with some problems and two weak readers.

During the duration of the research, I was allowed free access to the school at any time that was convenient for me, and completed the observations and interviews in approximately six weeks.

3.5.3 Data collection procedures.

As stated by Cohen and Manion (1980:254), triangulation "overcomes the problem of method-boundedness" and data from multiple sources validate the findings of research. Through the different lines of enquiry; observation, interviews, questionnaires and class records, I investigated the classroom as a social unit, focusing on teacher and learner behaviors, attitudes and beliefs of the participants, as well as the literacy backgrounds of the learners.

I observed ten thirty-minute lessons over a period of six weeks. As non-participant observer, I sat at the back of the class, not participating in any activities. During the pilot study I conditioned

myself not to make assumptions based on my own experiences as a teacher, thus negating researcher's bias.

As a second method of data collection, I conducted personal interviews with six of the learners. As the study progressed, I conducted 10 interviews with the teacher as I needed her to validate and substantiate the interpretations I made after specific lessons. In this endeavor, I aimed "to obtain information and understand issues relevant to the general aims and specific questions of the research project" (Gillman 2002:2). Through semi-structured, informal interviews, I could modify or explain the questions as the interviews progressed and create a more relaxed, unthreatening atmosphere.

By using interviews, I aimed to substantiate the observations made in the classroom and elicit specific information pertaining to the individual's likes, beliefs and attitudes. The interviews with each child lasted approximately fifteen minutes while the interview with the teacher took about twenty minutes.

Although the audio-recorder was used during the interviews and the lesson observations, I found that the sound quality of the lessons was not good due to the proximity of the other classrooms and the hustle and bustle of normal school activities like changing of classes, choir practices and children's choral participation in the classes next door to me. Due to this problem I found myself writing field notes assiduously during the reading lessons as I could not depend on the recorder to capture all the verbal interactions clearly.

Initially, I planned to identify learners for the interviews by studying their interactions in the classroom, their body language and their verbal interactions throughout the duration of the ten lessons. However, as there were 35 learners and observing all of

them and taking field notes would be impossible, I identified six learners after the first two observations. I assessed their reading proficiencies through their different levels of participation in the reading lessons. Two were very active, two passive listeners and two of them seemed to be struggling with reading. After the third lesson, I focused my attention on the six learners I have identified, discussed their abilities with the teacher and chose them as suitable respondents to represent the good, the weak and the average learners in the class.

I evaluated the learners' reading abilities in another classroom while the teacher worked with the rest of the class. I gave each of them a set of the graded readers supplied by READ. The books are graded according to age and grade cohorts, starting with Beginner readers: levels A1 to A3, Intermediate readers: B1 to B2, and Competent readers: C1 to C2. (see appendix 3-pages 145 to 201). I tested the reading abilities of all six interviewees starting with a level A1 reader and stopping with one where the learner began to struggle.

In the second week of the research, the whole class was provided with questionnaires (see appendix 15) which elicited information about the parents' preferences regarding medium of instruction, the languages spoken in the child's home, the languages the child encounters as secondary discourses and the home-based literacy practices of the child. Given the scenario that the learners were all from Xhosa or colored homes where usually Xhosa and Afrikaans were spoken, I had to ascertain whether it was by choice that the learners were in the English class. The home-based literacies and secondary discourses needed to be established so as to give credence to the findings and interpretations.

3.6. Conclusion.

This chapter begins by explicating the methodologies, methods and techniques used to gather data and investigate the research questions. Secondly, reasons for the selection of the school, the class, the teacher and the interviewees are given. In conclusion, research theory relevant to the study is discussed and the data collection procedures are outlined.

The next phase of the study, analysis and interpretation of the findings will be outlined in Chapter 4.



CHAPTER 4.

Research Description and Analysis.

4.1. Introduction.

As introduction to this chapter, the social context of the school is given as well as a brief profile of the teacher in order to explicate the setting of this research .The goals of the methodological procedures are followed by a description of the observations. An interpretive analysis follows the description of the research procedures .The field-notes taken by the researcher during the methodological procedures and tape recordings of the interviews and lessons have been transcribed from the raw data. However, due to the poor quality of my audio recordings and the lengthy lesson observations, full transcriptions are not provided.

In this analysis and the appendices attached, I have included excerpts from the classroom interactions, the reading sessions and the interviews which were relevant to the findings.

4.2 Social Context of the School.

The historical background of the school was elicited from interviews with the principal, Mr. A Peterson, a teacher, Mr. S Wessels and Mr. P Prins, an historical researcher in Grahamstown.

The school was established in 1884 as a missionary school for the black¹ and colored² children in eastern Grahamstown by X Merriman, a missionary of the Union Congregational Church. The school catered for Substandard A to Standard 5 learners and the medium of instruction (MOI) was English.

Both the Xhosa-speaking black children and the Afrikaans-speaking colored children were thus educated in a language that was not their mother-tongue.

In the 1970s, the school was established as an Afrikaans-medium school since many black people were relocated to the northern areas of Grahamstown and the school had to cater for the Afrikaans speakers from the colored area only. A few Xhosa children who remained at the school were then instructed in Afrikaans. This status quo remained until 1994, when the school had to comply with the new education policies to accept learners from any ³ethnic background or geographical area, regardless of home languages. With the desegregation of government schools, many parents exercised their rights to enroll their children at the schools of their choice. To cater for the influx of Xhosa-speakers, the MOI reverted to English, and to cater for the Afrikaans speakers, Afrikaans was used as MOI in parallel medium classes.

At present 803 children are enrolled at the school of which 520 are Xhosa and 283 are colored. However, as parents could exercise their right to choose the MOI, both Xhosa and Afrikaans-speaking children were catered for in English medium or Afrikaans medium classes.

¹ Terms used during Apartheid era

² Terms used during Apartheid era

³ Terms used during Apartheid era.

There are 22 classes, 8 English and 14 Afrikaans medium, which house approximately 30 to 35 learners from the two different linguistic and ethnic backgrounds. Over the years, the Afrikaans medium classes decreased in number, while the English medium classes are increasing steadily. However, the principal and some of the teachers are of the opinion that learning problems are experienced by the children who are not instructed in their mother-tongue. Many of the learners start their schooling in the reception year (Grade R), and others enroll in later grades, coming from schools in the township where they have been instructed in Xhosa.

The staff total is 26, including the principal, the deputy principal and 3 heads of departments. The teachers have all been educated at tertiary institutions during the apartheid era. The 8 Xhosa and 17 colored teachers were educated at institutions which catered for their ethnic and linguistic groups only. This means that colored trainee teachers were instructed in English and Afrikaans while Xhosa trainees were only instructed in English, their second language. The Xhosa teachers thus use English in class, as Xhosa is not offered at the school.

Although the school buildings are old, the buildings are in a good state as newer extensions have been erected during the years. However, the school premises and classrooms seem to be very constricted for such a big school population. At present, two extra pre-fabricated classrooms are still in use but there is still a shortage of three classrooms. The school premises are kept neat and clean by cleaners remunerated by the state while the school pays for extra help by means of school fees.

The school-fee per year is R100 per child. This is very low because many of them come from the previously disadvantaged communities where a third of the parents are unemployed and

some are dependent on state subsidized social grants and pensions. The government subsidizes the school with +-R38 per child per year and supplies books and school furniture (or is supposed to). The school is thus financially constrained due to the socio-economic status of the parents, the under-funding and under-resourcing of the government and the infrastructure of the school. In addition, the eastern area of Grahamstown that was demarcated for non-whites during the apartheid era only has one municipal library and one sports field.

At the time of this research the school curriculum offered the following subjects as prescribed by the National Curriculum Statement 2002 (N.C.S.), Afrikaans & English as 1st and 2nd Languages, Mathematics, Human & Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Life Orientation and Arts & Culture.

The children participate in extra-curricular activities like rugby, netball, cricket, hockey, soccer and athletics, as well as cultural activities like choir and drama. The school has a netball and tennis court but the bigger contact sports are played on communal municipal grounds which cater to four other schools in the area. The children are also cultivating a vegetable garden on the school premises, providing fresh vegetables for the needy. The government feeding scheme provides bread and biscuits for children who do not bring lunch to school.

The staff upholds an ethos of learning and enforces strict discipline with regard to respect for teachers, peers and school property. Punitive measures to control homework, participation and good behavior in class and absenteeism, include detention, summoning of parents to the school and cleaning of school premises.

4.3 Profile of the teacher.

⁴Funeka, the teacher in this study, is a Xhosa-speaking woman who matriculated at Rabula Secondary school in the Eastern Cape. She was instructed in English and Afrikaans and completed her tertiary training, M4 (matric plus 4 years teacher training), at Mount Arthur Training College, Rhodes University where English was the Medium of Instruction (MOI)

She volunteered to have the research done in her English classes, stating that she was willing to accommodate researchers, representatives from Non-governmental organizations (NGO's.) and education specialists in her classes. She felt that teachers should be willing to accept help from others, should be willing to learn more about teaching and would gain from outside educational input.

Thirty-two years ago, *Funeka started teaching English to the then-standard two's. In 2000, she started teaching at her present school which caters for Afrikaans- and Xhosa- speakers, but English is the MOI in the classes she teaches. She attended a READ work shop in 2000, as in her own words she is keen to acquire new knowledge or information that will assist her to deal with the problems she experiences, teaching English to non-mother-tongue speakers. She describes her experience with READ as follows:

"If there was no READ in my school, learners I taught would have suffered because few or no books are supplied by the Department of Education-not enough for encouraging and motivating the learners to have that love of reading-and acquire reading skills. READ has different kinds of

⁴ Names changed to protect privacy of participants.

books, the learners enjoy stories! The teacher's guides supply lesson plans where children learn writing skills, reading skills, drama, music, I can't explain, wonderful stories! READ is a very good NGO project t- I congratulate it."

4.4 Goals of the methodological procedures.

This chapter deals with the analysis of the case study data gathered through observations of ten fifty-minute reading lessons, 10 interviews with the teacher and 6 interviews and reading sessions with individual learners. In addition, the learners' written work tasks provide evidence of their abilities to answer questions and reproduce what they have learnt. Thirty-five questionnaires were sent out to parents to obtain personal information about the learners.

The first outline provides "a rich description" (Yin: 1984) of the observations of the lessons and sets out to explicate the teacher's methodological strategies employed during the reading lessons. The second outline constitutes the interviews between the researcher and the teacher and serves to ascertain the teacher's strategies employed and her theoretical orientation.

The third outline of the interviews between the researcher and the learners explicate the attitudes of the learners towards reading, how well they understand the lessons as well as ascertaining their home literacy backgrounds. The reading sessions with the learners and their class work tasks provide evidence of the learners' reading abilities and their levels of competence.

The results procured from the questionnaires give quantitative evidence of the parents' preference for English as medium of instruction and the children's home and school literacy profiles.

4.5. Observations.

4.5.1 Lesson 1 (17 March 2004)

There are 35 children sitting in groups of five or six. The teacher has a Big Book, "The Terrible Tiger" (appendix 4-page 202), on the easel in front of the class. The "Big Book" is part of the READ program for teaching reading to primary school children. Each child has a smaller version of the big book in front of them. The teacher reads the lines of six to eight words aloud and uses a pointer to point at each word as they go along. The class repeats the lines after the teacher while she points at the words and joins in the reading if they struggle. Where the children mispronounce or mumble certain words the teacher repeats them slowly, or more than once, even up to five times. The children repeat after the teacher in choral response. The teacher explains some phrases or concepts, sometimes switching to Xhosa. The teacher asks certain children to stand up and read individually and helps them along, correcting pronunciation and reading for them if they get stuck.

Each child has a small version of the big book with lower order questions like: *Where are the children going?* (See appendix 5-page 207). They are then told to complete the phrases like: *Creep, Creep over the hill*, and *Scamper, scamper under the log*, making use of the illustrations. As they write in their notebooks, the teacher walks around, helping them, sometimes drawing the attention of the whole class to specific details about the story.

The teacher goes to the table and marks the books individually. The child, whose book is being marked, stands next to the teacher while the others write at their desks. Some children ask their peers while they are writing but the teacher's reprimands stifle the whisperings: "*Don't make a noise*", "*Sukuthetha*", "*Who's talking?*" She then addresses those who are finished and talking amongst themselves: -"*You will have to tell me the story, to tell us what you've read*", "*Did you enjoy the story?*" The children whisper in their groups and consult the small books. The teacher gets up again and checks on those children still writing. She then compliments a child who has finished: "*Look class, *Thulethu (interviewee number 4) is finished- you are alright now – he's alright now, his work*". The children answer, "*Yes*". Some children keep on writing while others page through the reading books and others start private conversations in the groups.

While the teacher is marking in front, one child gets up, walks to the window and looks out. Another goes to the front and drinks water from a communal bottle. A girl goes to the front and gets a box of quarter loaves of bread and jam and takes it to the back. (It is common practice to get the bread provided by the government feeding-scheme ready before the break). The children obviously become fidgety because it is before break. The teacher has to reprimand them continuously, telling them to read silently, while she is marking the books of individual learners at the table. While she is marking, the teacher asks the children questions about their work and the children reply in monosyllables; 'yes' or 'no.' (As the researcher is at the back of the classroom, these conversations were inaudible.)

The children who have returned from the table then help the slower writers to finish. Some whisper in Xhosa and ask their peers to help them. The teacher subdues the class by reprimanding in Xhosa and switching to English," *sukuthetha-*

keep quiet,” and telling those who are finished that they must read silently. The bell rings as the teacher is marking and some children are still writing. They are told to finish the questions and are dismissed.

4.5.2 LESSON 2. (24 March 2004).

A new reading lesson begins. The chairs are carried to the front of the easel, some children sit on the floor and everyone faces the teacher, the easel and the chalkboard

The teacher keeps the book closed on the easel saying: *“Let’s look at the title of the book. Who can tell what the book is about?”* The children raise their hands and one child says: *“Locked Out.”*(see appendix 6-page 208). The class and the teacher repeat 3 times *“Locked Out”*, while the teacher points at the words. The teacher asks: *“Who is the author?”*-and points to the name on the cover. One child answers: *Midge Hanssen*. The teacher then asks: *“Who wrote the story?”* and the class gives an oral response. The teacher asks: *“Tell me about the pictures in the book”*, and pages through the book slowly. Individuals answer: *‘They are walking, They are laughing, and They are going to school’*. The children are then asked to make predictions about the story as the teacher pages through. One child answers: *‘She comes from school.’* The teacher then points to specific illustrations asking:

‘What’s going on here?

What is the cat doing?

What season of the year is it?

What is she doing with the rubbish bin?

What is she doing inside the house?

What did she find?’

The children answer at random in monosyllables and short sentences – ‘*She climbs through the window, she puts the bin under the window, the cat looks at her, autumn, the key, a note,*’ etc. The teacher prompts the respondents to give the answers to the questions and sometimes mouths or verbalizes the answers in unison.

The teacher then summarizes the story while paging through the book:

‘The girl comes from school. She and the cat are locked out. She takes the rubbish bin and climbs through the window. Inside the house she finds a note from her mother, telling her that the key is under the doormat.’

None of the children seem to notice the irony of the situation. The teacher explains and some children laugh. She reads the story again, pointing at the words in the Big book and the children repeat after her. A few children are asked to read individually while the teacher points at the words.

The teacher then points to the board where the words – ‘Climbed, locked, walked, called, looked’, are written. The children are then coaxed to read the words in parrot-fashion after the teacher, emphasizing the past tense endings ‘d’ and ‘t’. The teacher then writes on the board:

<u>Today</u>	<u>Yesterday</u>
Walk	Walked
Lock	Locked.
Look	Looked

The past tense conjugations are then repeated orally with the teacher emphasizing the ‘ed’ endings. She does not explain what the past tense is or when it is used. Volunteers are then asked to

point at any two words and read them aloud. The children do this fluently and emphasize the 'ed' endings imitating the teacher. The children are then told to go to their desks and write the past tense forms of the words as they appear on the board in their workbooks. They are then given an exercise on present and past tense sentences (see appendix 7-page 215). Those who are finished are told to read the story "Locked Out" in their groups. The teacher walks around the classroom. The children read the story silently but do not seem to read as groups. The bell rings and the children are dismissed.

4.5.3. Lesson 3. (08 April 2004).

The desks are arranged in groups of five to six. The teacher introduces the lesson by asking the children which books they have read so far. The children raise their hands. Some do not raise their hands and the teacher asks the ones who enthusiastically implore her to ask them. (These learners I have noticed were more confident in their interactions with the teacher and during the other lessons). The teacher points to several learners or calls them by their names and they respond aloud by giving the titles of the books. They are (among others): 'The Yellow Chicken', 'The Terrible Tiger', 'Why the sun and the moon leave the sky', 'Fire', 'Counting the Leopard's Spots' and 'Locked Out'.

The teacher starts a retell session where learners are asked to tell what has happened in specific stories. The more confident and eloquent learners respond and are allowed to tell their stories. I notice that some learners seem to be reticent and shy but not everybody is called upon to respond. The teacher walks around the classroom, randomly picking someone to answer.

She specifically asks a boy who does not seem to participate and in his retell session guides him along *(Thulethu- interview 4). Where the learners hesitate or struggle, she corrects them, lets them repeat the correction and sometimes gives explanations in Xhosa or Xhosa equivalents. The teacher also compliments and praises the learners who answer well. She, however, tends to ignore certain children who 'hide' behind the more confident ones in the group.

I specifically notice that one boy *(Sipho- interview 5) who never answers any questions and does not join in the choral and whole class responses, only opens his mouth when the teacher passes him. When she wants to involve him, he struggles so much that she answers the questions herself or picks one of the others to answer.*(Beulah –interview 1).

The bell rings and the lesson end.

4.5.4. LESSON 4 (13 April 2004).

As a pre-reading activity, the learners were asked to bring empty wrappers, containers, and bags that contained foodstuffs that their families had bought. The teacher goes to the back where empty tins, empty bags, tin wrappers, tea and chips packets, etc are displayed. She asks individual children which container they have brought and what was inside. The children answer eagerly and correctly.

Some children cannot remember some of the contents and the teacher provides the answers, letting the whole class repeat after her.

She then gives the children the Collective (Count) Nouns to describe certain foodstuffs and writes them on the board as follows:

A bag of potatoes,
A packet of flour,
550 grams of sugar,
One kilogram of flour.

The teacher emphasizes that quantity and weight can be used to describe nouns and the terms kilograms and grams that they have encountered in Mathematics. The children then read the expressions from the board.

The teacher draws a distinction between kilograms and grams by using an empty 570grams tin of coffee and a kilogram packet of sugar from the display. She shows these containers to the children and says: "*Grams is smaller than kilograms*", lifting up the containers for all to see. The children repeat after the teacher. She then writes this statement on the board.

Using the other wrappers and containers, the teacher elicits other count nouns from the class and writes them on the board.

e.g. a kilogram of butter, a loaf of bread
a tin of jam, a bag of flour.

The children then are instructed to read the Count nouns as they appear on the board. The teacher uses a pointer to show the expressions, and words that are incorrectly pronounced are repeated several times. The bell rings and the children are dismissed.

4.5.5 Lesson 5. (22 April 2004).

The children are provided with a reader” *Benny & Betty & their friends* (Harman, et.al. 1983) in which a dialogue takes place between a shopper (a girl) and a shopkeeper. They are asked to read the dialogue silently (appendix 8-page 216).

The teacher leads a discussion on what the girl has bought. She then asks the children to tell her what was bought. The children raise their hands and answer eagerly when called upon*(Unathi, Sibongile, Beulah-see interviews 2, 3, 1). Some shout out the answers while others are quiet and do not participate. Some keep their hands raised although when called upon, they wait for the others or the teacher to prompt*(Lumtu, Siphon- see interviews 6 and 5).

The teacher then points children to the empty bottles, wrappers and cartons in their display (Lesson 4) and tells them that all these things can be bought at the shop. She then asks them: *What else can be bought at a shop?* The children volunteer answers like: *Sweets, clothes, cars, food, etc.*

The teacher then sits at her desk in front of the classroom and calls asks pairs of learners to come to the front and read the dialogue in roles. Some of the children seem to rely on memory to read their individual roles and the teacher praises those who ‘read’ fluently. The children enjoy the alternation of reading roles and they read the short sentences with ease. Some learners struggle a bit but the others prompt and mouth the words to help their partners.

The other learners are to follow in their books but some start arguing over who is going to be the shopkeeper and the shopper when it is their turn. After each reading, the teacher and the class applaud the readers. Eight groups of two perform the role-play till the end of the lesson when the bell rings. The teacher tells the children that they will finish the role-play in the next lessons.

4.5.6 LESSON 6. Follow-up of Lesson 5 (27 April 2004).

The paired reading continues and those who are finished are given Language questions on the dialogue (see appendix 9-page 217). They are reminded to work silently and the role-play is completed with the whole class.

After all the children have had their turns, the pairs are sent back to their tables and are told to read silently while the rest of the class finishes the written work. The teacher sits at her desk, marking the books. This time she marks the books without calling the learners up to the table. The whole class engages in silent reading until the end of the lesson.

4.5.7 Lesson 7. (13 May 2004).

The children are given copies of a poem: "My Body". The teacher reads the poem aloud and the children follow on their sheets. The teacher explains the meaning of words such as: arm, shin, elbow, and points to the different body parts on a poster tacked to the chalkboard (see appendix 10-page 218). While explaining, the teacher asks questions and guides the learners by prompting with key phrases or words. The teacher then gives a summary of the poem and the children are instructed to answer questions set on the poem in their books. The whole class is engaged in answering the questions in their workbooks and the teacher walks around, guiding them and giving clues.

The bell rings and the class are reminded that their written work has to be marked.

4.5.8. LESSON 8. (19 May 2004)

The Big book is placed on the easel in front of the class. The children are again grouped on the mat around the easel. A reading aloud session follows with the teacher reading and pointing and the children repeating after her. The following words from the story "Lindi goes shopping" are written on the board. - hurt, tears, embarrassed, tucks and crawls.

The children are asked to come up to the board and pick one of the words. The respondent has to say the word aloud and then explain what is meant. Where children do not give comprehensive answers the teacher guides through body gestures and explanations. For example, she shows how someone cries, crawls and tells the children about an incident where she was embarrassed. While explaining and gesturing, the teacher infrequently code-switches to Xhosa, using single words and short phrases. For example, she directly translates the term 'tucks' giving the Xhosa equivalent 'ngubuleka'. The words on the board are then repeated in choral response and the teacher corrects mispronunciations. Individual children are then asked to read the words and mimic 'crying', 'crawling' and 'being embarrassed'. The words are then written in the workbooks and children are to supply their own meanings.

The period ends while the children are still writing in their workbooks and they are told to finish the work at home. The

teacher tells the learners that she will assess the homework at a later stage.

4.5.9. LESSON 9 (20 May 2004).

The flag of South Africa is illustrated on the board. A map of the continents of the world is placed next to it. The children are asked to show the flag of South Africa. One child points at it and another is asked to show South Africa on the map. The teacher explains the difference between a continent and a country, using Europe, Asia and South Africa as examples. She points to Africa saying- '*iAfrika le*'. She then says: *South Africa is a?* (The children answer – '*country*') She repeats this and the children respond four to five times. She then says: *Africa is a..... ?* the children answer – '*continent*' and the sentences are repeated as before. She then explains what an 'island' is, switching to Xhosa and mentioning Robben island and Nelson Mandela.

The children are then shown the map of the world and have to go up to it and point at the different continents, saying aloud, 'Europe, Africa, Asia,' etc.

The sentences and illustrations of a story, 'Mpume's Flag' (appendix 11-page 219), are then placed on the easel. The teacher asks individual children to read the sentences (1 to 2) underneath the illustrations while she points at each word. Most of the children get a turn to read except the weaker ones and those that evade the teacher or hesitate for too long. Significantly, those that evade the teacher or struggle to read are the ones that have been identified by the researcher during the previous lessons.

The teacher then retells the story of Mpume who saw the South African flag hanging from the state building and started singing 'Nkosi Sikelela'.

She points to words written on the board-

National anthem

Nkosi Sikelela

The children are then asked to sing the national anthem and the bell rings for the end of the period. (The teacher is also the official choir master of the school and explained to the researcher that all of the children are required to know the National Anthem).

4.5.10. LESSON 10 – Lesson 9 continued (28 May 2004)

A big picture of 'Mpume's Flag' (South African flag) is put on the board. The teacher recaps the story and the children repeat the words written on the board.

The children are then instructed to answer questions set on the story (appendix 12-page 220). Each Child has his/her small book with the story and they answer in their workbooks. The second task is to draw and color the flag of South Africa, after they have answered the questions. While the children are busy writing and drawing, the teacher sits at her table and marks the comprehension questions.

The children answer the questions from memory and look at the picture on the board to color their own flags (see appendix 12-page 220). The lesson continues until the bell rings.

4.6. Interviews with the teacher.

In discussions with the teacher I attempted to understand her beliefs and theories about teaching reading and to explore her strategies used. After having observed five reading lessons, I devised specific questions that would answer my queries about her theories of reading, her classroom practices and the school set up. The interviews were conducted informally after lesson 5 and lesson 10. The answers of the teacher were paraphrased from the raw data and relevant excerpts from her responses are quoted verbatim.

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WERE ASKED-(the answers to the questions are paraphrased).

4.6.1 QUESTION 1. *Your children are all mother-tongue speakers of Xhosa, how and why are they in an English medium class?*

ANSWER: Xhosa speaking children have been accepted at this school since its inception for different reasons (see paragraph 4.2 -Social context of the School), but Xhosa is not offered as MOI or as a subject. The parents of these children want them to be taught in English and accept that Afrikaans is taught to them as a second language as it is an Afrikaans medium school. In 1994, black teachers were sent to the previous colored schools, but at some schools, our skills, as Xhosa teachers are not used, as the schools do not offer the language as a subject. According to the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS), the children are supposed to be taught in their mother tongue from Grade R to 3, but this does not happen as the teachers, as well as the parents, are reluctant to make these changes. The Xhosa teachers, having being educated in English, cannot teach in Xhosa nor are the

Afrikaans people conversant with the language. Actually, the parents from the township schools where Xhosa is the MOI send their children here to be educated in English.

At our school the matter has been discussed but people are accepting the situation as it is, although the teachers, especially, language teachers like me, encounter problems with mother-tongue speakers having to study through the medium of another language at such an early stage. The problems are: lack of basic linguistic skills, no or little knowledge of English and a lack of orthographic-phonemic skills.

4.6.2 QUESTION 2. Which textbooks do you use for reading instruction?

ANSWER: When I came to this school there were only a few old readers like *Benny and Betty and their friends*, (Harman et.al.1983) that were used about 20 years back. Sometimes I use these books, as there is no other option- although they are meant for second language learners. Our school does not have the money to buy new books for each learner and we are spending a lot of money on paper and photocopy machines because of the shortage of books. The government does not supply books to the school so the teachers make copies of more modern books or use magazines and newspapers. I joined 'READ' when I started teaching English and they have supplied me with teaching guides, textbooks and reading boxes that the children can use. The books in the reading box are graded according to the children's abilities. In my lessons, however, I use one title at a time and I notice that for some children the books are easy and for others they are difficult. In the silent reading sessions, or the reading for enjoyment sessions, I let them choose books from the box that they can read and understand.

4.6.3 QUESTION 3. I have noticed that you employ different strategies when you teach reading e.g. paired reading, reading aloud, silent reading, integrating writing and other subjects as well as activating previous knowledge – Where do you get these strategies from and what is the purpose of doing this?

ANSWER: I have been using these strategies in the reading class because I believe that a child in grade 3 should be guided towards reading fluently.

In the lower grades, the children are taught through Phonics and Look-and-Say methods but they are unable to read with understanding.

The children also have different abilities and some methods of teaching do not work with all of them. I therefore employ different methods to teach them to understand what they read. I also remember how I was taught to read and the methodologies that I have been taught at college, and then I employ them. The guides supplied by READ also give me new ideas on how to teach reading.

I believe that a child who can read will also be able to write; therefore I try to incorporate writing exercises with the reading lesson. Learning to write will improve their ability to read and to think about what they are reading.

4.6.4 QUESTION 4. How do you think a child should be taught reading?

ANSWER: In our situation it is difficult, seeing that many children are learning a foreign language per se, 'English'. Some of them have to be guided to learn the symbols, the phonics of the

language, even in grade 3. Sometimes, I employ Phonics instruction or I write words on the board that they cannot grasp and practice them orally. I usually read aloud and point at the words because they cannot sound and spell the words. In my opinion, they must know the different symbols of the language they are reading, especially if these symbols are different in their mother tongue, therefore I do a lot of drilling and repetition exercises. I sound out words, they have to spell and sound them out correctly- that is how they will remember. Sometimes I activate prior knowledge through pre-reading activities or I explain the themes of the stories in Xhosa.

4.6.5 QUESTION 5. *I notice that you try to integrate other subjects when you teach reading. What are your reasons for doing this?*

ANSWER: If I find that one method does not work, I employ another, keeping in mind that my children have to understand what they are reading - that is very important, and writing - they must write.

According to the Outcomes Based Curriculum (OBE) the other subjects should be integrated with the language classes. I integrate the different subjects in this class, as I do not only teach English, but Mathematics and Human and Social Sciences too. I believe that the children learn to think in English and their English will improve if they use it often and when learning other subjects, especially if they are only exposed to English at school.

(The following questions were asked after the interviewer has observed five more lessons, basing them on what was happening in the class.)

4.6.6 QUESTION 6. *You have mentioned that some children are weak readers. How do you deal with them in the class? (This question was prompted by the fact that the teacher seemed to overlook specific learners even if they raised their hands to answer).*

ANSWER: I ask questions about the reading or the vocabulary. The children must raise their hands if they know the answers. If they do not raise their hands, I know they have problems. Usually I read the text aloud, give explanations and prompts and ask questions. The weak ones I try to involve more, especially if they do not participate or when they keep on answering incorrectly.

Overcrowding in the class is however a problem. Sometimes I do not notice that certain pupils are uncooperative. I notice that when I explicitly ask them or when I mark their books.

4.6.7 QUESTION 7. *And * Thulethu, I see that you always involve him- asking questions or calling on him to be more attentive.*

ANSWER: Thulethu has problems at home. He has been abandoned by his parents and is staying with other people. He tends to be inattentive and he struggles with English that is why I try to involve him more, to draw his attention from his problems as it is affecting his performance even in the other classes.

Some of the weak readers that I involve more are those that are repeating the grade. Most of them had failed last year because they do not cope with the medium of instruction. They are also the ones that are absent from school a lot. If they can learn English, they will perform better at school.

4.6.8 QUESTION 8. *I notice that you code-switch to Xhosa a lot. What are your reasons for doing this?*

ANSWER: When I notice that the children do not understand the reading, I explain words or expressions in Xhosa. If there are things that are new to them in the target language then I use examples from their mother tongue to make them clear. I also use expressions like 'Yeva' which means 'listen' and 'Yebo' which means 'yes', etc, which are standard expressions in their mother tongue. I use Xhosa so they can understand - understanding is more important.

4.6.9 QUESTION 9. *I have noticed that you put the children in groups. How do you decide which children should be put in which groups and why do you incorporate this method of teaching reading?*

ANSWER: As I said, the children have mixed abilities. I group two good ones with two weak ones, in this way, the weak ones learn from the others. Sometimes children understand their peers better than they understand the teacher. This makes my task lighter especially since the class is big and sometimes I cannot get to some children, then the peer groups help each other. In group work, the stronger ones can help the weaker ones.

4.6.10 QUESTION 10. *What do you find difficult to teach in the Reading class?*

ANSWER: When children have to read individually. Some are so weak that the others cannot follow the story, and then I have to

read again or ask the better readers to read. I find that group reading is easier where at least everybody is involved, and then I do not stand a chance of missing to involve some who are hiding away or who are lazy.

The children also struggle with spelling a lot - even if the words have been used in the stories or were written on the board. I think this is because some of them must still learn to read and understand the symbols of English. Many of them cannot read in their own language so they have nothing to fall back on- English is like a foreign language to them.

4.7. Interviews with the learners.

4.7.1 Introduction

The factors that impact on learning to read in a language other than the mother-tongue are: exposure to the second language, mother-tongue influence and attitudes towards the learning of another language.

As the main goal of the research is to explore the success of the reading lessons and how the teacher and learners interact, I decided to interview six learners in the class and ask questions pertaining to what they liked or disliked doing in the reading class, questions which would show their level of understanding of the reading texts and questions which would give information about their home literacy backgrounds and their home languages. For the purposes of my research, it was imperative to establish the learners' primary and secondary Discourses (Gee 1990), so as to ascertain how the success or failure of the reading lessons is influenced by the primary Discourses.

The success of the reading lessons should be displayed through reading competencies and comprehension. In order to assess their comprehension of the texts, I devised a question that would display their ability to retell what they have read in class (question 2). To assess their reading competencies, I picked learners who displayed different reading abilities or levels of participation in the class to read to me in individual sessions noting fluency, pronunciation and automaticity.

The learners were identified on the basis of their interaction with their peers and the teacher and their overall participation in the classroom and reading activities. Two of the learners were very confident and participated eagerly and could answer the teacher's questions most of the time, (Beulah and Unathi: interviews 1 and 2). Sibongile (interview 3) showed average reading abilities when called upon to read and participated in activities when the teacher required him to, while Thulethu (interview 5), shied away from the teacher but participated when coaxed and guided. The learners I perceived as weak, (Sipho: interview 4 and Lumtu: interview 6) struggled to answer or to follow the teacher's reading aloud prompts.

After having identified the learners as good, average and weak, I assessed their reading abilities by asking them to read individually to me in private sessions. I used the graded readers (appendix 3-pages 145 to 201) provided by READ to assess the reading levels of the learners. The readers are graded according to grade and age cohorts and are characterized by controlled vocabulary, monosyllabic words for beginner readers, restricted number of words, illustrations or pictures, big print and wider letter and line spacing. Thus, these books facilitate quick recognition of words or phrases and prepare the reader to read fluently and automatically. According to this grading system, the

learners in grade three should be able to read up to and including level C2. Children in grade 1 should be able to read A-level books and children in grade 2, B- level books while the 1 to 2 and 3 indicators, indicate the levels of competency based on number of words in the book. Reading competency is then judged according to the number of words the child knows and his/her ability to read fluently and with understanding.

The following questions were asked:

- What do you enjoy doing in the reading class and what do you dislike doing in class?
- Tell me about one of the stories you have read in class.
- Do you read at home and what do you read?
- Does your family read to you at home and what do they read?
- Where else do you encounter people reading within you community?
- Which languages do you speak most at home?

I interviewed each learner privately, taking him or her out of the class where there was no disturbance. I tape-recorded the interviews and made field notes as the interviews were conducted. I found that after having spent 4 weeks and 10 lessons in the classroom, the learners were very comfortable and open with me (they did not show any nervousness and answered without hesitation and some even volunteered anecdotes or

information from their private lives).I could therefore deduce that my information would not be marred by shyness or anxiety.

4.7.2 Interview 1.

The first learner that I interviewed, *Beulah, was able to read level A up to level B2 readers fluently and without hesitation. She was able to read the level C2 book, only struggling with new or unfamiliar words. This level is above the expected level of a grade 3 child during the first term. According to READ's grading system, Beulah's answers to the questions, displayed that she was a competent reader. She claimed that if the teacher tells the class to read silently, some children do not read but play, while she prefers to read. She also stated that she likes to write about the stories they have read or answer questions on the reading. She stated: *"I like to read ...and write. When the others play, I sit in class and read"* (see appendix 13-page 221).

This learner could retell many stories (about six different titles) that have been done in the class and even retold some of the stories that she has read privately. Here she mentioned titles like "The Chinese Quilt" and "My family" which no-one else has mentioned. She even volunteered to tell me about her sister's wedding which had taken place the week before. During my observations, I noticed that she takes part in the classroom activities very eagerly, she reads fluently and with understanding and she was usually picked out by the teacher if none of the other learners could answer questions. I thus judged her to be a good reader even to the extent of being above the level of the whole class.

She reported that she read extensively at home, she belonged to Joza library⁵ and her parents and siblings read to her regularly. Her father would read the newspaper and she would read with him or he would show her something interesting like the headlines or specific captions beneath the photographs. In the church, their services are conducted in English and she could recite Chapter 23, 'The Lord is my Shepherd'. (Here she volunteered to do this without the interviewer asking her to –see appendix 13 page 222). She speaks mostly English at home with her siblings, parents and peers and only sometimes speaks Xhosa to her little brother.

4.7.3. Interview 2.

The second learner that I interviewed, *Unathi, I assessed as having a good to competent reading ability in the classroom. She was able to read the graded books up to level C2, commensurate with grade 3 learners of 8 or 9 years old. Unathi said that she loved reading in class as well as at home. She enjoys writing what the books are about and eagerly participates in silent reading, reading aloud and group reading activities. She was able to retell five of the stories they have done in class and could recite lines and phrases from the books verbatim. She reported that she reads, "*All the books I see*". She watches television programs that tell stories, reads the newspaper, and she belongs to the main library in town. She mentioned other titles that have not been dealt with in class like "Noah's Ark," "The lizard's grandmother", showing that she finished ahead of the others to be able to enjoy the leisure reading sessions.

She also observes many people reading, besides her parents and siblings, mostly the soldiers on the army camp (where she resides), who sit under the trees and read and during church services, they read hymnals and 'missals'.

⁵ A public library in the township

She reported that her family members take turns to read novels, newspapers and the Bible to her. She speaks Xhosa to her parents, Afrikaans to the Afrikaans-speaking friends on the camp, and English to those who speak English.

In the observations, I have judged that this learner has good reading abilities, which put her above the rest of the class, and in the individual reading session she proved to be a fluent, competent and very confident reader.

4.7.4. Interview 3.

The third learner, *Sibongile, displayed average reading abilities in the classroom. On the grade reading testing, he moved up to level C1 books but struggled with words that started with the same clusters of consonants, for example, *promise* and *present* – interchanging one with the other. He enjoyed the stories they have read in class and could retell several of them coherently. He stated that he read English and Xhosa books at home and that he belonged to the Joza Library. At home he reads books everyday. The Bible is read in church and people around him read the newspapers in English, Sotho and Xhosa. They only speak English at home but there was no one that read to him.

4.7.5 Interview 4.

The fourth learner that I interviewed, *Thulethu, has displayed average reading abilities during class activities but tended to shy away from answering questions posed by the teacher. The teacher tended to involve Thulethu more and coaxed him to take notice in class (see interview with teacher: question 7). He was able to read the graded readers from level A1 to B1, but used his finger while reading and read at a slower pace than the other learners who displayed average reading abilities. In my opinion, he displayed average abilities in the class as the teacher

continually guided and coaxed him to perform. Her reasons for this encouragement of a specific learner I have included in the open interview I had with her (see question 7) In actual fact, his reading ability was that of a grade 2 learner and using his finger while reading, showed that he was still spelling out words when reading.

During the interview, Thulethu was eager to answer but not very coherent or fluent (see appendix 13 page 222). He said that he liked to read in class and he liked it when the teacher asked questions in class. He also enjoyed writing in class but on probing further, I found that he mostly rewrote what the others wrote or he copied from the board. Obviously, he did not understand what he wrote as, on recounting what he had read, he repeated phrases and sentences verbatim from the books e.g. "*Terrible Tiger,and....they not scared of terrible tiger...not scared of anything....Swimming*". He could not relate the gist of the stories into his own words and his answer to the question whether he read at home was incoherent; evidently, there was no one at home who read books or belonged to a library. He stated that his father reads the newspaper at home, that their church services are in Xhosa and that he seldom hears English in his community. At home he only speaks Xhosa, to his father, to friends and other people in the community. (Significantly, it came to light that this child had been abandoned by his parents so I could not be sure of the truth of his answers. He may thus have given me answers that he thought were appropriate).

4.7.6. Interview 5.

The fifth learner that I interviewed displayed very weak reading abilities in the class. During the interview, Sipho, could not answer the questions coherently and mostly nodded or moved his head in response. In answer to the first question about his likes

or dislikes in the reading class he said, " *I like read*". When he retold the stories he mentioned, "*animals*", "*the dance room*" and "*they want to eat*", without making any sense. These were but sketchy details about the stories which show that he could not remember any of the stories well. He stated that he does not belong to a library and responded with "yes" even if the questions demanded details about where he stayed or what he does after school.

At home the people in his house do not read to him and he never hears English or Afrikaans in his house. He only sees people read in the shop (supposedly the shopkeepers) and the Bible is read in English in church. His family never speaks English at home, only Xhosa. This learner revealed that he did not understand English therefore I found that the answers to the questions could not give me the required information that I wished to elicit. Siphos read the level A readers with difficulty and struggled with level B1- indicating that his level of reading was that of a Grade 1 learner.

4.7.7. Interview 6

The sixth learner that I interviewed could only read Level B1 readers. I picked this learner to be interviewed, as he never participated in the classroom activities, even if the teacher tried to involve him. However, due to his reticence it became apparent that the other learners would volunteer to respond if he shied away from answering or producing work. *Lumtu stated that he likes reading but not writing (see appendix 13 page 224). For example, when he was asked what he enjoyed doing in class, he answered: "*like reading*". Only after I have coaxed him into giving his opinion about written work in class, he answered, "not writing".

In the retell session, he could only repeat the sentences or phrases from the stories like: *'buzz off' 'friend help him', and 'don't bugging me'*. (from the story "The little yellow chicken") Although he was required to answer questions that display understanding, he recited these phrases from the story verbatim. When he was coaxed to tell a story he said "*I can't*".

He only reads at school, does not belong to a library and does not encounter people that read at home. His siblings only work in their schoolbooks and never read to him, and in church, the services are in Xhosa. They only speak Xhosa at home and he comes in contact with English speakers only at school.

4.8. Analysis & Interpretation.

4.8.1. Introduction.

From the lesson observations, I noticed that the teacher employs different strategies to *'help the children understand what they are reading'* (her own words). The salient categories that recur in her lessons are: reading aloud followed by choral responses and repetition, silent reading, writing, integration of other subjects, children raising hands to show that they understand or to respond to questions and code-switching to Xhosa. In addition, features that appeared in the lessons but not that often were: pre-reading activities, individual responses, group work and pair work, praising of individual learners or the whole class, prediction, reading for enjoyment and marking of children's books. These characteristics I will discuss separately under factors pertaining to classroom practice and factors pertaining to the teaching of reading and writing. In these analyses, I will draw on the triangulated data collected through the interviews with the teacher and the learners, reading sessions with the children, the

children's class work books, the learners' school and literacy profiles as well as the parents' preference of MOI.

4.8.2. Analysis of Classroom Practices.

4.8.2.1. Teacher Reading Aloud and Choral Responses.

The teacher read most of the texts, giving explanations and the children followed with repetitions and choral responses. In my discussion with her it was evident that she avoided individual reading by the whole class as in her own words, " *many of them do not have the basic skills to read aloud or fluently*". Whenever she did ask individuals to read, it was mostly the children who volunteered and knew that they could read or those that she felt needed to be coaxed to participate.

Significantly, the teacher was obliged to resort to reading aloud and choral responses because of the large number of children and the fact that the class consisted of children with diverse language and reading abilities. She employed reading aloud protocols and group reading to "*lighten her task*" and "*involve more children*". (Her own words). Through careful lesson planning and class control, the teacher would have minimized her choral reading and choral responses by incorporating interactive group- or pair work and individual activities. In teacher-pupil interactions, weaker readers could have been involved and individual attention could have been given. Only some of the children read aloud and for those that were competent readers, the continual repetition was unnecessary. Because many of the learners only understood when she explained, or used Xhosa, she under-emphasized individual reading and individual responses. It was therefore difficult to gauge the reading and comprehension abilities of all the learners through choral reading and oral drills.

The focus of these reading aloud sessions was more geared to reading fluently and pronouncing the words correctly than on comprehending the text. As stated in the interview (question 6), the teacher relied on their written work to assess whether they understood the readings. Although she states that '*understanding is important*' (question 8), neither her questions (lower order) during the lessons nor the written work tasks (writing words or phrases from the stories in their books: lessons 4 and 9, or the extension tasks given on the texts: lesson 2 and 10), tested understanding. Through choral responses, she does not succeed to teach the children to 'think' in English as she proposes to do (interview: question 3).

Significantly, the teacher states that she teaches reading the way she was taught. Being educated at schools and a tertiary institution that exemplified the then segregated and impoverished education policies of the apartheid government, her teaching practices and beliefs are steeped in fundamental pedagogics. (Taylor et.al. 2003:133) state that these authoritarian principles have had "a profoundly detrimental effect on teacher's thinking and practice", and according to Chisholm, (in Taylor et.al. 2003); the development of critical and innovative teaching strategies is hampered by the training that teachers received. The choral response protocols exemplify teacher-centered practices as opposed to learner-centered practices.

The findings of Vinjevoll and the P.E.I. researchers on teacher-centered practices find echo in studies undertaken by McDonald (1990) and Taylor (2006). A report in Taylor (2006:5), based on three cross-country comparative studies on equity, efficiency and the development of South African schools, attribute the poor results of learners from disadvantaged backgrounds on teacher-

centered classrooms. According to these researchers, the following pedagogical practices are neglected in teacher-centered classrooms:

- micro pacing (teacher responsiveness to pupils' levels of ability and progress,
- correcting pupils' errors and engaging pupils at high levels of cognitive demand with respect to principled and procedural knowledge.

With regard to micro-pacing, the teacher adapted her lessons to the reading abilities of the class, but the reading aloud protocols did not cater for all the learners. Where correcting of errors and encouraging principled and procedural knowledge are concerned, the children did not possess the basic linguistic proficiencies on which the teacher could build.

Taylor et.al. (2003:134), state that the dominant classroom interaction consists of the children listening to the teacher's oral input and occasionally chanting in response. The teacher in this study states that she employs the rote learning and choral response method in the class to counteract overcrowding and the weak decoding abilities of some of the learners (interview: question 9). In this way, she proves to be sensitive to learner abilities, presenting her lessons in such a way that she accommodates most of the learners.

In their attempt to teach basic reading skills, teachers overlook the disadvantages resulting from these teacher-centered practices. In the words of Macdonald (1990), who had undertaken a study in Bophuthatswana in the mid-to late eighties,

Rote learning had built up a self-sustaining momentum: teachers explained that drilling

was an effective way of teaching since children could not read. Yet, rather than teaching them more reading they resorted to memorization.

As many of the children are reading on a level way below that of their counterparts, the dilemma for the teacher lies in which strategies to follow so as not to disadvantage the weak ones or advantage the strong ones. The teacher thus resorts to basic reading instruction (phonics, drilling and repetition) and attempts to incorporate top-down principles, so as to reach the whole class. Either way, some children will not be catered for effectively.

Another disadvantage of choral responses and repetition is that many learners depend on those who know the answers and mimic them. Although the teacher realized this, she saw choral responses as the reading instruction strategy which enabled her to reach everyone. In her own words "*sometimes I cannot get to all the children*" (interview: question 9).

Rote-learning and repetition are teaching strategies that are dependent on short-term memory. Researchers in the field of reading coined the phrase 'chunking' to describe this phenomenon. However, short term memory can only hold five to nine chunks of information. Many teachers, who resort to repetition, find that they repeat the same concepts several times and even for consecutive years to children who are repeating a grade. As stated by Aldersen & Urquhart (1984: preface (xiii)),

Recall is itself a creative task, dependent on memory, and as such, a poor or deceptive indicator of the cumulative process of understanding.

Excessive repetition would thus not stimulate information-processing as required for language learning or reading. This is proven in the interviews with the weaker learners who could only

recall single words and phrases from the stories or could only repeat prompts by the researcher.

For Example-Interview 5-

Question: *What do you like doing in the reading class?*

Answer: *reading.*

Interview 6-

Question: *Tell me about a story you have read.*

Answer: *'Little yellow chicken... buzz... off...
Don't bugging me.*

The weaker readers could only recall the titles of the stories, but not what the stories were about, showing little or no comprehension.

The continual drilling and repetition, is typical of behaviorist principles of habit-formation. According to McCormick (1994), language learning based on behaviorism is a process of habit-formation, the more often something is repeated, the stronger the habit and the greater the learning. The teacher who relies on imitation, repetition, drills and dialogue memorization, is thus following behaviorist teaching strategies and a typical behaviorist classroom is characterized by the oral-mode of information transmission, rote-learning and verbatim recall of information.

Although the teacher reads the text aloud, her emphasis is on 'reading' as a response to her prompts. The children are mimicking her reading aloud protocols with little or no comprehension. As she has stated, some children do not know the phonetics of English and struggle to pronounce the words. Her emphasis on phoneme/grapheme relationships leads her to decode the text rather than teaching reading as "a cognitive-information processing" skill (McCormick 1994:13). Thus there

exists a discrepancy between what the teacher does and what she proposes to do, that is, teaching reading comprehension. McCormick states that where teachers emphasize texts and word and letter recognition, they emphasize lower order skills and reading can be seen as "the translation of written elements into language" (Perfetti 1984:6).

As has been shown by the interviews with the learners, (appendix 13-page 221), Thulethu and Lumtu could not retell the stories in their own words and resorted to repeating phrases, words and sentences they have mimicked in class. Comprehension of the texts is thus forfeited in favor of reading as "empty verbalism" (Johnson 1973:109). As the teacher accentuates the surface structure of the language; the deep structure, the intentions of the writer and the meaning intended, is lost to the reader. Smith (1984:27) states that meaning lies beyond the sounds and printed language and cannot be derived from the surface structure by any simple or mechanistic process (rote-learning or grapheme/phoneme drills).

The dilemma of the teacher to teach reading to 35 children of mixed abilities is exacerbated by the fact that other contextual factors like level of reading ability and knowledge of the target language impede reading instruction. The teacher knows that understanding is important (interview question 8), but she has to focus on basic reading skills in order to reach the majority of the learners in her class. Smith (1984:4) states that:

Drills, exercises and rote learning play a little part in learning to read and may provide a distorted idea of the nature of reading.

Although following behaviorist principles, the teacher tries to employ top-down teaching strategies (Cummins 2001) which involve the reader's world experience (schema) that direct reader goals and expectations (Carell and Eisterhold 1983, Grabe and

Stoller 2002, Anderson 1999). According to cognitive principles, decoding and comprehension occur simultaneously in the reader's brain which account for the interactive nature of reading (Pretorius 2002, Anderson 1999). If the teacher teaches reading uni-directionally, from the smallest unit, graphemes to phonemes to words to sentences, she does not teach comprehension per se, but focuses on mechanical linguistic processes which may impede reading proficiency. Thus, many learners taught reading in this fashion are able to read the printed word but do not understand the message encoded in the print. Pretorius (2002:92), states that "Comprehension is the sine qua non of reading" and strategies that emphasize "empty verbalism" (Perfetti: 1984), impede reading proficiency.

4.8.2.2. Children Raising Hands

This practice was the most common one the teacher used to get children to respond or to check understanding. However, most of the time, two-thirds of the class raised their hands, but many of them were never given the opportunity to respond. With this practice, the teacher would not be sure that each individual in the class knew the correct responses. Although she says that she ascertains that the learners who do not raise their hands have problems, I noticed that most of the time most of them raised their hands even if they did not know the answers. This strategy thus developed the tendency among the children to 'con' the teacher, pretending that they knew the answers. Because the class is so big, the learners know that they may not be called upon to answer, even if their hands are up. In lesson 5, certain individuals that had raised their hands- implying that they knew the answers- could not answer when called upon. The teacher also tended to

ask the children whom she knew to be articulate, more often, as their hands went up more enthusiastically.

Pertinently, the question- and- answer technique is used extensively throughout the lessons, but the questions are not cognitively challenging (for example: Lesson 1 – The question: *What is the tiger doing?* expects the children to look at the pictures and answer. The main goal of the lessons seems to be to develop fluent reading and answering of low-order questions which were aimed at data recall or checking whether learners were listening to the teacher. Low- order questions are described as questions that serve as recall strategies where only one or a small range of correct answers are possible. Middle order questions require learners to understand information and sometimes apply it to new situations, while higher order questions require learners to analyze information, build new ideas or make judgments (Ellis 1992). The lessons were devoid of questions or tasks that elicited these skills.

Grabe and Stoller (2002) state that low order questions inculcate low level cognitive processes. That is, word recognition abilities, syntactic parsing and semantic-proposition formation and automatic assimilation of information. Higher order questions require learners to disambiguate word-and clause-level meanings and create a mental picture of the text, incorporating schemata to interpret the text. High questions would thus instill in the reader the capacity to make observations, ask questions, refute assumptions and derive at hypotheses about the texts.

The fact that many of the children struggled to execute lower-level skills, forced the teacher to accentuate them, using low-level questions. Questions and answers were repeated in drill

fashion whenever reading instruction took place. By incorporating this learner-centered strategy the teacher is trying to cope with the diverse linguistic abilities of her learners. However, the children who have mastered these low-level processes are actually not progressing to the higher level processes (analyzing and understanding information, building ideas and evaluating information) nor are the children who have not mastered these processes 'being taught', as they are still struggling with the basic grapho-phonemic relationships of the symbols of the language.

The teacher's questioning technique thus aims to teach the learner according to their levels of competency. Again the number of learners in the class tends to detract from the success of her questioning techniques. Were the class smaller, the groups consisting of maybe three to four learners, she could have employed different teaching strategies like jig-saw reading and tasks, group sequencing and group projects (ELET-reading course book: 1995). In these tasks, where questions vary between higher order and lower order levels, individual participation within groups would be enhanced

4.8.2.3. Code-Switching:

The reasons why the teacher reverts to the home-language are to explain difficult or new terms, to establish co-operation and to draw the learners' attention (see interview question 8). In this regard, I could not establish whether the children understood the explanations in their mother-tongue, being not conversant with the language, but she was successful in getting children to respond or pay attention when using formulaic expressions like 'Yeva'- *do you hear*, 'Pinde'- *repeat* and 'uthini?'- *meaning*

'*what're you saying?*' These tag switches the teacher uses to check the children's understanding, focus their attention on what she is saying or to give instructions (Poplack 1987). Some of the expressions seemed to play a social function as the children should understand expressions like 'this is Africa' instead of 'iAfrika-le' and 'Nivile Niyeva', meaning-'you don't listen'.

Instances where code switching served an explanatory purpose were more infrequent. For example, she explained difficult terms in lesson 9 by giving a brief explanation of the word 'island'- '*isiqithi*' and talked about Nelson Mandela and Robben Island, using Xhosa.

Some expressions were used to discipline the class- '*sukutheta*, meaning stop talking, and '*hayi*', meaning 'no'-(lesson 1). Expressions like these are used to manage the class, sustain discipline and exercise authority. According to Adendorff (1992), code-switching in the learning environment serves as a communicative resource as well as a learning resource. By switching to the learners' mother-tongue, the teacher may unwittingly or consciously try to establish a closer relationship with the children and instill a sense of pride in their own language and culture, being a Xhosa-speaker herself. Ndayipfukaminge (1994) states that code-switching functions as a means to alleviate the artificiality of the classroom by narrowing the distance between the teacher and the learner.

4.8.2.4. Group work and Pair work

Although the children are placed in groups of mixed abilities, this strategy is not successful as no interaction takes place between

the children in the groups. Learners were only instructed to engage in group work after the teacher dominated the lessons, reading or explaining. The children are physically in groups but not interactively and the teacher only employs this strategy when she wants the more able children to help the weaker ones. Where the individuals in the groups are helping each other, the teacher is not actively involved in the group as she leaves the children on their own. As she states, "*This, [children helping each other in the groups], makes my task lighter since the class is big*". She mentions that the children play different roles in the group like, scribe, reporter, etc. but in her group work sessions I did not perceive them following these basic practices.

Group work or co-operative learning should be exemplified by children exchanging ideas, arguing a point, listening to each other and accepting or refuting other's viewpoints (ELET reading course book: 1995). These theorists postulate that group interaction should also instill respect and tolerance and should serve to encourage shy or less confident learners to interact with their peers on an equal platform negating the authoritarian influences of the teacher. In group discussions, the weaker learners will in fact learn from the stronger ones, provided they are interactively engaged.

In lesson 5, two learners were involved but they were only required to read and perform different roles according to the text (the shopkeeper and the shopper). This lesson in itself did not constitute interactive learning 'per se', as the children did not share knowledge or negotiated meaning through interaction. Working in the group meant for these children, asking and getting help from other group members. The teacher does not provide the learners with opportunities to engage in learner-learner discussions or to work co-operatively as a group. The PEI researcher, Bell (in Taylor et.al. 2003:150), reported that the

teachers' understanding of group work do not go beyond "the superficial level of physical arrangements", what he terms 'clusterwork'.

In a study undertaken by Alferts (1994) on group work management techniques of a second language teacher, she found that the tasks set by the teacher are not conducive to group discussions and do not exemplify interactive learning. She noted that the children are seldom given a chance to interact and whole class discussions dominated group work activities.

The dominant interaction in all Funeka's lessons (this research) constituted the teacher talking to the whole class or individuals, but the groups were not tasked to work interactively nor did the teacher act as facilitator of group discussions. Funeka believes that children understand their peers better (interview: question 9), but she does not employ group strategies to enhance this.

Like the teachers in the PEI study and the study of Alferts (1994), the teacher in my study seemed to assume that the physical arrangement of the desks in groups will automatically promote participation and learning. However, the clustered desks will rather promote learner-to-learner conversations and joking (which are not based on the lesson), unless the teacher gives the children constructive tasks to complete as a group, like exploratory discussions, jig-saw reading tasks, question-and-answer negotiations or group projects (ELET reading course book: 1995).

4.8.2.5. Integration of other subjects:

As mentioned by the teacher (interview: question 5), she tries to integrate her reading instruction with other learning areas,

specifically, Mathematics, Social Sciences and Arts and Culture. In lesson 4, she incorporates Mathematics by exploring the differences between grams and kilograms and in lesson 9; she explores social science by emphasizing the difference between continents, countries and islands. She explores Arts and Culture by asking the children to sing the national anthem and drawing the flag of South Africa.

However, this integration of subjects fall short of curricula requirements as the teacher is not interlinking her reading lessons with themes from other subjects and does not work in conjunction with other teachers from other learning areas. Her aim to improve the learners' proficiency in English reading through extension tasks based on other subjects is not reached, as the lessons are haphazardly planned and are not structured to allow learners the opportunity to cognitively engage with, or read texts from other learning areas.

4.8.2.6. Marking of Books

The samples of the children's work that I perused showed the teacher's marking where she corrected answers and wrote in correct responses (see appendix 12-page 220). Where the teacher marked individuals' work at the table, she gave them individual guidance and even referred them back to the text or the blackboard. At one stage, the teacher reverted to phonics, spelling out words that a child could not spell.

As the teacher praised the children who performed well, the marking of books seemed to encourage the children to answer correctly and not make mistakes. Evaluation of class work should

be used to diagnose problems, credit achievement and encourage diligence. The marking of children's books presents the teacher with opportunities to correct, remediate and reward children in a learning situation. This, the teacher succeeded with, as many children were eager to go to the table, check their assessments or hand in their books.

In a study conducted by Pyle and Smith (Vinjevoild 1999) on teacher-centered practices, it was found that corrections often consisted of a single word and did not give teachers the opportunity to remediate or extend on what was learnt. The red 'ticks' and 'crosses' which indicate wrong or right answer seem to be the teacher's way of marking with single word corrections written in red. Unfortunately, I did not observe immediate follow-up lessons after books were marked as the observation sessions did not take place in succession. The assessment procedures in the children's books (lessons 3 and 6: appendix 7-page 215) and appendix 12-page 220) did not supply diagnostic feedback or formed the basis of other lessons making use of errors and problems as a remediation strategy.

4.8.3 Analysis of Reading Practices.

4.8.3.1. Pre-Reading Activities:

The teacher used pre-reading activities in four of her lessons, working along cognitive lines. However, she did not build on or extend her children's own background knowledge and literacy backgrounds in these lessons.

Her pre-reading activities involved giving summaries of previous texts (lesson 3 and 10), going over vocabulary that would be difficult (lesson 7) and letting children bring grocery containers from home (lesson 4), thus activating prior cultural and background knowledge effectively. In the lesson on Shopping, the pre-reading activity was most successful, as most of the children could tell the class about the wrappers, tins and other goods that can be bought at the shop (lesson 5). This activation of the children's schema was successful, as their own 'life-world' was used to stimulate it. In six of her lessons, children's prior knowledge was not activated, although the teacher could have incorporated this strategy. For example, in lesson 1, the story of the tiger could have been activated by using themes about wild animals, the zoo, pets and even sounds that animals make. Lesson 2 could have been introduced by an oral session where learners relate experiences where they have been locked out and lesson 7 on the body could have integrated themes from the Natural Sciences Learning area as an introduction.

By not activating the children's prior knowledge or world experience, the teacher does not follow the principles of schema theory (Alderson and Urquhart 1984, Carell and Eisterhold 1983, Anderson 1999).

Schemata, according to Dixon (1992:12) constitute:

The reader's background knowledge stored in hierarchies in the brain [which] enables the reader to relate to and interact with information contained within the text, and is crucial to discourse processing.

Where the children's background knowledge is not activated or brought to bear on the text, they solely rely on the visual stimuli to make meaning and they are unable to incorporate cognitive

meaning-making skills. This phenomenon may account for their low comprehension proficiencies in the reading lessons.

4.8.3.2. Individual Responses:

The teacher elicited individual responses mostly through writing activities. When individuals responded orally during reading sessions, only those who raised their hands were individually involved. Individual interaction with the teacher took place when she marked their books at the table and on another occasion when she asked individuals to go to the blackboard and read words and phrases that had been discussed during the lesson. Personally, I deduced that this strategy would have been more successful in a class with fewer children and the teacher avoided it, assuming she was reaching more children through whole class involvement. Her questioning techniques in the individual interactions, however, fall short of the pedagogical purpose of questioning. Ellis (1992) proposes two reasons why teachers ask question: to oblige learners to contribute to the interaction and provide feedback which guides teacher explanation or exploration. Where learners were only required to give information already known-display questions (Wolfolk: 1984), or answer Yes or No questions, higher order skills were not tested.

However, given the deficient reading abilities of so many of the learners, low-level questions directed at weaker learners are more effective and enhance basic memorization skills, word recognition skills, pronunciation and fluency (Chall :1967).

4.8.3.3.Silent Reading:

Only one lesson, number five, was introduced by a silent reading session. In other lessons, this strategy was used when learners had finished their work before others or when the teacher was marking or engaged with other learners. In my opinion, this strategy was not fully practiced or monitored. As one learner said, "*many children play or talk*", when they are supposed to be reading on their own. This may be caused by the fact that the learners are not competent enough to read independently. As the teacher said, they do not understand what they have read unless she explains or engage in guided reading sessions.

It could also be that silent reading is practiced too early when the children may not have a large enough vocabulary to guess the meaning of the words (Urquhart and Weir 1988:233). Also, the learners do not have the basic linguistic schema or the content schemata to process the text.

According to Larsen-Freeman (1984), silent reading helps the children to internalize what they are reading. A competent reader makes assumptions and confirms or rejects them as he/she reads the text. If silent reading is not monitored properly, either by giving them worksheets or guiding questions, children will become bored and start talking or playing. On the other hand, silent reading is meaningless if the child has not mastered basic reading skills and reading with comprehension.

However, theorists like Smith (1994), Andersen (1980) and Chall (1967) emphasize oral reading as an integral part of the teaching of beginning reading. As the children in this class are not fluent in English, they should first be conversant with the printed equivalents of the oral vocabulary. The first step would thus be oral reading followed by silent reading. The teacher, having

gauged the children's lack of grapheme/phoneme relationship knowledge, does not prioritize silent reading per se, as all the children in her class are not competent oral readers at this stage.

Although the teacher uses silent reading techniques in her class, the advantages of this methodology, that is, to interact with the writer on a personal level, to improve reading and vocabulary ability and to enjoy reading as a leisure activity, cannot be explored, given the social and linguistic dynamics in the class.

4.8.3.4. Reading for Enjoyment:

There were no sessions that were set aside for reading for enjoyment as a classroom strategy. Only when children were finished with their written work, while others were still writing, were they given time to choose their own books from the box and read on their own. Evidently, the weaker and slower readers did not experience the enjoyment of reading without interruption from the teacher or their peers as they seldom finished ahead of the class.

Theorists in the field of reading instruction, Day (1993,) and Mc Cormick (1994), believe that the best way for children to learn to read is by reading. However, as stated by Day (1993) the reading material should be classified as "comprehensible input" (Krashen 1978). The weaker and slower readers will however not gain from Sustained Silent Reading (S.S.R.) sessions or reading for enjoyment, as they are at variable levels of competence. By not monitoring which books the children read on their own, the teacher is not able to provide these children with comprehensible input. Any reading for enjoyment sessions with children who

struggle to decode the text, are thus futile. The competent readers would gain from these sessions, but the weaker readers should be engaged in activities commensurate with their reading abilities.

4.8.4. Analysis of Writing Practices.

Funeka emphasizes the importance of writing as "*it improves their ability to read and think about what they are reading*" (interview question3). During five of the lessons (2, 4, 7, 8 and 9), new or unfamiliar words or phrases were written on the board. She involved the children by asking them to repeat the words orally, explaining the meaning of the words individually or writing the words in their workbooks. Three of the lessons were extended by giving the whole class comprehension questions to answer in their work books. In addition, some of the children's' written work was put on the walls. The written vocabulary served to acquaint the children with the grapheme/phoneme relationship of words as well as the meaning of the words, while the comprehension tasks tested their understanding of the texts.

On checking the children's books, however, I found that mostly Why, Who and What questions were asked which were not cognitively challenging. It would seem that since the writing tasks are not cognitively challenging, the teacher misses her goal to make the children 'think' about what they are writing. Lower order comprehension questions serve to test the reader's knowledge of the stories but fail to stimulate higher order skills like "categorization, classification and concept-formation (Smith 1984:21)".

According to the RNCS, Outcome 5 (appendix 14-page 226), the learner should be able to use language to think and reason, as well as to access, process and use information for learning (RNCS:2005). Writing exercises that only demand content knowledge of the text will not whet these processes or the child's meaning-making skills and are described as "rudimentary" by Vinjevold (2003). In a PEI study undertaken by Pyle and Smythe (in Taylor et.al. 2003), it was found that written work is largely confined to simple exercises at the end of a lesson and often only one-word answers were required. Notes in the children's workbooks in the Pyle and Smythe study functioned mostly as vocabulary exercises and often pupils copied work from the board with little comprehension.

These practices were prevalent in the writing exercises given by the teacher in this study. Although she proclaims that writing is important for learners to show understanding, to think in English and to cement knowledge of the language, her classroom practices seemed to be geared towards recall (lesson 2) and practicing spelling (lesson 2, 8 and 9).

4.8.5. Comment on Strategies employed

Judging from the responses during the observations, the retell sessions of the stories, the children's' written comprehension tasks and the reading abilities of some of the learners during the graded reading sessions, the different strategies employed by the teacher, seem to reach only a few of the learners in the class. Although she is aware of the problems: lack of basic reading skills, lack of stimulation at home and in the communities, lack of exposure to the target language, children having to learn to read in another language and not the mother tongue, insufficient resources at her school and social problems that affect learning;

she cannot address these problems in the reading class on her own.

By incorporating different methods of teaching reading, the teacher in her capacity, is doing what she believes is best and endeavors to teach the children to read and understand English, the language they have to know. However, the above-mentioned contextual factors impact negatively on the children's reading competencies and can mostly be attributed to the particular socio-political setting of the school, the children, the teacher, the communities these children come from and the educational policies in South Africa.

4.9. Other Contextual factors that impact on the classroom

4.9.1. Introduction

In order to understand the methodologies and theories of reading of the teacher in this study, the salient socio-political factors that impact on her teaching in the South African educational set-up, need to be explained. Contextual factors influenced by the political history of South Africa are: home literacy backgrounds of the learners and the parents' preference for English as MOI. In order to get information in this regard, I distributed thirty-five questionnaires which the parents had to fill in (appendix 15).

The results of the questionnaires were as follows:

Total Number distributed	35
Total Number filled in correctly	23

Total number spoiled	2
Total number filled in by learners themselves	2
Total number not returned	8

Answers to the Questions:

Languages used in the homes:

Xhosa	4
Xhosa & English	18
Xhosa, English & Afrikaans	1

Language spoken by the teacher (according to the learners):

English	15
Xhosa & English	3
No answer	5

Parents' Preference of M.O.I.

English	18
Xhosa & English	3
Afrikaans	1
No answer	1

Other social factors that impact on the class room and its efficacy as an educational facility are: lack of resources, financial constraints and social problems. These different contextual factors, I will discuss separately, drawing on the results of the questionnaires, the interviews with the children and the teacher and theories of reading researchers.

4.9.2. Home Literacy Backgrounds.

According to Heath (1983), Carell and Eisterhold (1983) and Gee (1990), the home literacy backgrounds of children predispose them to success or failure in mainstream education. According to the interviews with the children it was shown that the weaker readers have poor home literacy backgrounds. As the school and home represent two totally different cultures, the school curriculum serves to keep the two apart by not building on the child's home-based literacy, be it linguistically or culturally. In a study of three different communities' discourse patterns, Heath (1983) showed that if the family and communities value and promote Discourses and Literacy practices which do not allow the children to fit seamlessly into school literacy practices, those children are doomed to failure as in school, mainstream language norms are practiced.

The fact that the MOI of the Xhosa-speaking children in this class is English, and most of them started learning in English from grade 1, puts them at a disadvantage. Their mother-tongue, Xhosa, is replaced in school by a language that is foreign to them. The basic linguistic knowledge and competence of their mother-tongue is lost and not built on as they are exposed mostly to other languages at school. Van der Berg, et.al (in Taylor 2006:4), involved in school effectiveness studies in the Western Cape, affirmed that "children are severely disadvantaged when

the home language and the medium of instruction do not coincide". Cummins (1999) postulated that the transfer of basic linguistic skills and discourse conventions is facilitated if these skills are developed in the mother-tongue. According to Heugh (1995:46) "the natural cognitive development" of a child is stunted if the mother tongue is taken out of the learning environment.

Proponents of additive transitional bilingualism (Mc Dermot 1998, Heugh 1995) thus state that children should be taught in the mother-tongue (the primary discourse) for a minimum of five years while a second language (secondary discourse) is gradually introduced. In this way, the skills and knowledge acquired in the primary language in the home environment are easily transferred to the secondary language. Competence in the primary discourse and a rich literacy background are thus factors that determine poor or good reading abilities in the secondary discourse.

In this study, the teacher's strategies to teach reading are successful with the learners who read at home, belong to a library, encounter people reading, and are exposed to English outside school. The children who have a deficient instruction and tend to be uninvolved or not interested in what is literacy background, that is: do not read at home, do not encounter people that read, do not belong to the library and are mostly exposed to the mother tongue and not the target language, (Lumtu, Thulethu and Siphon in this study), are those who do not gain by reading happening in the classroom.

4.9.3. Medium of Instruction.

The fact that the children's home literacies are not extended or built upon at school, can be attributed to the curricula offered or the methodologies employed at the schools. On the other hand, the language policy of the school in my study does not follow the criteria as set out in the language policies adopted by the country in 1994 (Bill of Rights 1994: appendix 1-page 141).

As has been shown by the questionnaires sent out to the parents, mother-tongue instruction is eschewed in favor of English. Out of the twenty respondents who completed the questionnaire, 18 preferred English as MOI, while only three parents preferred English and Xhosa. Their reason for choosing English may be, as stated by Hartshorne (1992), a way to attain social and political upliftment in the 'new' South Africa.

The results of the questionnaires (page 106) showed that most of the respondents are exposed to Xhosa and English at home, but based on their competencies in the English class; their home literacy skills do not equip them for English medium instruction. It is evident that the parents and the children believe in the fallacy that if they possess basic communication skills (BICS) in English, they would be competent in schooled linguistic abilities. As stated by theorists like Cummins (1999) and Alderson and Urquhart (1984), BICS are different from CALP (Cognitive Academic Linguistic Proficiency). These theorists postulate that a learner's underlying proficiency of academic and conceptual knowledge will facilitate cross-lingual transfer. According to the Language Interdependence Theory and The Iceberg Theory, postulated by Cummins (2001), children who start learning a second language

while their conceptual and academic knowledge have not been developed or are at a basic level in the mother-tongue, are not able to transfer cognitive linguistic proficiencies across the languages. Negative transfer can thus hamper second language acquisition. The parents in this study do not see the disadvantage of substituting the mother-tongue with English and it may well be the reason why so many of the learners do not succeed at school or have such low reading abilities.

The fact that all the Xhosa-speaking students in this study are instructed in English at an Afrikaans-medium school shows that the school as an educational facility does not conform to the democratic policies of our country. As found by (Mc Dermot 1998) many schools are perpetuating the disparity between policy and practice by not complying with the LiEP as proposed in the Bill of Rights (1994), that is , that children should receive mother-tongue instruction from grade R up to, and including grade three.

The teacher in this study states that even teachers are accepting the statues quo and are reluctant to change. According to the teacher, English as MOI presents difficulties when teaching reading to second language speakers. She states that the weak children in her class who do not seem to benefit from formal schooling are those that cannot cope with the medium of instruction. Significantly, she refers to the failures of the year before who are still not coping, even after a year in the grade and being exposed to English as MOI for a second time.

4.9.4. Financial and Social constraints.

As reported by the teacher, the school as a government-subsidized institution should to be supplied with books and learning materials, but this does not happen. The teacher in this research uses old books and books that have been supplied to the school by an NGO - READ.

Reading theorists believe that a child learns to read by reading, but as the child is deprived of reading material at school (the only place he/she will acquire literacy, given the impoverished literacy and financial backgrounds), he/she is further disadvantaged through the lack of government funding.

Taylor et.al. (2003) state that the paucity of books and the inability of teachers to use them constructively are the greatest sources of illiteracy in South African society. Pertinently, parents who are financially not able to provide reading materials in their homes, are acculturating their children into a discourse that is in disparity with the school discourse.

The under-funding and under-resourcing of the previously disadvantaged schools is a legacy of the segregated educational policies of South Africa (Alexander 1989, Hartshorne 1992) which entrenched linguistic deprivation. At present, according to the new dispensation after 1994, each child is constitutionally entitled to free education, but we find that many children at the government schools are still deprived of their basic educational requirements.

Although the school receives funding from the government, this amount is inadequate to fulfill their financial needs. As most of the parents come from the lower income groups and are not able to pay the school fees or to assist with fundraising efforts, income from this source cannot augment the low government subsidy. Some children are further burdened by the fact that they are negatively affected by social problems like poverty, malnourishment and mental and physical abuse.

In the interview with the teacher (question 7), she reveals that a specific child, Thulethu, has problems at home and she tries to redress the situation by giving him more attention in class. Taylor et.al. (2003) state that, second to poverty and hunger, learning is severely hampered by affective variables in the South African set-up. In addition to linguistic and academic deficiencies, a myriad of social and psychological problems that children from disadvantaged backgrounds experience, have to be dealt with in the classroom.

4.10. Conclusion.

In this chapter, the data was explicated in order for the researcher to comment on the strategies employed by the teacher, the teacher's theoretical beliefs, the children's attitudes towards reading and the parents' preference for English as MOI.

In the following chapter, I will return to the goals of this study so as to explore whether the findings have provided insights into the teaching practices employed by the teacher and into the literacy backgrounds, language choice and attitudes towards reading instruction of learners from a specific socio-political and linguistic background.

In addition, avenues for further research, the limitations of this specific research and the implications for reading pedagogy will be explained.

CHAPTER 5.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.

5.1. Introduction.

In this study, I aimed to find out how reading is taught in the grade three classroom in order to determine why the grade eight learners at my school, who have been taught to 'read' at primary school, display reading abilities that are not commensurate with their age and level of education. In this quest, I needed to explore the theories of reading which inform the teacher's pedagogical practices, ascertain the participants' attitudes towards reading instruction and determine the language preferences of the parents and the literacy backgrounds of the learners.

As this research is exploratory and interpretive in design, the data collected through the methodological procedures: observations, interviews, reading sessions and children's books, were triangulated in order to compile a "thick description" (Yin 1984), on which the findings could be based. The observations of ten reading lessons supplied me with evidence of the teacher's theoretical orientations and the teaching strategies she employed. In the sixteen interviews I gained insights into the teacher's and the learners attitudes towards reading instruction. The informal interviews yielded comprehensive insights into "the real-life experiences and interpretations" (Allison et.al 1996:117) of the participants. The questionnaire provided quantitative evidence of the parents' preference for English as MOI as well as details about the children's home literacy backgrounds. The children's books provided evidence of the written work tasks based on reading instruction and the teacher's assessment strategies.

The focus of this chapter is to draw conclusions from the main findings of the study. The salient contextual factors that influence the teaching of reading and the acquisition of reading skills in the grade three class emerged from the data of this study and were found to be common to South African schools where previous research have been done (Taylor et.al 2003, Taylor 2006). These factors are:

- the use of English as MOI,
- the home literacy backgrounds of the learners,
- teacher training and teaching strategies used in the classroom,
- the socio-economic circumstances of the learners,
- and the infra-structure of the school.

I will discuss these factors separately, drawing on the relevant literature that informs the findings. To conclude, I will put forward the value of the research, its implications and limitations and avenues for further research.

5.2. Contextual factors that impact on Reading Instruction

5.2.1. English as MOI.

English is the mother-tongue of only 9% of the South African population, and the majority of other language speakers who use English, do so for instrumental purpose. That means they only use English in the workplace, in public institutions where required and when in contact with English mother-tongue speakers for social purposes. It is thus an enigma that the majority of indigenous people prefer to have English as the MOI (Mc Dermot 1998).

As has been proven by the results of the questionnaires sent to the parents in this study, English is the preferred MOI of most of the parents, regardless of the mother-tongue of the learners. The fact that parents are given the right to choose the MOI at government schools and prefer to opt for English instead of any of the other 11 official languages of the country, place constraints on the implementation of the Language policy of South Africa as drafted in the South African Bill of Rights, 1994. The government proposes an additive multilingual language policy for all schools- that is:

- All 11 official languages are to enjoy parity of esteem and be treated equitably.
- All learners learn their home language and at least one additional language.
- Learners become competent in their additional language, while their home language is maintained and developed
- The additional language should be introduced as a subject in Grade 1.

(adapted RNCS: 2005)

Since the inception of the new government in 1994, the LiEP, NCS and RNCS proposed mother-tongue instruction in the first three years of schooling. Although South Africans were amenable to name changes of the places they knew from birth, Gauteng instead of Johannesburg, and even accepted new terms for the rugby and soccer teams, indigenous languages as MOI have been outright rejected.

Despite theory and research that prove the advantages of mother-tongue instruction, parents eschew the right to choose their indigenous languages as the MOI. Their reasons being rooted in

the socio-political history of the country and English is still held in high esteem in comparison to the indigenous languages (Mc Dermot 1989, Niewfield and Janks 1998, Underhalte et.al.1991).

Newfield and Janks (1998) state that the task of redressing the inequities in education had not been accomplished, as South African education is still largely segregated. Politicians and researchers in the educational domain agree that education should be de-racialized and the languages of South Africa should be democratized (Alexander 1989, Guus and Martens 1998), in order for the schools to succeed in educating all the children in South Africa.

Theorists in second language teaching, claim that the first language provides a solid foundation of literacy skills and knowledge from which positive transfer to the second language can take place (Luckett 1995, Cummins 1999, Mc Laughlin1992). In the case where the first language is substituted by a second language at too early a stage, as in the case of the learners in this study, these theorists agree that it may take up to four or six years to acquire the level of proficiency for understanding the language in its instructional uses. Cummins (1999) underscores the linguistic interdependency of the first and the second language. He states that the second language learner should first progress above a certain language threshold, before the first language abilities can be effectively transferred. If the child's first language is thus substituted by a second language too early in his/her language development, positive transfer cannot take place.

Carrell and Eisterhold (1983) claim that the language ability of a child at age six is already well-developed. They have attained an adequate control over their syntax, they possess a vocabulary of about 5000 words and they have an adequate phonological system which can communicate their needs. Thus, if this rich linguistic

knowledge is substituted by a new or foreign language when the child is small, he/she may forfeit the advantages of the mother-tongue. As the child's linguistic repertoire is still emerging and developing, taking away the mother-tongue may lead to cognitive deficiencies, thus hampering learning in all learning areas.

Many theorists (Cummins 2001, Wong Fillmore 1985, Luckett 1995, Alexander 1989) underscore the value of mother-tongue instruction, especially at primary school. E. Burroughs (in McDonald with Burroughs, 1991:31) states that,

Children's thinking develops most quickly and easily in their first language- once they are equipped mentally in the first language, children can transfer their skills and knowledge to a second language with reasonable ease.

However, even if parents are aware or unaware of the advantages of mother-tongue instruction, they opt for English as it is considered the 'lingua franca' of the new democratic South Africa which will afford their children full participation in the higher echelons of education and society (Mc Dermot. 1998). By opting for English, the parents assume that their children would not be marginalized socially, ethnically and linguistically, thus indemnifying their children from the apartheid legacy of social and educational stratification. By exercising their right to choose the MOI for their children, but not choosing the mother-tongue, parents are perpetuating the hegemonic domination of English and thwarting the implementation of the language policies of the new government. However, as stated by Guus and Maartens (1998), the lack of political will in the leaders of South Africa adds to the problem.

Many parents are under the false impression that if their children are able to speak the second language, they will be successful in

classes where the second language is used as MOI. Cummins (1999) states that these children may possess the BICS and may appear to be fluent in the language, but that the CALP, that is the dis-embedded and de-contextualized aspects of the language are lacking. He coined the phrase "a linguistic façade" where parents assume that their children will cope with English as MOI if they are able to communicate in English. This phenomenon is evident in this case study where some parents speak English to their children, thinking this communicative fluency will enhance success at school.

Thus, the dilemma in which the teacher finds herself, of learners not being able to decode texts orthographically or understand the meaning of texts, can partially be attributed to the fact that these learners do not possess the basic literacy skills that emerge naturally from linguistic knowledge of their mother-tongue. The teacher in this study reports that some of the learners who are repeating the grade, that is, they have been instructed in English for four years, still do not possess the basic linguistic skills to cope in class and are still struggling to read in English. This proves that some children in second language classes do not benefit from formal instruction and are wasting precious years in the school.

If parents were aware of the detrimental effects of learning a second language too early or substituting the first language with a second language, they could make informed choices about MOI. Lockett (1995) proposes an additive transitional language curriculum for South African primary schools, where a second language is introduced gradually and taught in conjunction with the first language, thus acknowledging the importance of retaining the mother tongue influence. In a Canadian study (in Mc Laughlin 1992), it was shown that immersion in a foreign or second language is not detrimental to learning content material in that

language, as long as the home language continues to develop and is supported. The home language can then act as a bridge for children and enables them to participate more actively in the learning activities

The learners in this study, struggle with the orthography of English as, at home they only speak the home language and seldom read or write it (see questionnaire results-page 106). The weak readers in this study could not even start reading the monosyllabic words in the graded readers, or answer the questions coherently during the interviews. Maybe initial reading and writing in the mother-tongue, which the child knows, will be more successful and a second language can be introduced effortlessly.

5.2.2. Home Literacy Backgrounds of the Learners.

Through the interactions in the home and home environment, when a child is small, he/she is socialized into specific literacy and cultural practices that may predispose him/her to success or failure in the mainstream school literacy environment (Niven 2004, Gee 1990).Gee (1990:150) describes the Primary Discourse as follows:

Socio-culturally determined ways of thinking, feeling, valuing and using our native language in face-to face communication with inmates which we achieve in our initial socialization within the 'family'.

The secondary Discourse is any other Discourse that people acquire which is not the primary one. The primary Discourse forms the basis for acquisition of any other Discourse and may

disadvantage the person if there is a mismatch between the 'ways' (Heath 1983) or patterns of socialization. If school literacy practices value and acknowledge the children's primary discourses, children from diverse literacy backgrounds, (as is the case in this study), will adapt to the school culture more easily and may find validation in the differences and similarities between the primary and secondary Discourses.

Through the interviews with the learners, it came to light that there exists a disparity between some of the children's literacy backgrounds and the school literacy practices. Where children are exposed to a rich literacy home environment, they seem to fit in with mainstream education and benefit by formalized educational strategies, while others are marginalized or doomed to failure as they do not fit in (Gee 1990). In this specific case, the weaker learners are seldom exposed to print, seldom encounter the language of instruction, and practice different literacies in their home environments. Their home literacy backgrounds therefore do not "precursor" (Niven 2004:22) them for success in school. It is evident that the parents of the children, who are read to, provided with books or exposed to print in any form, ascribe meaning and value to the institutional practices like reading and learning and 'precursor' them for success in school. The learners from disadvantaged backgrounds are thus the ones that are further disadvantaged by formal schooling as their primary socialization may be in disparity with a secondary Discourse. Significantly, in this study, the children, who are not exposed to a rich literacy home environment at home, (Lumtu: interview 5, Siphon: interview 6), are the ones that struggle in school.

However, the socio-culturalists do not see this as a literacy problem but as a schooling problem. Schools reward literacy-related activities like reading books, reading by others and exposure to print but the literacy practices of children from non-

mainstream communities are disregarded. Teaching strategies, the school curriculum and educational policies that do not acknowledge the home literacy backgrounds of the children are said to hamper the scholastic success of learners from different social and linguistic backgrounds.

Gee (1990:139) states that "discourses are mastered through acquisition, not through overt instruction and apprenticeship". Children who are thus acquiring a secondary Discourse should be 'socialized' into that discourse by interacting with those who have acquired the primary Discourse in their home environments. Teachers in the schools like the one in my study, should therefore address these children's needs by incorporating collaborative learning, holistic instruction and active learning, where individuality and self-worth is affirmed (Mc Laughlin 1992). This calls for a paradigm shift in teaching strategies, teacher training programs and curriculum planning.

5.2.3. Teaching Strategies and Teacher Training.

According to a study undertaken in Gauteng, (GETC 1999 in Taylor et.al 2003:20), many children have not being taught to read by the end of the foundation phase as teachers do not teach reading per se and employ authoritarian teaching strategies Taylor et.al (2003) state that Fundamental pedagogics, the dominant theoretical discourse in educational departments at South African black universities and colleges, is based on premises that are authoritarian. Hartshorne (1992:36) is of the opinion that the "closed, narrow ideological approach to teacher training, entrenched authoritarian teaching methods." Based on the lesson observations, I concluded that the teacher frequently resorted to authoritarian teaching methods. These methodologies

may have been entrenched by the teaching methods employed by her own teachers and by her tutors at training college.

Theorists that propagate INSET programs like READ, confirm that subject-focused programs enhance teachers' conceptual knowledge and enable them to move away from authoritarian, passive absorptive teaching methods towards more learner-centered approaches.

The teacher in this study acknowledges that the workshop with READ provided her with new and practical strategies to teach reading. Her willingness and enthusiasm to be part of the READ project is worth mentioning. She endeavors to achieve the educational aims of the READ projects by making use of the lesson plans, the reading books and the activities which promote and develop independent learning, language competence, learner confidence and language and learning skills.

She succeeds in meeting some of the main aims of READ, that is, increasing the confidence of the learners and creating a stimulating learning environment. She practices learner-centered approaches but is unable to meet the demands of all the children, given their different levels of competence. Consequently, the learning and reading competencies of all the learners are not developed by her teaching strategies, as most of her learners have deficient linguistic abilities. She is only successful with the learners who have a good command of English -BICS and CALP (Cummins 1999).

If she were provided with an assistant teacher who works with the children who have a basic conversational command of the language and need instruction in phonics, pronunciation and grammar, she could work with the rest of the class and extend on their cognitive academic competencies (Cummins 1999, Alderson

and Urquhart 1984). She can then employ teaching strategies that require the children to interpret the text and not only the lexis of English, while the assistant could teach basic reading, following behaviorist methodologies that are said to enhance beginning reading instruction.

Although the teacher is conversant with the learner-centered approaches propagated by READ, she resorts to an authoritarian style of teaching propagated by Fundamental pedagogics and Apartheid teacher training programs. Through the observations, it came to light that the teacher's strategies are informed by her theoretical orientations. In most of her lessons, she adheres to the principles of behaviorism by accentuating repetition of question-and-answer cycles, drilling and rotelearning. Eskey et.al (1988) defines such practices as 'teacher-centered' and the learners as 'sound-centered'. By accentuating phonics, fluency, spelling and pronunciation, the teacher emphasizes the orthography and sound of the language while the deeper meanings are not extricated. The teacher also adheres to authoritarian principles as she seldom allows the children to read or work on their own.

Although she is aware of top-down strategies, she mostly resorts to bottom-up strategies as the children's linguistic skills are deficient. In the interviews she reveals a more cognitive and learner-centered stance but does not follow it through in her teaching strategies. Macdonald (1990:135) states that:

Teachers consider rote learning an effective way of teaching since the children cannot read and resort to memorization when learning to read.

Given the children's literacy backgrounds, their poor knowledge of English, the MOI and the affective variables that influence

them negatively in class, it is questionable whether cognitive, top-down approaches would have been successful in this class. According to reading research, basic language and reading instruction is more successful through habit-formation strategies like the phonic approach incorporating drilling and question-and-answer scaffolding techniques (Chall:1967).

Krashen (1978) proposes that initial second language learning should be based on the way children acquire their first language, that is, naturally and in an undemanding environment. Cognitive abilities like incorporating schemata and making and refuting hypotheses about the language will occur naturally and automatically, if the child is provided with "comprehensible input" (Krashen: 1978). This view is based on the Transformational-generative principles espoused by Chomsky and others who state that the acquisition of language depends on innatist abilities, that is, congenital language acquisition abilities. Thus, the onus on the teacher in initial language and reading classes is to incorporate techniques that would simulate or equate home language acquisition.

The behaviorist teaching strategies used by the teacher in this grade three class are suited to the children's needs, that is, to acquire basic decoding skills. However, she does not succeed in teaching and testing critical thinking skills through writing as the writing exercises and comprehension questions are rudimentary. Through answering basic comprehension questions and writing down single words from the texts, the teacher follows through with behaviorist teaching principles, accentuating memorization skills. She does not expect creative writing from the children so the positive spin offs of reflective and critical thinking that follow from reading, are negated. Through writing exercises, learners should be encouraged to think critically and apply linguistic knowledge, that is, to organize, categorize and analyze

information (RNCS: 2005). However, the problem for this teacher lies in the fact that all the children are not at the same level of language development. The factors that contribute to this phenomenon are multitudinous as has been proven by this research. If the instructional practices in Grade R to 2 were successful and the infra-structure of the school was conducive to teaching and learning, the teacher in this study would have been more successful teaching reading and writing as prescribed by the curriculum.

5.2.4. Socio-economic status of the learners and infra-structure of the School.

Unterhalter, Wolpe and Botha (1991:60) state that

Apartheid education resulted in racial inequalities in terms of access to and survival within the education system, teacher quality and quantity and educational facilities.

Significantly, the government schools that cater for the black and colored children are the schools that are burdened by a lack of facilities, overcrowding, teacher shortages and teacher quality. The more affluent schools, catering for mainly white and upper middle-class colored and black people, are not dependent on state funding and are managed semi-autonomously. They therefore make their own decisions with regards to teacher pupil ratio, school fees and MOI. The factors that thus impinge on the learning and reading abilities of the learners at state-funded schools are negated at the private and semi-private schools which are able to provide a better education to the minority of the South African school population.

The interview with the teacher elucidated the fact that the school as an educational facility does not provide the learners with sufficient resources that complement learning and teaching. In addition to educational requirements like books and learning and teaching aids that are inadequate, the school is further not providing in the needs of the learners as far as desks, chalkboards, sports facilities and classrooms are concerned. The ratio of 35 learners to one teacher and the fact that the teachers are only capable of teaching in one language, Afrikaans or English, is also not conducive to outcomes-based principles. Monetary constraints bear heavily on the day-to-day management of the school, as the poorer communities cannot contribute towards the fiscal requirements of the school.

Imbewu (2003), a government- subsidized organization, undertook a seven-year longitudinal study to investigate drop-out and repetition rates of primary school learners and found that most educational problems facing the Eastern Cape can be attributed to the “wider socio-economic problems and to major challenges in the home and learning environments of the learners.” (Imbewu report: 2003). Taylor et.al. (2003) accentuate that,

The crisis of social justice is rooted in the fact that we supply less good schools to poorer and more disadvantaged people and better ones to more mainstream and advantaged people.

The participants in this study are thus burdened by socio-political factors that are hampering their educational aims and that can only be addressed by the Education department and the government.

5.3. Value, limitations and implications of the study.

5.3.1 Introduction.

Grabe and Stoller (2002:30) cite the salient factors that influence reading development as, “literacy background and experiences, instructional practices, peer and sibling interaction, cultural and social inheritance, etc”. In this study, the researcher aimed to explicate and identify specific factors that impinge on the teaching of reading in a second language. The main goal of this study has thus been reached.

5.3.2. Value of the study.

The study has implications for practitioners in the field of reading as it reveals the shortcomings, the successes and the problems ‘lived’ by teachers of English as a second language, the parents of these children, policy-makers, as well as the majority of South African children at government-subsidized primary schools.

By undertaking this study, it has been of value for me as a teacher of English as it raises my awareness of the difficulties encountered in primary schools and encourages me to address the difficulties experienced by my grade eight learners. The research proved to be constructive, as after having discussed the findings of my research with the language teachers at the high school where I am teaching, we have initiated a reading program to address the reading problems of the grade eight learners.

The study will prove to be informative to teachers of reading and the teachers where the study was conducted as it highlights poor and successful teaching strategies pertaining to reading instruction. It also evokes understanding for the plight of the parents and the learners, given the repercussions of English as MOI.

The study would be informative for the teacher who participated and other teachers in the same situation as they are enabled to examine their classroom practices, their theoretical orientations and their learners' problems and embark on measures to adapt their teaching to the educational and social circumstances of the children. As stated by McLaughlin (1992) student diversity challenges the educational system and calls for educational innovations and instructional practices.

Taylor (2006) highlighted the poor practices of teachers in the PEI research reports as teacher-centered and authoritarian. This study finds replication in previous research and can thus serve to broaden the knowledge base of Reading Instruction in a language other than the mother-tongue.

5.3.3. Limitations and Implications of the study.

The limitations of the research exist in the fact that a single case study cannot be used as a general standard whereby a holistic evaluation of reading instruction at primary schools can be obtained. A longitudinal comparative study in the grades where reading is taught, grades R to three, or at different schools, would have revealed more comprehensive results. In addition, given the time frame in which the research was done, it was not possible to identify all the factors that may have impacted on the reading abilities of the participants. The factors discussed by the researcher may not be of importance in a replicated study while other factors may have been overlooked. The value and generalisability of the research is thus diminished as the same study in a different grade or at a different school may not yield the same results.

The fact that I could not conduct the research in a Grade R or Grade one class where reading is supposed to be taught, did not give me the full picture of how teachers go about teaching in this primary school. However, as stated, the teacher in this class volunteered to have me in her class, while no one from the lower grades was willing to accommodate me, even after the principal had explained that my aim was to observe how reading is taught. This gives me the impression that the teachers in the lower grades or who are not amenable to INSET programs are not aware of or willing to acknowledge the problems pertaining to reading instruction.

On transcribing the data and struggling to annotate the poor and sometimes incoherent responses of the learners, I realized that the interviews with the learners would have been more precise if I had pre-empted their weak basic communicative abilities in English and had conducted the interviews in Xhosa with the help of a translator. The poor sound quality of my audio recordings compelled me to rely on the field notes to transcribe the data and the fact that comprehensive descriptive data are lacking, detracts from this research

Research has shown that many teachers regard reading as just another language skill and do not teach reading per se (Taylor et.al, Pretorius 2002). If I could have observed a grade one class and compared the methodologies employed by the two teachers, the study would have been more informative with regard to effective teaching strategies in Beginner reading classes as opposed to the grade three class. Alderson (2000) underscores the 'Reading Universals Hypothesis' and states that poor reading habits are transferred from the mother-tongue to the second language. However, the children in grade three, have been in school for about four years, have been instructed in the second language, but are still struggling to read efficiently. To be able to

explore whether the poor reading habits and poor linguistic abilities of the non-English speakers, are entrenched by the strategies in reading instruction in the lower grades or by the home literacy backgrounds, would have given me a more holistic picture of the factors that influence reading ability.

It is evident that the problems faced by the participants in this study cannot only be addressed by different teaching strategies in the classrooms, but by a fundamental change in the educational domain, particularly pertaining to the multiple contextual factors that impact on the performance and success of the learners, that is, medium of instruction, government funding, school readiness of learners, teacher training and curriculum planning.

5.4 Concluding Remarks

Evidently, the wishes of the parents have played a major role in the choice of MOI at the primary school where the research was conducted. The Xhosa-speaking parents do not want Xhosa mother-tongue instruction, some teachers are sceptical about implementing the language policy and even more Afrikaans-speaking parents are choosing English as MOI for their children.

This study provides language policy makers with an insight into the implications of the LiEP. As stated by Cleghorn (1992),

teachers are restricted by language policies that only makes sense at the national level, for keeping the peace between competing language groups,-the policy making process (should shift) from the socio-political arena to the pedagogical domain.

In December 2006, after the Grade 12 results of the so-called 'Madiba's children' was released, the minister of Education, the prominent teacher's unions and education specialists stated that the policies pertaining to mother tongue instruction have to be implemented as the poor results of the learners is a direct consequence of the non-implementation of the language policies tabled in 1994 (Die Burger: 28 /12/06).

Luckett (1995:75) states that "the black middle class will redefine South African language practices". Admissibly, the need to redress the inequities of the past, pertaining to the socio-political and economic circumstances of the previously marginalized groups, is crucial. If all South African children are to benefit from the new education policies that are informed by principles of equity and redress; parents, educators and education planners need to examine their attitudes towards language as these attitudes will govern the choices of MOI. in the near future.

The findings in this study replicate the findings of the P.E.I. that found institutional conditions, the use of textbooks and other materials, teacher knowledge, classroom practices and student learning as some of the key issues that have a detrimental effect on teaching and learning at our government schools.

In addition, this study shows that non-mother tongue instruction from grade one is flawed in that the children are not afforded the positive influence of the mother tongue when learning a second language, especially in reading instruction.

In particular, the multiple contextual factors that impact on the reading competencies of grade three non-mother tongue speakers of English at this Primary school had emerged from the data and had been explored by the researcher so as to meet the goals of the study. The data thus revealed that the learners coming from

the primary school to the high school are negatively affected by the contextual factors that have been highlighted and that many of the learners are not competent readers when they exit the primary school.

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On 8 May 1996, the *Constitutional Assembly* of the Republic of South Africa adopted a new democratic constitution. In this constitution, a considerable number of clauses are devoted to matters of language, reflecting the immensely multilingual and multicultural nature of the society. Amongst others, the constitution provides (Clause 6) for no less than eleven official languages:

- (1) The official languages of the Republic are Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu.
- (2) Recognising the historically diminished use and status of the indigenous languages of our people, the state must take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages.
- (3a) The national government and provincial governments may use any particular official languages for the purposes of government, taking into account usage, practicality, expense, regional circumstances and the balance of the needs and preferences of the population as a whole or in the province concerned; but the national government and each provincial government must use at least two official languages.
- (b) Municipalities must take into account the language usage and preferences of their residents.
- (4) The national government and provincial governments, by legislative and other measures, must regulate and monitor their use of official languages. Without detracting from the provisions of subsection (2), all official languages must enjoy parity of esteem and must be treated equitably.
- (5a) A Pan South African Language Board established by national legislation must promote and create conditions for the development and use of:
 - (i) all official languages;
 - (ii) the Khoi, Nama and San languages; and
 - (iii) sign language; and
- (b) promote and ensure respect for:
 - (i) all languages commonly used by communities in South Africa, including German, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Portuguese, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu; and
 - (ii) Arabic, Hebrew, Sanskrit and other languages used for religious purposes in South Africa.

Central government spells out its position on language in education in the 1996 *South African Bill of Rights*, Clause 29:

“Everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable. In order to ensure the effective access to, and implementation of this right, the state must consider all reasonable educational alternatives, including single medium institutions, taking into account”:

- (a) equity;
- (b) practicability; and
- (c) the need to redress the results of past racially discriminatory law and practice.

Adapted: Guus and Maartens 1998:1

Checklist 2: Using a story for language development

Activity
2.1

Goal: The educator can use a Storykit to Read Aloud and do Before and After Reading Activities that develop learners' Language, Literacy and Communication skills.

Sub-goals	Performance Indicators
<p>1. The educator uses Before Reading Activities to make the story more understandable.</p>	<p>Did the educator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - prepare the story thoroughly - select key words - produce key word cards - explain the key words meaningfully - use illustrations to 'set the scene' - draw on the learners' prior knowledge?
<p>2. The educator reads a story effectively and meaningfully.</p>	<p>Did the educator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - capture the learners' attention - read with expression to make the story come to life - ensure that there was no teaching or interruption when telling the story - encourage learners to join in or predict at certain points - show the illustrations to add meaning to the story?
<p>3. After Reading, the educator checks understanding and links the story to the learners' lives.</p>	<p>Did the educator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - formulate thoughtful questions to check for understanding - encourage the learners to respond to the message in the book - link the story to the learners' lives - ask learners' opinions about issues?

Checklist 3: Using a story for language development

Activity
3.1

Goal: The educator can use a story for language development by designing learning activities that develop all four language skills.

Sub-goals	Performance Indicators
<p>1. The educator is able to develop the learners' speaking and listening skills based on a story.</p>	<p>The learners did some of the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - re-told the story correctly - dramatized parts of the story - made oral sentences with the key words - increased their vocabulary
<p>2. The educator is able to develop the learners' writing and language skills based on a story.</p>	<p>The learners did some of the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - participated in shared writing based on the story - sequenced the sentences constructed during shared writing - completed a cloze procedure with the sentences - made little books based on the story using sentences and illustrations
<p>3. The educator is able to develop the learners' reading skills based on a story.</p>	<p>The learners did some of the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - participated in shared reading of songs or rhymes from the story - participated in shared reading of sentences from the story - did some kind of word study based on the words from the text - did some sort of phonic work based on the text - did some individual reading based on the text - identified rhyming words in the text

Checklist 4: Using a story for language development

Activity
6.3

Goal: The educator incorporates stories into the macro planning for the year. Stories are read to the learners more than twice a week and the stories are used for language development.

Sub-goals	Performance Indicators
1. The educator selects stories carefully.	<p>The educator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - selects stories from a variety of sources - selects stories from different genres - selects stories in other languages - uses posters, pictures, Big Books and objects to introduce stories - makes sure stories are understandable and the right length.
2. The educator regularly and successfully reads stories aloud.	<p>The educator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - has a 'syllabus of stories' for the year - introduces the stories effectively - uses key words meaningfully - reads the stories effectively so that learners listen attentively - uses illustrations to aid understanding - always checks for understanding - can say which stories the class really enjoyed. <p>Learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - can talk about stories they have heard and recount their favourite story.
3. The educator bases language activities on stories.	<p>Based on the stories, the educator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - designs activities to develop speaking and listening skills - designs activities to develop writing and language skills - designs activities to develop reading skills - has evidence of learners' work based on stories.

GRADED READERS

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------|
| 1. RUFF AND ME | Level A1 |
| 2. A PRESENT FOR JABU | Level A2 |
| 3. PLANTS | Level B1 |
| 4. TOO SMALL | Level B2 |
| 5. THE BIRTHDAY SURPRISE | Level C1 |
| 6. A GOOD KNEE FOR A CAT | Level C2 |

Ruff and Me



Ruff and Me

About the book

Text type: personal narrative

Running words: 33

Teaching focus

High-frequency / sight words

New

here, are

Revision

me, my, I, we

Repeated sentence structure

Here are _____ .

Phonics (letter-sound relationships)

U/u (Ruff, Ruff's)

Word ending

-un (fun, gun, nun, run)

Revision

A/a (and, am); M/m (Me, my);
R/r (Ruff, Ruff's); W/w (we)

Punctuation and concepts of print

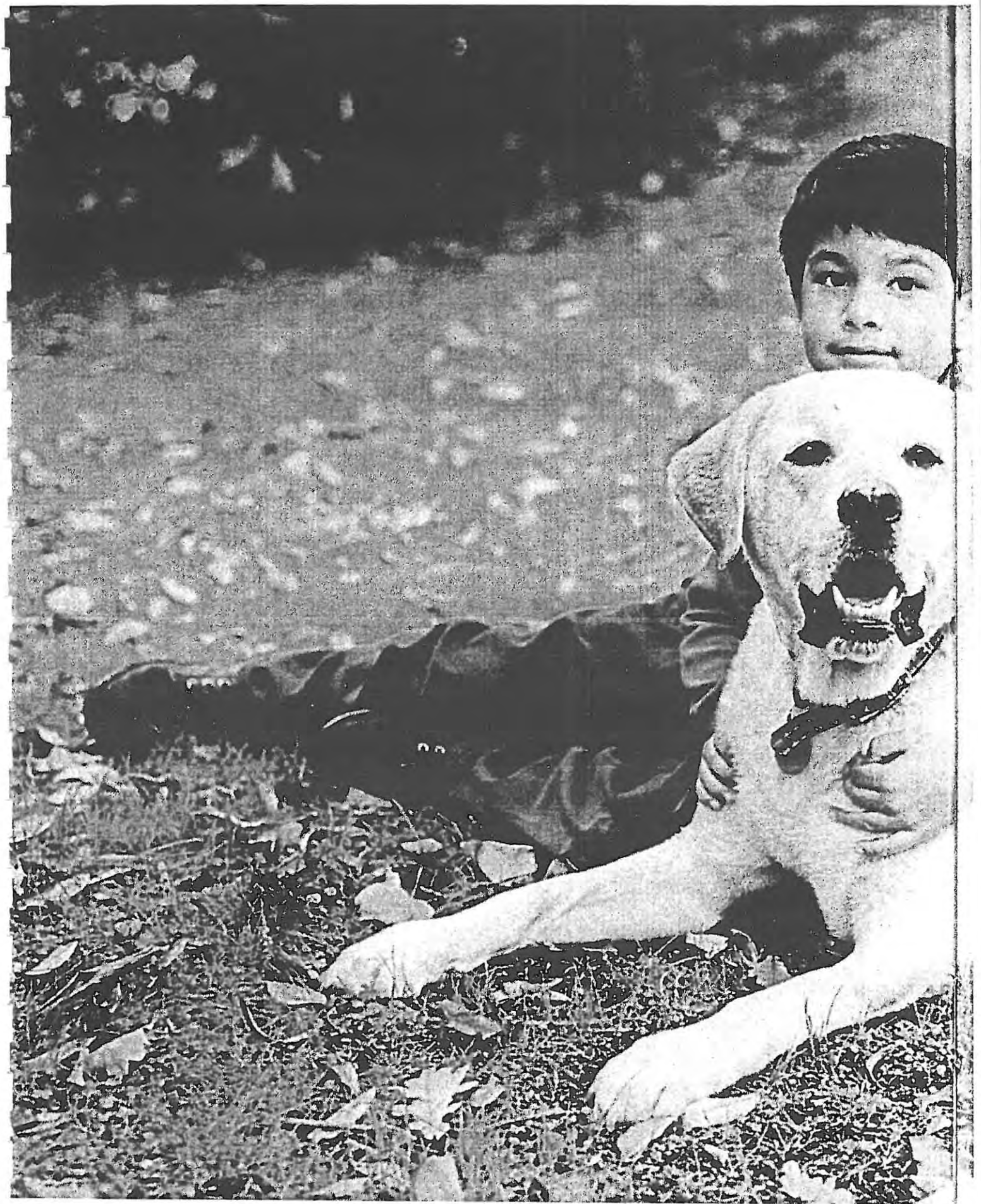
The following appear in this book: capital letters, full stops, apostrophes.
Point out that the name **Ruff** begins with a capital letter.

Here are my eyes.



Here are Ruff's eyes.





Here we are.

Read the poem.



Me!

Here are my hands.

Here are my feet.

Here are my ears.

Here are my cheeks.

Here are my teeth.

Here are my eyes.

Here is my face –

What a surprise!

Group Reading Card

1. Choose the right answer.

The story is about _____

- a cow
- a dog

2. Find these words in the book. Write the word and the page numbers.

- eyes - pages ___ and ___
- ears - pages ___ and ___
- teeth - pages ___ and ___

3. Look in the book and write down the word that has a **u** in it.

Group Reading Card

4. Look in the book and fill in the missing words.

- Here are _____ eyes.



- _____ are my teeth.



- Here I _____.



5. Draw a picture of your eyes. Write:
Here are my eyes.

A Present for Jabu



A Present for Jabu

About the book

Text type: narrative

Running words: 180

Teaching focus

High-frequency / sight words

New

out

Revision

a, for, day, the, in, on, of, my, she, has

Phonics (letter-sound relationships)

Word beginnings

br (brother)

ch (children)

Revision

A/a (an, ambulance); B/b (baby, brother); C/c (come); D/d (day, does); E/e (every); F/f (Friday, for); G/g (gets, get); H/h (home, has); I/i (in); J/j (Jabu, Jabu's); L/l (Lesedi's); M/m (Monday, My, mothers, mother, must); N/n (Neo's, not); O/o (on, of); P/p (Present, present); S/s (soon, says); T/t (Tuesday, taxi); W/w (Wednesday, wait, will); Y/y (Your); Fr (Friday); sh (she)

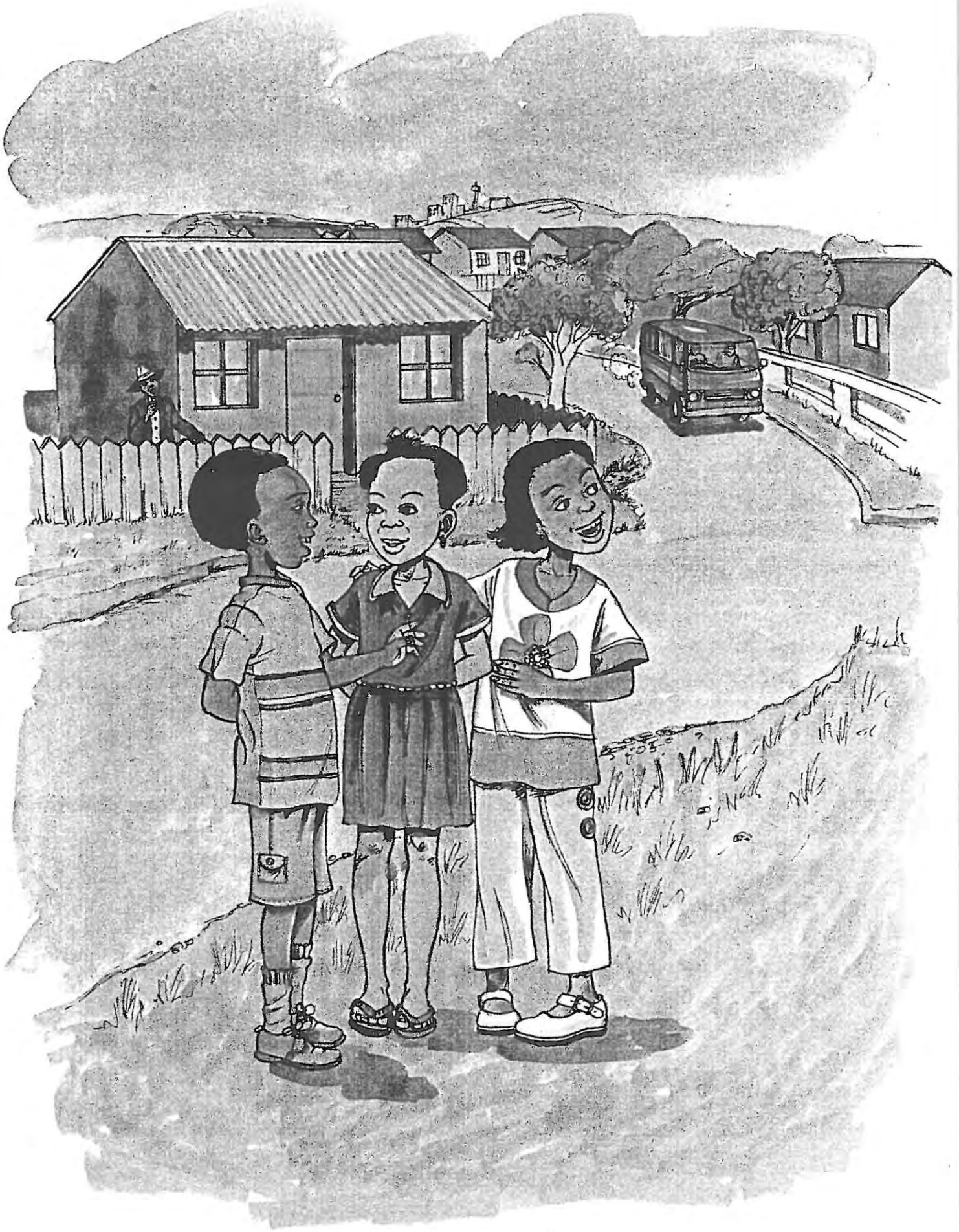
Punctuation and concepts of print

The following appear in this book: capital letters, full stops, ellipsis (...), apostrophes, speech marks, commas, exclamation marks.

Point out that the names of the days of the week and the names **Lesedi**, **Neo** and **Jabu** begin with capital letters.

Text appears in bold for emphasis on the word **must** (page 10).

Every day
the mothers come home
in a taxi.
The children wait for them.

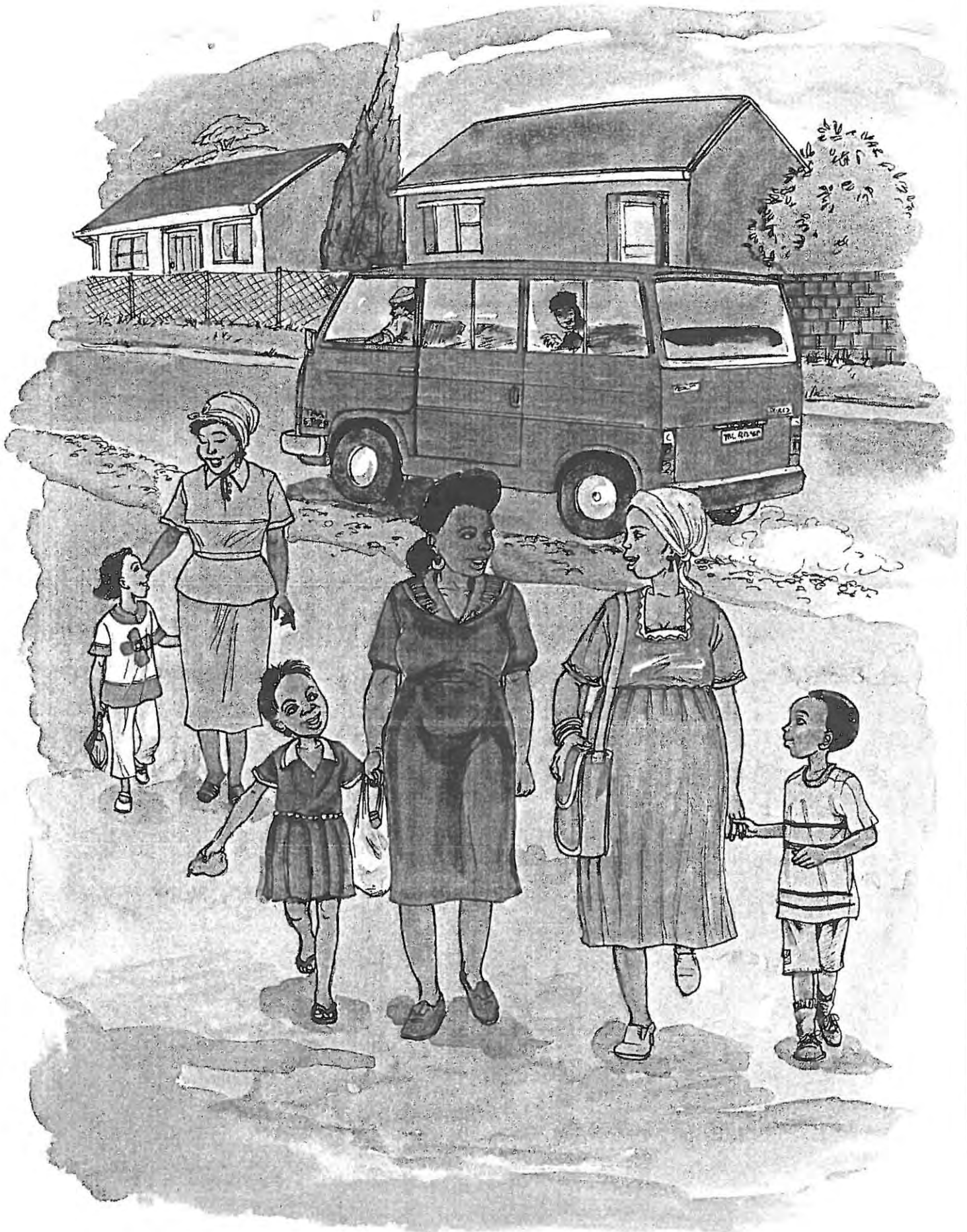


On Monday...

Lesedi's mother
gets out of the taxi.

Neo's mother
gets out of the taxi.

Jabu's mother
gets out of the taxi.



On Tuesday...

Lesedi's mother
gets out of the taxi.

Neo's mother
gets out of the taxi.

Jabu's mother
does not get out of the taxi.

'Your mother will come soon,'
says Lesedi's mother.

Read the poem.

Jabu's Joy

Jabu is sad.

He misses his mother.

But she comes home

With a baby brother!

What a happy,

happy day!

Jabu is glad.

Hip-hip hooray!

Jabu smiles

and jumps for joy!

His mother has

A baby boy!

What a happy,

happy day!

Jabu is glad.

Hip-hip hooray!



Group Reading Card

1. Choose the right answer.

The story is about _____

- an insect
- a new baby

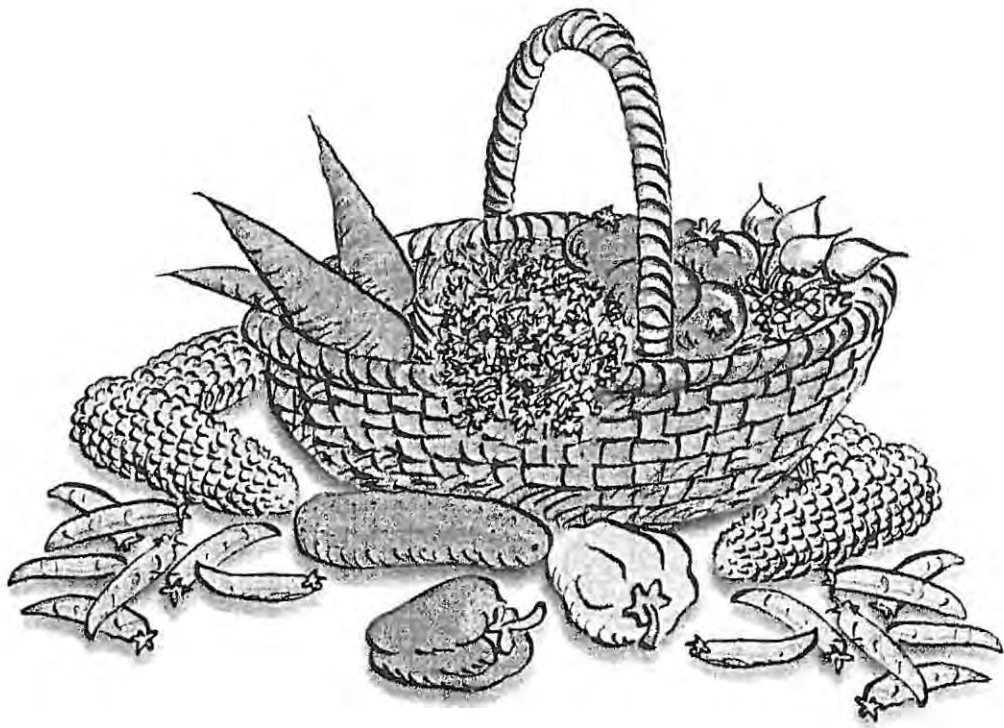
2. Find these words in the book. Write the word and the page number.

- children - page _____
- Wednesday - page _____
- Friday - page _____
- present - page _____

Group Reading Card

3. Look in the book and write down one word that begins with **br**.
4. Look in the book and fill in the missing words.
 - Neo's mother gets ____ of the taxi.
 - Jabu's mother does ____ get out of the taxi.
5. Draw a picture of your mother getting out of a taxi. Write:
My mother gets out of a taxi.

Plants



3. Plants

About the book

Text type: non-fiction

Running words: 81

Teaching focus

High-frequency / sight words

we, can, the, of, some

Phonics (letter-sound relationships)

Word beginning

pl (plants)

Word endings

-an (can)

-oot/oots (roots)

Punctuation and concepts of print

The following appear in this book: capital letters, full stops.

Grammar and other special features

Plurals that **do not** end in s (spinach, fruit, celery).

Double consonant -pp- (apple).

Visual literacy: *Parts of plants* chart (pages 12 and 13).

Questions and answers using singular and plural personal pronouns:

Can you _____? Yes **we** can. / No **we** can't.

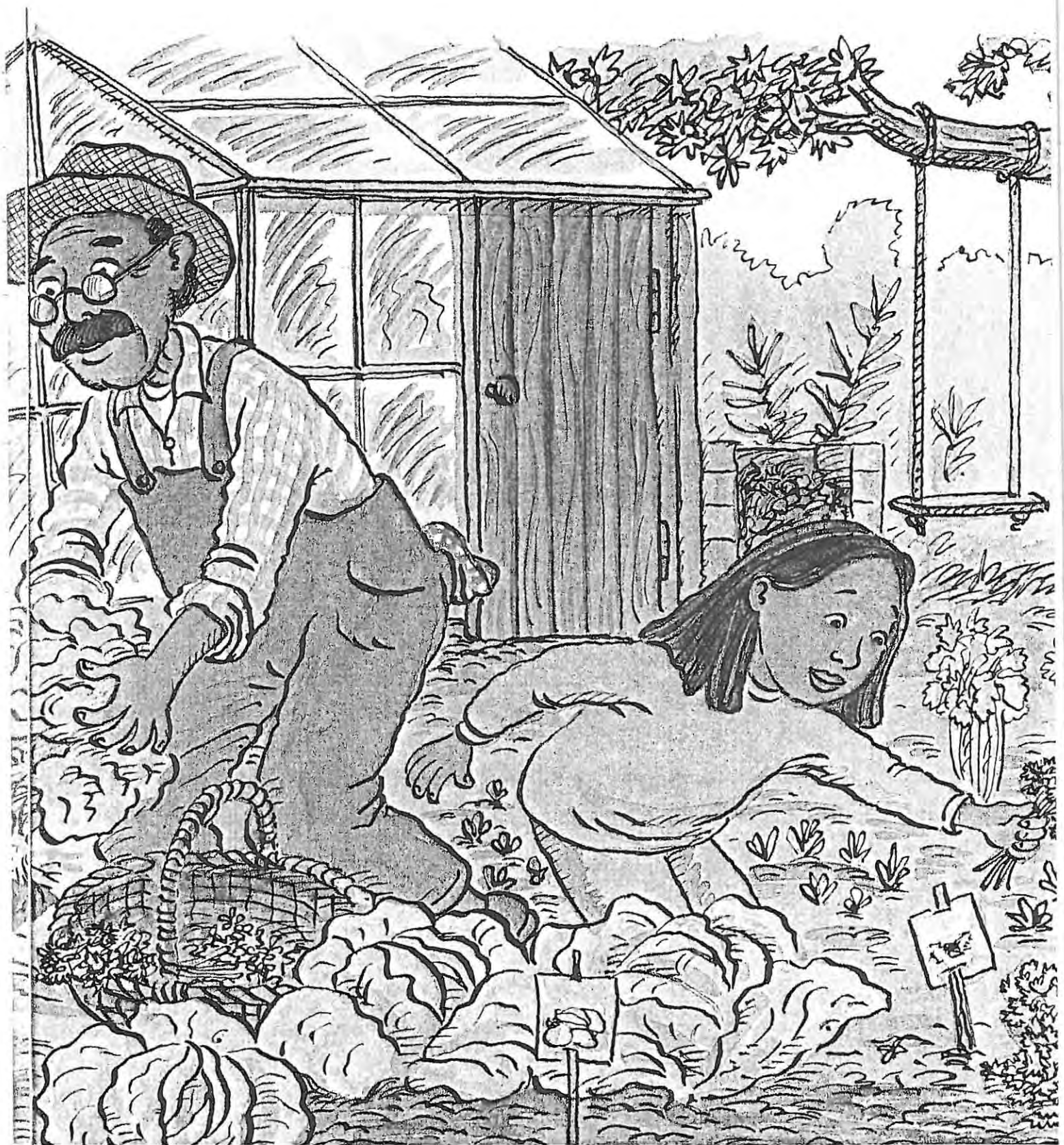
Yes **I** can. / No **I** can't.

Modals: can, can't

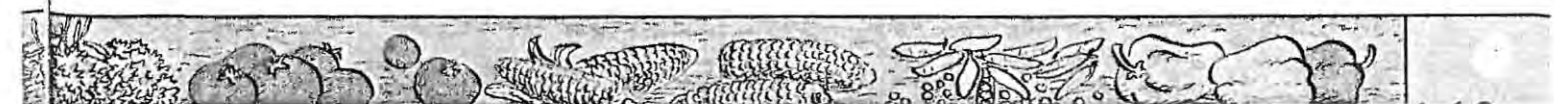


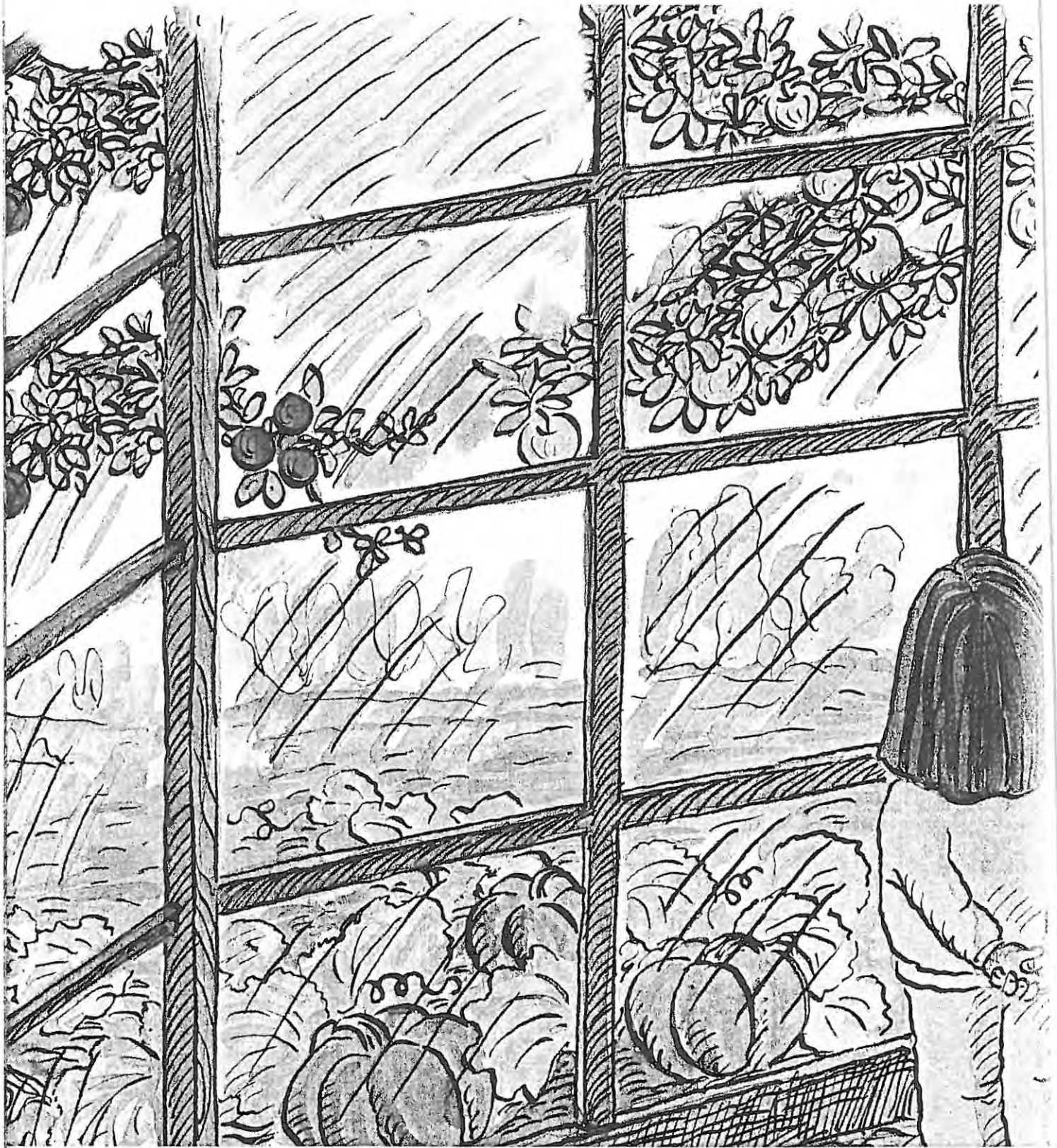
Plants have leaves.
We can eat the leaves
of some plants.





We can eat cabbages
and spinach.





Plants have fruit.
We can eat the fruit
of some plants.



Parts o

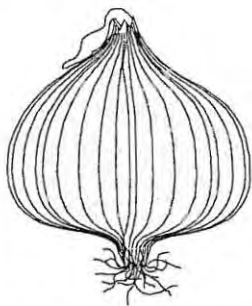
Roots



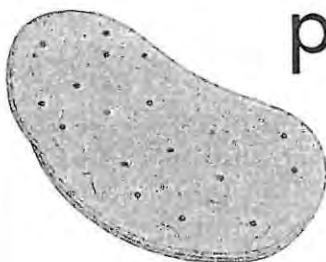
carrot



beetroot



onion



potato

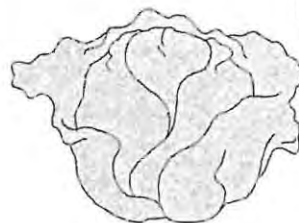
Leaves



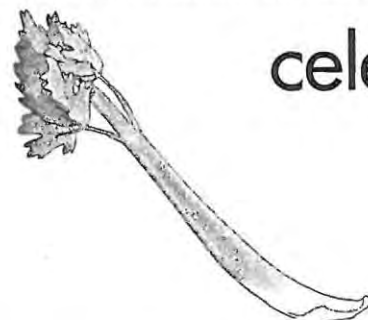
spinach



cabbage



lettuce



celery

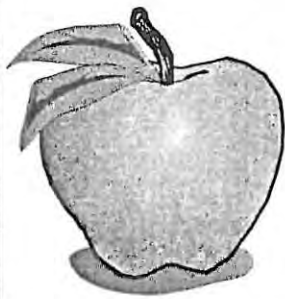


plants

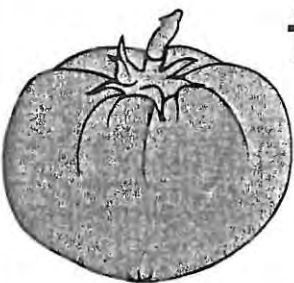
Fruit



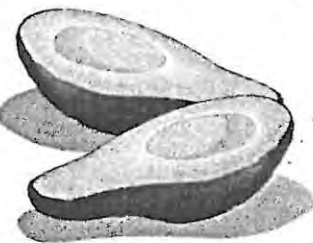
orange



apple

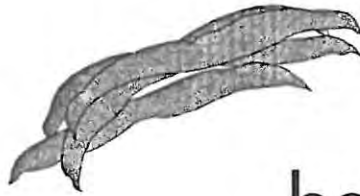


tomato



avocado
pear

Seeds



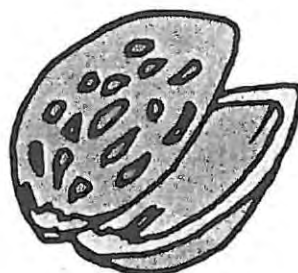
beans



peas



mealie



nut



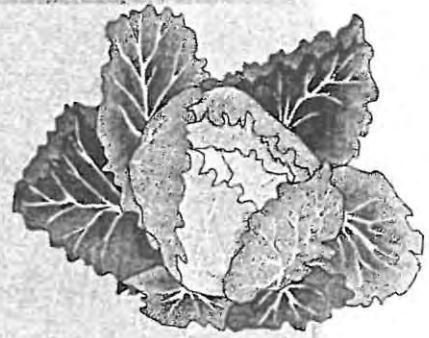
Read the poem.

Plant Parts

Is it a leaf or is it a fruit?

Is it a seed or is it a root?

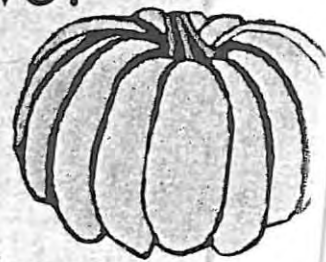
Cabbage is healthy for you and me.
Giraffes eat **leaves** and so do we!



Is it a leaf or is it a fruit?

Is it a seed or is it a root?

Pumpkin is healthy for you and me.
Monkeys eat **fruit** and so do we!



Is it a leaf or is it a fruit?

Is it a seed or is it a root?

Peas are healthy for you and me.
Birds eat **seeds** and so do we!



Is it a leaf or is it a fruit?

Is it a seed or is it a root?

Carrots are healthy for you and me.
Baboons eat **roots** and so do we!



Group Reading Card

A. Choose the right answer.

The book is about _____.

- animals
- little seeds
- plants we can eat

B. Look at pages 12 and 13:

Write down the names of four plants that you like to eat.

C. Find these words in the book.

Write the word and the page number.

1. cabbages — page ____
2. vitamins — page ____
3. roots — page ____

Group Reading Card

D. Look on page 8. Write one word:

1. that ends with **an**
2. that begins with **pl**
3. that ends with **oots**.

E. Copy and complete these sentences. Check in the book.

1. _____ have seeds.
2. We _____ eat the seeds of _____ plants.

F. Draw and label these plants:

1. A plant with leaves we can eat.
2. A plant with fruit we can eat.
3. A plant with seeds we can eat.
4. A plant with roots we can eat.

Too Small



13. Too Small

About the book

Text type: narrative

Running words: 176

Teaching focus

High-frequency / sight words

come, these, your

Phonics (letter-sound relationships)

Word beginning

d (clothes)

Word endings

-irt (skirt, shirt)

-ock/ocks (socks)

Punctuation and concepts of print

The following appear in this book: capital letters, full stops, commas, speech marks, apostrophes, exclamation marks.

Point out that speech marks are used for the words actually spoken.

Point out that commas are sometimes used before speech marks.

Point out that capital letters are used for names.

Grammar and other special features

Continuous tense: I'm growing... (*I'm Growing* poem on page 22).

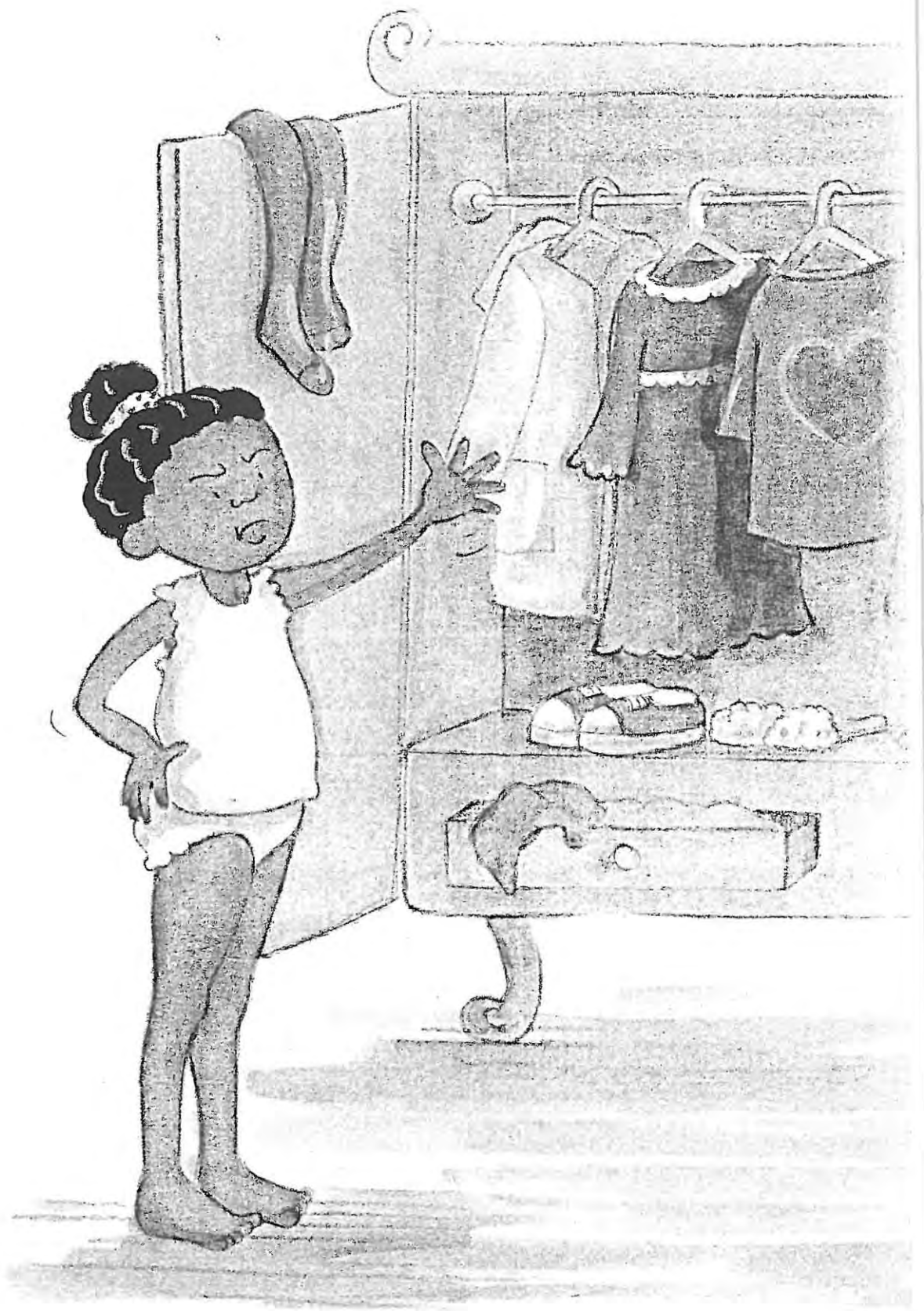
Too used as an adjective.

Adjectives (big, small).

Sub-text: Younger sister trying on the clothes behind the dressing table.

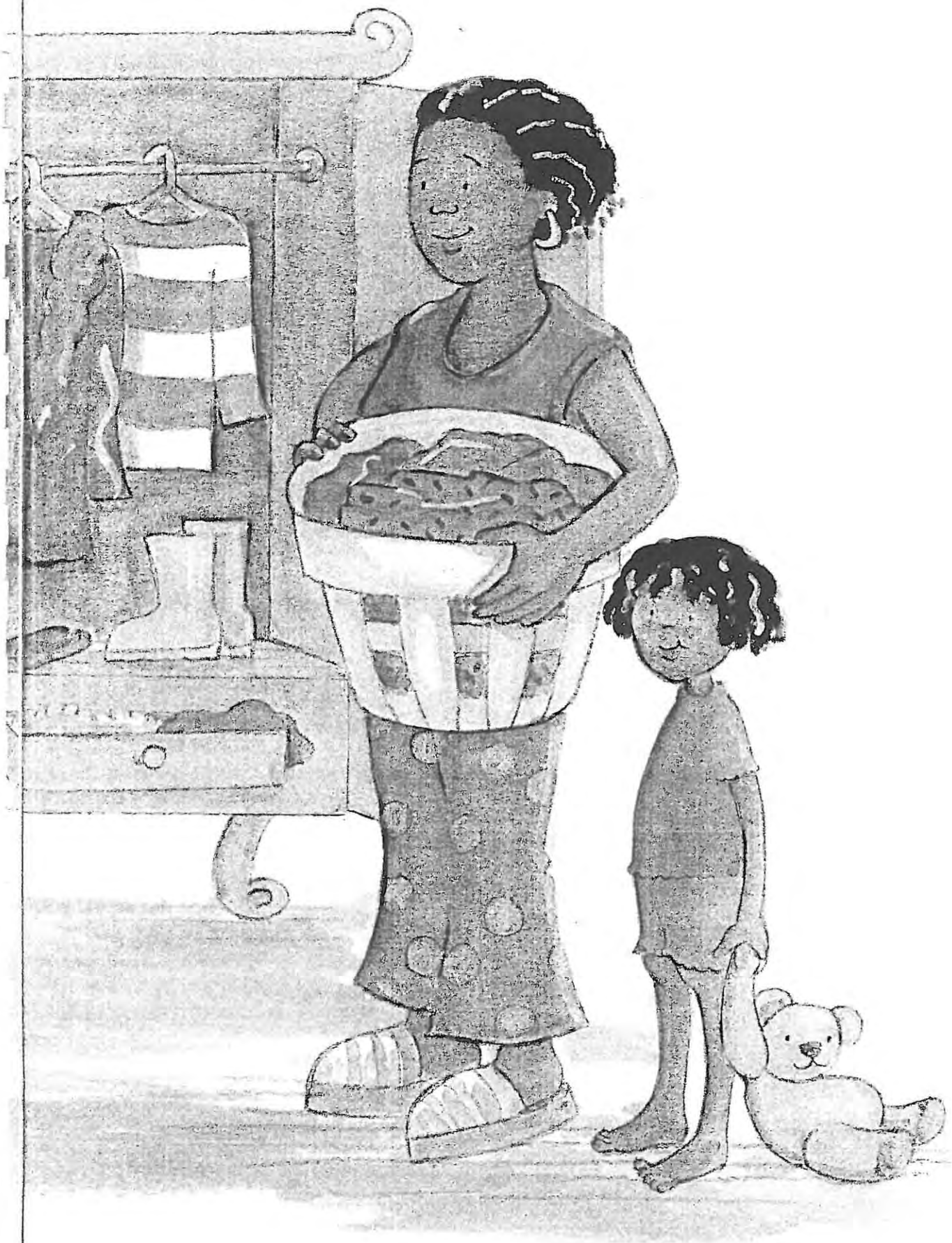
Vocabulary: clothing.

Rhyme: rhyming words (small, tall / skirt, shirt / me, see) in the *Too Small* poem on page 21.



'Mom,' calls Lebo.

'Come and look. These clothes are all too small for me!'



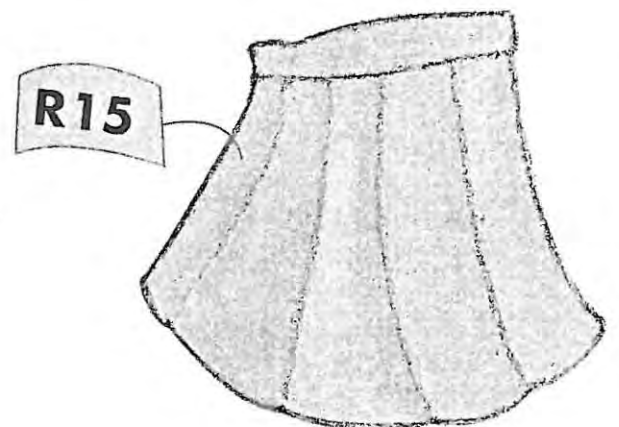
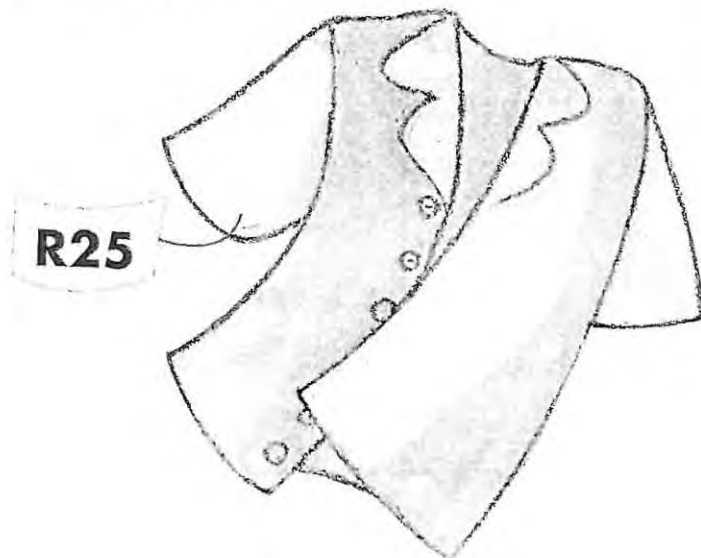
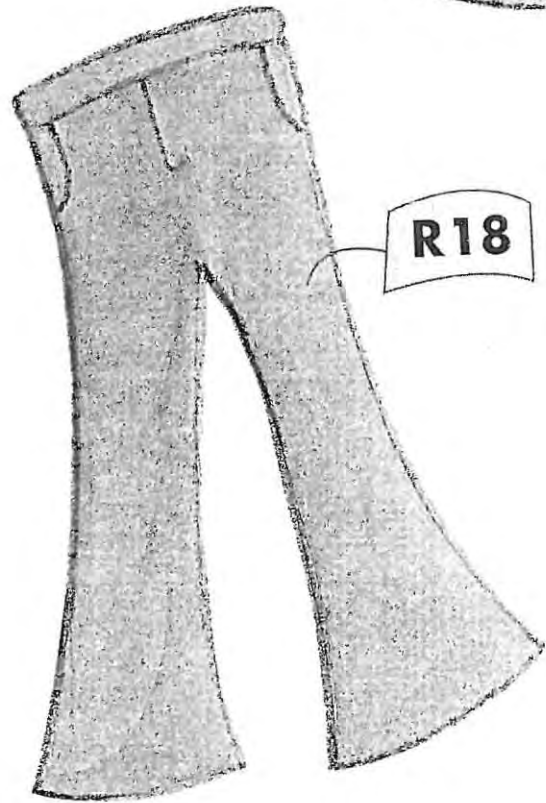
'Let me see,' says Mom.



'Look at my skirt. It's too small,' says Lebo.

Clothes to buy

- Which clothes would you buy?
- How much would they cost?



Read the poem.

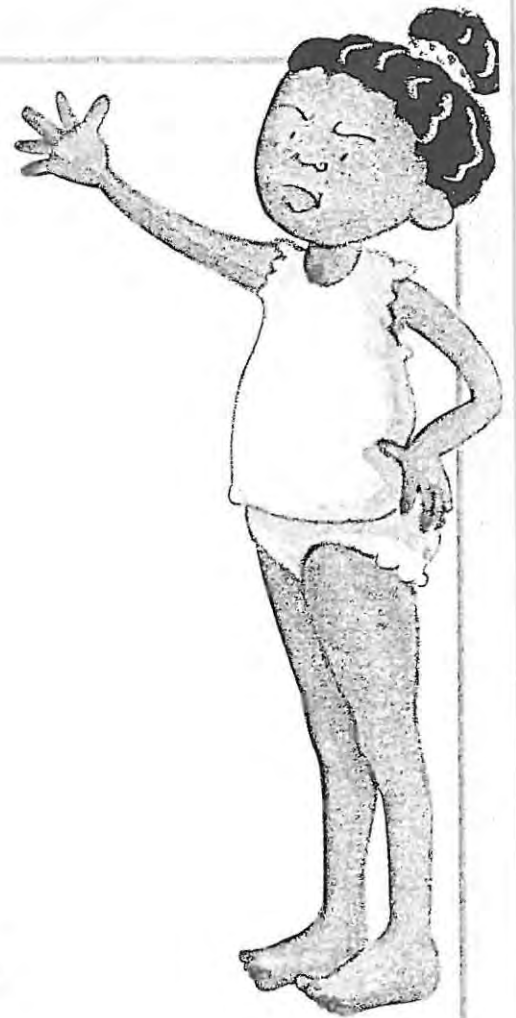
Too Small

My clothes are too small!
My clothes are too small!
I have grown too big,
I have grown too tall.

My jeans are too small,
And my socks and my skirt,
My takkies and raincoat,
My jersey and shirt.

My little sister
Is smaller than me.
All of these clothes
Will be her's now, you see.

My clothes are too small!
My clothes are too small!
So my little sister
Will now have them all!



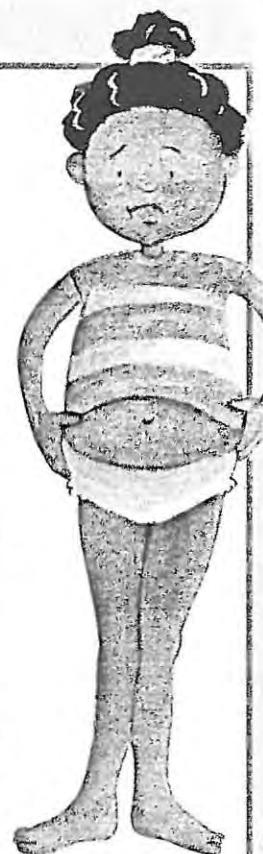
Read the poem.

I'm Growing

I'm growing, I'm growing.
My clothes are too small.
I'm growing, I'm growing.
Nothing fits anymore!

My jeans are too short,
And I can't zip my skirt.
My jersey's too tight,
And so is my shirt.

I'm growing, I'm growing.
My clothes are too small.
I'm growing, I'm growing.
Nothing fits anymore!



Group Reading Card

A. Choose the right answer.

The book is about _____.

- a girl whose clothes are too small for her
- a girl who falls in a puddle
- a boy who wants to buy fruit

B. Answer these questions:

1. Who gets Lebo's old clothes?
2. What does Nomsa say at the end?

C. Find these words in the book. Write the word and the page numbers.

1. jeans – pages ___ and ___
2. jersey – pages ___ and ___
3. big – page ___

Group Reading Card

D. Find these words in the book.

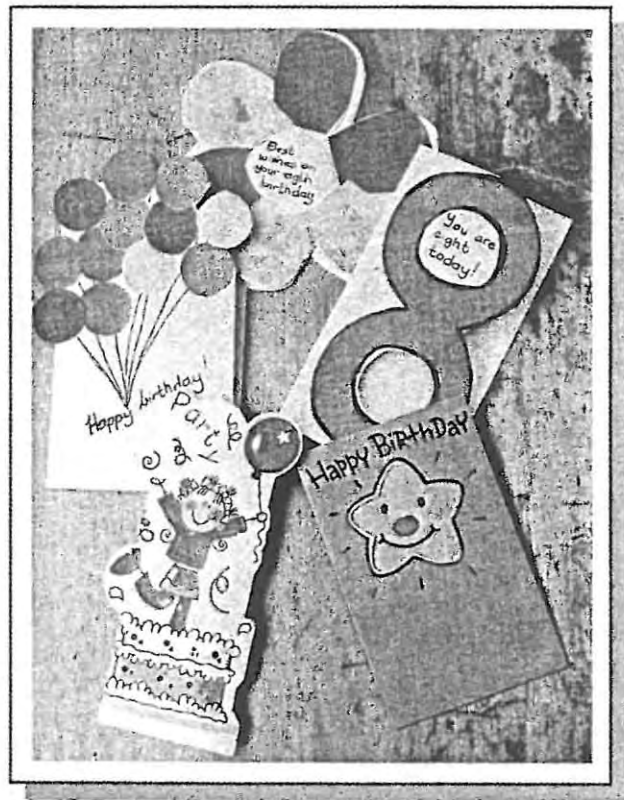
1. Look on page 2. Write one word that begins with **cl**.
2. Look on page 4. Write one word that ends with **irt**.
3. Look on page 14. Write one word that ends with **ocks**.

E. Copy and complete these sentences.
Check in the book.

1. 'Look at my skirt. It's too _____,'
says Lebo.
2. Now you have lots of _____,'
says Lebo.

F. Draw yourself wearing your favourite clothes. Label your clothes.

The Birthday Surprise



1. The Birthday Surprise

About the book

Text type: narrative

Running words: 192

Teaching focus

Vocabulary

surprise, turned, excited, couldn't, nobody, piece

Punctuation and concepts of print

- Exclamation and question marks
- Ellipsis
- Text above and below picture
- Commas

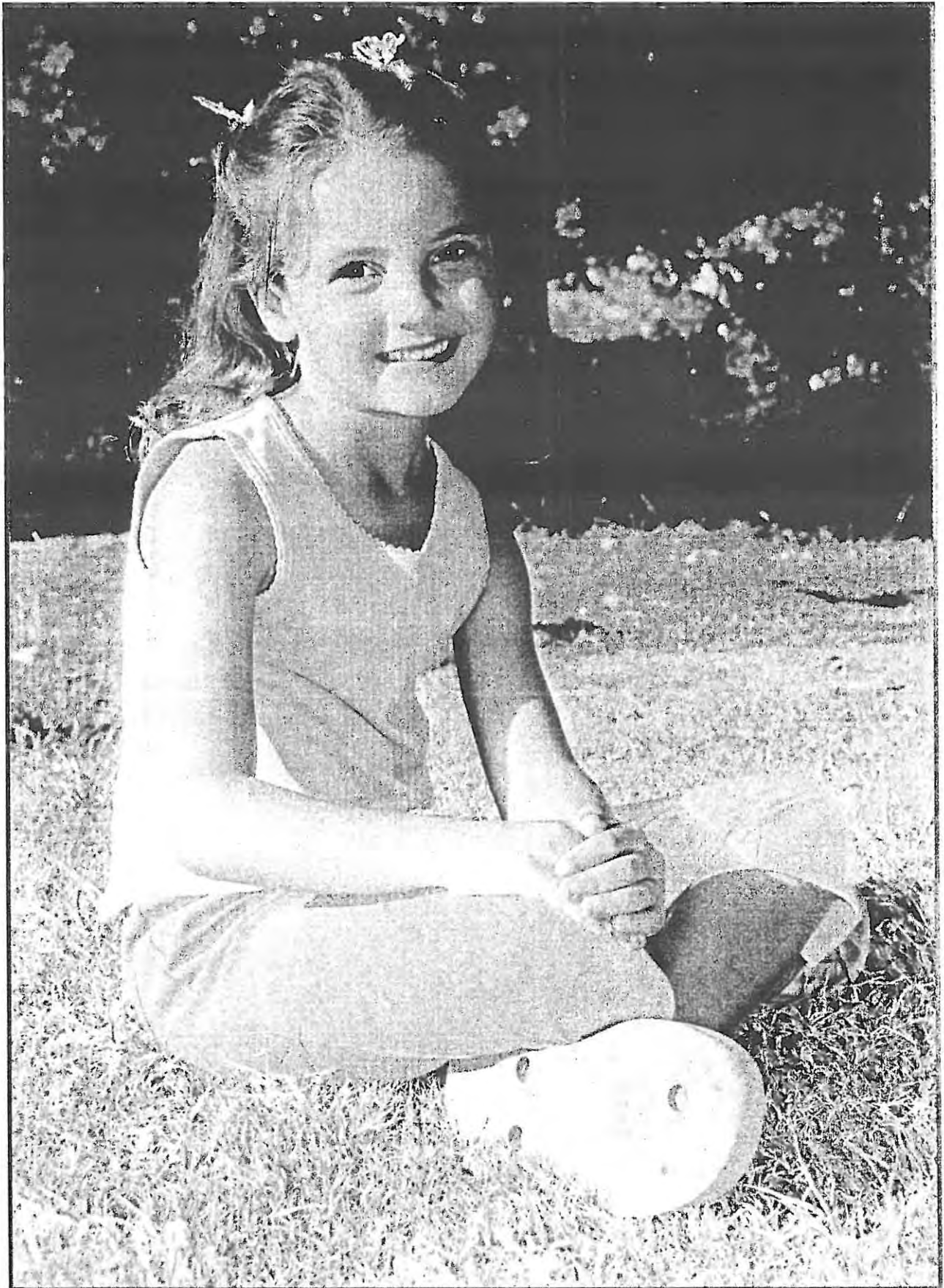
Grammar and other special features

- Questions: Where ...? etc.
- Simple past tense
- Example of a recount

Illustrations

- Photographs as context cues
- Photographs of birthday cards

Yesterday was my birthday. I turned eight years old.





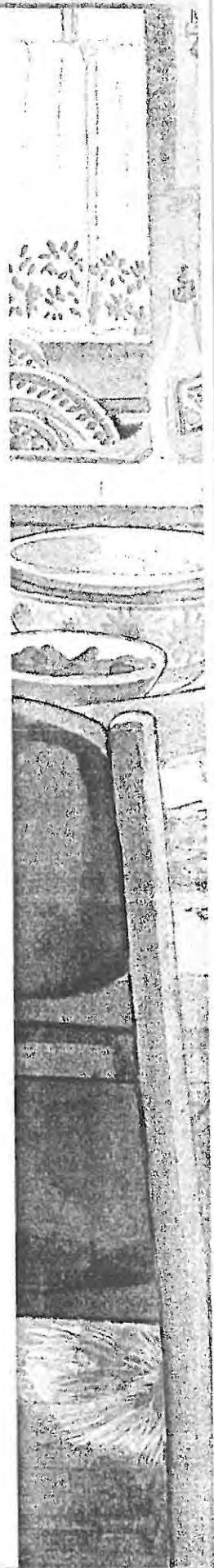
When I woke up early in the morning, I was very excited. My mom and dad gave me a doll for my birthday. I was so happy.

The Fredericks family have a pet cat. He is a big ginger cat called Sam. They have had Sam for so long that he has grown old. He is too old to hunt for mice or chase insects. Nowadays, Sam likes to sleep on someone's knee all day.

Today was no different.

The old cat wanted to sit on someone's knee. He saw Mom in the kitchen and tried to climb onto her knee.

'Go and sit on a chair, Sam,' said Mom. 'I'm too busy to have a cat sleeping on my knee. I have to prepare some food. Aunt Mary and Anna are coming today.'





I went to school and looked for my friends. I couldn't find them anywhere.
Where had they all gone?



We all enjoyed the birthday party.
It was the best birthday surprise
ever!

Group Reading Card

A. Choose the right answer.

The book is about _____.

- a girl who forgets her birthday
- a girl who has a surprise birthday party at school
- a girl who turns eleven years old

B. Answer these questions:

1. What did the girl's parents give her for her birthday?
2. Who came to call the girl to class?
3. What did the girl see when she went to class?
4. What did the girl's mother bring for everyone?
5. Who gave the girl cards?

C. Are these sentences in the book?

Copy the sentences and say **Yes** or **No**. If you say **Yes**, also write the page number.

1. My mom brought cake for everyone.
No Yes _____
2. I went to the office and waited there.
No Yes _____

3. When I woke up in the morning, I was very excited.

No Yes _____

4. I handed out the sweets.

No Yes _____

D. Copy and complete these sentences.

Add -ed to the words.

1. I turn___ eight years old.

2. I look___ for my friends.

3. I wait___ at the office.

4. I hand___ out sweets.

5. We all enjoy___ the party.

E. Write a list of the things you would need for a birthday party. Give your list a heading.

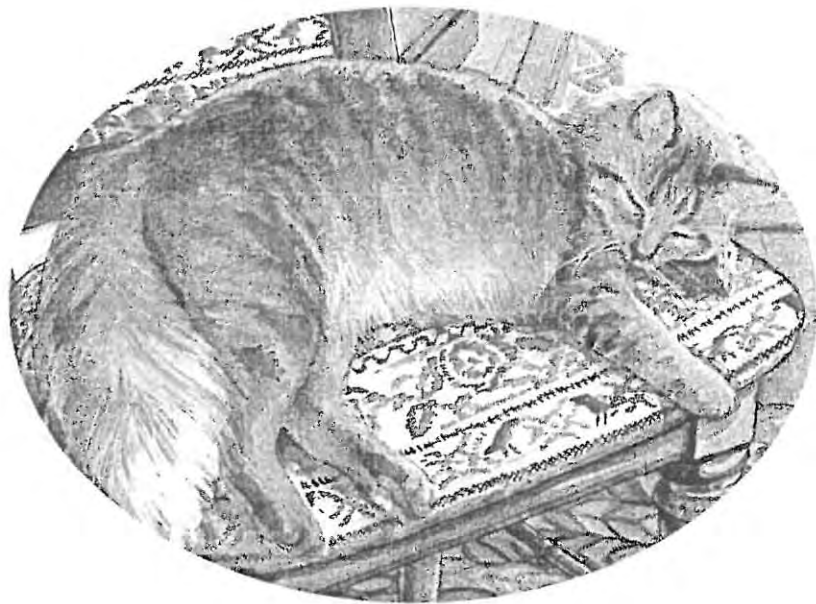
Example:

My birthday party list

- sweets
- cooldrink
- chips
- cake
- music
- a paper crown

A
Good Knee
for a

Cat



12. A Good Knee for a Cat

About the book

Text type: narrative

Running words: 556

Teaching focus

Vocabulary

chase, prepare, stroke, shy, treat

Punctuation and concepts of print

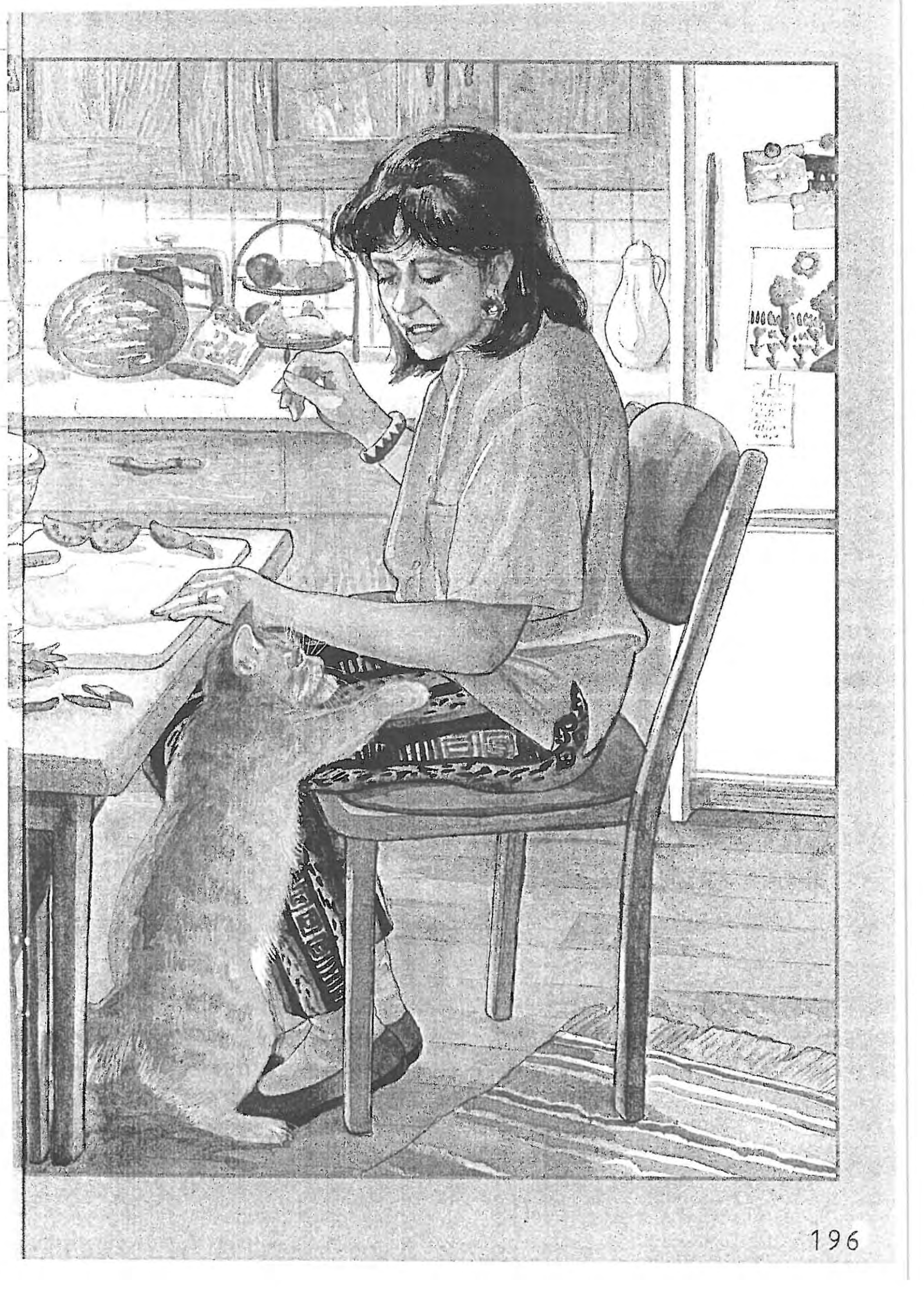
- Question mark and exclamation marks
- Capitals for proper nouns: names
- Speech marks
- Commas
- Hyphen: no-one

Grammar and other special features

- Simple present and future tenses
- Compound words: someone, onto, wheelchair
- Adjectives: big, ginger, old, etc.
- Adverbs: carefully
- Apostrophes: someone's, I'm, couldn't, Bianca's, we've, won't, etc.
- Connectors: then, and, but, later

Illustrations

- Watercolours as context cues

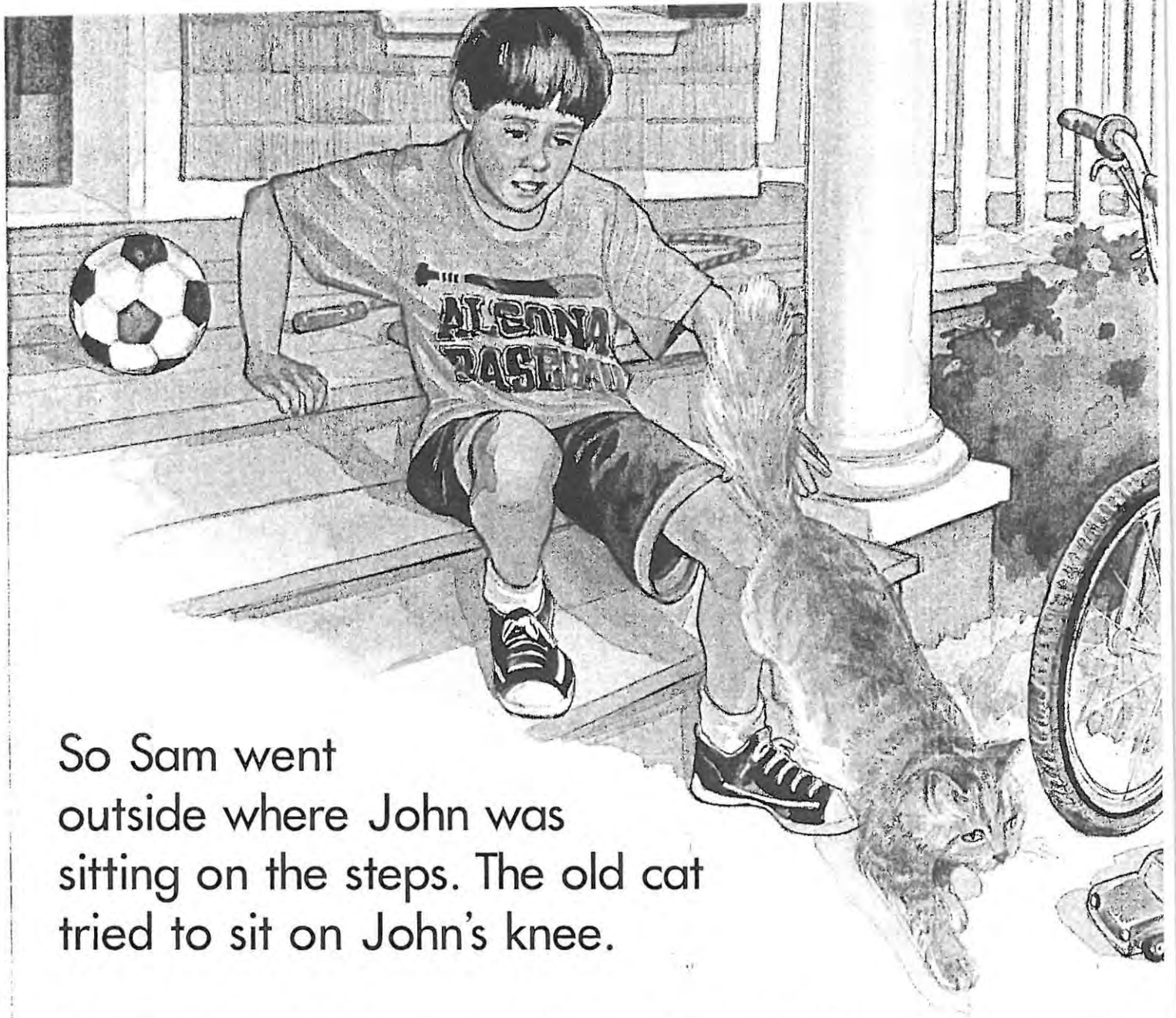


The old cat went looking for a knee to sit on.

He went into Bianca's room and jumped onto her bed.

'Oh, Sam! Get off!' said Bianca. 'I have to clean my room and make my bed. I also have to clear the rubbish off the floor. My cousin Anna is coming today and she may come into my room.'





So Sam went outside where John was sitting on the steps. The old cat tried to sit on John's knee.

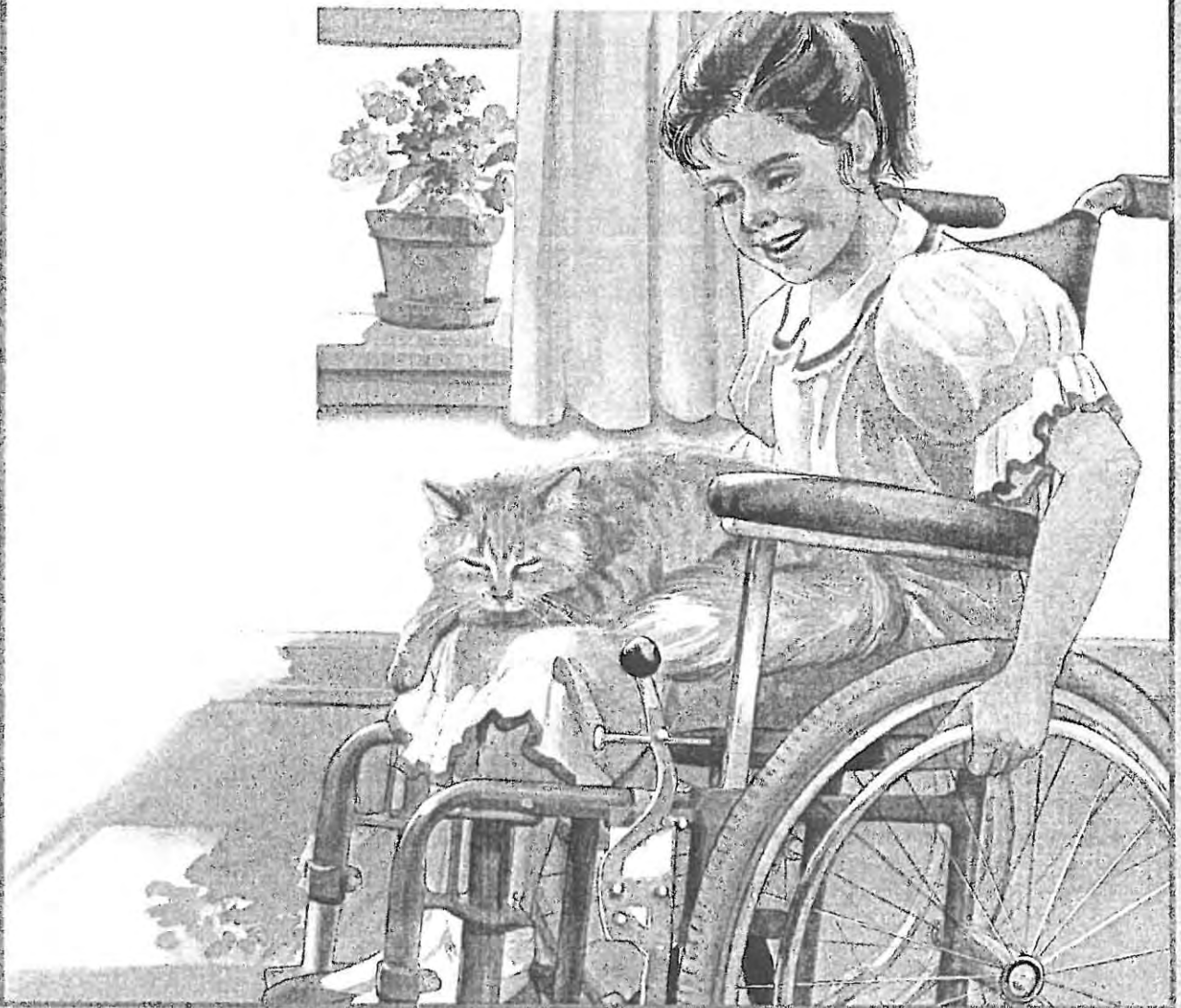
'Sorry Sam! I have to clear the rubbish off the path. My cousin Anna is coming today,' said John. He pushed the old cat gently off his knee.

The old cat couldn't find a knee to sit on. Mom and Bianca and John were all too busy to sit still!

'I will just have to go inside and sleep on a chair,' thought Sam. 'No-one has the time to stroke me.'

'Most knees come and go,' thought the old cat, 'but a wheelchair knee is a treat for a cat.'

And he purred himself to sleep again.



Group Reading Card

A. Choose the right answer.

The book is about _____.

- Sam the cat who catches a little bird to eat
- Sam the cat who wants to sit on someone's knee
- Sam the cat who looks for food

B. Answer these questions:

1. Where did Sam first look for a knee to sit on?
2. What did Bianca have to do before her cousin arrived?
3. Whose knee did Sam finally fall asleep on?
4. Why do you think Sam enjoyed sitting on Anna's knee most?

C. Are these sentences **True** or **False**? Write only the number and the word.

Example: 1. True

1. Sam is an old cat.
2. Mom is preparing the food for Uncle Joe's visit.
3. John had to clear the rubbish off the path.

Group Reading Card

4. Anna played cards on her own.

D. Join the two words to make a new word.

Example:

hair + brush	=	<u>hairbrush</u>
1. wheel + chair	=	_____
2. tooth + brush	=	_____
3. down + stairs	=	_____
4. hair + cut	=	_____
5. some + thing	=	_____

E. Draw a cat sleeping in a comfortable place.
Write a few sentences about your picture.

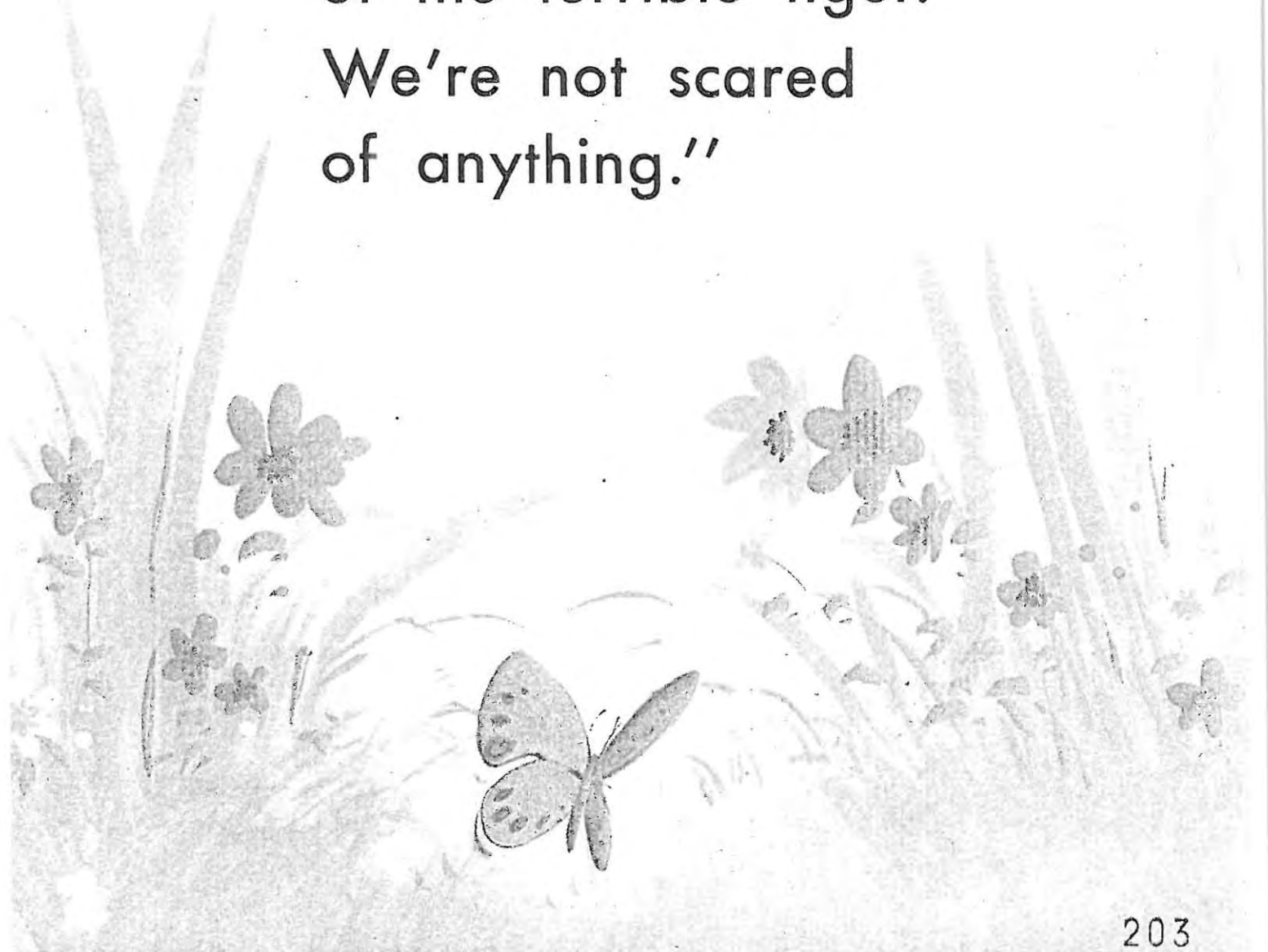
Example:

The cat likes to sleep in the basket. It likes the warm sun.

The Terrible Tiger



“We’re going to hunt
the terrible tiger.
We’re not scared
of the terrible tiger.
We’re not scared
of anything.”





Creep, creep over the hill.

"Hello monkey.

We're going to hunt
the terrible tiger.

We're not scared
of the terrible tiger.

We're not scared of anything."





"We're not scared
of the terrible tiger.
We're not scared of anything!"

The Terrible Tiger

Activity 1

A. Read the words.



Where are the children going?

Look at the pictures and write the sentences in your workbook.

The first one has been done for you.



1. Creep, creep
over the hill.



2. Creep, creep
_____ the log.



3. Creep, creep
_____ the forest.



4. Scamper, scamper
_____ the forest.



5. Scamper, scamper
_____ the log.



6. Scamper, scamper
_____ the hill.

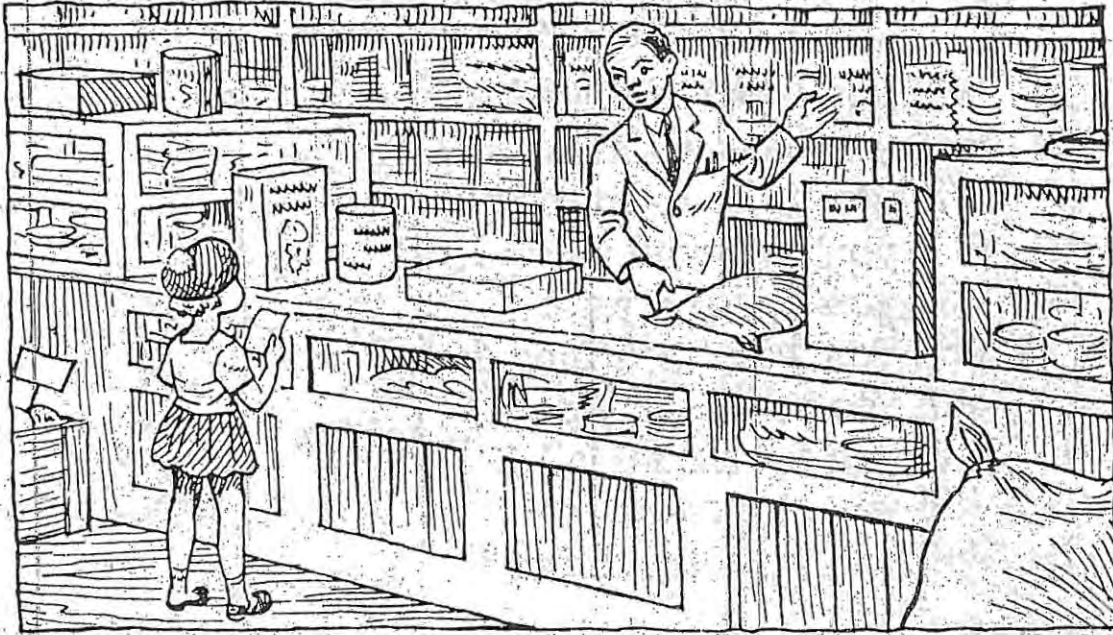
B. Draw a picture of the terrible tiger in your workbook.



"Silly Mum," said Alex.

"I had to get into the house
to read the note."

MARIE GOES SHOPPING



1. *Read:*

SHOPKEEPER: Good morning, Marie.

MARIE: Good morning, Mr Botha.

SHOPKEEPER: How are you?

MARIE: I am well, thank you.

SHOPKEEPER: What can I do for you?

MARIE: Mother sent me to buy some groceries.

SHOPKEEPER: What does she want, Marie?

MARIE: Half a kilogram of butter, a loaf of white bread, a tin of peach jam, a packet of tea and a pocket of flour, please.

SHOPKEEPER: Will you take the groceries with you?

MARIE: No, Mr Botha. Please send them home.

SHOPKEEPER: All right, Marie. I shall send them this afternoon.

MARIE: Good-bye, Mr Botha.

SHOPKEEPER: Good-bye, Marie.

2. Answer each of the following questions with YES, I SHALL, and then with NO, I SHALL NOT:

(Example: Will you sail your boat? Yes, I shall sail my boat.
No, I shall not sail my boat.)

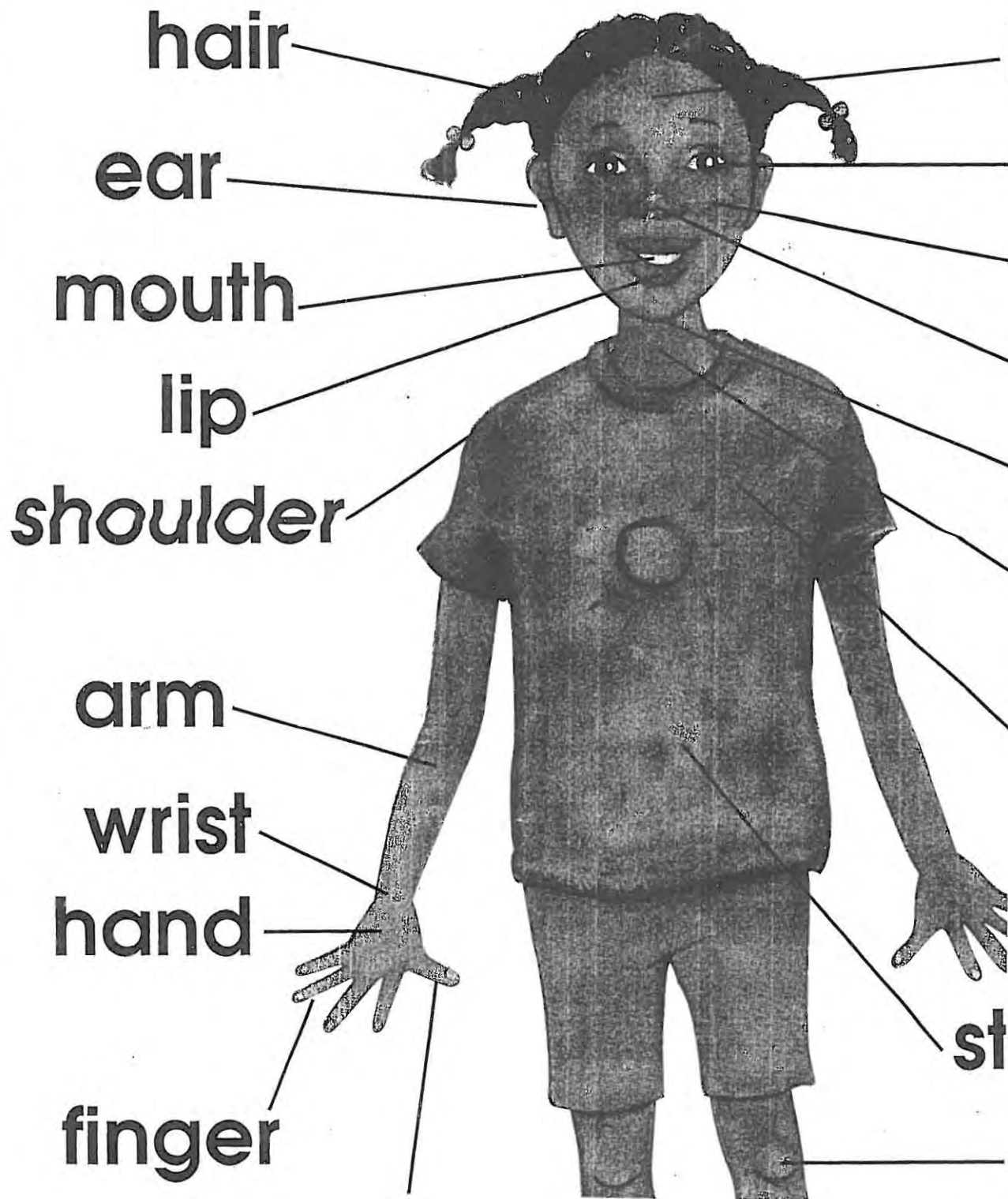
- (a) Will you come to school tomorrow?
- (b) Will you have a glass of milk?
- (c) Will you go to town today?
- (d) Will you play with me?
- (e) Will you go for a walk?
- (f) Will you wear your blue dress?
- (g) Will you sweep the floors?
- (h) Will you lay the table?
- (i) Will you buy a new pen?
- (j) Will you wash the dishes?

3. Say the following sentences five times, but begin each sentence (i) with YOU, (ii) with JAN, (iii) with ANNA, (iv) with WE and (v) with THE CHILDREN. (Make all the necessary changes.)

- (a) I am reading from my book.
- (b) I am speaking to my brother.
- (c) I am using my knife and fork.
- (d) I am brushing my teeth.
- (e) I am milking my cow.
- (f) I am clapping my hands.
- (g) I am cleaning my shoes.
- (h) I am riding my horse.

APPENDIX 10.

My body



Locked Out





Alex walked home from school.
She went to the front door.
The door was locked.



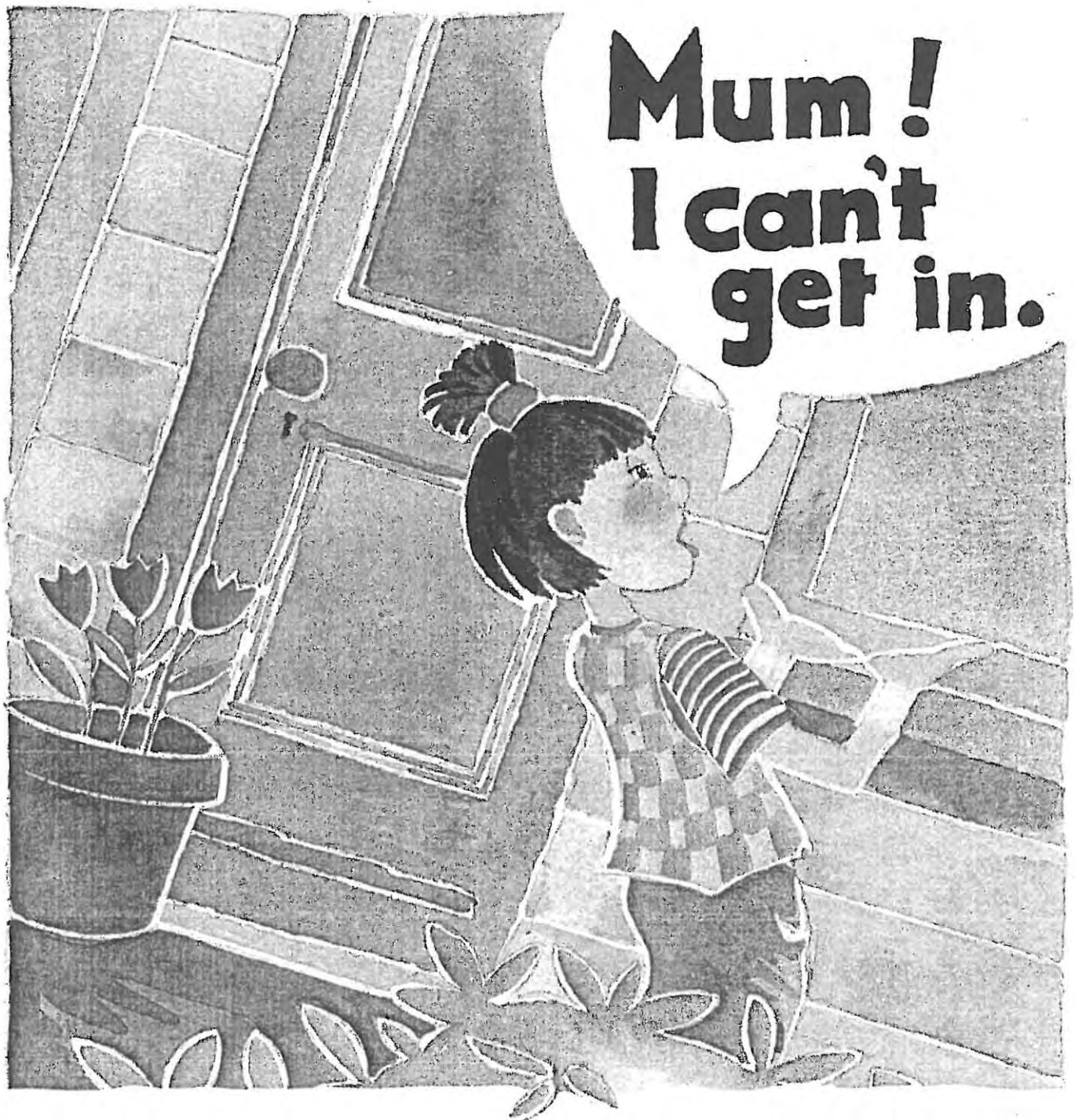
She went to the back door.

It was locked, too.

"Mum! Mum!" she called.



Alex looked at the windows
by the back door.
The windows were locked.

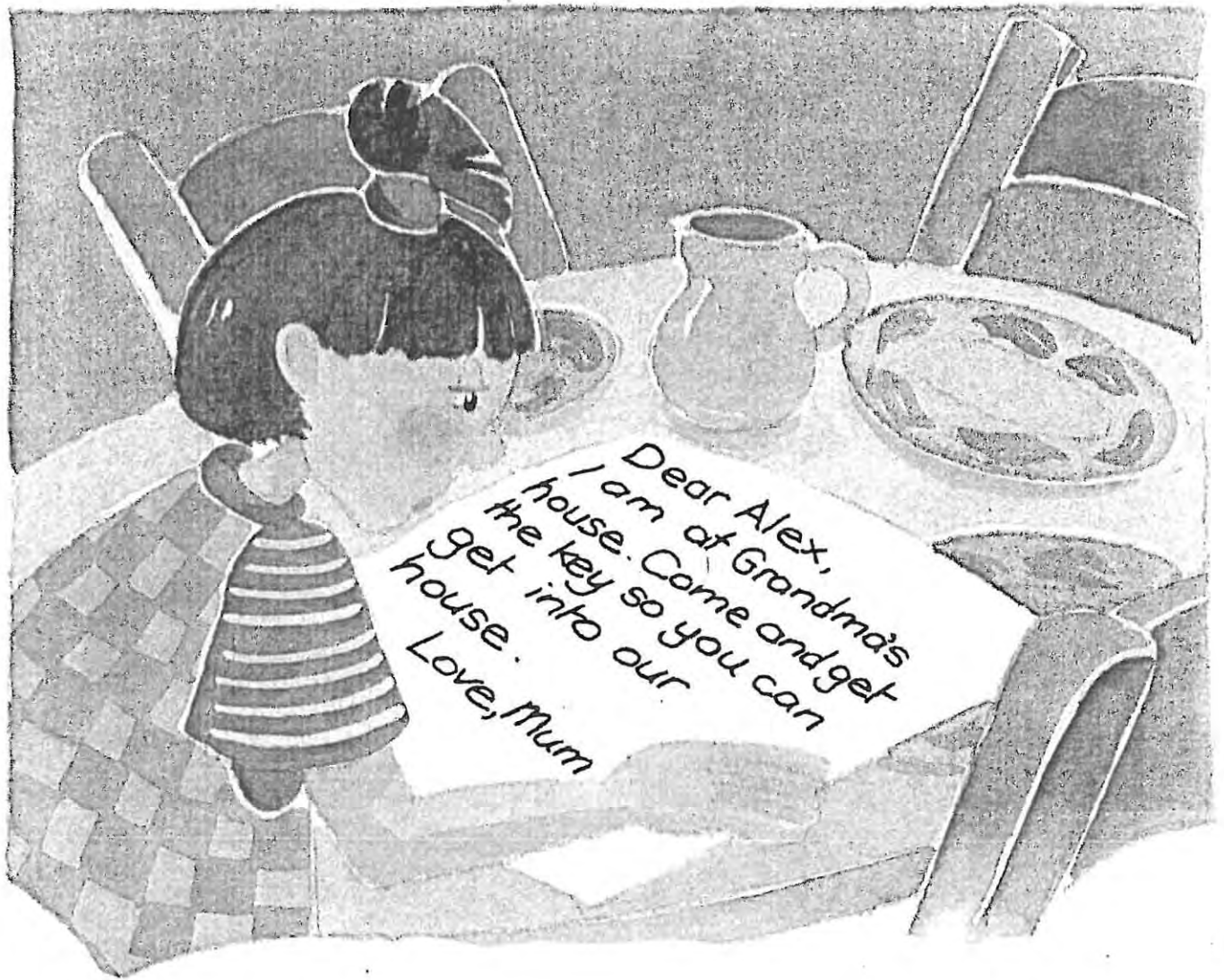


**Mum!
I can't
get in.**

She looked at the windows
by the front door.

They were locked, too.

"Mum! I can't get in,"
she called.



Then Alex saw a note on the table.

The note said:

"Dear Alex,

I am at Grandma's house.

Come and get the key

so you can get into our house.

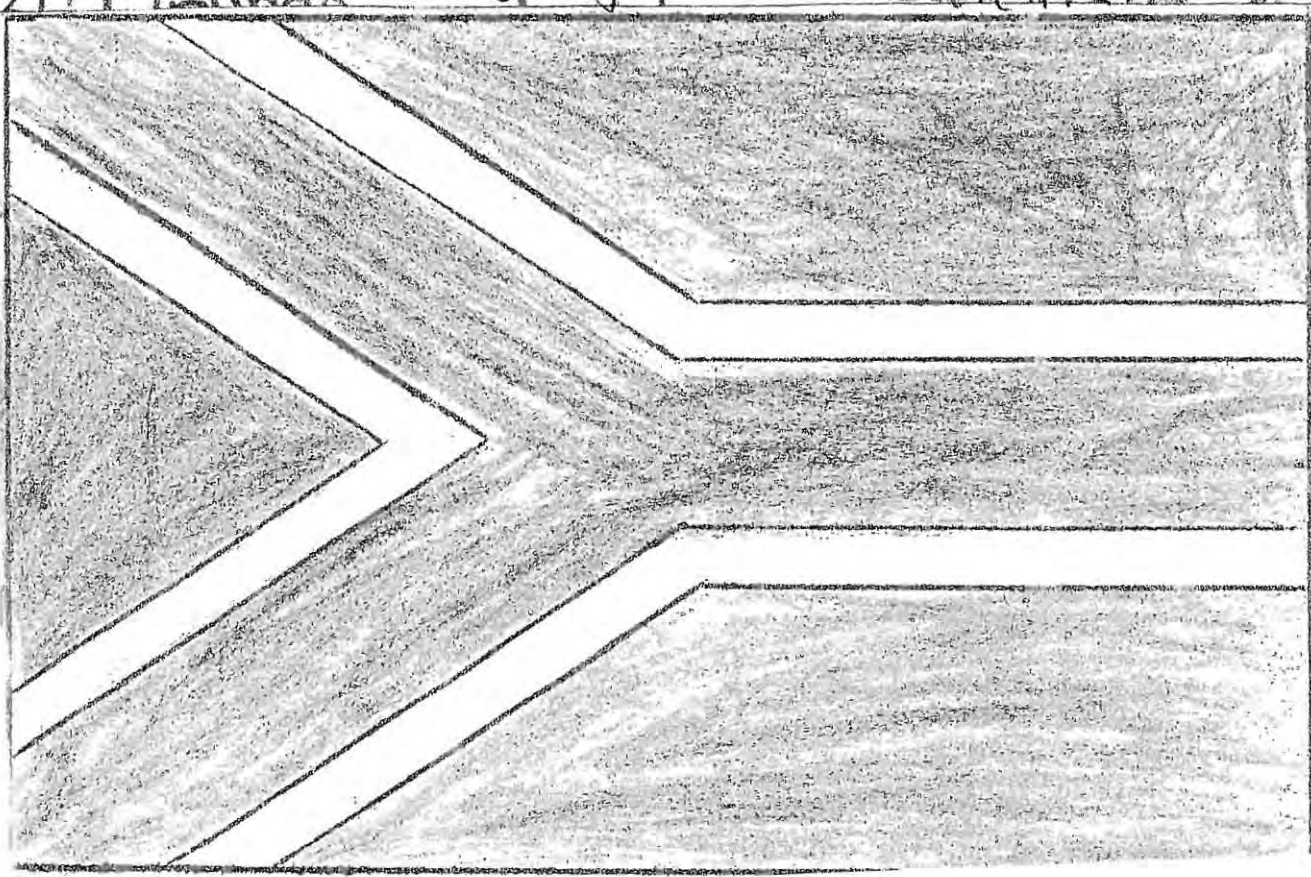
Love, Mum."

Mpume's flag 2004 Zimkitha Nonkonyana Sentences 04

1. Mpume and her parents ~~went~~ ^{went} to town that they ~~can do~~ ^{to} some shopping.

2. Mpume saw a flag ^{flying} ~~on~~ ^{hanging} on the hotel.

3. Mpume's when she see the south African ^{flag} she sing the National ~~at~~ ⁱⁿ ~~u~~ ^u



ing.
no.

2004/05/04
219

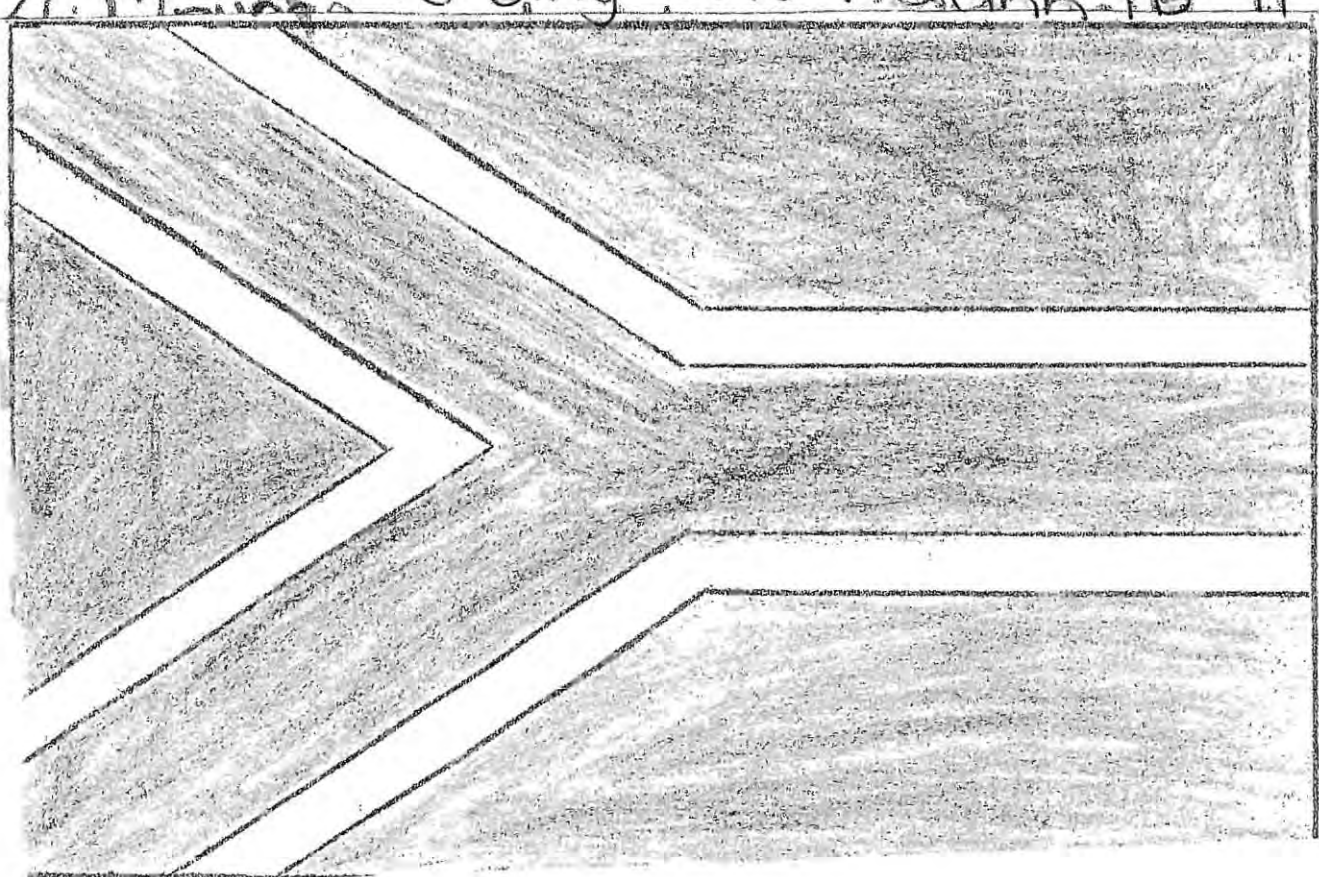
Mpume's flag Zimkhitha Nonkonyana Sentences

2004
May
04

1. Mpume and her parents ~~went~~ to town that they could do some shopping.

2. Mpume saw a flag ~~at~~ ^{flying} the hotel.

3. Mpume's when she see the South African ~~flag~~ she sing the National ~~song~~



im
ling

2004
May
04

APPENDIX13.

Interviews with the learners

Interview 1: R: - researcher, B: - Beulah.

R: What do you like doing in the reading class?

B: I like to read...with the teacher...and alone.
I sit in the class when the others play I sit in the class and read.

R: What did you read?

B: *(No answer)*.

R: Which books did you read from the box at the back of the classroom?

B: ...mmm... What am I, The terrible Tiger.....
The Chinese quilt, My Family, Noah's Ark, and Locked Out.

R: Tell me about 'What am I'.

B: It's about animals. They ask: What am I... then it is a monkey, a crocodile...a leopard. They don't know what they are. We look at the drawings, the tails, what they do, then we know.

R: Tell me, do you only read here at school?

B: No, I read at home too. I get books from Joza library.

R: In which languages are these books?

B: English... only English.

R: And your parents? Do they read?

B: Yes. My father reads newspapers...The *'Grocott'....and Sports newspapers. He shows me the pictures in the newspapers, and then he tells what is happening or who it is.

R: And the other family members? Do they read?

B: Yes. My mother...my brother... my sister. They read

newspapers ...and books.

R: and... does any of them read to you?

B: YesThey read the Bible to me...sometimes books... they take turns.

R: and other people? Do you see other people reading?

B: Yes...in church we read the Bible. In English. The Lord's My shepherd, we pray in church. Must I say it? (she recites the whole psalm voluntarily.

R: O.K. and other places?

B: The library.

R: O.K. now tell me, which languages do you speak at home?

B: My parents speak English...we speak English, my brothers and sisters.

R: and Afrikaans? Or Xhosa.

B: I speak Xhosa to my brother...sometimes.

R: Thank You.

INTERVIEW 4. (TH- Thulethu)

R: You know that I come to your class to see the reading lessons, What do you like doing in the class?

TH: like to write [corrects himself] read, read.

R; and what else do you like?

TH: ...the teacher asks...

R: [waits for him to continue- but he does not]
Oh, the questions that the teacher asks?

TH: yes.

R: Now, tell me about the stories you have read.

TH: ... Terrible Tiger... and... they not scared of Terrible Tiger... swimming...we going to hunt terrible tiger.

[I did not pursue this question as interviewee obviously struggled to remember and gave coherent answers]

R: You've read quite a number of books in class. Do you read at home?

TH: [hamilee] – not sensible answer.

R: Do you read at home?

TH: (*nods*) yes.

R: Where do you get the books?

TH: Nsika Nsika (the high school in the township)

[R: O.K. Tell me, are there people at home that read to you?

TH: my father... *Grocott.

R: What does he read to you?

TH: (*no answer*)

R: Do you see other people reading there where you stay/

TH: (*no answer*).

R: newspapers, the Bible?

TH: Yes... the Bible... in the church....Xhosa.

R: Now, which language do you speak at home—or the most?

TH: Xhosa.

R: any other languages? Do you speak other languages?

TH: English.

R: Do you speak English at home? To whom?

TH: my mother.....my father.

R: O.K.Thanks.

INTERVIEW 6- L (Lumtu).

R: Tell me, what do you like doing in the reading class?

L: like reading...not writing

R: There's a reading box in the class. Tell me about one of the stories?

L: The little yellow chicken.....friend help him...buzz off. Don't Bugging me.

R: Tell me about another story.

L: (silent for a while) I can't

R: Do you read at home? What do you read?

L: no... at school... (*Silence*)

R: are there people that read to you at home?

L: no.....my sister.

R: what does she read to you?

L: schoolbooks.

R: Can you tell me something that she has read to you?

L: I can't.

R: Do you see other people reading at home?

L: no.

R: ...in church?

L: Xhosa.

R: Tell me. Which language do you speak at home?

L: Xhosa.

R: no other language. Afrikaans or English

L: English...at school.not Afrikaans.

R: O.K. Thank you.

¹

¹ A local newspaper.

APPENDIX 14.

INTRODUCING THE LANGUAGES LEARNING AREA - ENGLISH

Definition

The Languages Learning Area includes:

- ▣ all eleven official languages: Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, SiSwati, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga; and
- ▣ languages approved by the Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB) and the South African Certification Authority (SAFCERT) such as Braille and South African Sign Language.

The Learning Area for each official language is presented in three parts, each with its own volume: Home Language, First Additional Language, and Second Additional Language.

In a multilingual country like South Africa it is important that learners reach high levels of proficiency in at least two languages, and that they are able to communicate in other languages.

The Additive Approach to Multilingualism

The Languages Learning Area is in line with the Department of Education's language-in-education policy. This policy gives School Governing Bodies the responsibility of selecting school language policies that are appropriate for their circumstances and in line with the policy of additive multilingualism. The Languages Learning Area Statement provides a curriculum that is supportive of whatever decision a school makes. It follows an additive approach to multilingualism:

- ▣ All learners learn their home language and at least one additional official language.
- ▣ Learners become competent in their additional language, while their home language is maintained and developed.
- ▣ All learners learn an African language for a minimum of three years by the end of the General Education and Training Band. In some circumstances, it may be learned as a second additional language.

The home, first additional and second additional languages are approached in different ways:

- ▣ The home language Assessment Standards assume that learners come to school able to understand and speak the language. They support the development of this competence, especially with regard to various types of literacy (reading, writing, visual and critical literacies). They provide a strong curriculum to support the language of learning and teaching.
- ▣ The first additional language assumes that learners do not necessarily have any knowledge of the language when they arrive at school. The curriculum starts by developing learners' ability to understand and speak the language. On this foundation, it builds literacy. Learners are able to transfer the literacies they have acquired in their home language to their first additional language. The curriculum provides strong support for those learners who will use their first additional language as a language of learning and teaching. By the end of Grade 9, these learners should be able to use their home language and first additional language effectively and with confidence for a variety of purposes including learning.
- ▣ The second additional language is intended for learners who wish to learn three languages. The third language may be an official language or a foreign language. The Assessment Standards ensure that learners are able to use the language for general communicative purposes. It assumes that less time will be allocated to learning the second additional language than to the home language or first additional language.

LEARNING OUTCOMES



Learning Outcome 1: Listening

The learner will be able to listen for information and enjoyment, and respond appropriately and critically in a wide range of situations.

The skills in listening that learners bring to school should be developed and used to expand their speaking, reading, viewing and writing skills. Active listening is central to learning, as well as for building respectful relationships. Learners can listen to increase their knowledge of their own and other languages and cultures.



Learning Outcome 2: Speaking

The learner will be able to communicate confidently and effectively in spoken language in a wide range of situations.

Learners need to be able to use their communication skills effectively across cultural and language boundaries. They should learn through experience that multilingualism is personally and socially enriching. They should learn how to communicate with people who have speech and hearing impairments, and to be sensitive to their needs.



Learning Outcome 3: Reading and Viewing

The learner will be able to read and view for information and enjoyment, and respond critically to the aesthetic, cultural and emotional values in texts.

Reading for meaning is the main purpose. Techniques and strategies that help learners do this with increasing accuracy support reading for meaning. Reading (including visual and multimedia texts) is essential for language development, learning to write, enjoyment, personal growth, and learning about the world.



Learning Outcome 4: Writing

The learner will be able to write different kinds of factual and imaginative texts for a wide range of purposes.

In the Foundation Phase, learners work towards this outcome. They learn that writing carries meaning, and that they themselves are the authors of that meaning. They develop their handwriting skills to be able to record their thoughts and ideas so that they and others can read them. They learn how to use writing conventions such as spelling and punctuation to make their writing understandable to others. They learn that writing is a process that includes pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, illustrating and publishing.

HOME LANGUAGE PROFILE (circle, or fill in)							
11. What languages are used in your home? XHOSA - ENGLISH							
	LANGUAGE 1	LANGUAGE 2	LANGUAGE 3				
(Name the languages)	XHOSA	ENGLISH					
12. Can you							
understand this language?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
speak this language?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
read this language?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
write this language?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
13. Do you speak this language: YE							
with your mother?	n.a.	always <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>	always <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>	always <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>
		sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	never <input type="checkbox"/>	sometimes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	never <input type="checkbox"/>	sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	never <input type="checkbox"/>
with your father?	n.a.	always <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>	always <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>	always <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>
		sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	never <input type="checkbox"/>	sometimes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	never <input type="checkbox"/>	sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	never <input type="checkbox"/>
with your older brother(s) or sister(s)?	n.a.	always <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>	always <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>	always <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>
		sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	never <input type="checkbox"/>	sometimes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	never <input type="checkbox"/>	sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	never <input type="checkbox"/>
with your younger brother(s) or sister(s)?	n.a.	always <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>	always <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>	always <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>
		sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	never <input type="checkbox"/>	sometimes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	never <input type="checkbox"/>	sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	never <input type="checkbox"/>
with other people?		always <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>	always <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>	always <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>
		sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	never <input type="checkbox"/>	sometimes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	never <input type="checkbox"/>	sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	never <input type="checkbox"/>
14. What language do you speak best?	Language 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Language 2		Language 3		
15. What language do you like to speak most?	Language 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Language 2		Language 3		
SCHOOL LANGUAGE PROFILE (name the languages) ENGLISH							
16. In what language(s) does your teacher speak to you? ENGLISH							
17. In what language(s) would you like your teacher to speak to you? ENGLISH							
18. What language(s) do you learn at school? ENGLISH							
19. What language(s) would you like to learn at school? ENGLISH							
BASIC DATA (circle, or fill in)							
1. District		GRAHAMSTOWN					
2. School		GEORGE BICKERSON					
3. Grade		1 2 3 4 5 6 7					
4. Name	(or code)	SIPILELE					
5. Surname		KATE					
6. Sex		boy <input type="checkbox"/> girl <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
7. Date of birth		1995 - 10 - 28					
8. Country of birth		SOUTH AFRICA					
9. Country of birth father		SOUTH AFRICA					
10. Country of birth mother		SOUTH AFRICA					



Additional comments