

**EXPLORING STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING  
READING TO ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL  
LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN GRADE 2**

**SYDLIN CADDY**

**2015**

**EXPLORING STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING READING  
TO ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS  
IN GRADE 2**

by

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

**MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS**

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SEPTEMBER 2015

## DEDICATION

*I am dedicating this dissertation to my wonderful mother.  
Your love for me was immeasurable, and although no longer of this  
world, you remain the greatest influence on my life.  
I love you.*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- ❖ The participants who took time from their busy schedules and shared their personal experiences in order to make this study a possibility.
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- ❖ My inspirational parents and incredible sisters, your constant encouragement and love has inspired me to persevere.
- ❖ My friends, I appreciate your understanding and support. Thank you.

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## UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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### **Declaration:**

I declare that the dissertation, which I submit for the degree Magister Educationis at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

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Sydlin Caddy

**SIGNATURE OF STUDENT**

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Prof N. C. Phatudi

**SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR**

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Additional Language learners in Grade 2

Sydln Caddy

Early Childhood Education

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## ETHICS STATEMENT

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The author, whose name appears on the title page of this thesis, has obtained, for the research described in this work, the applicable research ethics approval. The author declares that she has observed the ethical standards required in terms of the University of Pretoria's *Code of Ethics for researchers and the policy guidelines for responsible research*.

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Sydlin Caddy

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF LANGUAGE EDITING

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I, Catharina Johanna Barnard, hereby certify that I have revised the language of the dissertation “Exploring strategies for teaching reading to English First Additional Language learners in Grade 2”, written by Sydlin Caddy.

I found the standard of the language acceptable provided the corrections as indicated have been made.



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3 May 2015

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## ACRONYMS

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CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
DoBE	Department of Basic Education
DOE	Department of Education
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
FAL	First Additional Home Language
EFAL	English First Additional Language
USA	United States of America
ANA	Annual National Assessments
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading and Literacy Study
NEEDU	National Education Evaluation & Development Unit
SVR	Simple View of Reading
FET	Future Education and Training
BICS	Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills
CALP	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
ESL	English Second Language
TPR	Total Physical Response
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching

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## ABSTRACT

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In this dissertation, I explore the reading strategies teachers utilise in their grade 2 classrooms when teaching English First Additional Language learners (EFAL) in English home language contexts. Participants for this study were grade 2 teachers from three former model-C schools in the Gauteng province. A qualitative research methodology was employed, using a case study design. Data were collected using observation, focus group interviews and one-on-one interviews. The findings that emerged from the study were firstly, that teachers made use of a Balanced Literacy Programme in their classrooms but also placed great emphasis on the development of English comprehension and vocabulary among EFAL learners. Secondly, challenges faced by learners such as overcrowding, lack of parental support and poverty negatively impacted their English reading development and academic achievement. Teachers adapted their strategies to provide support for these learners through adjusting the pace of teaching as well as providing much needed individual attention during group guided reading sessions. Thirdly, teachers made use of a combination of the whole-word approach and phonic approach when teaching reading to EFAL learners. And finally it emerged that an inclusion of reading resources in the learners' home languages as well as technology in EFAL classrooms could positively influence English reading acquisition among learners in future. Recommendations revealed from the findings of the study included actively employing additive bilingualism in South African schools due to the prevalence of EFAL learners in English home language contexts, creating a language policy specifically for EFAL learners in the South African context, improving parent education surrounding second language learning and introducing technology into classrooms.

### KEY TERMS

- Reading
- English First Additional Language
- English Second Language
- home language
- strategies
- methods
- approaches
- teaching, learners
- Foundation Phase

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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	Page
Acknowledgements .....	i
Declaration of Originality .....	ii
Ethical Clearance Certificate .....	iii
Ethics Statement .....	iv
Acknowledgement of Language Editing .....	v
Acronyms .....	vi
Abstract and Key terms .....	vii
Table of Contents .....	viii

---oOo---

### CHAPTER ONE EXPLORATION OF THE RESEARCH

	Page
<b>1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY</b> .....	1
<b>1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY</b> .....	2
<b>1.3 RATIONALE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY</b> .....	5
<b>1.4 PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH</b> .....	7
<b>1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS</b> .....	8
1.5.1 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION .....	8
1.5.2 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	8
<b>1.6 DEFINITION OF MAIN CONCEPTS</b> .....	8
1.6.1 STRATEGY .....	8
1.6.2 READING .....	9
1.6.3 PHONICS .....	9
1.6.4 PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS .....	9
1.6.5 HOME LANGUAGE .....	9
1.6.6 ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EFAL) .....	9

	Page
1.6.7 LANGUAGE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING (LOLT).....	10
1.6.8 WHOLE LANGUAGE APPROACH.....	10
1.6.9 PHONIC METHOD.....	10
1.6.10 BALANCED READING APPROACH.....	10
<b>1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1.8 RESEARCH SITES AND PARTICIPANTS.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>1.9 DATA COLLECTION METHODS.....</b>	<b>13</b>
1.9.1 ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS.....	13
1.9.2 FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS.....	14
1.9.3 OBSERVATION.....	15
1.9.4 FIELD NOTES.....	15
1.9.5 DATA ANALYSIS.....	15
<b>1.10 TRUSTWORTHINESS, CREDIBILITY AND TRANSFERABILITY.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>1.11 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>1.12 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>1.13 CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>19</b>

---oOo---

## CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

	Page
<b>2.1 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	20
<b>2.2 WHAT IS READING</b> .....	20
<b>2.3 WHO ARE ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS</b> .....	21
<b>2.4 PREVALENCE OF ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS WORLDWIDE</b> .....	22
<b>2.5 TEACHING ENGLISH TO FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS</b> .....	24
<b>2.6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION THEORIES</b> .....	25
<b>2.7 CHALLENGES FACED BY ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS</b> .....	29
2.7.1 LACK OF RESOURCES .....	29
2.7.2 TEACHER TRAINING .....	30
2.7.3 EFAL TEACHERS .....	31
2.7.4 OVERCROWDED CLASSROOMS .....	32
2.7.5 THE IMPACT OF DIFFERENT CONTEXTS ON EFAL LEARNING IN SOUTH AFRICA .....	33
2.7.6 PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND EDUCATION .....	33
2.7.7 POOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS .....	34
2.7.8 LANGUAGE ORTHOGRAPHY .....	35
<b>2.8 READING STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES</b> .....	36
2.8.1 SYNTHETIC PHONICS APPROACHES .....	36
2.8.2 ANALYTIC PHONICS APPROACHES .....	37
2.8.3 INTEGRATIVE APPROACHES .....	39
<b>2.9 DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE POLICIES IN SOUTH AFRICA</b> .....	41
<b>2.10 THE SOUTH AFRICAN HOME LANGUAGE CURRICULUM</b> .....	43
<b>2.11 CONCLUSION</b> .....	44

## CHAPTER THREE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

	Page
<b>3.1 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	47
<b>3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM</b> .....	48
<b>3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN</b> .....	49
3.3.1 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	50
3.3.1.1 Case study .....	50
<b>3.4 PARTICIPANTS, RESEARCH SITES AND SAMPLING</b> .....	52
3.4.1 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS .....	52
3.4.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH SITES .....	53
<b>3.5 DATA COLLECTION</b> .....	54
3.5.1 INTERVIEWS .....	54
3.5.1.1 One-on-one interviews .....	55
3.5.1.2 Focus group interviews .....	56
3.5.2 OBSERVATION .....	57
3.5.3 FIELD NOTES .....	58
<b>3.6 DATA GATHERING PROCESS</b> .....	59
<b>3.7 ROLE OF A QUALITATIVE RESEARCHER</b> .....	59
<b>3.8 RESEARCH QUALITY PRINCIPLES</b> .....	60
3.8.1 TRUSTWORTHINESS .....	61
3.8.2 CREDIBILITY .....	61
3.8.3 TRANSFERABILITY .....	62
3.8.4 DEPENDABILITY .....	62
3.8.5 CONFIRMABILITY .....	62
<b>3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS</b> .....	63
<b>3.10 DATA ANALYSIS</b> .....	64
<b>3.11 LIMITATIONS</b> .....	65
<b>3.12 IN RETROSPECT</b> .....	65
<b>3.13 CONCLUSION</b> .....	66

## CHAPTER FOUR PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

	Page
<b>4.1 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	67
<b>4.2 ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY IN SCHOOLS</b> .....	70
4.2.1 LEARNERS' ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY .....	70
4.2.2 ENGLISH COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES .....	71
<b>4.3 IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF TEACHING READING</b> .....	73
4.3.1 DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION AND VOCABULARY .....	73
4.3.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF A PHONIC APPROACH TO TEACHING READING .....	75
4.3.3 THE USE OF A WHOLE WORD APPROACH TO TEACHING READING .....	75
4.3.4 ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR UNDERACHIEVING LEARNERS .....	77
<b>4.4 CHALLENGES IMPACTING TEACHING READING</b> .....	79
4.4.1 LACK OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT .....	80
4.4.2 POVERTY AMONGST LEARNERS .....	81
4.4.3 LACK OF SPACE AND OVERCROWDING IN CLASSROOMS .....	82
4.4.4 LEARNER BEHAVIOUR AND CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT .....	83
<b>4.5 CONCLUSION</b> .....	84

---oOo---

**CHAPTER FIVE**  
**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS**  
**AND CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY**

	Page
<b>5.1 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	86
<b>5.2 FINDINGS</b> .....	86
5.2.1 WHAT INFORMS THE USE OF SPECIFIC READING STRATEGIES? .....	88
5.2.1.1 National language policies and curriculum .....	88
5.2.1.1 English language proficiency .....	89
5.2.1.3 EFAL challenges .....	91
5.2.2 WHAT MATERIALS ARE USED DURING THE TEACHING OF READING? .....	93
5.2.2.1 Materials utilised when implementing a whole word approach .....	93
5.2.2.2 Materials utilised when implementing a phonic approach .....	94
5.2.2.3 Types of texts used during reading teaching .....	95
5.2.3 WHAT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES COULD BE OF ASSISTANCE WHEN TEACHING READING TO EFAL LEARNERS IN GRADE 2? .....	95
5.2.3.1 Technology .....	95
5.2.3.2 Home language readers .....	96
5.2.4 HOW DO LEARNERS RESPOND TO THE READING STRATEGIES USED IN CLASS? .....	96
<b>5.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS</b> .....	97
<b>5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	99
5.4.1 ADDITIVE BILINGUALISM IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS .....	99
5.4.2 LANGUAGE POLICY FOR FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS .....	100
5.4.3 PARENT EDUCATION .....	100
5.4.4 INTRODUCTION OF TECHNOLOGY AND TEACHER TRAINING .....	100
<b>5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH</b> .....	101
<b>5.6 COMPREHENSIVE SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION</b> .....	101
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	102

---oOo---



## LIST OF TABLES

---

---

	Page
<b>Table 1.1</b> .....	16
Summary of the research strategy and methodology	
<b>Table 2.1</b> .....	41
Steps in a Guided Reading lesson	
<b>Table 3.1</b> .....	47
Summary of research strategy	
<b>Table 4.1</b> .....	67
Profile of the schools and participants	
<b>Table 4.2</b> .....	68
Observation of reading lessons presented	
<b>Table 4.3</b> .....	69
The identifies themes, categories and teachers' perspectives	
<b>Table 5.1</b> .....	87
Summary of the emerging themes in comparison with consulted literature	

---oOo---

## LIST OF FIGURES

---

---

	Page
<b>Figure 1.1</b> .....	3
Most prominent languages spoken by learners in South African schools in 2007	
<b>Figure 1.2</b> .....	3
Language of learning and teaching in South African schools in 2007	
<b>Figure 2.1</b> .....	28
Pictorial representation of Virginia Collier's Conceptual Model for acquiring a second language	

---oOo---

## LIST OF APPENDICES

---

---

	Page
<b>Appendix A</b> .....	114
Letter of information to teachers taking part in the focus group interview	
<b>Appendix B</b> .....	116
Letter of information to teachers taking part in the one-on-one interview and observation	
<b>Appendix C</b> .....	118
Letter of information to parents regarding research to be conducted	
<b>Appendix D</b> .....	120
Application to the principal to conduct research at the school	
<b>Appendix E</b> .....	122
Application to the Department of Education to conduct research	
<b>Appendix F</b> .....	124
Setswana letter of information to parents regarding research to be conducted	
<b>Appendix G</b> .....	126
IsiXhosa letter of information to parents regarding research to be conducted	
<b>Appendix H</b> .....	128
Sotho letter of information to parents regarding research to be conducted	
<b>Appendix I</b> .....	130
Letter of information to parents regarding information session	
<b>Appendix J</b> .....	131
Focus group interview schedule	
<b>Appendix K</b> .....	132
One-on-one interview schedule	
<b>Appendix L</b> .....	133
Observation schedule	

---ooOoo--

# CHAPTER ONE

## AN EXPLORATION OF THE RESEARCH

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### 1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Reading is an important language skill that every learner has to acquire in order to access knowledge not readily available (Kilfoil & van der Walt 2007: 163). Reading is defined as an ability to decode words, both print and meaning. The two, print and comprehension, are inseparable factors that have to be deliberately taught to learners. Teachers are expected to know the appropriate reading strategies, methods, practises and resources in order to scaffold new knowledge and build on learners' previous knowledge (Kilfoil & Van der Walt 2007: 165). Reading is a critical skill which benefits learners in a number of ways. It is required by learners across the school curriculum, it is a skill used throughout a child's schooling life into adulthood and it inspires dreams and inventiveness among young minds (Blunden-Greef 2014: 141).

Reading shows a positive correlation with children's grades at school, improvement in their language vocabulary and verbal fluency as well as an enhancement of their general knowledge (Richardson & Eccles 2007: 34). However, teaching reading to English First Additional Language learners has its challenges, especially in English home language contexts. As these learners are not proficient in English, the teacher is required to provide additional support in order to improve their English language usage and understanding. Phatudi (2014: 9) suggests including pictures, actions and senses in activities as well as using simple language slowly with much repetition in order to allow EFAL learners to make meaning in English. In addition to the challenge of second language learning, these learners' reading development is often hindered by factors such as a lack of reading resources and food due to low socioeconomic status and overcrowded classrooms (Elley & Cutting, 2001; Goldenberg, 2008).

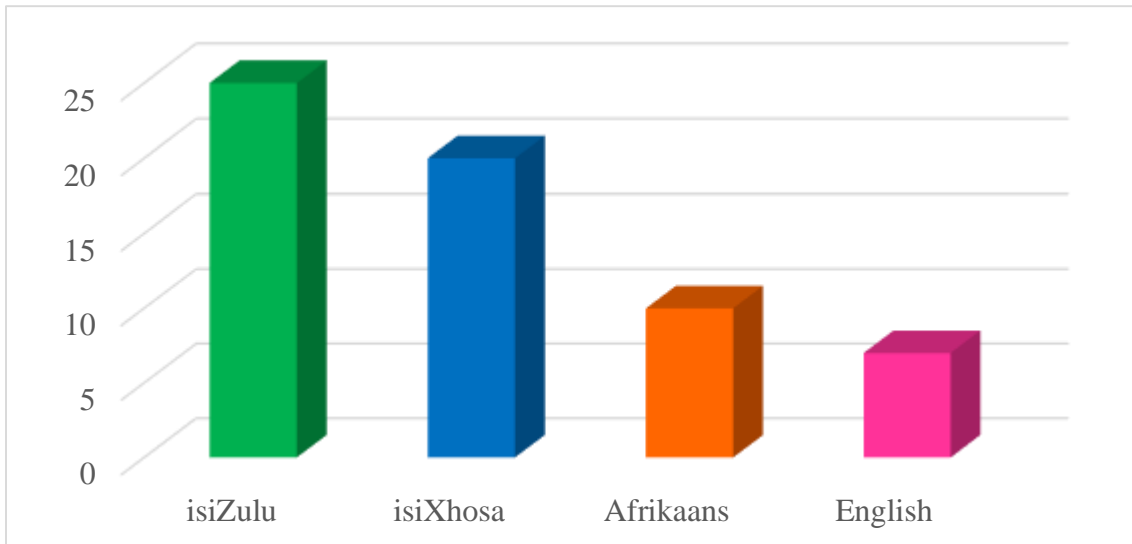
Research states that when learners are not taught in their home language, they are more likely to experience poor academic achievement (Manyike & Lemmer 2010: 29). Second language learning is experienced throughout the world as well as in South Africa (DoBE 2010; Slavin, Lake, Davis & Madden 2011). This poses many challenges in South Africa,

as results from The Annual National Assessments (ANA) and National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU) reports refer to. NEEDU (2013: 10) undertook a study in order to assess reading fluency in grade 2 classrooms throughout South Africa. This report revealed that, “72% of the three best learners in each class observed are reading below the average benchmark for Grade 2 learners, and that 22% are on or below the poor benchmark.” The ANA results of 2014 (2014: 9) show that grade 3 learners achieved a Home Language average of 56% and it was recognised that First Additional Language learners achieved lower scores than Home Language learners (DoBE 2014: 102). Within the stated factors, which are inhibitory in nature, this study therefore set out to investigate the strategies teachers implement when teaching reading to English First Additional Language (EFAL) learners in English Home Language classrooms in South Africa.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

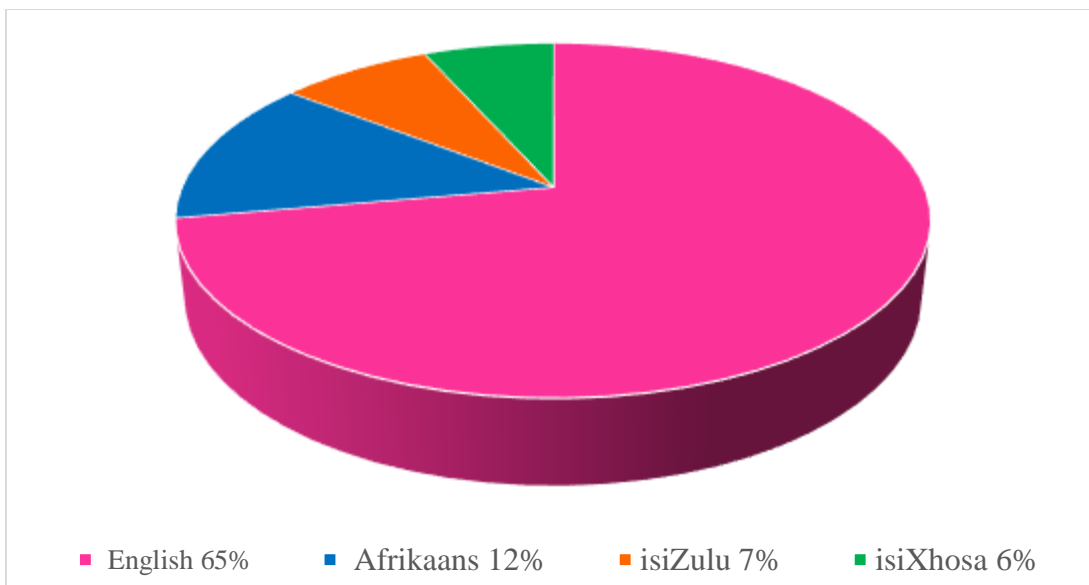
The focus of the research study was on grade 2 learners in South African schools. I was interested in investigating this topic as there is a prevalence of children in schools throughout South Africa who are English First Additional Language learners in English Home Language classrooms.

This is reflected in survey conducted by The Department of Basic Education (2010: 21) in 2007. It was found that the most prominent languages spoken by learners in South African schools were isiZulu 25%, isiXhosa 20%, Afrikaans 10% and English 7%. This is represented in figure 1.1 below.



**Figure 1.1: Most prominent languages spoken by learners in South African schools in 2007**

The survey also revealed that the home languages of learners in the school system were not reflected in the Languages of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in South African schools. A graphic representation of this is shown below in figure 1.2.



**Figure 1.2: Languages of learning and teaching in South African schools in 2007**

IsiZulu, with 25%, is shown to be the prominent home language among learners in South Africa. However, only 7% of schools have an isiZulu LoLT. In sharp contrast, 7% of learners in South Africa have English as a home language but 65% of the schools have an English LoLT. The disaggregation of schools according to LoLT as compared to the

demography of the country as shown in figure 1.1 reveals the large number of EFAL learners in South Africa. There are number of reasons for the prevalence of EFAL learners in South African schools. Many parents favour attendance of English LoLT schools for their children. The South African Department of Basic Education provided the following reasons for the popularity of the language:

- English is associated with economic growth
- It is a global language
- It is useful for future studies, as tertiary education tends to be offered in English
- It is a common language in the working environment (2010: 22).

The reasons mentioned could be a few of many possibilities for the prevalence of EFAL learners in South Africa. Elsewhere in the world, however, a similar situation is evident. In 2007 in the United States of America (USA), one out of every five children in schools spoke a language other than English as a home language (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics 2011: 9). In the USA and many European countries there is a large influx of immigrants from neighbouring countries which results in these children not receiving education in their home language. The fact that these learners do not receive education in their home language causes barriers to their learning. These learners find it challenging to master literacy skills, such as reading, in a second language and this puts them at risk of developing literacy problems (Nel 2005). Similarly, Hugo's (2008) finding suggests that the majority of EFAL learners' English language abilities are not developed well enough for them to achieve academic success while at school or when they enter tertiary institutions in later years. In this study the teaching strategies teachers use in order to allow EFAL learners to acquire effective reading skills are investigated in South African classrooms.

My research study was conducted in three former model-C schools in Gauteng. The Language of Learning and Teaching of all of these schools is English, and the majority of learners are black African children whose home language is one of the other ten official languages in South Africa. These learners are expected to meet the requirements set out in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) document for English as Home Language, although in most cases, English is in fact their First Additional Language.

There is little literature available on effective teaching strategies used in South African schools, especially for EFAL learners in English home language classrooms. A fair amount

of literature is available on English home language learners, but does not address EFAL learning in an English home language environment (DOE, 2006). This study therefore, analyses the strategies teachers use to facilitate reading for EFAL learners in English home language classrooms. This study was guided by the following research question:

*“What strategies do teachers use when teaching reading to English First Additional Language learners in grade 2?”*

### **1.3 RATIONALE AND SIGNIFICANCE**

I chose this topic as it is of relevance to my life as a teacher. I am a full-time educator who deals with English First Additional Language learners who are in an English home language context on a daily basis. From 2010 until 2012, I taught in a government primary school in Gauteng. My learners came from diverse backgrounds, with the majority being African learners from different language groups and cultures. In 2011, 31 out of the 36 learners in my class were EFAL learners. In 2012, 35 out of 36 learners were EFAL learners. The school’s Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) (Department of Basic Education 2010) is English; therefore language was the most prominent barrier to learning in my classroom and school context.

In my experience as a teacher in this environment, I identified that many learners in my class found great difficulty in learning to read in English as well as writing words and sentences. They encountered problems with phonics and therefore struggled to decode and encode words. Learners’ understanding of the letter-sound relationship is instrumental in mastering reading and writing skills. I identified that many English First Additional Language learners’ phonics knowledge was incredibly limited. With the diversity found in all South African classrooms, finding an effective strategy for the teaching of reading to EFAL learners is a very complex problem.

The learners’ home language is defined by Department of Basic Education (2010: 3) as the language which is spoken most frequently at home. In 2007 the learners in the South African school system’s most prominent home languages were as follows: 25% of learners spoke isiZulu at home, 20% spoke isiXhosa, and 10% and 7% spoke Afrikaans and English as a home language respectively (Department of Basic Education: 2010). However, The Annual School Survey in 2007 by the Department of Basic Education (2010: 14) reported

that the Languages of Learning and Teaching in South African schools were as follows: 65% of schools learned via the medium of English, 12% via Afrikaans, 7% isiZulu and 6% learned via the medium of isiXhosa. This reflects that the majority of learners in South African schools are EFAL learners. This situation impacts on their academic performance, specifically in literacy.

According to the Report on the Annual National Assessments (ANA) of 2011 (Department of Basic Education 2011: 8) it is a well-recognised fact that South Africa's schooling system performs well below its potential and expected level of academic achievement. In 2011 the results of the ANA Literacy test revealed that the National average for grade 3 was 35 % (Department of Basic Education 2011: 20). Another study which supports these results and conclusion is the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) which took place in 2006 and 2011. The PIRLS is a study conducted for the purpose of assessing the reading level of grade 4 learners. Learners are assessed on the literary experience as well as whether they are able to acquire and use information (2007: 47). In 2006, there were 45 participants from 40 different countries. The lowest performing country out of all was South Africa (Mullis, Martin, Kennedy & Foy 2007). In 2011, South Africa participated in prePIRLS which was introduced in order to assess the reading comprehension of developing countries at the end of the primary school cycle. In prePIRLS the reading texts are shorter and slightly easier with simpler vocabulary used in order to test the basic reading skills required for success in PIRLS (Mullis, Martin, Foy & Drucker 2012: 29). South Africa's grade 5 learners took part and a slight improvement was noted from the 2006 results, however not statistically significant (Mullis et al. 2012: 47). These results prove that South African learners' reading ability and comprehension require much improvement. With the majority of learners in South African classrooms being EFAL learners, reading focus should be on English language comprehension.

Although the CAPS document provides Home Language and First Additional Language guidelines, the school at which I taught follows the guidelines for teaching and assessment of English as a Home Language. While the majority of the learners in the school are EFAL learners, the school's medium of instruction is English and parents do have the freedom to send their children to whichever school they prefer. In the English Home Language curricula, phonics forms an integral part of reading as well as being integrated into the other language skills (Department of Basic Education 2011: 8). In my classroom



environment many learners found it difficult to master the phonics of the English language and this had a negative impact on their reading ability. A reason for this could be that English forms part of the Germanic languages where most African languages are part of the Bantu language family (Lekgoko & Winskel 2008). Thus, phonics of English is not as easily mastered due to the home language background. As I was exposed to this context daily and became concerned about this situation, this piqued my interest in conducting research in this area.

Secondly, my honours degree in learning support was completed in 2010 and this sparked my interest in this field. Language can become a serious barrier for a number of learners. This causes these learners to scholastically not to achieve as well as they should. The findings of a study conducted by Purpura, Hume, Sims and Lonigan (2011: 654) revealed that language and numeracy skills are interrelated. This is a result of the impact that English language ability has on learners' overall academic achievement in different subject areas. Manyike and Lemmer (2010: 29) agree that poor English proficiency amongst learners could lead to academic underachievement across the curriculum. My personal experience both at University and as a grade 1 teacher in a government school in South Africa made me undertake this study.

#### **1.4 PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH**

This research was worth conducting as most children in South African schools do not speak English as their mother tongue. The research provides guidelines to learners, educators and parents as to what strategies are most effective in allowing EFAL learners to perform to their full potential. It could effectively improve the way in which teachers teach reading in South Africa and the way in which learners learn to read.

The focus of my study was to gain more insight into the mastering of reading in English, when learners of different home languages are in the same environment. By conducting interviews with educators teaching in the same context and observing their teaching strategies, I was able to establish which reading strategies were found to be effective in their context when implemented into mainstream government schools.

One of the potential benefits of this research is the identification of effective teaching strategies in language teaching which can currently be applied to a variety of different

classroom environments and improve learners' acquisition of reading skills. After consulting much literature on my topic, I found that very little literature is dedicated to the teaching of reading in EFAL in the South African context. Thus this research could potentially broaden the knowledge base regarding reading methods in South African schools and improve the knowledge of all parties involved in the education system.

## **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

### **1.5.1 PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION**

*“What strategies do teachers use when teaching reading to English First Additional Language learners in grade 2?”*

In order to answer my primary question, the following secondary questions were used:

### **1.5.2 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- *What informs the use of specific reading strategies?*
- *What materials are used during the teaching of reading?*
- *What additional resources could be of assistance when teaching reading to EFAL learners in grade 2?*
- *How do learners respond to the reading strategies used in class?*

## **1.6 DEFINITION OF MAIN CONCEPTS**

The following concepts are clarified below as they are relevant to the study:

### **1.6.1 STRATEGY**

A strategy in this context is a deliberate, planned procedure designed to help the learner reach a goal (Gunning 2008: 275).

## **1.6.2 READING**

Reading is a combination of automatic and accurate decoding which allows for an understanding of what is being read (Leppanen, Aunola, Niemi & Nurmi 2008: 548).

## **1.6.3 PHONICS**

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement defines phonics as referring to sounds in words and the symbols (letters of alphabet) which represent these sounds (2011: 15). Phonics is the application of letter-sound correspondences and blending skills to read written words (National Reading Panel 2000).

## **1.6.4 PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS**

This concept refers to the metalinguistic ability to reflect on and manipulate the phonemic segments of speech (Kozminsky & Kozminsky 1995:187). Phonological awareness refers to directing children's attention to the sounds in language, and manipulation of these sounds (Foorman, Schatschneider, Eaken, Fletcher, Moats & Francis 2006:25).

## **1.6.5 HOME LANGUAGE**

This is the language which is spoken most frequently at home by the learner (DBE 2010:3).

## **1.6.6 ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EFAL)**

Phatudi (2014: 244) defines a first additional language as, "the language that is learned formally at school in addition to the home language." In this case, English. In my study EFAL learners can be defined as those learners who speak a different home language but, are taught in English as this is the LoLT of their school. The school implements the CAPS Home Language curriculum.

### **1.6.7 LANGUAGE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING (LOLT)**

This refers to the language medium in which learning and teaching, including assessment, takes place (DBE 2010: 3).

### **1.6.8 WHOLE LANGUAGE APPROACH**

A philosophy which holds that learning to read is similar to the acquisition of natural language. Children learn to read by exposure, reading along with the teacher, and by guessing words using the context, pictures, and other cues (McGuinness 2004: 370).

### **1.6.9 PHONICS METHOD**

A generic term for any reading method that teaches a relationship between letters and phonemes (McGuinness 2004: 368).

### **1.6.10 BALANCED READING APPROACH**

A Balanced Reading Programme includes Listening and Speaking, Reading and Phonics, and Writing and Handwriting. All of these skills are integrated as components of this programme (Department of Basic Education 2011: 18).

## **1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

A qualitative research design was used. According to Creswell (2008:46) qualitative research relies on participants' views and asks general questions that are broad in order to collect data in the form of words from participants. The research is conducted in real-life situations and non-invasive means of data collection is used (Nieuwenhuis 2007b: 79). These elements make qualitative research an appropriate design for conducting research in an educational setting as participants are respected and not harmed in any way.

The researcher plays a large and very influential role in data collection during qualitative research and is viewed as a "research instrument" in this process (Nieuwenhuis 2007b:79). Qualitative researchers are not interested in cause and effect. These researchers place

emphasis on the individuals' experience and what this means to them. The way in which each person constructs their understanding and interprets their world is significant in qualitative research (Merriam 2009: 5). Qualitative researchers can impact on the research results in a number of ways due to personal feelings and biases. Merriam (2009: 17) lists some competencies which a researcher should apply when conducting field work; these include being a careful observer, asking good questions and thinking inductively. It is of utmost importance that a researcher takes note of all situations and changes in the environment and participants. Due to the fact that the research takes place in a natural setting, these changes could greatly impact on the findings of the study.

According to Johnson and Christensen (2012: 17) there are five different qualitative approaches to research, case study being one of them. Merriam (2009: 40) describes a case study as an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system. This research design was appropriate to be used in my qualitative study. It focused on various teachers' experiences and outcomes when teaching reading over a number of years. The focus was English First Additional Language learners, and the strategies grade 2 teachers in mainstream former model-C schools find effective in the teaching of reading skills was explored. The majority of learners in grade 2 classrooms had basic understanding of the English language as they were exposed to it in grade 1; thus the focus was more on the acquisition and application of reading skills than on the basic comprehension of English.

The type of study was a collective case study, as three different cases (schools) were researched to gain a better understanding of the issue being investigated (Creswell 2008: 477). These three schools are situated in the inner city, and are governmental primary schools. The majority of learners in these schools are EFAL learners, studying in English home language contexts.

Case studies strive towards a holistic understanding of how participants relate to one another and how they make meaning of experiences occurring in the world around them. Multi-perspective analysis is possible as the researcher does not only focus on the phenomenon under study, but also on interactions between participants and the environment (Nieuwenhuis 2007b:75). Case study research is an appropriate approach to use in an educational setting as it is made up of a number of individuals: parents, teachers and learners who all have reciprocating effects on one another. In the case of the English

First Additional Language learners observed in this study, the LoLT of the school, home language of the teacher, the home language of the parent and home environment all had an impact on the learner's English acquisition and proficiency. It is not a closed system and therefore outside influences can and generally do impact on the research participants, the phenomenon under study and the environment in which the research is conducted. These three aspects are interrelated and therefore cannot be studied independently. In order to collect meaningful data surrounding EFAL learners and effective readings strategies, more than one method of data collection was utilised. Multiple data gathering techniques may be used when conducting a case study, such as observation and interviews (Nieuwenhuis 2007b:76). Merriam (2009:45) describes case study knowledge as more concrete, more contextual and more developed by reader interpretation than the other techniques.

The case study is appropriate to be used for this research as the knowledge is contextual. The three different schools in which research was conducted each had diverse methods, ideas, environments and ways in which teacher and learner knowledge was constructed. The findings are specific to the context in which the data were collected. The fact that multi-perspective analysis is possible in a case study is very conducive to the educational site where the research took place. A number of factors do have an influence on the way in which teachers are able to teach and the way in which learners learn. The strategies which teachers use to teach reading and the effectiveness of learners' knowledge comprehension and internalisation of what is taught were of interest to me in my specific study.

Lastly a defining characteristic of case study research is that multiple methods of data collection may be used. In my research I made use of four data collection tools: observation, field notes, one-on-one interviews and focus group interviews. This was most effective as it gave a holistic view of the problem being studied. The teaching process was observed while the teachers were interviewed. These four tools used for data collection are discussed below.

## **1.8 RESEARCH SITES AND PARTICIPANTS**

Purposive sampling was employed. Three different schools from similar backgrounds were investigated. All three schools were inner city, mainstream government schools. These schools are former model-C schools. The majority of learners in all of these schools were

First Additional Language learners with their LoLT being English. Purposive sampling is appropriate as the participants are selected according to criteria relevant to the research question (Nieuwenhuis 2007b: 79).

Grade 2 educators were chosen as participants for this study. The most experienced teacher in each grade, chosen by the Foundation Phase Head of Department in each school, was used for the one-on-one interview as well as observation. Three reading lessons were observed in each school. The remainder of the grade 2 teachers formed the focus group interview in each school.

## **1.9 DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

Data for this study was gathered by using one-on-one interviews, focus group interviews, observation and field notes. The use of more than one method of data collection allowed for a holistic understanding of the strategies that teachers make use of when teaching EFAL learners, as well as what informs the use of these strategies.

### **1.9.1 ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS**

The first tool that was used for data collection in this study is interviews. An interview is a means of data collection where an interviewer asks questions of an interviewee. I conducted one-on-one, in-person, semi-structured interviews which were done face-to-face, as opposed to telephone interviews. Three teachers from different schools were interviewed. This means of data collection allows the interviewee to feel comfortable if the researcher establishes trust and rapport (Johnson & Christensen 2012: 198). Interviews allow the researcher to gain an understanding of participants' views and experiences; facial expressions and gestures can also add to the meaning of data collected. During these interviews I was able to use the teachers' mannerisms and expressions as a tool to assess when follow-up questions needed to be asked in order for teachers to express their experiences more thoroughly and when questions needed clarification. This was important in gaining accurate data for this study.

Qualitative interviews consist of open-ended questions. The type of interview approach I used was the semi-structured interview (Merriam 2009: 89). In this case the researcher has

specific topics in mind and certain open-ended questions which will be written down before the interview. This approach is still relatively unstructured as questions can be reworded or asked in a different order during the interview (Johnson & Christensen 2012: 203). I interviewed three teachers about their experiences in teaching reading over the years. The strategies and resources they have found to be effective, specifically in teaching EFAL learners, were discussed. The challenges these teachers face regularly and how they overcome these were also points of interest.

The interviews were triangulated with observation. Triangulation was used in this research in order to enhance the accuracy of the study. This process draws on multiple sources of evidence or data collection, in order to corroborate the findings (Creswell 2008: 266). As I made use of observations and interviews from various schools and teachers, the results of these data collection methods were compared. I observed whether what the teacher had stated in the interview prior to the observation was reflected in her teaching methods as well as in the learners' understanding of what was taught. Triangulation increased the accuracy of my findings.

### **1.9.2 FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS**

A semi-structured, focus group interview was conducted at each one of the three schools. The participants were made up of the grade 2 teachers not used for the one-on-one interview. These teachers were interviewed on their personal teaching strategies regarding reading the teaching of EFAL learners. Processes and challenges were also explored. The focus group interview produced interesting results as in many cases teachers were encouraged by their colleagues to share their stories and opinions.

By interviewing grade 2 teachers from the different schools, I was able to compare the teaching methods and gain an understanding of what teaching strategies these teachers believe are most effective when teaching EFAL learners how to read. These interviews took place on a week day after school in a teacher's classroom. It was arranged to be a day when the teachers had sufficient time and the interview was not interrupted. All interviews were recorded to save time, as well as to ensure that accurate data collection took place. These recorded interviews were then transcribed.



### **1.9.3 OBSERVATION**

Observation is the watching of peoples' behaviour patterns in specific situations in order to collect information about a phenomenon of interest (Johnson & Christensen 2012: 206). Peoples' attitudes and behaviours are not always reflective of one another: therefore observation of participants in a certain environment is important for the researcher to get an unbiased and conclusive view of what is taking place.

Naturalistic observation occurs in real-world settings where behaviour takes place naturally (Johnson & Christensen 2012: 206). Naturalistic observation is an appropriate tool to collect data for my research. I observed how reading is taught in the classrooms and which methods and strategies are used by the various teachers. An observation schedule was compiled beforehand to ensure focus was kept on the research topic as well as to observe specific aspects of reading teaching (Nieuwenhuis 2007b: 84). Observation took place in the classrooms of the various schools, representing the natural environment in which these learners are taught on a daily basis.

### **1.9.4 FIELD NOTES**

According to Creswell (2008: 224), field notes are used for "recording notes during observation". I, as the researcher, played the role of a non-participant observer. I visited the schools and took notes of what I observed but did not become involved in the activities of the participants (Creswell 2008: 222). Field notes allowed me to document my experiences of observing the teaching of reading lessons. By recording activities, reactions and discussions in the classroom my understanding of what was observed was amplified (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw 2001: 353).

### **1.9.5 DATA ANALYSIS**

Qualitative data analysis attempts to understand how participants make meaning of a phenomenon by analysing their knowledge, attitudes and experiences. Nieuwenhuis (2007c: 99) says, "Qualitative data analysis is best done by the use of inductive analyses which allows common themes to emerge from data." Content analysis is a strategy which is appropriate to be used when looking for similarities and differences or themes in

interviews. These were conducted with all three teachers and were recorded to guarantee a truthful and correct reflection of responses. The transcribed data was then coded which allowed themes to be uncovered in the data (Nieuwenhuis 2007c: 105). Categories were established using coding. Once categories had been identified, data was interpreted. This included understanding why data findings are as they are and aligning these with the relative literature (Nieuwenhuis 2007c: 111).

The table below summarises the research strategy used for this study.

**Table 1.1: Summary of the research strategy and methodology**

<b>Research Strategy</b>		
<b>Primary research question</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Data collection tools</b>
Which strategies do teachers use when teaching reading to English First Additional Language learners in grade 2?	To get teachers' perspectives on which strategies they have experienced as effective when teaching reading.	1. Semi-structured interviews 2. Observation 3. Field notes
<b>Secondary research questions</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Data collection tools</b>
What informs the use of specific reading strategies?	To gain an understanding of why teachers make use of a certain strategy in their classrooms daily.	1. Semi-structured interviews
What materials are used during the teaching of reading?	To establish which materials are used during teaching reading.	1. Semi-structured interviews 2. Observation 3. Field notes
What additional resources could be of assistance when teaching reading to EFAL learners in grade 2?	To establish which resources teachers could have in their classrooms to make their teaching of reading more effective.	1. Semi-structured interviews
How do learners respond to the reading strategies used in class?	To establish the effectiveness of the strategy used.	1. Semi-structured interviews 2. Observation 3. Field notes

<b>Research design</b>	Qualitative case study	
<b>Participants</b>	Purposive sampling: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grade 2 teachers from three former model-C, inner city government schools in Gauteng.</li> <li>• Three of the most experienced grade 2 teachers in each school</li> </ul>	
<b>Data analysis</b>	Coding and identification of themes	

## 1.10 TRUSTWORTHINESS, CREDIBILITY AND TRANSFERABILITY

Trustworthiness is a crucial component in any research study. It refers to the reliability and validity of the study and the findings (Nieuwenhuis 2007c: 113). Through the use of multiple data collection methods the trustworthiness of findings is increased. During this study, collecting data through means of one-on-one interviews, focus group interviews observation and field notes, allowed for triangulation of findings. This improved the reliability of results. Another method of improving trustworthiness in this study was to ensure that participants were well informed and took part in this research willingly.

## 1.11 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

### CHAPTER ONE: Exploration of the research

This chapter presents an introduction to the research that was conducted. The background information, rationale, significance and research questions underpinning the study are introduced. Thereafter, a brief discussion follows on participants, research design and methodology and lastly the trustworthiness of the study is discussed.

### CHAPTER TWO: Literature review

This chapter introduces the relevant existing literature influencing the teaching of reading to English First Additional Language learners. Firstly, reading and EFAL learners are introduced in context of this study. Then the focus is on second language, referring to national and international prevalence, second language acquisition theories as well as challenges. The focus of the chapter then shifts to important components in reading

teaching and approaches to EFAL learning. Finally, a discussion follows on historical and current language education in South Africa and a summary of the relevant literature concludes the chapter.

### **CHAPTER THREE: Research design and methodology**

This chapter outlines the research methodology, epistemology, research design, selection of participants and sites, data collection and research quality principles consistently applied throughout this research study. A collective case study was used of three former model-C, mainstream governmental primary schools in Gauteng. Purposive sampling was used in identifying schools with EFAL learners in an English home language context, as well as grade 2 teachers. I made use of one-on-one interviews, focus group interviews, observation and field notes in collecting data. The ethical considerations complete this chapter.

### **CHAPTER FOUR: Presentation and analysis of data**

In this chapter data is analysed and interpreted. Common themes and categories emerged from the data collected through interviews and observations of reading lessons taught. These multiple methods of data collection allowed for the triangulation of findings. Correlating and opposing views and findings are presented.

### **CHAPTER FIVE: Discussion of findings, recommendations and conclusion**

In the final chapter of the study, findings from the research are presented and compared with the relevant literature present in the field of study. From this comparison, similarities and differences emerge which allow for the answering of the research questions. The chapter is concluded by stating the recommendations and conclusion to this particular study.

#### **1.12 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Potential limitations of the research were identified. Firstly, the sample size was relatively small. I used three grade 2 teachers from different schools to observe and interview. These results are limited in that they are context specific. Secondly, data collection in the form of interviews could possibly not be accurate. The interpretation of teachers' views as well as the fact that many teachers were not home language English speakers could possibly affect

the findings. These limitations were minimised by the use of member checking and triangulation.

### **1.13 CONCLUSION**

Having introduced the research study in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 focuses on the existing literature available on teaching reading in the Foundation Phase as well as English First Additional Language learners. This literature presents both national and international views on the research topic.

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## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

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#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature review will firstly provide an understanding of reading and English First Additional Language learners. The prevalence of these learners in the United States, Europe and Africa and the reasons for having children learn in a language other than their home language are then examined. The literature review draws on theories by Jim Cummins, Stephen Krashen and Virginia Collier to address second language acquisition and learning, and the numerous challenges faced by EFAL learners academically, socio-culturally and economically are addressed. The focus of the chapter then shifts to various reading strategies and interventions for struggling readers and the effectiveness of each is discussed. Finally, the effectiveness of language policy changes and curriculum reform that were required after the abolishment of apartheid in South Africa are debated, as well as the language curriculum currently implemented in South African schools, which concludes Chapter 2.

#### 2.2 WHAT IS READING?

Reading is one of the most important skills that needs to be learned by young children as it is required in daily interactions and situations. Reading is a combination of automatic and accurate decoding which allows for an understanding of what is being read. The process of learning to read begins with learners being able to decode words accurately and efficiently; this then leads to the main aim of reading – understanding the meaning of the text (Leppanen, Aunola, Niemi & Nurmi 2008: 548). The Simple View of Reading (SVR) model, proposed by Gough and Tunmer in 1986 also highlights these two important components which have an impact on reading ability. The model states that reading ability (R) is the product of decoding (D) and linguistic comprehension(C). According to Georgiou (2009: 76), decoding is the ability to read text by making use of the grapheme-phoneme correspondence rules, and linguistic comprehension is the ability to interpret and understand oral sentences and words. Therefore the SVR model can be represented as  $R =$

D x C (Gough & Tunmer 1986). Blunden-Greef describes the importance of reading with comprehension by saying:

- Reading for comprehension is crucial for all subjects that learners will encounter in the school system and beyond.
- Reading is necessary for survival in the world of schools and academics and in adult life as well.
- Reading allows learners to dream and may give them a good start on the road to viewing reading as a lifelong source of pleasure.
- Reading develops learners' imagination and creativity.
- Proficient reading can easily be translated into proficient writing (2014: 141).

Comprehension is one of the five components of effective reading instruction (National Reading Panel 2000). The South African Department of Education states these components in the CAPS (DoBE 2011: 14) and Teaching Reading in the Early Grades: A Teacher's Handbook (DoE 2008:14) which are phonemic awareness, word recognition (sight words and phonics), comprehension, vocabulary and fluency. Many English First Additional Language learners do not acquire these skills successfully and this results in reading difficulties among these learners (Hoover & Gough 1990).

### **2.3 WHO ARE ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS?**

English is the predominant language of learning in South Africa and the world over. The South African Department of Basic Education (DoBE) reported in 2007 that the home language of only 7 percent of learners in the school system were English; however, 65 percent of learners were taught by medium of English (2010: 14). Several reasons are evident for the dominance of English as the medium of instruction in South Africa. Four main reasons are highlighted. Firstly, parents' opinion is that English is a global language. It is also very common in the working environment as in most tertiary institutions which offer courses in English. Finally the English language is associated with economic growth (DoBE 2010: 22). The number of single medium schools in South Africa in which English is the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) also contributes greatly to the large number of EFAL learners. In 2007 there were 4342 English single medium schools in South Africa and only 41 isiZulu schools (DoBE 2010: 24). The majority of EFAL learners

in South African schools happen to come from an African background where English is their second or third language.

The English First Additional Language learners referred to in this study are not readily exposed to English. These learners have a home language other than English which is used to communicate most of the time. EFAL learners have limited exposure to English, mainly during teaching time at the schools which they attend (Phatudi & Motlal 2014: 21). These learners are enrolled in schools where the Language of Learning and Teaching is English and they are expected to meet the English Home Language requirements in the South African curriculum (Murray 2012: 90). Hugo and Horn (2013: 64) agree that most of EFAL learners are not proficient enough in English to achieve success in the Foundation Phase classroom.

#### **2.4 PREVALENCE OF ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS WORLDWIDE**

Throughout the current literature, the prevalence of second language learners has emerged. English First Additional language (EFAL) learners are widespread throughout South Africa and the world. Various factors currently impact this worldwide trend and lead to many parents opting to place their children in schools where the LoLT is English which differs from the children's home language.

Regarding the linguistically diverse continent of Africa, Barnes (2005: 255) states it is the continent with the highest concentration of languages spoken in the world. Approximately 2000 languages are spoken across Africa. In South Africa specifically, English and Afrikaans are the most dominant languages which continue to occupy this role in Further Education and Training (FET) and Tertiary level (Murray 2012:85-86). These reasons encourage popularity among these two languages. Similarly, in the United States, it is necessary for citizens to be proficient in English in order to be successful in schools, during postsecondary education as well as in the workforce (Baker, Baker, Basaraba, Deck, Kame'enui & Park 2012: 738).

In an era where technology is constantly evolving and globalisation is inevitable, international communication becomes essential. Globalisation therefore relies on the



concept of a global language (Barnes 2005: 245). Globalisation is a large contributing factor to the prevalence of English First Additional Language learners worldwide. A substantial amount of literature has covered immigrant minority groups in the United States of America and Europe.

The literature focus in the United States is on first language Spanish-speaking children for whom English is a second language. Goldenberg (2008: 10) states that First Language Spanish speakers make up 80 percent of Second Language English learners in the United States. In the Netherlands there has been an influx of immigrants from surrounding European countries. In the Dutch education system the number of Turkish and Moroccan children in particular has rapidly increased due to the high birth rates within these groups. These children acquire an ethnic minority language as a first language and then they learn Dutch as a second language when they enter school (Verhoeven & van Leeuwe 2011:360). Greece is another European country which has a growing number of second language children in primary schools. There has been an increase of non-Greek speaking immigrants in Greece over the past few decades and this trend is expected to continue. These learners are mainly Albanian and Romanian immigrant children (Geladiri, Griva & Mastrothanas 2010: 3765).

The reasons stated above provide some insight into the prevalence of First Additional Language worldwide. These numbers are expected to increase over the coming years (Scheffner Hammer, Hoff, Uchikoshi, Gillanders, Castro & Sandilos 2014: 716). Heugh (2002: 180) confirms that, “English has played a significant role and will continue to do so, not least in the area of international communication, higher levels of education and the economy”. Therefore, effective reading programmes are especially important for disadvantaged and minority children who depend on school to achieve success. There have been advancements in programmes for struggling readers throughout the years and this has created a sense of optimism that these learners are able to improve (Slavin et al. 2011: 2); however, more research is required in the area of English First Additional Language learners (Scheffner Hammer et al. 2014: 716).

In Africa, Europe and the United States reading failure is concentrated among schools serving many disadvantaged, minority children with limited English proficiency (Betts, Bolt, Decker, Muyskens, & Marston 2009: 144-146). This reflects that in many cases

EFAL learners do not achieve as well as home language speakers of English. Cummins (2000) indicates that literacy teaching in a learner's home language is more successful than teaching in a language learners only become familiar with when they attend school. The decision of parents to place their children in English schools when their mother tongue is not English contradicts the expert views on language acquisition and could be contributing to the academic failure among this group of children.

## **2.5 TEACHING ENGLISH TO FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

Teachers introduce a number of strategies into their daily classroom practice in order to promote First Additional Language (FAL) learners' language development as well as to improve comprehension. Communicative Language Teaching and the Total Physical Response Approach are recognised as dominant approaches when teaching FAL learners (Intarapanich 2013: 310).

A strategy revealed as being effective for teaching young EFAL learners, is the Total Physical Response Approach (TPR). This approach requires learners to physically respond to an instruction or communication from the teacher provided in the LoLT (Mbatha, 2014; Kilfoil & van der Walt, 2007). Learners in the Foundation Phase are not able to concentrate for long periods of time, therefore the use of physical activities engages these young learners and piques their interest, which allows for the development of second language learning (Hashemi & Azizinezhad 2011: 2085). According to Er (2013: 1768), in addition to learners following simple instructions provided by the teacher such as, "stand up" or "sit down", the use of games, songs that are straightforward for children to remember and dramatising stories are all effective Total Physical Response approaches. These activities are thoroughly enjoyed by learners and serve as evidence to teachers that second language comprehension has been achieved (Mbatha 2014: 80).

Communicative Language Teaching is a more modern approach to second language teaching and has gained popularity in classrooms all over the world (Savignon 2007: 208). Intarapanich (2013: 307) defines this approach by saying, "Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) stresses the need to teach communicative competence as opposed to linguistic competence; thus, functions are emphasized over forms." This approach

encourages learners to communicate and be able to function effectively in social situations. The focus in the classroom is on activities such as learning greetings, how to ask for permission and introducing oneself in the additional language (Mbatha 2014: 74). Communicative Language Teaching is an appropriate approach to apply as English has emerged as a global language; therefore communicative competence in English is beneficial (Savignon 2007: 210).

Pica (2000: 2) and Kilfoil and van der Walt (2007: 27) recognise that there has been a movement toward using an eclectic approach to second language teaching. Teachers use certain elements of various approaches which they feel are applicable to their learners' language development. This however, is not always an advantageous approach, as the decision is based on the teacher's individual choices and there may not always be an appropriate selection of methods to develop FAL learners' language ability holistically (Kilfoil & van der Walt 2007 :27).

## **2.6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION THEORIES**

When perusing current literature it is clear that the way in which second language learners acquire the language of learning as well as their performance academically is a point of much discussion. Three theorists on second language acquisition are prevalent in the consulted literature and contribute to this study.

According to Cummins (1980: 177) there are two types of language proficiency which need to be considered when addressing second language learning. Firstly, cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) which includes literacy skills and concepts needed to be understood in an educational setting in order to achieve well academically, and secondly, basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) which are developed through social interactions and demonstrate a fluency of the language. Cummins (2008: 73) and Quiroga, Lemos-Britton, Mostafapour, Abott and Berninger, (2002: 103) agree that in many cases learners have developed BICS and thus are able to converse freely in English; it then appears that they have a more developed language ability than in reality. Similarly, beginning second language readers may be reading fluently in English due to word recognition; however, they are often not able to comprehend what has been read (Quiroga

et al. 2002: 104). Studies conducted among poor achieving language minority groups concluded that the majority of these learners are able to function with peers socially and appropriately, however find great difficulty in using, understanding and manipulating language in an academic context (Lemmer 2002: 47). The prevalence of English second language learners worldwide requires teachers to actively develop cognitive academic language proficiency as this language, as the LoLT, needs to be applied to all subjects (Kilfoil & Van Der Walt 2007: 15). Learners are required to possess BICS as well as CALP in order to achieve optimally across the curriculum.

Secondly, Cummins's interdependence hypothesis (1981: 21) states, " To the extent that instruction in Lx is effective in promoting proficiency in Lx, transfer of this proficiency to Ly will occur, provided there is adequate exposure to Ly (either in school or environment) and adequate motivation to learn Ly". This shows the relationship between home language and additional language acquisition and proves that proficiency in the home language has a positive impact on second language acquisition (Makoe 2014: 55). The CALP of each learner's home language and additional language overlap and therefore, if learners are proficient in their home language initially, they will acquire the additional language with a considerable amount of success (Cummins, 1981; Makoe, 2014). The learners in my study are not learning in their home language; therefore, I would like to find out how teachers teach English to second language learners without necessarily knowing the home languages of learners present in their classrooms, as Cummins regards this as important.

Stephen D. Krashen is a large contributor to the field of second language acquisition and learning. Of his five hypotheses on second language acquisition, The Acquisition-Learning Distinction and The Input Hypothesis are the most relevant to this study. In Krashen's The Acquisition Learning Distinction hypothesis, he states that there are two distinct ways of developing competence in a second language. This happens either through language acquisition or through language learning (Krashen 1982: 11). Language acquisition is defined by Makoe as:

...a subconscious and intuitive process whereby a young child picks up or develops a language through regular exposure from an early age. Even though a person can speak the language effectively and meaningfully, they may not be able to say what grammatical rules and structures of the language are being applied.

That is because the language is acquired informally through everyday interactions, and as such the person has intuitive knowledge of the grammar (2014: 34).

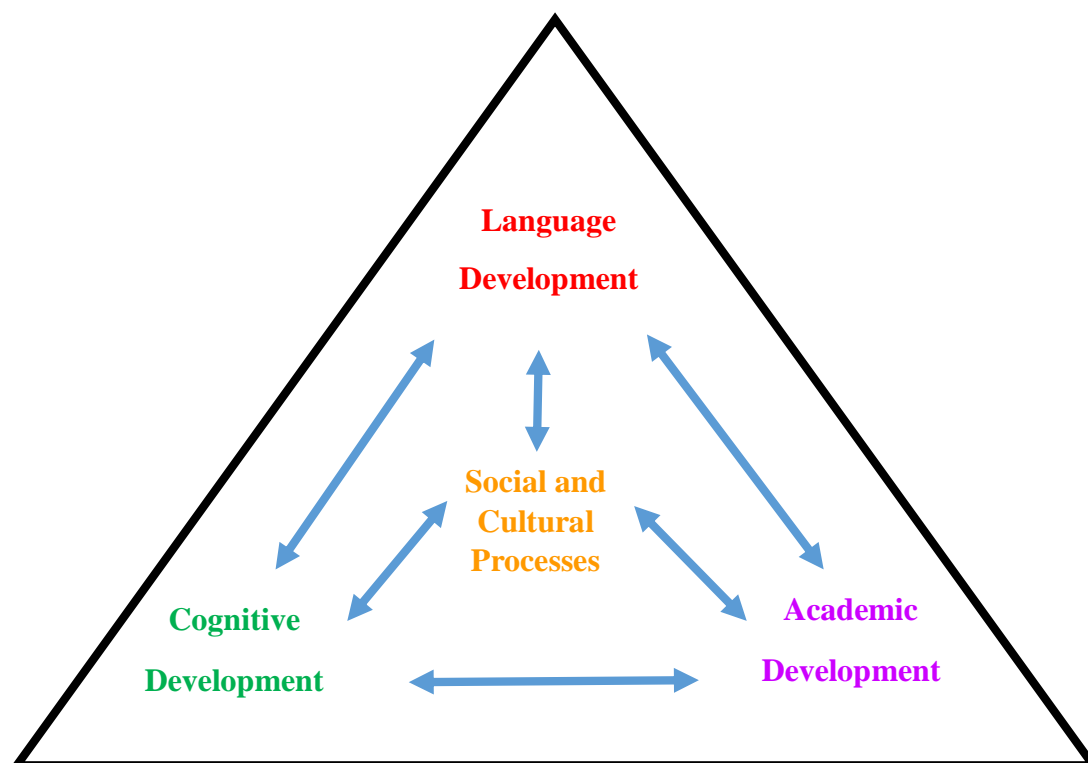
Language learning is a process where a person develops a formal knowledge of a language. This usually occurs in a formal environment such as a school and language structures and rules are taught by a teacher (Krashen, 1982; Makoe, 2014). The majority of First Additional Language learners in South Africa are taught English formally at school although language acquisition has proven to be more successful in second language proficiency (Makoe, 2014; Payne, 2011).

The Input Hypothesis states that in order for language acquisition to take place, the learner needs to understand input a little beyond their present competence level (Krashen 1982: 21). Makoe (2014: 37) expands on this by saying, “meaningful interaction and understanding (comprehensible input) will lead to language acquisition”. In the classroom environment, English First Additional Language teachers should assess their learners and understand what level of language they have acquired. The teachers should then attempt to provide and/or use a higher level of language in order to continually improve learners’ language acquisition (Payne 2011: 421).

Lastly, Virginia Collier’s Conceptual Model for Acquiring a Second Language has four main components (Collier 1995:2-3):

1. *Sociocultural processes.* At the centre of the model is the child acquiring a second language. All of the social and cultural experiences occurring daily or previously in all environments, have an impact on language acquisition.
2. *Language development.* This consists of the subconscious aspects of language development (communication etc.) as well as formal teaching of language in school which is important when acquiring a second language.
3. *Academic development.* School content in all of the various subjects, progressing from grade to grade, expands language development. Academic knowledge is developed in the first language and later transferred to the second language.
4. *Cognitive development.* This dimension has been previously neglected. Cognitive development in first language is important to second language acquisition.

The figure below depicts Virginia Collier’s Conceptual Model for Acquiring a Second Language and demonstrates the importance that each of these four components is developed as they are interdependent (Collier 1995: 3). Pillar & Skillings (2005: 3) state that educators should attempt to provide a supportive environment at school which allows for the development and interaction of these factors.



**Figure 2.1: Pictorial representation of Virginia Collier’s Conceptual Model for Acquiring a Second Language**

There are a variety of practical strategies which teachers can implement in their classrooms when teaching EFAL to learners to nurture a supportive learning environment. An acceptance of learners’ home languages in the classroom can be shown through use of poems and various musical activities in home languages and English in order to improve understanding (Hugo & Horn, 2013; Phatudi, 2014). Rose and Dulm (2006: 11) advocate the use of code-switching for learners and teachers as a communicative tool. Here home languages can be brought into the classroom to aid learning. Another example of this is to have learners’ home language reflected around the classroom by having labels, themes and posters in both languages – the LoLT and home language (Lemmer 2002:55). Including activities during which learners can share their cultural identity, traditions and family encourages acceptance of diversity as well as confidence within the learners (Phatudi,

2014; Lemmer, 2002). These types of activities can have a positive impact on learners acquiring a second language and confirm the interrelatedness of the four main components in Virginia Collier's Conceptual Model for Acquiring a Second Language.

The theories discussed for acquiring a second language share many commonalities. Krashen, Cummins and Collier all believe that social interaction and communication in a natural, conversational manner are essential to second language acquisition. They also agree that in order to learn and find success scholastically, a learner requires an academic understanding of the language and needs the skills to be able to apply language to more complex situations. The acquisition of a second language can be influenced by a number of challenges. Cognitive resources, background, individual and contextual factors are some issues that can complicate this process (Cummins 1991: 70). These theories are relevant to my study in that they contribute to the understanding of the context in which FAL is learned. Virginia Collier's Conceptual Model is important in clarifying the process of the study. It is important to note how teachers address the social and cultural aspects in promoting cognitive and language development in order to effect academic success.

## **2.7 CHALLENGES FACED BY ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

When discussing second language learners, challenges that the learners as well as the teachers face cannot be overlooked. Many of these challenges have an impact on second language learners' academic achievement (Muhammed, 2013; Maluch, Kempert, Neumann & Stanat, 2015; Van Staden & Bosker, 2014).

### **2.7.1 LACK OF RESOURCES**

The first issue which poses a challenge when teaching second language learners is the lack of resources in certain classrooms and schools. Hugo (2010: 141) notes that there is lack of readers as well as appropriate reading materials in many schools. This not only influences second language learners but the teaching of reading as a whole. Kruizinga and Nathanson (2010:73) discovered that there is a lack of levelled Guided Reading books which makes it very difficult for teachers to implement the Guided Reading Approach correctly. Similarly, an insufficient amount of necessary resources causes teachers to be restricted in the

teaching activities that they make use of in their classrooms (Beukes, Moyo & Van Rensburg 2010: 33). This certainly influences the teachers' ability to implement the current curriculum effectively.

With regards to EFAL learners, the reading experience should be made interesting and enjoyable in order to encourage learning (Blunden-Greef 2014: 171). Foundation Phase educators can improve their teaching strategies and approaches through the use of appropriate resources (Singh 2009: 94). In many rural schools where there is a prevalence of EFAL learners, there is a lack of reading resources. The prominent reading resource is textbook readers; this environment therefore does not encourage reading amongst Foundation Phase learners (Singh 2009: 104). Singh (2009: 104) suggests that teachers have a large role to play in disadvantaged schools and should become proactive in creating a stimulating reading environment. A recommendation is to involve learners in creating reading resources, such as writing their own books and charts to place in the reading corner and around the classroom (Singh 2009: 100). This adds an element of fun and learner responsibility to classroom reading. Foundation Phase educators need to be flexible and experts in reading teaching (Singh 2009: 94). However, the context of FAL in my study is relatively well resourced, despite the fact that the resources may be old and uninteresting to 21<sup>st</sup> century learners. This study conducted by Singh (2009) investigated this aspect as paramount in challenges teachers face in reading teaching.

### **2.7.2 TEACHER TRAINING**

Along with the lack of effective resources, teacher training and education is also an area of concern. Hugo (2010:136) agrees that teaching reading is a very complicated task in the South African context due to the diversity of cultures and backgrounds present. This is an area which requires much training, practice and preparation on the part of the educator and school. Klapwijk (2012: 201) found that many educators in EFAL classrooms do not implement multilingual strategies during classroom teaching as they have little knowledge of second language teaching. She (2012: 202) suggests a solution to this challenge to be continual teacher support, development and training in language teaching in order to create an environment which is more conducive to EFAL learning. Reading cannot be taught correctly when there is an absence of teacher training as well as very vague descriptions of how to implement various literacy reforms, such as Guided Reading, correctly in South



African classrooms. Furthermore, teachers develop their own interpretations of policy which are based on their personal experiences, due to the presence of unclear governmental documents (Kruizinga & Nathanson, 2010; Mather & Land, 2014). Along with specialised training in multilingual teaching, educators require consistent support in implementing and understanding the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement in order to have learners profit from this policy (Mather & Land 2014: 212). The NEEDU National Report (2013) found that teachers in South African schools have poor subject knowledge regarding language (2013: 8). Teacher training is available in the form of in-service training (INSET) programmes; however, the content presented seems to be irrelevant to the realities of classroom teaching and little improvement is shown in teacher knowledge of teaching strategies. Most teachers in South African schools are qualified but the pre-service (PRESET) programmes are also not satisfactory as they do not address the poor subject knowledge of teachers entering the teaching profession (NEEDU 2013: 14-15). Teacher training methods require adaptation as the same approaches are being taught to students despite the changes in demographics, number of learners and diversity found in South African classrooms.

### **2.7.3 EFAL TEACHERS**

As much of the English communication in a Foundation Phase EFAL classroom is led by the educator (Lemmer 2002: 43), adequate educator English language proficiency is a necessity. In a study conducted by Nel and Müller (2010: 644), it was found that teachers who are not proficient in English have a negative influence on their learners' academic achievement as well as their English language acquisition. English First Additional Language learners are not familiar with the language and therefore, replicate the language errors of their teachers. Nel and Müller state that:

Language acts as the basic communication channel for knowledge transfer and learning from the educator to the learner. If the knowledge communication channel is obscured and hindered by limited English proficiency — both on the side of the learner and of the teacher — knowledge transfer cannot be effective (2010: 646).

This poses a challenge in South African classrooms as many educators use English as it is the LoLT of most schools; however, English is a First Additional Language for these

educators (Hugo & Nieman 2010: 60). Lemmer and Manyike (2012: 32) suggest that more opportunities for training be offered to indigenous African mother tongue educators in order to improve their English language proficiency.

#### **2.7.4 OVERCROWDED CLASSROOMS**

In South Africa, overcrowded classrooms are an added challenge faced by teachers and learners (Hugo 2010: 141). Teachers are not always able to pay the necessary individual attention required to learners. In addition they find it difficult to implement a variation of teaching activities due to limited classroom space and the numerous learners in each classroom. Classroom management also becomes exceptionally challenging and therefore very little group interaction activities are initiated (Beukes et al., 2010; Gounden & Wildsmith-Cromarty, 2006). When teaching EFAL learners, gaining a good English vocabulary is essential to reading success (Kieffer, 2012; Scheepers, 2008; Scheffner Hammer, Hoff, Uchikoshi, Gillanders, Castro & Sandilos, 2014). In order to attain this, EFAL learners need to be given many opportunities to practise speech in the classroom and also require added individual attention from the teacher in order to progress in such a challenging environment (Blunden-Greef & Motilal 2014: 120). Phatudi and Motilal (2014: 29-30) provide some ideas for managing large classes. They state that the teacher could utilise outside space, learners could be seated in groups, which also encourages communication, furniture could be rearranged in order to create more floor space required for activities and lastly, an educator in this context should always be well prepared with the relevant activities and resources before lessons begin.

The literature on overcrowded classrooms is mainly based on Third World countries. However in South Africa, which is a Second World economy, the problem is still prevalent. Former model-C schools which were previously of the white minority did not experience overcrowding. With the coming of the new democratic era, most of these schools had to admit more students than was previously the case. Classes that used to admit 25 learners now have 30-40 learners. This is still a far cry from the townships and rural schools which admit more than 50 learners per classroom (Van Staden & Howie 2010: 56). This study sets out to investigate the above aspect as important to understanding how reading is taught to EFAL learners.

### **2.7.5 THE IMPACT OF DIFFERENCES IN CONTEXTS ON EFAL LEARNING IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Many learners are raised in rural townships where their surroundings and environment are very different from those experienced in a formal school setting. A large gap is experienced between the school curriculum, which is westernised and urban, and the experiences of these children in the rural areas (Pretorius & Naude 2002: 442). Socio-cultural factors impact learners' ability to acquire the skill of reading as often the content is not appropriate to the learners background and context (Hugo 2010: 140). This supports the Virginia Collier's Conceptual Model for Acquiring a Second Language which states that sociocultural aspects have an impact on learners' language acquisition (Collier 1995:2-3). Singh (2009:99) states that learners' contexts should be carefully considered when selecting readers. These should be reflective of their backgrounds in order to stimulate curiosity. Classroom contexts differ and, therefore, so should the reading material. Hugo (2010:142) suggests that more research be conducted into language issues, as the same policy cannot be applicable to all schools due to the diverse nature of South Africa. The NEEDU report (2013: 14-15) mentioned previously, supports this stance by questioning the suitability of methodologies for teaching reading adapted by Teacher Training Institutions in preparing student teachers for teaching in EFAL classrooms.

### **2.7.6 PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND EDUCATION**

English First Additional Language learners face academic difficulties due to second language learning; however, family circumstances are also a large contributing factor (Halle, Hair, Wandner, McNamara & Chien 2012: 2). There is a lack of parent involvement in many of these children's homes because many parents work away from the family home for long periods. The children are often cared for by grandparents or other relatives who have received little, if any, formal school education (Pretorius & Naude 2002: 441). Similarly, in international studies, many immigrant children do not have educational support from their families and parents as they are low-income immigrant families who are dealing with poverty and acculturation issues. These parents do not always have other family members and a support system in the community to rely on (Quiroga, Lemos-Britton, Mostafapour, Abbott and Berninger 2002: 86).

Lack of parent involvement can in many cases be attributed to the parents' lack of education. In many instances parents are illiterate and therefore do not mediate stimulating learning experiences during early phases of childhood. These parents are often not able to identify potential learning opportunities in the child's environment and therefore many of these children are not prepared for school (Pretorius & Naude 2002: 448). Immigrant parents who did not attend school in the United States are not aware of educational conventions in the country. This, along with the fact that many parents may have had little formal education could be factors which impact on their child's academic achievement. In a study conducted by Quiroga et al. (2002: 87), 60 percent of participating families reported that they only read to their children for 15 minutes per week even after they attended a tutor programme. This is because they felt inadequate about their own reading and found reading to their children unfamiliar. Goldenberg (2008: 10) suggests that 40% of immigrants living in the United States have the equivalent of a high school diploma, which makes parents unable to assist their children with homework or improve their reading ability.

These parents' lack of English language proficiency has an impact on their children's English vocabulary as English is not spoken readily at home. Kieffer (2012: 55) and Scheffner Hammer et al. (2014: 716) recognise that reading and academic success is predicted by English vocabulary development. For these English First Additional Language learners, the necessary skills important for formal reading development are underdeveloped. Therefore, it is important to investigate how teachers equip these learners with English reading skills, despite the fact that they already come to the classroom being disadvantaged.

### **2.7.7 POOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS**

Another contributing factor to reduced academic performance among English Second Language learners is poor socio-economic status. The prevalence of extreme poverty in many parts of South Africa is a very challenging problem with which many people are faced. The majority of learners come from either illiterate or semiliterate homes with little or no access to literacy resources such as books, newspapers or libraries (Moore & Hart 2007: 16). The studies conducted in the United States and European countries confirm this finding. Goldenberg (2008: 10) found that 24% of immigrants from Mexico and Central

America live below the poverty level, compared with 11.5% of the US-born native population. The environments in which the young learners are raised are not beneficial to acquiring pre-reading and emergent reading skills. Children are not introduced to reading activities in their homes; as a result this becomes the duty of the school and teacher (Hugo 2010: 142). Halle et al. (2012: 14-17) recognise the difference in English language proficiency between children of differing socio-economic status. The more advantaged learners' families tend to be, the quicker the learners become proficient in English during the early years. These factors are beyond the teachers' control; however, it is important to note how the teachers overcome these challenges in order to develop learners' language skills so that they become proficient readers who read with pride and comprehension. These challenges all have a negative impact on these learners' academic performance when they begin school formally and very often continue throughout their formal education years.

### **2.7.8 LANGUAGE ORTHOGRAPHY**

Immigrant children and the resident African children, whom I will be using in my research, face many of the same challenges. Their acquisition of English as a second language, however, poses a different problem. The African languages in South Africa, such as Setswana, Sotho and isiXhosa form part of the Bantu language family. European languages such as English, German, French, Spanish and Finnish form part the Germanic language family. The Germanic languages have the same opaque alphabetic orthography (Lekgoko & Winskel 2008), which differs from the transparent orthography of the Bantu languages. Learning to read in a language with a transparent orthography is a much simpler task than that of an opaque orthography (Hutzler, Perry, Wimmer, Ziegler & Zorzi 2004: 273). This complicates the way that South African EFAL learners learn to read, as there is a contradiction between the English and African language spelling systems (Dampier 2014: 46). Malda, Nel and van de Vijver (2014: 42) and Murray (2012:90) note that when teaching reading, differing orthographies rely on different teaching strategies. Phonological awareness plays a large role in Afrikaans and Setswana reading whereas, vocabulary has been recognised as the more important element in English reading (Malda et al. 2014: 42). Therefore, comparing two languages from different groups such as Setswana and English can be complex. These two languages are completely different in phonology and trying to map Setswana's complex phonology onto the Roman alphabet is problematic for young

children (Lekgoko & Winskel 2008: 68). The English First Additional Language learners I observed in my research have a home language from a Bantu language family and the LoLT is English, a Germanic language. Singh (2010: 118) believes that the diversity of the South African context places these learners at a disadvantage. I set out to explore how teachers go about teaching reading in this challenging language environment.

## **2.8 READING STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES**

The existing research also highlighted various teaching strategies which have been used to teach reading to English second language learners. A variety of approaches have been utilised, mainly phonics approaches (synthetic phonics), whole language approaches (analytic phonics) and integrative approaches. Blunden-Greef (2014: 140) recognises that the same reading strategies are effective when teaching EFAL and home language learners; however, the pace at which teaching occurs can differ.

### **2.8.1 SYNTHETIC PHONICS APPROACHES**

A synthetic phonics approach involves learners having knowledge of individual sounds and letters and later learning to blend sounds in order to compose whole words (Davis 2012; National Reading Panel; 2000). According to Hugo (2010: 135) this approach requires learners to first recognise and read individual sounds and then approach digraphs and blends before attempting to read single words. He states that the phonics approach is a “bottom-up” approach. Phonics instruction usually occurs in the beginning stages of reading in English when students learn how sounds and letters correspond to one another and use this knowledge to read and spell (Tindall 2010: 3). The CAPS document (2011: 15) recognises that phonics is an important tool in reading as it helps learners decode words in texts as well as encode words when writing. Many studies have been conducted around synthetic phonic approaches and their success in teaching reading.

Slavin, Lake, Davis and Madden (2011: 2) conducted research where various approaches were implemented to see what the impact would be on struggling readers’ performance. This study recognised that reading failure is concentrated among schools that have many disadvantaged, minority children with limited English proficiency. The programmes that were researched were One-to-One tutoring programmes (Reading Recovery), Small Group

Tutorials (Corrective Reading and QuickReads), Classroom Instructional Process Programmes (Direct Instruction and Project Read), Classroom instructional process with tutoring (Success For All) and Instructional Technology. This study found that almost all successful programmes have a strong emphasis on phonics and one-to-one tutoring is a highly effective intervention method to improve struggling readers' reading ability (Slavin et al. 2011: 22). Furthermore, Quiroga et al. (2002: 105) agree that school psychologists enhanced student learning outcomes of Spanish-speaking ESL students by organising and supervising tutorials aimed at promoting phonological awareness in English.

With globalisation spreading at such a rapid pace and technology being implemented in every aspect of daily life, it is no surprise that technology in education is also being researched. The effects of computer-assisted learning on Literacy levels were studied by Ecalle, Magnan and Calmus (2008:554). Two groups of learners were used with one group using a computer-assisted learning programme in which syllabic units were highlighted inside words, the other using a computer-assisted learning programme where words were not segmented. The first group outperformed the second group and lasting effects were shown. Computer-assisted learning is mostly used as reinforcement of already taught phonic knowledge, and in this capacity is very beneficial. Singh (2009: 104) recognised the positive impact that the use of technology can have on encouraging reading among 21<sup>st</sup> century learners. It has been suggested that the use of mobile technology could increase access to education and thus decrease illiteracy in poverty-stricken areas (Kim, Miranda & Olaciregui 2008: 435).

### **2.8.2 ANALYTIC PHONICS APPROACHES**

The analytic phonics approach introduces sight words early, followed by sounding and blending at a later stage (Johnston, McGeown & Watson 2012: 1382). This approach is also referred to as the whole word approach and is viewed as a 'top-down' process. Comprehension and understanding meaning is of utmost importance. Learners will first read single words and then progress to sentences and finally read stories (Hugo 2010: 135).

At a school in New Delhi, India the analytic phonics approach to reading was utilised successfully through various techniques; firstly, through the Look and Say technique, where learners follow the object or texts and repeat after the educator (Pillar & Skillings

2005: 13). Pictorial illustration was used through drawings, photographs and illustrations which represent certain words (Pillar & Skillings 2005: 15). Other effective strategies were verbal illustration, association and questioning (Pillar & Skillings 2005: 16). Hugo (2010: 135) also refers to the language experience approach as an appropriate method for teaching second language learners as it incorporates each learner's context and personal experiences as well as allows them to practise speaking before they are expected to read.

When consulting the relevant literature, contrasting findings of the two approaches were discovered. Davis (2012: 567) is of the opinion that analytic phonics is a more effective approach to use than synthetic phonics as the learner begins with a word, associating it to meaning. Blunden-Greef (2014: 162) agrees that the words learned need to be within the learners vocabulary in order for them to understand the meaning. With EFAL learners this can be challenging as their English vocabulary is still developing. A conflicting view is expressed by Johnston et al. from their study:

It was found in Study 1 that, after 6 years at school, children taught by the synthetic phonics approach read words, spelt words and had reading comprehension skills significantly in advance of those taught by the analytic phonics method (2012: 1379).

Therefore, both phonic approaches are seen to have strengths in varying areas. Making use of a phonics approach to teaching reading allows for transference of strategies in learners' home language to English, EFAL learners' pronunciation can be improved by teachers modelling correct pronunciation and not many resources are required when implementing this approach. Weaknesses of the phonic approach are also evident as reading comprehension and fluency can be compromised if there is too much focus placed on phonic sounds and the irregular nature of the English spelling system can be confusing for EFAL learners and should be combined with another approach (Blunden-Greef 2014: 163).

In South African classrooms a combination of both are often made use of. Johnston (2012: 1366) acknowledges that generally English speaking countries make use of a mixed methods approach to reading. Instruction begins with an analytic phonics approach using sight words and in conjunction with this, letter recognition (synthetic phonics approach) is taught. This then progresses to teaching learners decoding skills by blending sounds.



### 2.8.3 INTEGRATIVE APPROACHES

The Centre for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence (CREDE) Report (1999: 22) suggests that the best way to develop literacy skills among English Language Learners is to combine direct as well as interactive approaches. Direct approaches are modelling, instructional input, corrective feedback and guided practice. Interactive approaches to teaching include structured discussion, brainstorming and thus encouraging higher thinking levels. Goldenberg (2008: 17) reports that in England a structured program called Jolly Phonics had a more positive impact on English Language Learners phonological awareness and alphabet knowledge than did the Big Book Approach. The Jolly Phonics programme uses direct instruction to teach children the sounds that make up words and how letters combine to form words. The Big Book Approach uses books with print that is large enough for many children to read at a time. Shared reading is done using this big book. This is reading as a group where the teacher guides learners (Gunning 2008). This concludes that direct teaching can be very effective in literacy teaching.

A British study implemented the Early Reading Research Intervention (ERR). This phonological intervention took place in a learning environment and taught generalisable skills to the whole class (Shapiro & Solity 2008: 598). The class was divided into higher, middle and lower achieving groups where phonics, sight words and reading was the focus. The results suggest that short, frequent sessions that include focused phonics training are best. This results in a decrease in reading difficulties and an improvement in average readers. Therefore this approach benefits all achieving groups in a class (Shapiro & Solity 2008: 600).

The Sunshine in South Africa Literacy Project recognised the fact that many African learners in South African schools are expected to learn English as a second or third language. Teachers were trained across six provinces in the Shared Reading methodology (Elley & Cutting 2001:193). This programme focuses on using Big Books for shared reading and guided reading in small groups to improve learners' phonics and reading ability. This balanced literacy programme improved grade two and three reading, listening and writing skills. There was a substantial increase in learner vocabulary and comprehension (Elley & Cutting 2001: 202-203). This approach proved to be much more

effective than using the traditional textbook approach to teaching reading (Elley & Cutting 2001:193).

Currently in South African schools, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) is used as a guideline for teaching and learning. This document specifies certain skills which need to be taught for English Home Language. These include Listening and Speaking, Reading and Phonics, and Writing and Handwriting. All of these skills are integrated as components of a balanced reading programme (DoBE 2011: 18). Requirements for teaching reading include Shared reading where reading takes place as a whole class activity. Group guided reading is the next requirement where the class is divided into ability groups and lastly paired and independent reading follows. In the CAPS specific steps in order to present a group guided reading lesson are provided (DoBE 2011: 13-14):

1. *Selection.* Teacher selects an appropriate text according to the ability of the group.
2. *Introduction.* The topic is discussed in order for learners to create a connection to their personal life experiences, therefore relating to the book (2-3 minutes).
3. *Picture talk or browsing* (2-3 minutes).
4. *First Reading.* Learners read the text individually and the teacher listens to each learner read a section of the text.
5. *Discussion.* This improves comprehension.
6. *Second and subsequent readings.* Learners reread the text individually or in pairs in order to improve reading fluency.

Blunden-Greef and Motilal (2014: 129) agree on some of these steps for a guided reading lesson; however, they recognise pre-reading, during reading and post-reading strategies. These are presented in the table below.

**Table 2.1: Steps in a Guided Reading lesson**

<i>Step 1 - before reading</i>	<i>Step 2 - during reading</i>	<i>Step 3 - after reading</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce vocabulary from the text</li> <li>• Predict</li> <li>• Establish prior knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Model good reading</li> <li>• Allow illustrations to guide understanding while reading</li> <li>• Engage learners in discussion and questioning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Praise learners</li> <li>• Improve comprehension skills</li> <li>• Ask questions about the text</li> <li>• Texts should always be available for re-reading to improve fluency</li> </ul>

There is consistency in establishing prior knowledge on the reading topic before guided reading commences, ensuring comprehension of the text during reading and enhancing reading fluency by making the text available after the reading session.

## **2.9 DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE POLICIES IN SOUTH AFRICA**

South Africa is a country with an education system which is continuously evolving in order to meet the needs of society. Post-apartheid, it was necessary for South Africa to develop a curriculum which attempted to address the inequalities of the past. The new government introduced many new policies in order to achieve this. According to Jansen, new policies were introduced in order to:

- Redress inequalities
- Improve quality
- Empower stakeholders
- Increase efficiency
- Transform the legacy of apartheid education in general (2003: 86).

In order to manage the extreme diversity within South African schools, particularly with regards to languages, certain policies were put into place. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996: 1257) declares that all citizens have the right to make use of the language of their choice. They have the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions. The state may also not discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone in terms of race, gender, sex, age, disability, language, etc. (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996: 1247). Although parents are awarded this right, several choose to place their children in an

English home language school. Many South African parents believe that if a child is proficient in English, in future they are at a better advantage in the labour market as well as would, on average, earn a higher salary than a person proficient in one of the other South African languages. This is a large contributing factor to the high demand for English education in South African schools, even for non-English home language speakers (Casale & Posel, 2011; De Wet, 2002).

To further recognise the cultural diversity in the country, multilingualism needed to be promoted. In 1997 the Language in Education Policy (LiEP) was introduced in order to develop all official languages in South Africa. This policy played a very important role in the government's plan to eradicate racialism. The LiEP stated that each individual is able to select their own language of learning, although the principle of additive bilingualism would be applied in schools, where learners would maintain their home language(s) while being provided access to being taught an additional language (Department of Education 1997: 1). The benefits of making use of additive bilingualism are acknowledged by De Wet (2002:119) and maintained by Casale and Posel by stating:

There is now substantial evidence in the language and education literature to suggest that children need to have reached an adequate competency in reading and writing in their mother tongue first, before they will be able to acquire competency in a second language. In support of this view, we find evidence that among adults in our sample, those who are proficient in their home language are significantly more likely to be proficient in English (2011:457).

Pretorius and Currin (2010: 68) as well as Casale and Posel (2011:451) recognise the Department of Education's recommendation to have learners initially be taught in their home language in the primary grades; however, this is not applied in the majority of schools. In most cases, learners are immersed in the LoLT of the school from grade 1. It seems that introducing the Language in Education Policy in order to advance multilingualism has in fact had the opposite effect. South African schools have become more monolingual after apartheid, despite the intentions of implemented policies (Webb, 1999; Casale & Posel, 2011).

## 2.10 THE SOUTH AFRICAN HOME LANGUAGE CURRICULUM

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (2011: 1) states that the current South African curriculum is the result of educational changes over a period of seventeen years. In 1997 Outcomes-based Education was introduced in South African schools to redress the inequalities caused by apartheid. This curriculum was revised in 2000, and became the Revised National Curriculum Statement grades R-9. Murray states:

In 2001 the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) was introduced to streamline and strengthen the curriculum, providing a common set of standards for teaching and assessing languages (2012: 88).

This document was amended and implemented in 2012. It is known as the National Curriculum Statement: Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement. This curriculum, as well as education in South Africa, has an important role to play in upholding the aims of the South African Constitution (Department of Basic Education 2011).

The presence of eleven official languages in South Africa and the popularity of certain languages result in very few learners actually receiving teaching instruction in their home language. According to the Department of Basic Education Report (2010: 18), in 2007 800 000 Foundation Phase learners were taught in English in South African schools however, only 187 384 of these learners' home language was English. Therefore 77% of the total learners in the school system were not educated using their home language (more than 600 000 learners). Due to the extent to which English and many of the other official languages differ structurally, a variety of approaches may be required when teaching reading in different languages. Murray (2012:90) and Malda et al. (2014:44) acknowledge that this aspect of the South African curriculum necessitates further attention and research.

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement for Grades R-3 includes Home Language and First Additional Language as subjects in the Foundation Phase (Department of Basic Education 2011: 6). As mentioned previously, urban, former model-C schools in South Africa have a great number of English First Additional Language learners. The diversity in these schools results from post-apartheid integration of cultures, races and languages (Mncwango 2009: 53) These EFAL learners are expected to reach the requirements set out in the CAPS for Home Language, when in fact this is their second or

third language. In my experience, many EFAL learners battle to reach these requirements as they are expected to compete with First Language speakers of English. Heugh (1999: 302) and Malda et al. (2014: 43) agree that when learners' home language and LoLT differ, lower marks are generally attained. When recognising the large numbers of learners attending English LoLT schools and the differences between the posed policies and practices in South African classrooms, it is clear that the current language policies are not sufficient to advance the development of literate learners (Webb, 1999; Casale & Posel, 2011). Heugh concludes:

... in its haste to implement a new curriculum ahead of the next elections in 1999, government did not cast its net widely enough to ensure that it was able to identify and adequately address all the major factors which determine educational success or failure in this country. Specifically, it did not take sufficient cognisance of the relationship between learning and the language(s) of learning (1999: 301).

CAPS is based on the principles of social transformation, inclusivity and social justice (DBE 2011: 5). These values are not being promoted in many schools in South Africa with regards to the number of learners who are being taught in a language other than their home language. Not all language groups are treated equally when taking into account the number of English schools in South Africa. CAPS should make provision for all language learners, in order to become a truly inclusive document. This could possibly be achieved by creating and implementing a curriculum specifically for EFAL learners, which allows them to achieve and develop English language skills sufficiently in the early grades.

## **2.11 CONCLUSION**

The aforementioned literature reiterates that reading is one of the most important skills a child can acquire. The Simple View of Reading Model highlights the importance of comprehension and decoding skills in contributing to reading ability. The development of these skills in English can be compromised by second language learning. There is a prevalence of EFAL learners worldwide and many of these learners are not proficient in English which has an effect on this reading ability. Some of Cummins, Krashen and Collier's views of second language acquisition contradict the parent decisions to place learners in English LoLT schools, without the necessary language proficiency in order to achieve success.

The language proficiency of EFAL learners is not the only challenge that these learners need to overcome. Internationally and nationally these learners very often come from a background of poverty, lack of parental involvement in schooling, and rural areas where they are expected to travel long distances to school (Goldenberg, 2008; O'Connor & Geiger, 2009). The aspects have a negative impact on academic achievement as well as reading.

A multitude of approaches are used to teach reading. The same approaches applied to first language teaching can be used to teach second language learners, if the pace is adjusted to suit the reading development of these learners. Synthetic phonics and analytic phonics approaches have both shown to be successful in certain environments. However, an integrative approach, including both approaches, has proven to be exceptionally effective when teaching reading. In the South African context, this approach is implemented through the use of a balanced reading programme.

South Africa's tumultuous past has prompted the development and implementation of new policies and curriculum. The Constitution of The Republic of South Africa as well as the Language in Education Policy were introduced to address the inequalities of the past. However, the popularity of English in South Africa has resulted in a more monolingual society than previously. The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement does not make provision for the numerous English Second Language learners in South African classrooms. With the diversity of languages encountered in the South African classroom, there is a variety of learner and teacher accents (Davis 2012: 569) and the unconventional nature of the English spelling system and sounds causes the teaching of phonics to become an extremely challenging task (Nchindila 2011: 89). Furthermore, the orthographic variances encountered between English and the African languages necessitate the Foundation Phase curriculum to be modified. This may require different approaches to teaching phonics for the various languages. This area requires more research (Murray 2012: 90).

The literature is limited in that there are not many studies conducted in South African Foundation Phase classrooms available. Data collected internationally is not specific to the South African context. Although many of the same challenges are faced by second language learners worldwide, the influence of African home languages and cultural

differences on English second language acquisition and learning in South Africa cannot be overlooked. Finally, many reading interventions found in the literature are used only as additional reinforcement and support to class teaching. These teaching strategies are not implemented in a classroom on a daily basis to teach learners phonics and how to read. The majority of the studies used one-to-one tutoring or small groups and these are shown to be very effective (Slavin et al. 2011). There is an evident deficiency in the literature with reference to effective strategies for whole class teaching. In my study, strategies used in whole class teaching will be observed. This is common practise in most South African classrooms and will be in the sample I will use to conduct my research as well.

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## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

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#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the research design and methodology employed in my study. A qualitative research paradigm was appropriate, while utilising interviews and observation in order to collect data. The purpose of this design was to correlate observation with teachers' responses during the interview process. The ethical considerations and limitations conclude this chapter.

The table below summarises the research strategy for this study:

**Table 3.1: Summary of the research strategy**

<b>RESEARCH PARADIGMS</b>		
<b>Epistemology</b>	Constructivism and interpretivism	
<b>Research Methodology</b>	Qualitative research design	
<b>RESEARCH DESIGN</b>		
Collective case study		
<b>SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS</b>		
Purposive sampling		
<b>DATA COLLECTION</b>		
One-on-one interviews, focus group interviews and observation		
<b>Primary Research Question</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Data collection tools</b>
Which strategies do teachers use when teaching reading to English First Additional Language learners in grade 2?	To get teachers' perspectives on which strategies they have experienced as effective when teaching reading.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. One-on-one interviews</li> <li>2. Focus group interviews</li> <li>3. Observation</li> <li>4. Field notes</li> </ol>

<b>Secondary Research Questions</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Data collection tools</b>
What informs the use of specific reading strategies?	To gain an understanding of why teachers make use of a certain strategy in their classrooms daily.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. One-on-one interviews</li> <li>2. Focus group interviews</li> </ol>
What materials are used during the teaching of reading?	To establish which materials are used during teaching reading.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. One-on-one interviews</li> <li>2. Focus group interviews</li> <li>3. Observation</li> <li>4. Field notes</li> </ol>
What additional resources could be of assistance when teaching reading to EFAL learners in grade 2?	To establish which resources teachers could have in their classrooms to make their teaching of reading more effective.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. One-on-one interviews</li> <li>2. Focus group interviews</li> </ol>
How do learners respond to the reading strategies used in class?	To establish the effectiveness of the strategy being used.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. One-on-one interviews</li> <li>2. Focus group interviews</li> <li>3. Observation</li> <li>4. Field notes</li> </ol>
<b>DATA ANALYSIS</b>		
Content analysis		
<b>QUALITY CRITERIA</b>		
Trustworthiness - credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability		
<b>ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>		
Anonymity, confidentiality, informed consent and intrusiveness		

### 3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

A research paradigm informs the particular approach taken in defining a problem when conducting a research study. The research paradigm chosen impacts how the researcher approaches the study theoretically and methodologically (Keeves 1997: 17). In researching effective teaching strategies for teaching reading, a qualitative approach was necessary in order to collect data through means of observation, field notes and interviews.

An appropriate epistemological stance for my study was that of constructivism and interpretivism. Researchers working in these specific paradigms recognise that individual

experiences and understandings differ entirely, although all are valid and relevant (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2004; Creswell, 2007). In attempting to gain an understanding of how educators teach children reading in South African classrooms, it was important to interact with various educators from the schools which I visited; thus requiring not only one-on-one interviews but focus group interviews as well. I was able to gain a multitude of diverse as well as similar understandings of the reading process based on educators' experiences. Due to the subjective nature of the constructivist approach, it is recognised that each context is unique and vastly different, and therefore results cannot be generalised in a study such as this (Nieuwenhuis 2007a: 51). The schools chosen for my study were similar in that in all the majority of learners were taught in English, when in fact this is not their home language, although schools differed in geographical location, home languages of learners, learner backgrounds and certain teaching styles used.

An interpretivist stance allows the researcher to gain an understanding of participants' experiences through communicating with them; therefore using interviews and observations to understand and experience another's point of view is an effective means of data collection (Ebersöhn & Eloff 2004: 356). I was able to gain valuable data on educators' personal experiences over many years of teaching first additional language learners in a home language context. Through the use of interviews I managed to establish and understand which teaching methods for reading the educators experienced to be most effective, followed up by observing the educators' implementing these strategies in their classrooms.

As a researcher, it is important to recognise that a relationship exists between researcher, participant and the data collected, which all are subjective (Nieuwenhuis 2007a: 55). I place value on participants' experiences, opinions, outlooks, approaches, assumptions and philosophies on teaching reading. Therefore, it is suitable to view my study using a constructivist and interpretivist paradigm (Creswell 2007: 439).

### **3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

A research design is a specific plan which outlines the process to be followed in the selection of participants, data collection and data analysis (Nieuwenhuis 2007b: 70).

### **3.3.1 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A qualitative research approach was used to undertake this study. This was an appropriate approach as the study focused on exploring the experiences of educators when teaching reading to English First Additional Language learners in grade 2. These teachers utilise specific strategies in their classrooms in order to allow learners to achieve their full reading potential. Qualitative research relies on participants' views and asks general questions that are broad in order to collect data in the form of words from participants (Creswell 2007:46). Therefore, through the use of interviews the researcher was able to obtain data about effective reading strategies from the personal experiences of the educators.

According to Lichtman (2010: 12), "Qualitative research attempts to provide a thorough understanding of the human experience." Through using data collection techniques which allow for flexibility, a qualitative research approach is able to uncover information which is specific to a particular situation. The use of this type of approach allows the researcher to research a situation holistically, taking a number of variables into consideration (Lichtman 2010: 12). This is in agreement with the views of Nieuwenhuis (2007b: 79), who says that qualitative research takes place in real-life contexts. This characteristic makes it a suitable approach to use in an educational setting where participants can be observed in their natural setting and thus their behaviour should remain unaltered by the experience.

#### **3.3.1.1 Case Study**

In order to create a holistic understanding of the problem being studied, a case study was chosen as the appropriate research design. This study focused on various teachers' experiences and outcomes when teaching reading. Case studies strive towards a holistic understanding of how participants relate to one another and how they make meaning of experiences occurring in the world around them. Multi-perspective analysis is possible as the researcher does not only focus on the phenomenon under study, but also on interactions between participants and the environment (Nieuwenhuis 2007b:75). Case study research was a fitting approach to use in an educational setting as it is made up of a number of individuals: in this case parents, teachers and learners who all have reciprocating effects on one another. It is not a closed system and therefore outside influences can and generally do

impact on the research participants, the phenomenon under study and the environment in which the research is conducted. These three aspects are interrelated and therefore cannot be studied independently.

Merriam (2009:45) describes case study knowledge as more concrete, more contextual and more developed by reader interpretation than in the case of the other techniques. The case study is appropriate to be used for this research as the knowledge is contextual. The three different schools in which research was conducted each have diverse methods, ideas, environments and ways in which teacher and learner knowledge is constructed. The findings were specific to the context in which the data were collected. The fact that multi-perspective analysis was possible in a case study is very conducive to the educational site where the research took place. A number of factors had an influence on the way in which teachers were able to teach and the way in which learners learned. The strategies which teachers used to teach reading and the effectiveness of learners' knowledge comprehension and internalisation of what was taught was of interest to me in my specific study.

Lastly, a defining characteristic of case study research is that multiple methods of data collection may be used (Nieuwenhuis 2007b:76). In this study four data collection tools were made use of: observation, one-on-one interviews, focus group interviews and field notes. This was most effective as it presented a holistic view of the problem being studied. The teachers were interviewed and later the teaching process was observed. This allowed the researcher to compare statements and strategies stated in the interviews with the techniques employed in the classrooms while reading lessons were presented.

The type of study is a collective case study, as three different cases (schools) were researched to gain a better understanding of the issue being investigated (Creswell 2007: 477). These three schools are situated in the inner city, and are former model-C governmental primary schools. The majority of learners in these schools are EFAL learners. The focus was on English First Additional Language learners, and the strategies grade 2 teachers in mainstream urban schools found effective in the teaching of reading skills was explored. Interviews, observation and field notes were used in the collection of data. The majority of learners in grade 2 classrooms had a basic understanding of the English language as they had been exposed to it in grade 1; thus the focus was more on the acquisition and application of reading skills than on the basic comprehension of English.

### **3.4 PARTICIPANTS, RESEARCH SITES AND SAMPLING**

#### **3.4.1 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS**

The research sample consisted of one grade 2 teacher in three schools who completed a one-on-one interview and was observed while teaching three reading lessons; additionally a focus group interview was held with the remainder of the grade 2 teachers in each school. Three former model- C schools in Gauteng province were involved and the research sample was alike in the three public schools. Purposive sampling was done as it allowed the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of a particular situation or environment by selecting a sample based on certain criteria. The researcher aimed to use a sample which could possibly provide the most information on the chosen topic; therefore the sample is not chosen randomly and cannot not be generalised (Merriam, 2009; Nieuwenhuis, 2007b).

Three different schools from similar backgrounds were chosen for this study. These schools were chosen with a particular purpose in mind. In order to answer the research question, only schools with a LoLT of English were considered. The majority of learners in all of these schools needed to be English First Additional Language learners, however the learners had to be taught English as a home language.

Typical sampling was made use of in the choice of teacher participants. The Foundation Phase Head of Department at each school recommended one of the grade 2 educators with the most experience teaching in the grade for the one-on-one interview and observation in their classrooms. This form of purposive sampling was appropriate as these educators would be able to provide much insight into effective strategies to use in the classroom based on their personal experiences (Creswell 2007: 216). The teachers used during the focus group interviews were grade 2 teachers who have experience of teaching reading to English First Additional Language learners on a daily basis. This selection of participants allowed the researcher to gain much valuable information from the practices of all of these teachers.

### 3.4.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH SITES

School A was situated in a small mining town, surrounded by mine-owned homes within Glenharvie in Gauteng province. The homes surrounding the school are brick houses and the area reflects that of middle-class occupants. The school is a former Afrikaans school which is now dual medium due to the large English demand in the area; the majority of learners in the school learn via the medium of English. The physical structure of the classrooms are large brick classrooms. These classrooms are able to accommodate 40 to 50 learners, while still being able to provide a reading corner and carpet area. There are three grade 2 classes in the school. The majority of the school population are Black learners who travel to school from the surrounding informal settlements and townships. The school has a large feeding scheme for learners as most come from impoverished areas. The most prevalent home languages found in this school are isiXhosa, Setswana and Sotho. The grade 2 educator who was interviewed and observed as well as the two educators interviewed in the focus group were not home language English speakers.

School B was situated in a middle-class residential area, in Roodepoort in Gauteng province. Although the school is situated in this area, many of the learners come from low-income backgrounds and the educators referred to this as one of the most challenging factors. The school has fair sized brick classrooms which are able to accommodate 35-40 learners. There are large fields and play areas for break times and extra-curricular activities. The majority of the school population comprises of Black learners who are second language English speakers. The LoLT of the school is English; however, the most common home languages spoken by learners are isiXhosa, Setswana and Sotho. There are three grade 2 educators in this school with only one of these educators being an English home language speaker.

School C is situated in Roodepoort in Gauteng province. The school is surrounded by security fencing and there is a guard at the gate for security purposes. This is a former model-C school situated in a middle-class residential area, although poverty is also prevalent throughout the school. The majority of learners are Black First Additional Languages learners and are transported to school via taxi daily. The school houses a number of brick classrooms; however these are slightly small to accommodate 35-45 learners as no room is left for a carpet in the classroom. There are three grade 2 classrooms

with all educators being English second language speakers. The LoLT of this school is English with the majority of learners being English First Additional Language speakers. The most prevalent home languages spoken were again found to be isiXhosa, Setswana and Sotho.

### **3.5 DATA COLLECTION**

Data for this study were collected using one-on-one interviews, focus group interviews, observation and field notes. Three grade 2 educators from three different schools acted as participants in the research. Triangulation was used in this research in order to enhance the accuracy of the study. This process draws on multiple sources of evidence or data collection, in order to corroborate the findings (Creswell 2008: 266). This was done by analysing whether what the teacher had stated in the interview prior to the observation was reflected in her teaching methods as well as in the learners' responses to what was taught.

#### **3.5.1 INTERVIEWS**

An interview is a means of data collection during which an interviewer asks questions of an interviewee in an attempt to gain a greater understanding on a certain topic. For this research, in-person interviews were conducted which were presented in a face-to-face manner. This means of data collection allowed the interviewee to feel comfortable as trust and rapport was established prior to the commencement of the interview (Johnson & Christensen 2012: 198). This form of data collection allows the researcher to gain an understanding of participants' views and experiences; facial expressions and gestures can also add to the meaning of data collected.

Qualitative interviews consist of open-ended questions. The type of interview approach used in this study was the semi-structured interview (Merriam 2009: 89). Certain open-ended questions were prepared before the interview began in order to allow the educators to express their views and share their experiences when teaching English first additional language learners. At times, more detailed questions were posed to the educators with the aim of clarifying educator answers as well as extracting information specific to the research topic. The questions were aimed at reading strategies teachers use to teach reading to EFAL learners in English home language classrooms. This approach is still relatively



unstructured as questions can be reworded or asked in a different order during the interview (Johnson & Christensen 2012: 203). This method allowed for the collection of rich and meaningful data throughout my research.

### **3.5.1.1 One-on-one interviews**

One-on-one interviews were an effective means of data collection, as educators' previous experiences and feelings could be elicited and understood by the researcher (Merriam 2009:88). When interviewing the most experienced grade 2 educator in the three schools for purposes of the research, the focus was on gaining an understanding about their experiences in teaching reading over the years. The strategies and resources they had found to be effective, specifically in teaching EFAL learners, were explored. In addition to this, the challenges faced regularly by these educators and how they overcame these were points of interest in this study.

The interviews were conducted in the educators' classrooms, in the afternoon after learners had been dismissed. This allowed for a calm atmosphere, free from distractions. During each 20 minute interview, an attempt was made to create a positive experience and communication between the interviewer and interviewee by the researcher remaining differential, courteous and open-minded throughout the interview process. A neutral stance was adopted with reference to the knowledge expressed by each participant (Merriam 2009: 106-107).

According to Merriam (2009: 109), in order to guarantee accuracy of the data collected and to "ensure that everything said is preserved for analysis", a recorder was used throughout the interviews. Every participant was informed prior to the interview and their permission was granted. In addition to the collection of accurate data, recording the interviews allowed me to reflect on my own interview techniques, questioning strategies and on the clarity of questions asked. This allowed me to improve as an interviewee with the passing of each interview.

Initially, only one-on-one interviews and observation were to be used as data collection techniques in this study. Focus group interviews were later added to increase the reliability of the data collected.

### 3.5.1.2 Focus group interviews

A focus group interview is an interview where numerous participants are present and questions are posed in a group setting. The researcher's role is simply to become a facilitator while allowing the participants to guide the interview with their interaction and discussion on the topics raised by the researcher (Nieuwenhuis 2007b: 90). The use of a focus group in this study allowed interaction amongst the grade 2 educators being interviewed. They were able to discuss various topics and reflect on many of the questions asked and in this way presented very interesting, reliable answers. Lichtman confirms this by stating:

What distinguishes focus group interviewing from qualitative interviewing with a single individual is that the group interaction may trigger thoughts and ideas among participants that do not emerge during an individual interview. (2010: 154)

After holding a one-on-one interview with the most experienced grade 2 educator in each one of the three schools, three teachers in total, the remaining grade 2 educators in each school were interviewed in a focus group. A focus group interview was conducted at each school. The number of participants varied slightly as School A had two participants, School B had three participants and School C had two participants. This differs considerably from the view of Lichtman (2010: 154) who states that the ideal number of participants in a focus group interview is 6-10 people. Due to the number of grade 2 classes in each one of the schools, the sample size was predetermined. The use of a well thought out interview schedule and considerate probing during the interview contributed to valuable data being collected.

An interview schedule was used to ensure that the same questions were posed to all participants and that they were presented in more or less the same manner (Merriam 2009: 102), allowing for accurate results throughout the schools. This provided some structure throughout the interview without it becoming too formal. In an attempt to extract information which would be essential to providing more clarity on the topic, probing was used throughout the interview process. The use of elaboration and clarification probes allowed the researcher to experience the answers given in their entirety as well as to check

the researcher's understanding of the participants' responses (Nieuwenhuis, 2007b; Creswell, 2007).

By having a one-on-one interview as well as a focus group interview in each school the researcher was able to establish not only every teacher's personal philosophy when teaching reading to EFAL learners, but also the specific school's reading culture and best practices. The focus group interviews took place on a week day after school in the teachers' classrooms. It was arranged to be a day when the teacher had time and the interview would not be interrupted. The interviews were recorded to save time, as well as to ensure accurate data collection. Notes were also taken during the interview in order to ask follow-up or probing questions relevant to each unique situation. One of the challenges faced when conducting the focus group interview at School A was the fact that the classrooms were used for waiting class in the afternoons. Although the interview was conducted with little interruption, the recording was not very clear due to the large amount of background noise. Much time was spent reanalysing what was stated in the recording to gain accurate data. The interviews were transcribed and these later analysed in order to pinpoint evident themes.

### **3.5.2 OBSERVATION**

Observation is the watching of peoples' behaviour patterns in specific situations in order to collect information about a phenomenon of interest (Johnson & Christensen 2012: 206). Peoples' attitudes and behaviours are not always reflective of one another; therefore observation of participants in a certain environment is important for the researcher to get an unbiased and conclusive view of what is taking place. In this study, observation allowed the researcher to triangulate the findings in the pre-observation interviews with those noted during the observation. By comparing what the educators had referred to in the one-on-one interviews, such as the type of strategies used when teaching reading, effective resources and more with the methods and environment observed by the researcher, corroboration of findings could take place (Merriam 2009: 119).

Two types of observation exist: laboratory observation and naturalistic observation. These differ in the environments in which they take place. Laboratory observation takes place in a controlled setting which is set up by the researcher. Naturalistic observation occurs in

real-world settings where behaviour takes place naturally (Johnson & Christensen 2012: 206). Naturalistic observation is an appropriate tool to collect data for my research. I observed how reading was taught in the classrooms on a daily basis and which methods and strategies were used by the most experienced grade 2 educator in each school. This observation took place on three separate occasions, during teaching time, in each one of the three schools. Each reading lesson observed took approximately 30 minutes. Focus was able to be kept on what needed to be observed by using predetermined questions and checklist items listed in a table format. This ensured that the researcher was able to remain focused on answering the main research question and secondary research questions (Nieuwenhuis 2007b: 84). I, as the researcher, did not become involved in the activities of the participants (Creswell 2007: 222).

One of the challenges faced by the use of observation over a number of lessons was to agree on a time suitable for both researcher and participant. At the time the research was taking place, all three schools were preparing for the Annual National Assessments and preparation for these were taking up the greater part of their time. A compromise was able to be reached and all observation sessions took place before the completion of the third term.

### **3.5.3 FIELD NOTES**

Merriam (2009: 128) says, “The written account of the observation constitutes field notes, which are analogues to the interview transcript.” In order to provide a deeper understanding of reading strategies used when teaching EFAL learners, field notes were recorded during the nine observation sessions. In addition to making notes throughout each lesson, each observation lesson was recorded. This allowed the researcher to listen to the recording after the observation session had passed and make any additional notes. Field notes were made every evening after observation sessions had taken place in order to record observations accurately. I was able to consult these notes when analysing the teacher interviews which lead me to a more convincing conclusion.

Each researcher’s experiences influence what is recorded in their field notes, what they believe to be thought-provoking and relevant to their topic of research (Mulhall 2003: 310). During observation of reading lessons at the three schools, I made notes of

interesting strategies implemented by the teachers and learner responses to these. By noting learner behaviour I was able to establish the level of learner engagement in the specific lesson presented. My personal experiences as an educator with EFAL learners in an English home language school contributed to the nature of field notes that were recorded during and after observation.

### **3.6 DATA GATHERING PROCESS**

Prior to the commencement of the data collection, a process needed to be followed in order to gain access to the sites in order to conduct this research. Once clearance was granted by the University of Pretoria Ethics Committee, I applied to the Gauteng Department of Education to gain access to the three schools which I felt fitted the profile of research participants and would provide rich data on the selected topic in order to answer the research question adequately. Once permission was granted by the Gauteng Department of Education, I made an appointment with the principal and Foundation Phase Head of Department in each school. I was then advised which teacher in grade 2 was the most experienced and introduced to this teacher and all the other grade 2 teachers. After gaining permission from the parents of the classes in which I would observe teaching, interview and observation days and times were established. Data gathering instruments which I made use of were interview and observation schedules as well as field notes.

### **3.7 ROLE OF THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCHER**

Once permission had been granted by the various authorities, the data gathering process began. The researcher role that I undertook while observing the teaching of reading lessons, was that of a nonparticipant observer. Creswell (2007: 222) defines this role as, “An observer who visits a site and records notes without becoming involved in the activities of the participants.” No physical or verbal contact was made with any of the learners in the classes which was challenging at times, as learners are curious and want to greet and ask questions. I observed the strategies teachers used when teaching reading to grade 2 learners and one of the first evident observations made was the number of learners in the classrooms. Classroom sizes varied from 37-42 learners and due to the large number of learners, physical space in classrooms was limited. Educators’ classroom management was very good; however, when working with a few learners during group reading, some of

the other learners needed to be constantly reprimanded and reminded by the educator to continue with the activity given to them. I also observed each teacher attempting to include all learners in lessons and encouraging interaction and participation through the use of questioning. It was challenging for educators to ensure every learner was reading and following in books during class activities due to the large number of learners present in these classes. The composition of classes observed in all three schools were mainly black learners who were English second language learners.

Throughout the interview process, I attempted to make each educator feel comfortable by establishing rapport prior to each interview. Teachers were very open to interacting and conversing with me on topics other than the research. We, as fellow Foundation Phase educators, were able to relate to one another and engage on teaching-related topics with ease. Through developing a “professional relationship”, I had to be very aware of my personal feelings and biases towards every educator before interviewing commenced as to not impact on the research results. Through this process I, as a qualitative researcher, placed significance on the individuals’ experiences and the way in which each educator constructed their understanding and interpreted the world around them (Merriam 2009: 5). For this reason, I attempted to remain as neutral as possible and really tried to understand each teacher’s personal experiences. Many follow-up questions were asked to clarify educators’ opinions as the interviews progressed.

Due to the fact that qualitative research takes place in a natural setting, many changes can occur in the environment and with participants which could greatly impact the findings of the study. To adjust to these changes, I remained flexible throughout the research process. On a few occasions educators changed times and days for scheduled for observation sessions due to school events, ANA tests or preparations for these or illness. These sessions were rescheduled for dates and times suiting both parties. Flexibility was also a crucial element during the interview process. Each situation was unique and required questions to be structured in a different way or follow-up questions to be asked to ensure clarity of responses. Flexibility was a key element in the data gathering process.

### **3.8 RESEARCH QUALITY PRINCIPLES**

Throughout this study, the following research quality principles were applied.

### **3.8.1 TRUSTWORTHINESS**

Trustworthiness is an essential component to any research study in order to produce results and findings which are meaningful (Maree & van der Westhuizen 2012: 38). Nieuwenhuis explains:

Reliability and validity, specifically as far as the research instruments are concerned, are crucial aspects in quantitative research. In qualitative research, the researcher is the data gathering instrument. Thus it seems when qualitative researchers speak of research “validity and reliability” they are usually referring to research that is credible and trustworthy (2007: 80).

In order to ensure the trustworthiness of my research and findings, three different research sites were chosen. Johnson and Christensen (2012: 398) as well as Nieuwenhuis (2007:80) agree that the use of multiple data collection methods allow for data triangulation, which increases the trustworthiness of findings. When collecting data, multiple methods of data collection were utilised. Through the use of one-on-one interviews, focus group interviews and observation in all three schools, comprehensive comparisons could be made when analysing data and this increased the reliability of the results. All interviews and reading lessons observed were recorded and transcribed verbatim to ensure the accuracy of this data. Through the assistance of my supervisor throughout the research process and data analysis, the element of bias was reduced and trustworthiness of findings increased. Lincoln and Guba (1986: 18) view credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability as important criteria of trustworthiness. These have been applied throughout this study and are discussed in more depth below.

### **3.8.2 CREDIBILITY**

Credibility of data refers to the “truth value “in the data collected and analysis of this data. Ebersöhn, Eloff and Ferreira (2007: 140) suggest a participant check be carried out once findings have been established in order to ensure the credibility of the data collected. During the interview process, I continually repeated participants’ responses to them in an attempt to ensure that their views were interpreted correctly. Clarifying questions were also asked while interviewing for this reason. Once all data had been analysed and conclusions drawn, the preliminary draft was sent to the participants and their comments noted. This

allowed me, the researcher, to establish whether the data had been analysed correctly as well as to explain the interpretations to the participants, therefore increasing the credibility of the data.

### **3.8.3 TRANSFERABILITY**

The applicability and generalisability of findings from one qualitative study to another are in most situations not possible. This is due to the fact that contexts, environments and individuals differ dramatically in the majority of studies and therefore, generalisability is not the aim of qualitative research (Shenton 2004: 69). However, Shenton (2004:70) proposes that it is necessary to provide a thorough and comprehensive description of the topic and situation under study in order to allow readers and fellow researchers to understand and compare this phenomenon with others or findings emerging in their own. In this study, the schools used and languages encountered could share similarities with a number of governmental schools around South Africa and thus could be compared in some areas, but results cannot be generalised as every context differs.

### **3.8.4 DEPENDABILITY**

Dependability refers to the consistency and reliability of the research. Therefore, if the research was repeated in a similar manner using the same participants in similar circumstances the results would be alike (Shenton 2004: 71). In order to achieve a level of dependability in this research, interview questions were stated very clearly and unambiguously using understandable language for all interviewees. Another method used in this research to increase the level of dependability was triangulation. Once data collected from observations, focus group interviews and one-on-one interviews had been collected, all data was analysed and common themes emerging throughout the data were established. Here data was triangulated to increase the reliability (Maree 2007: 297).

### **3.8.5 CONFIRMABILITY**

Confirmability represents the objectivity the researcher applies to the research process, data collection and analysis. Reporting the process in detail assists in improving objectivity as well as keeping researchers constantly aware of their own personal biases (Ebersöhn,



Eloff & Ferreira 2007:141). Before commencing with this research I, as the researcher, reflected on my personal feelings, values and beliefs surrounding the topic under study and the individuals involved and remained self-aware throughout the process to avoid bias. Keeping notes, recordings, transcripts and recording processes scrupulously has also assisted in minimising bias as much as possible.

### **3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In order to ensure that this study was conducted in an ethical manner, all documentation, such as letters of consent, were approved by the Ethics Committee of the Education Faculty at the University of Pretoria. I then approached the Gauteng Department of Education who approved my study and allowed me access into the three selected schools. Once this process was approved I made appointments with the school principals who then allowed access to the Head of Department and the relevant grade 2 teachers. It was important to conduct my interviews and observation within the third term time frame allocated by the Gauteng Department of Education.

Before the commencement of data collection for this study, it was important to inform all participants comprehensively about the research and what role they would be required to play in the process. Once these expectations had been outlined, participants could make an informed decision about whether or not to participate (Lichtman 2010: 55). Letters of consent were handed to the principal of each school as well as the teachers taking part in the interviews and lesson presentation to be observed. Letters of consent were also sent to the parents of learners in the classes where observation of the educators' teaching methods was to take place. To ensure every parent was informed about the research, letters were drafted in English and the three most prominent languages in each school. As the majority of learners in the classes were English Second Language learners, it was assumed that their parents or guardians could possibly be as well. In a last attempt to answer any questions or concerns parents may have had a parent information session was arranged at each school. A translator was present for the scheduled hour-long session. All participants were made aware of the fact that they were able to withdraw at any stage of the research.

Anonymity and confidentiality of all the participants in the research were ensured. No personal information was revealed of the educators or the school and information shared

during interview sessions was kept private as well (Lichtman 2010: 54). When referring to the various schools and educators in the research report, pseudonyms have been used in order to protect privacy. Therefore, no participants or sites should be identifiable in the research report.

Finally, a concerted effort was made to not intrude on educators' time and space (Lichtman 2010: 54). I was mindful of the times the educators were available to conduct interviews and observations and structured my time accordingly. An arrangement was made to conduct interviews in the teachers' classrooms at the mentioned schools. The relative arrangements were made with the school where I teach to accommodate all participants. I ensured that I arrived at the scheduled sessions on time and was prepared. I attempted to collect all the relevant information in the sessions we had agreed upon and was as efficient as possible.

### **3.10 DATA ANALYSIS**

Qualitative data analysis tries to understand how participants make meaning of a phenomenon by analysing their knowledge, attitudes and experiences. During this study, very early data analysis took place after each interview or observation session. The recording of the session would be listened to and additional notes made on the experience or any points of interest which were not noted initially. Once all data was collected it was transcribed to identify common themes emerging from interview and observation sessions. This allowed for an introductory understanding of teachers' experiences and some effective strategies for teaching reading to English First Additional Language learners.

According to Nieuwenhuis (2007c: 99), qualitative data analysis is best done by the use of inductive analyses which allow common themes to emerge from data. Content analysis is a strategy which is appropriate to be used when looking for similarities and differences or themes in interviews. The transcribed data was then coded which allowed themes to be uncovered in the data in order to answer the research questions (Nieuwenhuis 2007c: 105). Categories were established using coding. Once categories were identified, data could be interpreted. This includes understanding why data findings are as they are and aligning these with the chosen theoretical framework (Nieuwenhuis 2007: 111).

### **3.11 LIMITATIONS**

The first limitation to this study conducted was the sample size which was relatively small. Three schools were used as research sites: one teacher from each school to observe and conduct a one-on-one interview with and the remainder of the grade 2 teachers to interview. These results are limited in that they are context specific and cannot be generalised to many other situations.

Secondly, data collection in the form of interviews can also be limiting as different teachers' understanding of interview questions can vary. Many of the teachers interviewed were not home language speakers of English and thus may have misinterpreted some questions posed to them. This limitation can be minimised by the use of member checking and triangulation.

### **3.12 IN RETROSPECT**

When I consider the data collection phase during this research study, there are a number of difficulties that were encountered as well as potential changes that could have been made. Firstly, much difficulty was involved in attempting to accommodate all parents' language and literacy levels in the consent forms. These letters were drafted in English as well as the three most prevalent home languages in the three schools used for this study. Although, there was a similarity in some of the home languages at the schools, it was very challenging to find a translator for these letters. When I approached the teachers with these letters to hand to the learners' parents they were not particularly supportive in handing out letters in different languages and the general feeling amongst the teachers was that the parents are used to receiving letters in English. Most of the consent forms were returned with the English letter being the one that the parents or guardians completed. Perhaps it would have been more time efficient to have only drafted an English consent form and offered an information session with parents, with a translator present, to answer any concerns or questions.

An additional letter was drafted and sent to parents indicating a date, time and venue at each school for an information session regarding the research taking place in their children's' classrooms. A translator was arranged to be at each school at the indicated time

to assist English first additional language parents. I, as the researcher, am English speaking and do not speak or understand an African language and therefore the translator was required to be present to bridge the communication gap as well as assist in answering parents' concerns or questions regarding the study. The translator and I, as well as the teacher in whose class the observation sessions were to take place were all present at each school for the hour scheduled session. There were no parents that attended the sessions in all the schools and in retrospect perhaps my supervisor or my own telephone number on the consent form could have been utilised by parents if they had any queries.

### **3.13 CONCLUSION**

This chapter provided an in-depth view of the research paradigm, methodology, design, collection and analysis used to conduct this research study. I, as the researcher, also reflected on my personal experience during this process. Although many ethical considerations have to be applied when using schools as research sites where young children are present, valuable data can be collected in these environments. Chapter Four presents the research findings based on data collection.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

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#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Three focused on the choice of methodology and research design used in exploring the effective strategies used by teachers when teaching reading to English First Additional Language learners in Grade 2. Chapter 4 is aimed at presenting and interpreting the data collected through means of one-on-one interviews, focus group interviews, field notes and observations of reading lessons. One Grade 2 teacher, from each of the three schools, was a participant in the one-on-one interview and her reading lessons were also observed on three different occasions. The remainder of Grade 2 teachers in each school formed the three focus groups. The use of interviews and observations not only allowed for an in-depth understanding of teaching strategies, but also allowed for corroboration and comparison of findings. After vigorous analysis of the data collected, the data was coded by assigning phrases to the various segments of text. During this coding process it became clear what data would be used and what would be discounted. By placing similar codes together, themes emerged (Creswell 2007: 251-252). A teacher's perspective was added to each category to represent each unique situation. Table 4.1 displays the research sites, participants who took part in this study as well as their years of teaching experience.

**Table 4.1: Profile of the schools and participants**

School	One-on-one Interview	Years of Teaching Experience	Focus Group Interview	Years of Teaching Experience
School A	Ms. Rix	14 years	Teacher 1A	13 years
			Teacher 2A	6 years
School B	Ms. Smith	3 years	Teacher 1B	1 year
			Teacher 2B	2 years
			Teacher 3B	2 years
School C	Ms. Molefe	21 years	Teacher 1C	6 years
			Teacher 2C	15 years

The following table presents a summary of the reading lessons observed in all three schools.

**Table 4.2: Observation of reading lessons presented**

School	Lesson	Details
School A	Lesson 1	Shared reading lesson - Flip Chart “The Lonely Dragon” was used. Learners had to draw a picture of their favourite part of the story.
	Lesson 2	Class was split into three groups according to ability. Teacher took each group on the carpet while the rest of the class read at their desks. Each group had a different reading piece.
	Lesson 3	Learners at desks. Reading piece given to each child – “The Lucky Puppy”. Teacher read and learners followed. Learners then read the story and answered questions about the passage. While learners were answering the questions, the teacher listened to individual reading.
School B	Lesson 1	The entire class had the same book in front of them – Platinum English Home Language reader. The teacher read and then learners read after her. Learners used pointers to follow text. A variety of questions were asked at varying levels. Flash cards (sight words) and phonics included.
	Lesson 2	Learners were each given two high frequency words (Dolce words). Games were played using the words.
	Lesson 3	Learners split into ability groups. One group on the carpet with reading piece, other learners were at their desks completing a handwriting activity.
School C	Lesson 1	Learners were split into ability groups. The weakest group looked at a picture of the story, discussed it. Learned three sight words, built them using Abacards and made sentences out of them. Phonics activities were also included in the lesson.
	Lesson 2	Learners seated at desks - lesson began with learners reading and repeating sight words found in the book. The class then read a few pages in the book and answered some literal question posed by the teacher. She assisted learners to answer in full sentences and helped with sentence structure.
	Lesson 3	Group reading activity - read a book on the carpet. Competition was held where learners build sight words in pairs using letters.

These reading lessons observed provided insight into the teaching strategies teachers employed in their English Home Language classrooms with EFAL learners. By analysing

these strategies, field notes and teacher interviews, various themes and categories emerged from the data. A summary of these are represented in the tables below.

**Table 4.3: The identified themes, categories and teachers' perspectives**

Theme	Category	Teacher perspective
4.4 English language proficiency in schools	4.4.1 Learners English language proficiency	"English is their second or third language and therefore we experience problems as it is not their home language"
	4.4.2 Classroom strategies to encourage English comprehension	"The thing is, we have to make it interesting for them"
4.5 Important elements of teaching reading	4.5.1 Development of English vocabulary and pronunciation	"Ship and sheep".
	4.5.2 Importance of a phonic approach	"Sounds are very important, because once they grasp the sound, then it's easier for them to read the words."
	4.5.3 Importance of whole word approach	"We do a lot of group reading where we use flashcards and pictures."
	4.5.4 Additional support for underachieving learners	"The weaker ones they just, they don't cope."
4.6 Challenges impacting reading teaching	4.6.1 Lack of parental support	"You don't have the backup of the parents"
	4.6.2 Poverty amongst learners	"Poverty is a big problem in our school..."
	4.6.3 Lack of space and overcrowding in classrooms	"Teaching reading is very difficult if you've got 45 children in the class"
	4.6.4 Learner behaviour and classroom management	"You're busy with five children and 40 break down the class."

A discussion of the themes and categories presented in Table 4.2 above, are presented below.

## 4.2 ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY IN SCHOOLS

In identifying English language proficiency as a prominent theme throughout the one-on-one interviews, focus group interviews and observation, it became evident that this is an important aspect and has a definite impact on the teaching of reading to young learners. When teaching English First Additional Language learners, Cummins (1980: 177) makes a distinction between two types of language proficiency; BICS (basic interpersonal communicative skills) and CALP (cognitive academic language proficiency). Makoe explains:

Language proficiency in the LoLT and learning cannot be separated; the more proficient learners are in a language the more likely they are to perform well and to master the fundamentals of literacy at school (2014:51).

The EFAL learners in this study were able to follow instructions and express themselves in English (BICS) however, in many cases the CALP of these learners was still developing.

### 4.2.1 LEARNERS' ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

**“English is their second or third language and therefore we experience problems as it is not their home language”**

The learners' English language ability varied, from school to school and classroom to classroom. When observing lessons taught in all three schools it was evident that the majority of learners were able to understand instructions given by the teacher in English as well as respond orally to questions. The learners' English usage is certainly understandable however areas of grammar such as tenses, masculine and feminine and the like still needed to be improved upon in order for them to become fluent speakers of English. Ms Rix, Teacher 1B and Teacher 1C felt that learners' English ability was reasonably poor and the main reason for this was that *many learners attend this school from the surrounding rural areas*. The teachers felt that this causes them *to struggle a bit with language* due to the fact that they are not readily exposed to English. The majority of these learners' home languages are either Setswana, isiXhosa or Sotho and therefore numerous learners only find it necessary to speak English when they are at school. Ms. Molefe felt that the current national curriculum was not sufficient in aiding these English first additional language learners. She illustrated this by stating:



I think the policy that is in place at the moment, somehow it doesn't cater, especially because they are in a school where the home language is English, so most of them, even if they started it in Grade R, you find that there is no reinforcement when they get home of the language.

In the above statement Ms. Molefe also referred to the influence that attending Grade R has on learners' English language ability. Other teachers felt that if learners attended Grade R and Grade 1 in their schools that their English language ability was at an acceptable level. Teacher 1A stated that *they were lucky to get children from Grade 1 that started in their school in Grade R that can already speak English* by the time they reach Grade 2. Mrs Smith agreed that the Grade 2 *English level was okay, learners did not speak English too badly*. During observation of reading lessons, I recognised that the majority of learners were able to follow instructions and respond to questions asked. However, learners' English grammar and sentence structure still needed to be developed further in order to become completely proficient in English.

#### 4.2.2 ENGLISH COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

**“The thing is, we have to make it interesting for them”**

Throughout the interviews it was revealed by the teachers that learners responded best and learnt most effectively through the use of visual aids. This seemed to improve their English understanding as well as kept them interested for longer periods of time. Ms Rix, Teacher 1A, Teacher 1B and Ms Molefe agreed that when introducing new words and sight words, *placing a picture next to each word* was an effective strategy. This idea was also evident around the classrooms where action words, emotions, body parts, number words and colour words were accompanied by pictures reflecting the words. Labels such as *door, chair, table* and *dustbin* were also displayed on the physical objects throughout classrooms. The association of pictures or 3D objects with words increased English comprehension for first additional language learners.

When teachers were asked about resources which they felt would be beneficial to English comprehension as well as the teaching of reading, the use of technology was common. Teacher 2A stated that *DVDs of stories with words reflected on the screen or CDs with rhymes* would attract learners' attention, Teacher 1B agreed that *stories on a CD with*

*music* could be valuable. Although none of the classrooms in the three schools observed were yet equipped with the resources to facilitate the use of laptops or projectors, Teacher 2C felt that *a slide show could be made use of to introduce the words and having pictures accompany them*. Currently, learners are growing up in an age of technology where globalisation is a reality; the use of technology in classrooms to encourage learning would be both stimulating and effective in improving English comprehension among first additional language learners.

Another effective comprehension strategy identified by the teachers was that of allowing learners to act out words or stories. By encouraging learners to take on a role and experience it first-hand, they are able to grasp the true meaning of a word or story. Teacher 2B made reference to the use of *flannel boards* which not only draws attention but allows learners to experience the characters and use their English language skills. Similarly, Teacher 1B mentioned that *the learners in her class thoroughly enjoyed acting out the story using masks depicting the characters*. Here learners are able to explore English language in a relatively risk-free manner where the masks provide an element of safety. However, Teacher 2A reflects on the challenge that a lack of time poses. She says, *“If we had time we could have puppet shows or let children act out stories. Lack of time impacts what we do.”*

In all three classrooms, before reading commenced, it was observed that questions were posed to learners in order to establish background knowledge, prepare learners for new language presented in the text as well as encourage speech in English and improve language proficiency. *Ms. Rix made use of a picture walk, where learners looked at pictures in the story and discussed what they saw on each page. To establish background knowledge she asked, “What do dragons do?” as well as got learners to act out the expression seen in the story e.g. happy and sad*. At the end of the lesson, learners were required to *draw their favourite part of the story*, which allowed the teacher to assess comprehension of what was read. Ms. Molefe stated that, *“We can also use a method of predicting where children look outside the book and predict what is the story about”*. Mrs Smith also used this method which encouraged English speech by asking, *“What do you think the hippo would have said?” or “Why do you think his face is red?”* Using strategies of questioning and predicting during reading lessons allow learners the opportunity to express themselves as well as develop their English language ability.

A final strategy for improving English language comprehension is the use of the learners' home language during teaching time. Ms. Molefe makes reference to this:

Some of the children, English is a third language to them. I would prefer to have, let's say the reader that I have in English, it must be in their language as well. They start learning it in their language before proceeding to the language of teaching in the school, because they know it, they understand it in their language. I think it would be easier for them to progress to the actual learning and teaching language.

During observation of Ms. Molefe's lessons, *she would state an instruction in English and thereafter follow the instruction in learner's home language*. Learners' responses were swift and accurate. Cummins (1980: 185) agrees with this reasoning as he believes that proficiency in both languages can be improved through using the home language in tuition.

### **4.3 IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF TEACHING READING**

During the teaching of reading, educators implement a variety of strategies. Numerous reading strategies include similar elements and components. Most educators have developed their own strategies based on past successes and policies which they make use of when teaching reading. As there is no current policy present in South African schools for teaching second language learners English as a home language; educators' experiences in the classroom become the building blocks for identifying which elements are essential for teaching English First Additional Language Learners reading.

#### **4.3.1 DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION AND VOCABULARY**

##### **“Ship and sheep.”**

As the majority of learners in the schools are English First Additional Language learners, their pronunciation of English words differs from that of home language speakers. The learners' home languages have an impact on the manner in which they articulate English words. When it comes to phonetically encoding words, Teacher 1B recognises the fact that *by this time of the year grade 2 learners know every individual sound but they cannot pronounce the word*. The differences in learner accents and the phonic sounds which they

are taught at school seem to culminate in confusion for the learners. Teacher 3B agreed that learners' pronunciation impacts their reading and comprehension:

Sometimes they struggle with how they pronounce words. It differs from how I pronounce it and they don't always understand. But if you say it the way they say it, then all of a sudden everybody knows what you mean.

During observation of lessons in Ms Rix, Ms Smith and Ms Molefe's classrooms, I witnessed the teachers *modelling* the correct pronunciation of words. Teachers assisted learners in sentence construction, correcting their oral sentences and having learners repeat the correct sentence. *Questioning* was also used throughout lessons where teachers would attempt to get learners to use the vocabulary present in the various texts. These strategies were common in all three teachers' reading lessons.

Although a variety of methods were used by teachers to improve learners' English pronunciation, it could not be overlooked that two of the three teachers observed were not English home language speakers themselves. Ms Rix's home language was Afrikaans while Ms Molefe's home language was Sotho. During the focus group interviews, of the seven teachers who took part in the interviews, only one teacher's home language was English. When reading through the transcribed interviews as well as during observation of lessons, it became evident that these teachers' English sentence construction, pronunciation as well as vocabulary are relatively limited. Having a classroom of learners from varying home languages is challenging. By adding a second language English teacher the situation becomes exceptionally complicated. The language is not always modelled correctly to the learners. Learners could easily pick up on the incorrect pronunciation of words or sentence construction as they do not come from an English background. In order to improve learners' English vocabulary it is essential for the teachers' vocabulary to be vast. The impact of English First Additional Language teachers on the learners whom she is educating is substantial.

#### 4.3.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF A PHONIC APPROACH TO TEACHING READING

**“Sounds are very important, because once they grasp the sound then it’s easier for them to read the words.”**

Using sound recognition in teaching young learners to read was a common strategy amongst all teachers interviewed. When teachers were asked what they have experienced as the most important element when teaching reading to grade 2 learners Ms. Rix stated, *“Knowledge of sounds and phonics.”* Ms Smith agreed that *the sounds have to be worked on before attempting to read words and sentences.* Teacher 1B said, *“Sound recognition is the most important.”*, and Ms. Molefe made the point that *sounds are very important as once learners have grasped the sounds it is easier for them to read the words.* While observing reading lessons being taught in all three schools it was evident that phonics was the most prevalent and favoured strategy for reading new words and unseen texts. Teachers guided learners and encouraged them to use this strategy.

In School A, the *Letter Land programme* was used to teach the sounds. The programme included songs to which children could sing along, as well as books accompanying the sounds which assisted in teaching learners to read. In School C, a phonic approach was also used. During observations of reading lessons learners were required to sound out sight words and new words found in the text and then, build the words using *Abacards*. These cards have letters on them and learners built the various words in pairs. When observing reading lessons in School B, learners played a game where learners had to identify the beginning sounds of the words. A considerable emphasis was placed on learners having a thorough knowledge of the sounds and decoding and encoding words. Ms Rix stated that from experience she has learned that *if learners do not have good phonics knowledge and are poor readers, their sentence building will be poor when writing. The children that are more advanced work at a faster pace and their spelling is very good.* Therefore, the impact of phonics is not only relevant to reading but to writing as well.

#### 4.3.3 THE USE OF THE WHOLE WORD APPROACH TO TEACHING READING

**“We do a lot of group reading where we use flashcards and pictures.”**

Although the whole word approach was not mentioned by teachers as the most essential element to teaching reading, it was present in the reading lessons observed. Teachers also

discussed this approach during the one-on-one and focus group interviews. It was noted that high frequency words or sight words were commonly placed on flashcards as well as new words present in a reader. During the focus group interview Teacher 1A referred to *the use of flash cards of the high frequency words*. She stated that after they have been introduced to learners, *learners are required to use these words in sentences*; this increases the comprehension of words for First Additional Language learners. It is necessary for learners to have a thorough understanding of the words before reading of books commenced. In School B, Ms. Smith indicated that *they begin with building up words using sounds, repeat the sight words and then progress onto reading sentences, paragraphs and finally stories*. During observation of Ms. Smith's second reading lesson she made use of this strategy through the use of a game, which learners enjoyed thoroughly. Each learner was given two flash cards of high frequency words, they were required to read the words and make sentences using the words which allowed the teacher to assess their understanding of words. Later in lesson, learners had to give a clue about their words and the others tried to guess what it was. Teacher 2C indicated a similar use of strategy, she said, *"You start with the sounds, then introduce the words, then there is something to do with the meaning of the words, then you make your sentences and then we'll read the text."* It became evident that a critical element of using high frequency words and flashcards was not only that learners master reading the words in order to increase their reading speed, but that they also have a comprehensive understanding of the meanings of the words.

School A and School B made use of reading programmes which encourage the use of the whole word approach by using flashcards but also focused on learners' vocabulary and comprehension of the words. School A made use of the *Lector Programme* which Teacher 1A explained as having various work sheets on differing levels, words are displayed with accompanying pictures and learners are required to write down the meanings of the words that have been read. In School B, the school had purchased the *Why Read?* programme which provides reading pieces with small accompanying flashcards for learners. Teachers have the large flashcards to use during shared reading lessons.

Above, Ms. Smith refers to the fact that sight words need to be repeated regularly and it was evident during the observation of her lessons that learners were confident in this regard. Teacher 1C says, *"That's the core method, that's what we've been told, that's in*

*the policy. You have to repeat and repeat and repeat.*” During observation of lesson 1, Ms. Molefe instructed the learners to read and reread a list of sight and new words present at the back of their reading books. This was done aloud. When observing lessons taught in all three schools, it was evident that the vocabulary present in the books had to be repeated until learners were confident in identifying those words, before reading of the book commenced.

The participants used throughout the research revealed the fact that they did not only use one strategy when teaching reading. It was common practice amongst all of the teachers that a combination of strategies was used. Each one of the three lessons observed at the schools were presented differently and aimed at improving a variety of skills. The teachers made use of a phonic as well as a whole word approach to reading and felt that this was effective. Ms. Molefe refers to her success stories in past years by saying, *“I’ve had quite good progress whereby you find a child, take him from this level and then by the end of the year seeing that child being, you know, a fluent reader.”* Ms. Smith also believed this strategy to be a successful one and proceeded to say, *“I have heard positive feedback from my Grade 3s that they are coping well, so I think my reading strategy works well.”* A combination of approaches proved to be effective in teaching English First Additional Language learners in these South African classrooms.

#### **4.3.4 ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR UNDERACHIEVING LEARNERS**

**“The weaker ones they just, they don’t cope.”**

In all classrooms there are learners who are identified as needing additional support. In School A and School C, some teachers recognised that there are first additional language learners who read very well but also those that battle. Teacher 1C agreed with this thought by saying, *“For the most part they are average. Out of the 45 I’ve got I would say about 30 are average to above average. The rest are below average.”* However, Ms. Smith from School B felt that the reading level was poor. Teacher 2A also said, *“Reading level is not that good as they are from different places and they are speaking different languages; reading and speaking of English becomes very difficult, more especially reading.”* Although the level of learners reading and the number of poor readers in each classroom differed, it was clear that these learners existed in every classroom and required a slightly varied method of reading instruction.

Teachers made use of group reading in order to accommodate the varying levels of reading present in each classroom. Learners were grouped according to their reading ability. This not only allowed teachers the liberty of having different books for each group according to their reading level but also allowed every learner to feel a sense of achievement within their reading group. Along with having separate books for each group, Ms. Rix also assisted struggling learners by permitting them to spend more time on each book. Teacher 2C supported this by saying, *“The learners that struggle take longer to understand.”* In School C, teachers would change learner books as soon as they felt that they were ready to progress, not necessarily being bound by specific time constraints. Ms. Molefe explained:

My fluent group would obviously proceed, they would obviously proceed to the next level or to other sets of books that I have. Then I normally stay with the other ones and do all the activities that I’ve gone through with the fluent group until they master all the techniques. I try to make sure that they master most of the techniques that I want to cover with them.

In attempting to provide additional support to poorer readers, more individual attention was given to learners in small groups. Here teachers were easily able to identify learners’ areas of need and implement strategies for improvement. Ms. Molefe explains a strategy she implements in her classroom:

Visualising I normally use for my weak ones as well, using more pictures. I’ve got small cards, the ABA cards, I would give them read a sentence in a book, then ask them to build a word. Then ask them to match a picture with the word, or rather go from words to sentences, and then choose a picture that goes with that sentence. Instead of having now the whole book and reading from the whole book.

During observation of her group reading lesson, this intervention was presented clearly. Learners looked at a picture in their reading book. The teacher asked the learners questions about the picture and they were required to give their own opinions. Three sight words were introduced and these discussed. Questions such as, “When do we use this word?” were asked. Learners were placed in pairs and each pair given a set of letter tiles (Abacards). They used these to build simple sight words with the teacher’s encouragement. She would ask them what sound the word began and ended with and offered assistance with digraphs such as saying, “‘o’ and ‘o’ make the ‘oo’ sound.” This strategy was also



implemented for the stronger reading groups, but at a more advanced level. Here learners were asked to build more challenging sight words, more words as well as sentences. These learners also had a certain time limit in which to build their words. All reading abilities were catered for and Ms. Molefe said that she did see an improvement in learners' ability by implementing this intervention strategy.

During the interviews with the teachers it was revealed that diverse opinions exist about English First Additional Language learners and struggling readers. When asked about positive experiences when teaching reading Ms. Molefe stated that she had none this year. Teacher 1C shared a similar view by saying, "*The weaker ones they just, they don't cope.*" The impact of a young learner being taught in a language other than their home language cannot be overlooked. When interviewing Teacher 1A she said, "*With children that come to our school and cannot speak English at all we always have a problem. And most of the time they repeat that year of school, because they sit here and don't know any English. They spend the year learning English.*" She felt that only once this had been established, could these learners progress into becoming fluent readers. However, Ms. Smith disclosed a success story which proves otherwise:

I had a little boy last year, he came to our school, he is Sotho, and he couldn't speak a word of English, not one word. He came in here on the first day and he couldn't understand me and I couldn't understand him. And now he's in Grade 3 and he is doing so well, he got an award at the end of the year. He's really, he's just blossomed.

Ms Smith employs a balanced literacy approach in her classroom as do the other teachers; however, Ms Smith is a home language speaker of English. Her English proficiency is very good which is modelled to learners on daily basis. This does have a positive impact on the EFAL learners in her class and could have improved the English proficiency of the little boy in her class, allowing him to achieve well across the curriculum.

#### **4.4 CHALLENGES IMPACTING READING TEACHING**

O'Connor and Geiger (2009:266) make reference to the countless challenges educators' face when teaching English First Additional Language learners. These challenges are not only experienced by educators but by the learners simultaneously. Ranging from academic,

social, cultural, linguistic and economic, these all have an influence on learners' achievement at school. Specifically referring to teaching reading, educators face a gruelling task in managing these challenges and attempting to develop a high level of reading proficiency among grade 2 learners.

#### **4.4.1 LACK OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

**“You don't have the backup of the parents.”**

The lack of parental support for learners is a challenge which is extremely prevalent in schools around South Africa. There are a multitude of reasons for this; however, three main reasons for this lack of support were identified by the teachers who were interviewed. Firstly, in most families both parents are required to work and in some cases the hours are very demanding. Teacher 1B says, *“The parents are not helping their children. There are many children sitting outside the school gate until after 6 pm. Those are the children whose homework is never done.”* It was also noted that many children are cared for by their grandmothers and the mother or father returns home at 9 or 10 o'clock in the evening after a day at work; therefore there is no additional support from parents.

In the statement below Ms. Molefe explains why, in many cases, no additional reading is practised at home:

Most of the children they live with grannies, then there is nobody to help them with the reading there, or either books are not purchased for them to do more reading. At school is the only time where they get a chance to do their reading.

With children who live with their grandparents, often a significant challenge to reading is evident. Teacher 1C mentions that many children who live with their grandmothers have no support with their reading or homework as the grandmother does not understand or speak English at all. The only time learners are exposed to English is at school in the classroom. This has an extremely negative impact on their reading proficiency as there is no person at home to assist with or reinforce reading pieces or books sent for homework. For a young second language learner this is an exceptionally unfavourable situation to be placed in.

Teachers were of the belief that many parents of learners who they teach are unsupportive and this caused teachers to be discouraged. Teacher 2B explained, *“I’ve got some children that don’t read at home because the parents don’t care; so that makes it difficult for them in the class to read, to do any work, and during tests you can see they’re falling out because they can’t read, and they do not practise at home.”* The effect that reading has on the other learning areas is vast. When learners do not have support from home it seems that the other subjects are negatively affected. Teachers feel as though they are expected to teach children at school and have them achieve academically in all areas. This, however, is far more complicated when dealing with English first additional language learners. These learners require much more exposure to English than only during the school hours. Ms. Rix described her disappointment with regards to reading:

When there is a child that struggles with reading and you get some progress with them, and then the parents at home neglect the reading, it’s not of importance to them, then the child gets back and he forgot everything at home...and then you have to start all over again. So you don’t have the backup of the parents.

In many cases, parents may not have developed the necessary skills to be able to assist their children with homework, studying or reading. And this challenge, along with time constraints and work priorities is not conducive to learners reaching their full potential academically. In order to develop conscientious learners who are able to communicate and read well in English, collaboration between parents and educators is required. Teachers will then feel more appreciated and encouraged to make an even greater effort with English First Additional Language and struggling learners.

#### **4.4.2 POVERTY AMONGST LEARNERS**

**“Poverty is a big problem in our school...”**

Poverty is not only a problem present in the schools used as research sites but is an ever present challenge nationwide. Poverty impacts education in a number of ways. In School B the teachers mentioned that some children lived in areas and homes where electricity was not up to standard or there was no electricity available at all. In many cases, parents arrive home very late after work and there is no light. This influences learners’ reading ability as they are not able to reread books or reading pieces sent home or complete any homework at all. Without a sufficient amount of practice, learners’ reading proficiency will not

improve. In addition, learners are attempting to learn to read in an additional language which requires much more practice and time than in their home language.

Teacher 3B revealed another example of poverty in their school by saying, “*Poverty is a big problem in our school as over 100 families needed to be exempt from paying school fees.*” A similar problem was revealed in School A, where they have a fairly large feeding scheme at the school in order to accommodate the number of learners who cannot afford to bring lunch to school or in some cases, eat at all. This poses a huge challenge in trying to educate learners whose primary needs have not been fulfilled. Learners are perhaps worrying about where their next meal is coming from or are sitting in the classroom feeling hungry and thus are not focused on gaining an education.

Where children come from impoverished backgrounds, having appropriate English children’s books in their homes is simply not a priority. This is a point of despondency for teachers, as once again the teachers’ hard work in class time is not followed up with reinforcement in the homes. Ms. Molefe displays this disappointment by saying, “*You find that you are trying your best here at school, but then it goes down the drain again, especially during the long holidays when children are not exposed to books.*” During observation of lessons it was evident by some learners’ uniforms or lack thereof as well as the fact that stationery had to be lent to certain children who did not have their own, that poverty was a very real problem for a number of these children.

#### **4.4.3 LACK OF SPACE AND OVERCROWDING IN CLASSROOMS**

**“Teaching reading is very difficult if you’ve got 45 children in the class”**

The number of learners present in a classroom influences the way an educator teaches and limits the teaching strategies that he or she is able to employ. The classes I observed in the three schools all had more than 30 learners in a class. School A had 33 learners, School B had 39 learners and School C had 44 learners. The teachers in School C referred to the difficulties faced with overcrowding in classrooms. Teacher 2C stated:

The challenge is there, these classrooms, these classes are too big. I mean for you to give maximum support, I mean to 45 children is really difficult. You find that those ones lagging behind will always lag behind, because you cannot give that maximum support to them.

Especially in the case of English First Additional Language learners who face a possible added barrier to learning, it is essential that educators have the time and resources to be able to offer interventions and support. Giving much one-on-one support in situations such as this one is very rare.

When observing reading lessons in School C, the lack of classroom space was noticeable. In this classroom there was no space available for a carpet in the front of the classroom as the learner desks occupied most of the space from the back walls right up to the front of the blackboard. Learners read at their desks, when group reading took place the front desks had to be moved back a little and learner's crammed into the awkward space on the tiles. The entire class is never able to sit on a carpet together, all whole class teaching and explaining is done while learners sit at their desks. In School A and B, the physical classroom size was better utilised as a result of having fewer learners. These classrooms did have carpets in them, which is where group reading took place. School A, with 33 learners in the class, was also able to have a carpeted reading corner. However, even these classrooms seemed to be filled to capacity and there was no unutilised space available in them.

#### **4.4.4 LEARNER BEHAVIOUR AND CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT**

**“You're busy with five children and 40 break down the class.”**

The number of learners in the classrooms certainly has an impact on learner behaviour and classroom management. During group reading sessions, learner behaviour seemed to be poorer. When observing a group reading lesson at School A, the children at the desks had to read silently while the teacher paid attention to the group on the carpet. The learners seemed to be bored, some started drawing pictures and others began speaking to one other. Ms. Rix had to remind learners constantly about the instructions she had given them, asking them to keep quiet. Teacher 1A referred to silent reading as a strategy she had made use of in previous years, but also stated that it is not successful anymore because learners do not sit quietly. This was continuously disruptive to the group reading lesson and therefore it continued for quite a long period of time, causing learners to become more rowdy.

During the group reading lesson at School B, Ms. Smith's classroom management was excellent. She speaks in a very soft, calm tone of voice which seems to rub off on the learners. Learners at the desks were given a handwriting activity to complete. This was successful as learners were able to complete this independently and the activity lasted as long as the group was busy on the carpet. Learners were seated, did not disrupt the group reading lesson by walking around and talking and seemed familiar with working in groups and the teacher's expectations of them.

At School C, one group of learners were in the front of the classroom with their books and the rest of the learners seated at the desks. The learners at the desks were completing Mathematics activities in the books supplied by the Department of Education. Although Ms. Molefe was very firm and learner behaviour was fair, learners at the desks kept on asking questions about how to complete the various pages. In one instance, Ms. Molefe had to explain the concept of time in depth to the learners. This took a few minutes which was disruptive to the group reading on the carpet.

On two occasions when observing lessons being taught in School A and School C, a teacher had been absent and some learners had been sent to various classrooms for substitution. Therefore, in addition to the 44 learners already present in Ms. Molefe's classroom, there were 5 grade 1 learners sitting at the back of the classroom. Similarly, on one visit to School A, Ms. Rix also had learners sitting in her reading corner for substitution. This added to the overcrowding of the classrooms, and learners also had to be constantly reminded to keep quiet and complete their work. Elements such as this have a negative impact on classroom management and make the teaching of reading so much more challenging.

#### **4.5 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has highlighted effective strategies and challenges when teaching reading to English First Additional Language learners in Grade 2. The teacher interviews along with observation of reading lessons taught, allowed for triangulation of data. Throughout this chapter, common categories and differences in the data collected were highlighted. The data lead to important findings regarding EFAL learning and teaching. It was revealed that learners were able to communicate in and understand English, but academic elements of

English needed further development. Teaching strategies placed a lot of emphasis on developing English comprehension skills and vocabulary amongst learners. The most popular approach to teaching reading, evident in all three schools, was the use a combination of the phonic and whole word approach. EFAL learners in these schools require additional support in the classroom as they face many challenges which impact their reading and academic progress. These challenges include lack of parental involvement, poverty and overcrowding. These findings along with the relevant literature will provide answers to the research questions in the following chapter.

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## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

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#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 4, the data collected through interviews and observation were presented. Similarities and differences were highlighted through the use of relevant themes and categories. This final chapter presents a discussion of the relevant literature on reading strategies used to teach English First Additional Language learners, as presented in Chapter 2, accompanied by the data collected throughout this research study. Discrepancies and agreements between the literature and data emerge and thus assist in answering the research questions referred to in Chapter 1.

#### 5.2 FINDINGS

The findings of this research study is presented by analysing the following secondary research questions based on the data collected, in conjunction with the relevant literature consulted:

- *What informs the use of specific reading strategies?*
- *What materials are used during the teaching of reading?*
- *What additional resources could be of assistance when teaching reading to EFAL learners in grade 2?*
- *How do learners respond to the reading strategies used in class?*

These questions will assist in answering the primary research question of this study, “*What strategies do teachers use when teaching reading to English First Additional Language learners in grade 2?*”

The table below presents a summary of the emerging themes in comparison with the literature consulted.



**Table 5.1: Summary of the emerging themes in comparison with consulted literature**

Theme	Author and year	Relevant literature	Finding
English language proficiency in schools	Cummins (1980)	Development of BICS and CALP are required for second language learners to have academic success.	FAL learners' English had developed enough by grade 2 to be able to communicate and follow instructions. English comprehension and grammar still needed to be established.
	Blunden-Greef (2014)	Reading for comprehension is crucial for all subjects that learners will encounter in the school system and beyond.	There was a large focus on development of English comprehension in reading strategies.
	Casale and Posel (2011)	It is clear that the current language policies are not sufficient to advance the development of literate learners in South Africa.	The CAPS English Home Language curriculum is not suitable for EFAL learners.
Important elements in teaching reading to EFAL learners	Elley & Cutting (2001)	A balanced literacy programme has proved to be successful in developing English literacy skills.	A combination of a phonic and whole word approach was an effective strategy implemented in EFAL classrooms for teaching reading.
	Blunden-Greef (2014)	The same methods are implemented when teaching home language and additional language learners; however, the pace can be varied.	Learners with poor English proficiency require individual support in guided reading groups where they are able to progress at their own pace and experience success.
Challenges impacting reading teaching	Muhammed (2013)	Challenges EFAL face have an impact on their academic achievement.	Lack of parental support, poverty and overcrowding among EFAL learners have a negative influence on learners' English reading development.

### 5.2.1 WHAT INFORMS THE USE OF SPECIFIC READING STRATEGIES?

This secondary research question is answered by referring to the teachers' responses during the focus group and one-on-one interviews held at School A, School B and School C. A comparison between teacher opinions and observation of the reading lessons conducted with English First Additional Language learners also provided valuable insight into why educators utilise certain approaches in their classrooms. Sociocultural, economic, lingual and political factors impacting on teaching strategies when teaching grade 2 learners are presented below.

#### 5.2.1.1 National language policies and curriculum

During observations of Ms Smith, Ms Rix and Ms Molefe's reading lessons, it was clear that the CAPS English Home Language curriculum is implemented in their classrooms and to a large extent informs the reading strategies made use of. In Chapter 4, section 4.5.3 Teacher 1C agreed that, *"That's the core method, that's what we've been told, that's in the policy."* A CAPS requirement for teaching reading is implementing Group Guided Reading (DoBE 2011: 18) which was presented during observation sessions in Ms Smith, Ms Molefe and Ms Rix's reading lessons. The strategies these teachers made use of during the guided reading lessons included establishing background knowledge by using questions and asking learners to make predictions. This is reflected in section 4.4.2, Ms Rix made use of a picture walk and asked learners questions which they had to act out such as, *"What do dragons do?"* Predicting was used by Ms Smith by asking learners, *"What do you think the hippo would have said?"* and Ms Molefe asked her learners to predict what would happen in the story by asking them to look at the cover and guess what the rest of the story was about. In the literature consulted, Blunden-Greef & Motilal (2014: 129) and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (DoBE 2011: 13-14) agree that establishing prior knowledge on the reading topic before guided reading commences and ensuring comprehension of the text during reading has a positive impact on English language proficiency.

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement encourages the use of a balanced reading programme, which integrates Listening and Speaking, Reading and Phonics, and Writing and Handwriting (DoBE 2011: 18). As mentioned in paragraph 4.5.2, Ms Rix, Ms

Smith, Ms Molefe and Teacher 1B recognised the importance of phonics to reading and writing and Ms Rix also noted the connection between reading and writing by stating, *“If learners do not have good phonics knowledge and are poor readers, their sentence building will be poor when writing.”* Holistic literacy development through the use of a balanced literacy programme has proved to be successful in developing English literacy skills (Elley & Cutting, 2001; Saunders & Goldenberg, 1999).

In all three schools where observation and interviews took place, there is a prevalence of English first additional language learners. All of these schools have an English LoLT and learners are immersed in an English environment from grade 1. In Chapter 4, 4.5.4, Teacher 2A expressed that the reading level amongst these learners is poor: *“Reading level is not that good as they are from different places and they are speaking different languages, reading and speaking of English becomes very difficult, more especially reading.”* Paragraph 4.4.1 refers to Ms Molefe raising a concern about the appropriateness of the current national curriculum for EFAL learners by saying, *“I think the policy that is in place at the moment, somehow it doesn’t cater, especially because they are in a school where the home language is English.”* Additive bilingualism is encouraged in the Language in Education Policy (Department of Education 1997: 1), by De Wet (2002:119) and Casale and Posel (2011: 457) but is not being implemented in South African schools. Most EFAL learners are achieving lower marks than home language English learners and the South African language policies need to be adjusted in order to pay more attention to learning and languages of learning in order to encourage improvement amongst EFAL learners’ levels (Webb, 1999; Casale & Posel, 2011; Heugh, 1999; Malda et al., 2014). The variety of languages encountered in South Africa differ structurally and, therefore, may require different teaching approaches to teaching reading. The South African curriculum necessitates further research in this regard (Murray, 2012; Malda et al., 2014).

### **5.2.1.2 English language proficiency**

In section 4.1.1, teachers expressed opposing views on grade 2 learners’ language proficiency. Ms Rix, Teacher 1B and Teacher 1C felt that learners’ English ability was reasonably poor, while Teacher 1A and Ms Smith were of the opinion that if learners attended Grade R and Grade 1 in their schools their English language ability was at an acceptable level by the time that they reached grade 2. During observation of lessons

taught at School A, School B and School C it was noted that learners were able to follow instructions and express themselves in English when conversing with peers or the teachers; however, English comprehension and areas of grammar such as tenses and the correct usage of masculine and feminine seemed to be lacking. In the consulted literature on language proficiency, Cummins (1980: 177) differentiates between two types of language proficiency: basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). Most of EFAL learners observed during this study have developed BICS but CALP is not yet fully functional which requires them to need further support in the academic elements of English. Kilfoil and van der Walt (2007:15) recognise the importance for teachers to develop English BICS as well as CALP of their learners in order to ensure success across the curriculum.

Throughout the interviews and observations, teachers recognised the importance of employing strategies in order to improve learners' English comprehension. Paragraph 4.4.2 showed that Ms Rix, Teacher 1A, Teacher 1B and Ms Molefe agreed that associating an English word with a 3-D object or picture improved EFAL learners' English understanding. Learners' response to visual aids was very promising. Another effective strategy was allowing learners to act out or physically represent a word or story. Teacher 1B stated that the learners in her class thoroughly enjoyed acting out the story using masks depicting the characters. Teacher 2B employed a similar strategy but allowed the use of flannel board pictures and characters to allow learners to experience and understand the story. Hugo (2010: 135) also refers to the language experience approach as an appropriate method for teaching second language learners as it incorporates each learner's context and personal experiences as well as allows them to practise speaking before they are expected to read. Blunden-Greef (2014: 141) acknowledges the importance of reading with comprehension as it is an important skill required in all school subjects as well as necessary for everyday life.

A final strategy highlighted in order to improve EFAL learners' proficiency and comprehension is the use of code-switching. Rose and Dulm (2006: 11) advocate the use of code-switching for learners and teachers as a communicative tool. The effectiveness of this was witnessed during observation of Ms. Molefe's lessons: she would state an instruction in English and thereafter follow the instruction in learner's home language.

Learners' responses were very positive to this. Ms Rix and Ms Smith did not speak an African language and therefore were not able to employ this strategy in their classrooms.

### 5.2.1.3 EFAL challenges

Many challenges faced by EFAL learners have an influence on the teaching strategies that educators implement in their classrooms. In addition to learning a second language, environmental, socioeconomic and cultural issues can impact negatively on learners' academic achievement and reading. Educators use certain strategies on a daily basis in order to overcome these challenges and improve the English reading levels of these learners.

Teachers have to adjust their teaching approaches due to overcrowded classrooms. In School B and School C, there were 39 and 44 learners in each class respectively. In Chapter 4, 4.6.3, Teacher 2C expressed the effects of this challenge by stating, *“These classes are too big. I mean for you to give maximum support, I mean to 45 children is really difficult. You find that those ones lagging behind will always lag behind, because you cannot give that maximum support to them.”* During observation of reading lessons at School A, School B and School C, at least one reading lesson was observed where all learners were seated at their desks. This provided more space for learners as at School B and School C all the learners in the class could not be accommodated on the carpet at the same time. When Ms Molefe, Ms Rix and Ms Smith implemented the group guided reading strategy to teaching reading; they were able to provide some much needed individualised support to these EFAL learners and give them opportunities to practise their English speech and vocabulary. A well-developed English vocabulary is essential to success in English reading (Kieffer, 2012; Scheepers, 2008; Scheffner Hammer, Hoff, Uchikoshi, Gillanders, Castro & Sandilos 2014) and therefore, the use of smaller reading groups allows for the improvement of learners reading levels. However, Teacher 1A says, *“With children that come to our school and cannot speak English at all we always have a problem. And most of the time they repeat that year of school, because they sit here and don't know any English. They spend the year learning English.”* Teacher 2C and Teacher 1A made note of that fact that educators are not able to provide intensive support to learners whose English language ability is poor in grade 2 due to classroom size and

therefore, in many cases these children tend to remain weaker than their peers and may need to repeat the year in order to establish BICS comprehensively.

A second challenge revealed during the interview process was lack of parental support. In Chapter 4, 4.6.1 Teacher 1B addressed the fact parents are not involved in their children's schooling by saying, "*The parents are not helping their children. There are many children sitting outside the school gate until after 6 pm. Those are the children whose homework is never done.*" Ms Molefe agreed with this by stating that most EFAL learners live with their grandmothers who are not literate in English and therefore cannot offer assistance to learners' reading. Reading and English language was only practised during teaching time at school. Kieffer (2012: 55) and Scheffner Hammer et al. (2014: 716) recognise that these EFAL learners have not developed the important skills to improve reading development as these are not reinforced at the learners' homes. Teachers need to adjust their teaching strategies in order to improve reading literacy amongst EFAL learners. In 4.5.4, Ms Rix and Ms Molefe agreed with Teacher 2C who said, "*The learners that struggle take longer to understand.*" Therefore, Ms Rix allows struggling learners to spend more time on certain books and Ms Molefe will not allow her reading groups to progress onto the next book until they have mastered the first. This strategy supports Blunden-Greef's view that the same reading strategies can be implemented with first and additional language learners; however, the pace of teaching should be unhurried (2014: 140).

Lastly, the challenge of poverty among EFAL learners is prevalent in all three schools. Moore and Hart (2007:16) state that the majority of these learners have little access to literacy resources at home and in their communities. In Chapter 4, 4.6.2 again, it is pointed out that teachers are not experiencing support on the parents' part as learners are not exposed to books and reinforcement at home is difficult when learners are in environments without electricity. Reading does not seem to be a priority in these learners' homes. Ms Molefe reinforced this view by stating, "*You find that you are trying your best here at school, but then it goes down the drain again, especially during the long holidays when children are not exposed to books.*" Halle et al. (2012: 14-17) identify that difference in socio-economic status does have an impact on learners' English language proficiency. The higher the socio-economic status, the more easily learners become proficient in English. In the classrooms observed, all 3 teachers provided a reading corner or area where learners were allowed access to additional books. This is an addition to Ms Rix, Ms Molefe and Ms

Smith's reading strategies to encourage access to books in order to promote reading proficiency among EFAL learners from high poverty backgrounds present in their classrooms.

## **5.2.2 WHAT MATERIALS ARE USED DURING THE TEACHING OF READING?**

The five components of effective reading instruction are phonemic awareness, word recognition (sight words), comprehension, vocabulary and fluency (National Reading Panel, 2000; DoBE, 2011, DoE, 2008). The materials teachers made use of in their classrooms promote the development of each one of these components. School A, School B and School C made use of a combination of whole word and phonic approaches during reading teaching.

### **5.2.2.1 Materials utilised when implementing a whole word approach**

The consulted literature highlights contrasting views about the success of the whole word approach to teaching reading, but an area that was agreed upon was that learners need to have a comprehensive understanding of the meaning of the words that are introduced (Davis, 2012; Phatudi, 2014). The importance of placing these words in context when teaching EFAL learners cannot be underestimated. In section 4.5.3, School A utilised a programme called *Lector*, which included elements of whole word teaching. Teacher 1A states that this programme makes use of reading pieces with accompanying words and pictures and learners are required to write down word meanings, which is effective for EFAL learners' comprehension and vocabulary development.

Chapter 4, 4.5.3 revealed that flash cards of the high frequency words and new words found in the reading books were a common resource used in all 3 schools. Teacher 1A referred to using flash cards and learners were required to use these words in sentences. This approach was also used by Ms Smith during observation of her reading lesson. School B employed of the *Why Read? Programme* which provides reading pieces with accompanying flash cards for learners. Once learners are confident in reading these words, it has a positive impact on their reading fluency and pace.

During observation of the reading lessons taught in School A, School B and School C it was noticeable that many resources were placed on classroom walls in order to improve word recognition. In section 4.4.2, Ms Rix had body parts and emotion words with pictures next to them as well as labels on the dustbin, blackboard and other classroom items displayed. Ms Smith has a weather and colour chart displayed on her walls, with the relevant words next to the pictures. Ms Molefe had action and emotion words displayed with the accompanying words as well as classroom rules. All three of these teachers had English posters displaying the theme for that week with the relevant vocabulary on their walls which, encourages English proficiency.

### **5.2.2.2 Materials utilised when implementing a phonic approach**

In section 4.5.2 the teachers revealed phonics as the most important element when teaching reading and during observation, phonics was noticed to be the most favoured strategy for reading unseen words. Teacher 1B stated, “*Sound recognition is the most important.*” This was agreed upon by Ms Rix, Ms Smith and Ms Molefe. All three of these teachers displayed an alphabet wall frieze in the front of their classrooms to assist learners during reading and writing activities. The CAPS document (2011: 15) agrees that phonics is an important tool in reading as it helps learners decode words in texts as well as encode words when writing.

School A made use of the *Letter Land Programme* to teach phonics. This programme includes music resources such as CDs as well as books used to introduce sounds. In 4.5.2 it is mentioned that Ms Molefe made use of *Abacards* during group guided reading sessions. Learners used these letter tiles to build new words presented in their reading book as well as sight words. Both the whole word approach as well as the phonic approach to reading are being implemented in the three schools used during this study. In Chapter 4, section 4.5.3 Ms Smith is quoted as saying, “*They begin with building up words using sounds, repeat the sight words and then progress onto reading sentences, paragraphs and finally stories.*” This reading strategy is an integrative one and includes resources from both approaches. In Section 4.5.3 it is mentioned that Teacher 2C uses a similar strategy to teaching reading and said, “*You start with the sounds, then introduce the words, then there is something to do with the meaning of the words, then you make your sentences and then*



*we'll read the text.*” Johnson et al. (2012: 1366) recognises that a combination of both approaches is normally used in English speaking environments.

### **5.2.2.3 Types of texts used during reading teaching**

In Chapter 4 Table 4.2 provides an overview of lessons observed in the 3 schools. These lessons incorporated a variety of texts. In School A, Ms Rix made use of a *Flip Chart* during shared reading, *stories on an overhead projector, graded readers as well as printed reading passages* at varying levels given to learners for additional reading. In School B, Ms Smith's learners made use of the *Platinum Grade 2 English Home Language Reader* and also gave learners *printed passages* for additional reading to include for homework. In School C, *graded readers* were used. The inclusion of a variety of texts and reading resources raises the interest level of learners and encourages reading.

### **5.2.3 WHAT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES COULD BE OF ASSISTANCE WHEN TEACHING READING TO EFAL LEARNERS IN GRADE 2?**

While observing reading lessons taught to grade 2 learners in 3 model C schools around Gauteng, it was noted that many resources used were in very shabby condition and were outdated. When teachers were interviewed and asked about resources which would be beneficial to reading teaching, they agreed on resources that would engage 21<sup>st</sup> century learners' attention.

#### **5.2.3.1 Technology**

Technology was mentioned in every focus group interview as a means to improve reading instruction and learner comprehension. In section 4.4.2 Teacher 2C's feeling was expressed that a *slideshow* could be used when introducing new words with accompanying pictures. Teachers do not have projectors or computers in their classrooms yet; however she felt it could be an effective manner to improve her reading strategy. Teacher 2A and Teacher 1B agreed that stories on *DVDs and CDs* would grab learner attention along with the use of rhymes and music. In the study conducted by Ecalle, Magnan and Calmus (2008:554), technology showed a positive impact on literacy levels. The use of technology also encourages reading among modern learners (Singh 2009). Technological resources

implemented in South African schools could impact the reading level of EFAL learners dramatically.

### 5.2.3.2 Home Language readers

In Chapter 2, the consulted literature reflects the positive impact that showing acceptance of learners' home languages in the classroom can have. By having classroom labels, activities and books in home language as well as English, EFAL learners' understanding can be improved (Hugo & Horn, 2013; Phatudi 2014). In section 4.4.2 Ms. Molefe's reference to this was quoted: *"Some of the children, English is a third language to them, I would prefer to have, let's say the reader that I have in English, it must be in their language as well. They start learning it in their language before proceeding to the language of teaching in the school, because they know it, they understand it in their language. I think it would be easier for them to progress to the actual learning and teaching language."* Ms Molefe's reasoning is reflected in Cummins' (1980: 185) view of second language acquisition, namely that he believes that proficiency in both home language and additional language can be improved through home language instruction.

### 5.2.4 HOW DO LEARNERS RESPOND TO THE READING STRATEGIES USED IN CLASS?

During observation of reading lessons in School A, School B and School C it seemed that most learners were very keen to take part in lessons and discussions and listened to stories with interest. There was a recognisable increase in learner enjoyment when elements of fun and excitement were added to reading activities. In section 4.5.3 it is described how Ms Smith gave each learner in the class 2 sight words and each learner had to give the class clues about their word which the other learners had to guess. Similarly in section 4.4.1, Ms Rix allowed learners act out emotions and characters in the story. However, in section 4.6.4, learners' enjoyment and behaviour deteriorated in Ms Rix's class when they were expected to read silently at their desks for long periods of time. Also in Ms Molefe's class, learners completing mathematics activities at their desks while group reading commenced, disrupted the reading lesson as they clearly did not understand what was expected of them. Learners seem to respond well to taking an active role in reading lessons and this improves comprehension which is very important for EFAL learners.

The teachers expressed their success stories which are a result of the use of a balanced reading programme, including phonics and whole word strategies, in their classrooms. In section 4.5.3, Ms Smith expressed this by saying, *“I have heard positive feedback from my Grade 3’s that they are coping well, so I think my reading strategy works well.”* Ms Molefe referred to her success stories in past years by saying, *“I’ve had quite good progress whereby you find a child, take him from this level and then by the end of the year seeing that child being, you know, a fluent reader.”*

In addition to these success stories, educators also expressed disappointments with regards to some learner’s reading achievement. In Chapter 4, section 4.5.4, Teacher 1C was quoted as saying, *“The weaker ones they just, they don’t cope.”* This disappointment is also expressed by Ms Molefe and Teacher 1A who believes this poor achievement is due to lack of English language proficiency. When English First Additional Language learners do not acquire comprehension and vocabulary skills successfully, reading difficulties can be experienced (Hoover and Gough 1990). Ms Smith experienced an alternate outcome with a learner who was not proficient in English. In Section 4.5.4, she said, *“I had a little boy last year, he came to our school, he is Sotho, and he couldn’t speak a word of English, not one word. He came in here on the first day and he couldn’t understand me and I couldn’t understand him. And now he’s in Grade 3 and he is doing so well, he got an award at the end of the year. He’s really, he’s just blossomed.”* Although she employed the same reading strategies with all the EFAL learners in her class, Virginia Collier’s Conceptual Model for Acquiring a Second Language (Collier 1995:2-3) may provide some insight into why this learner progressed well despite not being proficient in English at the start of the year. This model demonstrates the importance of sociocultural processes, language development, academic development and cognitive development in second language acquisition. Academic and Cognitive development in the first language is transferred to the second language and is important in language acquisition. Therefore, if the learner in Ms Smith’s class was proficient in Sotho, he would have been able to transfer these skills to English and become proficient in English as well.

### **5.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

This study was aimed at exploring strategies for teaching reading to English First Additional Language learners in grade 2. A summary of the findings presented in

answering the secondary research questions assists in answering the primary research question, “*What strategies do teachers use when teaching reading to English First Additional Language learners in grade 2?*” The findings that emerged from the study are presented below.

Firstly, the teachers observed in this study made use of a balanced literacy programme, as stated in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement. Due to EFAL learners developing English language skills, the teachers’ strategies to teaching reading placed an emphasis on the development of English language comprehension and vocabulary. The majority of learners were able to understand and communicate informally in English; however, an academic understanding of English was still developing. Strategies that teachers employed in order to improve reading comprehension was the use of visual aids in terms of pictures and 3D objects accompanying texts, as well as the language experience approach. The use of code-switching was effective when giving instructions or an explanation as this was placed in context for the EFAL learners.

Secondly, challenges faced in schools and by EFAL learners had an impact on the reading strategies employed in classrooms. Overcrowded classrooms caused teachers to present many reading lessons where learners were seated at the desks. Teachers could accommodate smaller groups in the front of the classroom during group guided reading sessions, which allowed the opportunity for rare individualised support. The lack of parental support results in no reinforcement of reading or English after school hours and therefore lower levels of English reading proficiency. Teachers have adjusted their teaching strategies by spending more time on certain books and concepts until the EFAL learners in their classrooms have mastered them. Many EFAL learners come from a background of poverty which affects the access that these learners have to additional reading material. Teachers were able to provide learners with additional books by having reading corners in their classrooms which these learners were able to access.

Thirdly, teachers included a combination of the whole word approach and phonic approach to teaching reading. A similar strategy of beginning with sound recognition, then word recognition, then progressing to reading sentences, paragraphs and finally stories was utilised. In order to implement the phonic approach, all teachers had an alphabet wall frieze displayed in their classrooms and they made use of books introducing sounds, CDs and

letter tiles in order to build words. When making use of the whole word approach, teachers used flash cards displaying high frequency words and charts, posters and pictures were displayed on the classroom walls with the relevant English text and picture to encourage word recognition and comprehension.

Finally, learners responded positively to reading strategies that encouraged them to become actively involved in the lesson. When teachers made use of acting, games and competitions the learners were attentive and while enjoying the process they acquired important English reading skills. With there being such a prevalence of EFAL learners in South African schools, it was recognised that the possible inclusion of reading resources in the learners' home languages would improve understanding and positively impact English reading acquisition. Teachers also felt that they could improve their reading strategy even further by the introduction of technology in their classrooms. This would interest learners and encourage reading amongst these 21<sup>st</sup> century learners.

## **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings of this research study have revealed deficiencies in certain areas of education in South African classrooms. The following recommendations can be made, based on the results of the data collected and the literature consulted, in order to improve English First Additional Language acquisition, learning and teaching with special attention to reading.

### **5.4.1 ADDITIVE BILINGUALISM IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS**

It is well researched that learners acquire a second language more effectively if they are proficient in their home language. In South African schools where the LoLT is English, second language learners are immersed in English from grade 1. The home language of these learners is never developed further which has a negative impact on English language acquisition and academic achievement. During interviews the teachers in this study revealed that when learners begin grade 2 without English language proficiency, they usually end up repeating the year. A recommendation for teachers to improve English comprehension and acquisition is to include elements of the learners' home languages in the classroom. This can be done through home language books, labels around the classroom as well as utilising code switching when giving instructions or explaining a new

concept. This will also improve learners' confidence levels as the context is more relatable and reflects learner backgrounds.

#### **5.4.2 LANGUAGE POLICY FOR FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

The English Home Language curriculum needs to be adapted in order to include learners who are attending a school where the LoLT is English; however, their home language is another official South African language. These learners are in the majority but are not achieving as well as they should due to the differences in languages. The orthographies of languages differ which may require different teaching approaches when teaching reading. The development of a curriculum specifically for EFAL learners could be beneficial and allow for more focus on English comprehension and vocabulary skills as well as allow for more time to be spent on acquiring English concepts and skills. This could improve the reading level among all learners in South African schools.

#### **5.4.3 PARENT EDUCATION**

Parents of EFAL learners need to provide support in the reading and learning process and to accomplish this, parents need to be educated regarding English language acquisition and proficiency. The Department of Education needs to create parent education campaigns which highlight the importance of home language proficiency in order to promote second language acquisition. Parents need to understand why different English curriculums may be required with learners of different home languages in order to reach the same outcome, namely of creating English reading proficiency in all English South African schools.

#### **5.4.4 INTRODUCTION OF TECHNOLOGY AND TEACHER TRAINING**

The introduction of more modern reading strategies could improve reading achievement as learners show an elevated level of interest in technology. Schools and teachers' classrooms should be equipped with CD players, data projectors and computers in order to achieve this. These resources allow teachers the opportunities to include learner backgrounds and contexts into lessons and therefore improve comprehension when reading. Teachers will require regular training in order to understand how to implement technology in their classrooms in order to reap the benefits of this relating to reading. This will be a constant

process as technology is continually evolving and new programmes and methods of teaching will become available. Flexible teachers will be required to inspire 21<sup>st</sup> century learners.

## **5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

This study on effective reading strategies for EFAL learners has highlighted several topics which could inspire future research studies. Suggested topics are presented below:

- The effect of technology on English First Additional Language learners reading achievement in South Africa.
- The impact of additive bilingualism on learners English language proficiency in Foundation Phase classrooms.
- The influence of parent education on English First Additional Language learners' reading achievement.

## **5.6 COMPREHENSIVE SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

This chapter presented the findings from the research study, *Exploring strategies for teaching reading to English First Additional Language learners in grade 2*. It was found that generally EFAL learners' English language proficiency had an impact on their English reading ability which, to a large extent, influenced the reading strategies which teachers employed in their classrooms. The development of English comprehension and vocabulary was a focus point in the reading strategies that teachers implemented. A combination of the whole word approach and phonic approach proved to be an appropriate reading strategy when teaching EFAL learners; however, the pace of teaching needed to be adjusted to ensure comprehensive understanding. The poor achievement of EFAL learners in reading and across the curriculum calls for the development and implementation of an EFAL curriculum in South African schools.

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## APPENDICES

### **Appendix A**

Letter of information to teachers taking part in the focus group interview

### **Appendix B**

Letter of information to teachers taking part in the one-on-one interview and observation

### **Appendix C**

Letter of information to parents regarding research to be conducted

### **Appendix D**

Application to the principal to conduct research at the school

### **Appendix E**

Application to the Department of Education to conduct research

### **Appendix F**

Setswana letter of information to parents regarding research to be conducted

### **Appendix G**

IsiXhosa letter of information to parents regarding research to be conducted

### **Appendix H**

Sotho letter of information to parents regarding research to be conducted

### **Appendix I**

Letter of information to parents regarding information session

### **Appendix J**

Focus group interview schedule

### **Appendix K**

One-on-one interview schedule

### **Appendix L**

Observation schedule

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## APPENDIX A



Department of Early Childhood Education

The Teacher  
Primary School

Dear Sir/Mam

My name is Sydlin Caddy. I am a second year MEd student at the University of Pretoria. I am conducting a research study as part of the requirements of my degree in Early Childhood Education, and I would like to invite you to participate.

The purpose of the research that I would like to conduct is to gain more insight into the mastering of reading and to establish which reading strategies are effective when implemented into mainstream government schools.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to participate in a group discussion about your experience teaching reading to English First Additional Language learners. In particular, we will discuss the strategies and methods that you use in your classroom on a daily basis and what you feel is most effective. The challenges faced by you on a daily basis will also be discussed. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not wish to. The meeting will take place at a mutually agreed upon time and place, and should last approximately 30 minutes.

I hope that the findings of this research would assist teachers when teaching reading to English First Additional Language learners.

Please bear in mind that the participation in this research is voluntary, thus you are able to withdraw at any stage. Although this is a group interview the researcher will not disclose information. Information and names will be kept confidential at all times. Pseudonyms will be used in all transcripts and reports to keep participants names anonymous. All data and findings will be kept confidential. Only the researcher and supervisor will have access to the data. This data will be safely stored.

You are welcome to contact me at 0721260037/ sydlincaddy@gmail.com or my supervisor, Dr Phatudi at 0724961285/ nkidi.phatudi@up.ac.za if you have study related questions or problems.

Thank you for your consideration. Please complete in the consent slip below.

Yours sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sydlin Caddy  
MEd student  
University of Pretoria

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr N Phatudi  
Supervisor  
University of Pretoria

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have been fully informed of the nature of the research to be conducted. I consent to / do not consent to being a participant in the research study.

Teacher signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX B



Department of Early Childhood Education

The Teacher  
Primary School

Dear Sir/ Madam

My name is Sydlin Caddy. I am a MEd student at the University of Pretoria. I am conducting a research study as part of the requirements of my degree in Early Childhood Education, and I would like to invite you to participate.

The purpose of the research that I would like to conduct is to gain more insight into the mastering of reading and to establish which reading strategies are effective when implemented into mainstream government schools.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to meet with me for a one-on-one interview about your experience teaching reading to English First Additional Language learners. In particular, you will be asked questions about the strategies and methods that you use in your classroom on a daily basis and what you feel is most effective. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not wish to. The meeting will take place at a mutually agreed upon time and place, and should last approximately 30 minutes.

Secondly, I would like to observe your teaching strategies when teaching reading on three separate occasions. These dates and times will be mutually agreed upon.

I hope that the findings of this research would assist teachers when teaching reading to English First Additional Language learners.

Please bear in mind that the participation in this research is voluntary, thus you are able to withdraw at any stage. Information and names will be kept confidential at all times. Pseudonyms will be used in all transcripts and reports to keep participants names anonymous.

You are welcome to contact me at 0721260037/ [sydlincaddy@gmail.com](mailto:sydlincaddy@gmail.com) or my supervisor, Dr Phatudi at 0724961285/ [nkidi.phatudi@up.ac.za](mailto:nkidi.phatudi@up.ac.za) if you have study related questions or problems.

Thank you for your consideration. Please complete the consent slip below.

Yours sincerely,

---

Sydlin Caddy  
MEd student  
University of Pretoria

---

Dr N Phatudi  
Supervisor  
University of Pretoria

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have been fully informed of the nature of the research to be conducted. I consent to / do not consent to being a participant in the research study.

Teacher signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX C



Department of Early Childhood Education

The Parents  
Primary School

Dear Parents/ Guardians

My name is Sydlin Caddy. I am a MEd student in the Education Faculty at the University of Pretoria. I am conducting a research study as part of the requirements of my degree in Early Childhood Education, and I would like to invite your child to participate.

The purpose of the research that I would like to conduct is to gain more insight into the mastering of reading and to establish which reading strategies are effective when implemented into mainstream government schools.

If you allow your child to participate, your child will be observed within the classroom environment while being taught reading in English. I will be a non-participant observer. I am interested in the strategies that teachers use when teaching reading to English First Additional Language learners. The learners will not be participating in the study directly. Your child will not be required to do anything out of his/her usual routine and will not be harmed in any way. The observation will take place for 30 minutes within teaching time on a weekday. This will occur on three separate occasions. A meeting will be held with parents at school to explain the procedure more thoroughly.

I hope that the findings of this research would assist teachers when teaching reading to English First Additional Language learners.

Learner's names will be kept anonymous at all times. Pseudonyms will be used in all transcripts and reports. Please bear in mind that the participation in this research is voluntary, thus you are able to withdraw your child at any stage.

You are welcome to contact me at 0721260037/ [sydlincaddy@gmail.com](mailto:sydlincaddy@gmail.com) or my supervisor, Dr Phatudi at 0724961285/ [nkidi.phatudi@up.ac.za](mailto:nkidi.phatudi@up.ac.za) if you have study related questions or problems.



Thank you for your consideration. Please sign this form below if you are willing to allow your child to participate.

Yours sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sydlin Caddy  
MEd student  
University of Pretoria

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr N Phatudi  
Supervisor  
University of Pretoria

I, \_\_\_\_\_ as parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_,  
have been fully informed of the nature of the research to be conducted. I give my  
permission/ do not give my permission, for my child to be a participant in the research  
study.

Parent/guardian signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX D



Department of Early Childhood Education

The Principal  
Primary School

Dear Sir/ Madam

I am writing to ask permission to conduct research at your school. My study is titled “Exploring strategies teachers use for teaching reading to English First Additional Language learners in grade 2”. This study has been given ethical clearance by the University of Pretoria.

This research is being conducted by myself, Sydlin Caddy from the University of Pretoria as part of a Master of Education in Early Childhood Education thesis. The study has been approved by the University of Pretoria Research Ethics Committee and, as part of that approval process, I am required to obtain permission from sites where I would like to use participants.

The aim of this research is to gain more insight into the mastering of reading in English, when learners of different home languages are in the same environment. I would like to research which reading strategies teachers find to be effective.

Firstly, I would like to conduct a focus group interview with the grade 2 educators in your school. Secondly, I would like to have a one-on-one interview with the most experienced grade 2 teacher and observe his/her teaching strategy when teaching reading to English First Additional Language learners.

One of the potential benefits of this research is the identification of effective teaching strategies in education which can currently be applied to a variety of different classroom environments and improve learners’ acquisition of reading skills.

Please bear in mind that the participation in this research is voluntary, thus you are able to withdraw your school at any stage. The school’s name and identity will remain anonymous. Pseudonyms will be used in all transcripts and reports. The school will be given an unrecognisable name to protect its identity. All data and findings will be kept

confidential. Only the researcher and supervisor will have access to the data. Then it will be safely stored.

If you are willing to allow me into your school and give permission to conduct this research please would you sign the form below.

Yours sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sydlin Caddy  
MEd student  
University of Pretoria

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr N Phatudi  
Supervisor  
University of Pretoria

I, \_\_\_\_\_ as principal of \_\_\_\_\_, have been fully informed on the research wishing to be conducted on “Strategies teachers use for teaching reading to English First Additional Language learners in grade 2”, and give my permission for the study to be conducted. I reserve the right to be able to withdraw this permission at any time.

Principal signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX E



Department of Early Childhood Education

The Gauteng Department of Education

Dear Sir/ Madam

I am writing to ask permission to conduct research at..... School, ..... School and..... School in the D2 district. My study is titled “Exploring strategies teachers use for teaching reading to English First Additional Language learners in grade 2”. This study has been given ethical clearance by the University of Pretoria.

This research is being conducted by myself, Sydlin Caddy from the University of Pretoria as part of a Master of Education in Early Childhood Education thesis. The study has been approved by the University of Pretoria Research Ethics Committee and, as part of that approval process, I am required to obtain permission from the Gauteng Department of Education in order to gain access into the schools that I would like to conduct my research at.

The aim of this research is to gain more insight into the mastering of reading in English, when learners of different home languages are in the same environment. I would like to research which reading strategies teachers find to be effective.

Firstly, I would like to conduct a focus group interview with the grade 2 educators in each school. Secondly, I would like to have a one-on-one interview with the most experienced grade 2 teacher and observe his/her teaching strategy when teaching reading to English First Additional Language learners.

One of the potential benefits of this research is the identification of effective teaching strategies in education which can currently be applied to a variety of different classroom environments and improve learners' acquisition of reading skills.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

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Sydlin Caddy  
MEd student  
University of Pretoria

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Dr N Phatudi  
Supervisor  
University of Pretoria

## APPENDIX F



### Lefaphala Thuto ya Kokotlego ya Pele ya Bana

Batsadi  
Primary School

Batsadi/Batlhokomedi

Leina la ka ke Sydlin Caddy. Kemoithuti wa MEd lefapheng la thuto la Yunibesiting ya Pretoria. Ke dira patlisiso jaaka e le tlhokego ya gerata ya me ya Thuto ya Kokotlego ya Pele ya Bana, ebile ke ka rata go lakaletsa ngwana wa lona go tsaya karolo.

Botlhokwa ba patlisiso e ke batlang go e dira, ke go tlhaloganya ka botlalo mokgwa wa go buisa le go tlhomamisa gore ke maano afeng a a siameng ga a tsentsweng tirisong dikolong tsa mmuso.

Fa o letlelela ngwana wa gago go tsaya karolo, ngwana wa gago o tla elwa tlhoko mo maemong a phaposi borutelong mo nakong e a tla beng a rutiwa go buisa ka Seesimane. Ke tla be ke le moela tlhoko o o sa tseyeng karolo. Ke na le kgatlego mo mekgweng e barutabana ba e dirisang fa ruta baithuti go buisa Seesimane jaaka leleme la pele la tlaleletso. Baithuti ga ba tseye karolo e e maleba. Ngwana wa gago ga a kitla a tlhokega go dira sepe se a sa keng a se dira ka nako ya go ithuta ebile ga a ka ke a utlwisiwa botlhoko ka mokgwa ope. Kelotlhoko e tla tsaya metsotso e le some a mararo gareng ga nako ya go ithuta mo gareng ga beke. Se se tla diragala makgetlho a le mararo a farologaneng. Kopano ya batsadi e tla tshwarwa seko long, mo tsaimaiso e tla tlhalosiwa ka botlalo mme gona le mofetolodi.

Ke tshepa fa diphitlhelelo tsa patlisiso di tla thusa barutabana fa ba ruta baithuti go buisa Seesimane jaaka leleme la ntlha la tlaleletso.

Maina a baithuti ga ka kitla a itsisiwe. Mme ba tla nna tlhokaina diripotong le dikwalong tso tlhe. Tsewo karolo ya baithuti mo patlisisong e, ke ka go rata ebile ga ba gapelediwe mme o ka emisa tseo karolo nako fa o batla.

O ka ikamanya le nna mo go 0721260037/ [sydlinecaddy@gmail.com](mailto:sydlinecaddy@gmail.com) kgotsa motlhatlhobedi wa me, Dr Phatudi mo go 0724961285/ [nkidi.phatudi@up.ac.za](mailto:nkidi.phatudi@up.ac.za) fa o na le dipotso mabapi le dipatlisiso.

Ke lebogela tshiamisetso ya gago. O kopiwa go saena diforomo tse mo tlase fa o dumela ngwana wa gago go tsaya karolo.

Wetsho

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sydlin Caddy  
MEd Moithuti  
Yunibesiti ya Pretoria

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr N Phatudi  
Motlhatlhobedi  
Yunibesiti ya Pretoria

I, \_\_\_\_\_ jaaka motsadi/motlhokomedì wa \_\_\_\_\_, ke itse ka botlalo ka ga dipatlisiso tse di tla diriwang. Ke neelana ka tumelo/ ga ke dumele, gore ngwanake a tsee karolo mo dipatlisisong.

Motsadi/Motlhokomedì saena: \_\_\_\_\_ Letlha: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX G



Department of Early Childhood Education

Bazali  
Primary School

Bazali nabameli abathandekayo

Igama lam ndingu Sydlin Caddy. Ndingumfundi okwi MEd kwicandelo eliphakamileyo lemfundo kwidyunivesi yase Pitoli. Ndenza ucwaningo kwezemfundo malunga neemfuneko ngokunxulumene nesidanga samkwimfundo yabantwana abasakhulayo ndinesicelo sokuba umntwana wakho abe nentsebenziswano.

Injongo zolucwaningo kukufumanisa ukuba zeziphi imeko ezingundoqo ekumiliselweni kwemfundo kwizikolo zika Rhulumente.

Uyakuthi ke wakuba unikezele umntwana wakho ekuzibandakanyeni kweliphulo abephantsi kweliso elibukhali esikolweni kulwimi lwesingesi. Ndiyakuba ngomnye wabanomdla xa abafundisi besebenzisa le mfundo eyi first additional language learners. Umfundi akazukuthatha inxaxheba ngokupheleleyo. Umfundi akavumelekanga nakweyiphina into yesiqhelo yaye ingenabungozi lonto. Uccwaningo luyakuthatha nje imizuzu eyi 30 ekufundiseni phakathi ne veki. Lento iyakwenzeka ngokwezihlandlu ezintatho ezohlukeneyo. Lintlanganiso ziyakubakhona zabazali, apho kuyakuchazwa yonke into yaye kutolikwa.

Ndiyathemba ubuka iziphumo zolucwaningo luyakunceda abafundisi ntsapho xa befundisa I English first additional language learners. Igama lomfundi liyakugcinwa lufihlakele lonke ixesha. Nceda wazi ukuba xa umntwana wakho ethatha inxaxheba kolucwaningo unalo ilungelo lokurhoxa nangeliphi na ixesha.

Wamkelekile ukutsalela umnxeba kwezinombolo zilandelayo 0721260037/[sydlincaddy@gmail.com](mailto:sydlincaddy@gmail.com) okanye utsalele umnxeba kowongameleyo, u Dr. Phatudi ku 0724961285/ [nkidi.phatudi@up.ac.za](mailto:nkidi.phatudi@up.ac.za) malunga ne ngxaki ze mfundo.



Enkosi ngenxaxheba yakho. Nceda usayine eliphepha xa ufuna umntwana wakho athathe inxaxheba.

Owenu ozithobileyo,

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Sydlin Caddy  
MEd student  
University of Pretoria

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Dr N Phatudi  
Supervisor  
University of Pretoria

Mna, \_\_\_\_\_ njengo mzali okanye ka \_\_\_\_\_,  
Owaziswe ngokupheleleyo malunga nophando oluzakwenziwa. Ndinika ilungelo/  
ndinganiki lungelo, lomntwana wam ukuba athathe inxaxheba kuphando lwezifundo.

Mzali/ mmeli mzali: \_\_\_\_\_

Umhla: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX H



Lefapha la thuto ya bana ba banyenyane

Batswadi  
Primary School

Batswadi / Bahlokomedi

Lebitso la ka ke Sydlin Caddy. Ke moithuti wa MEd lefapheng la thuto Univesiting ya Pretoria. Ke etsa dipatlisiso ele karolo ya tse hlokalalang lengolong la dikgarata thutong ya bana ba banyenyane. Ke lakatsa ho mema bana ho nka karolo.

Lebaka la dipatlisiso tsena tseo ke di etsang ke ho fumana, haholo ho tseba ho bala le ho fumana mekgwa e bobebe ya ho ruta bana ho bala dikolong tsa mmuso.

Haeba u dumella ngwana hau ho nka karolo ngwana hau o tla hlahlojwa ka phaposing ya dithuto ho rutwa ho bala sekgowa Ke tlabo mohlalobi ya sa nkeng karolo. Ke kgothalla ho bona mekgwa eo matichere ae sebedisang ho ruta bana puo ya sekgowa. Bana ha ba na ho etsa dithuto ka mokgwa o fapaneng le oo ba o Hwaetseng hape ha ba na ho hloko fatswa. Ditlahlobo do tla etswa metsotso e Mashome a mararo ka nako e tlwaelehileng ya dithuto ya beke le beke, hona ho tla etsahala ka mekgahlelo e meraro e fapaneng.

Kopano ya batswadi e tla bat eng sekolong moo ho tla hlalosa haholo le motoloki a le teng. Ke tshepa hore lipatlisiso tsena ditla thusa Maticheri ho ruta bana ho bala sekgowa ka mokgwa o nepahetseng.

Mabitso a bana ha a na ho phatlalatswa. Ke kopa le tsebe hore ho nka karolo tlhahlobong ena ke ka boithaupi, motswadi o dumeletswe ho ntsha ngwana hae nako yohle haeba a sa kgotsofale.

U ka ntsetsa nomorong tsena tse latelang bakeng sa tlhaloso 0721260037 / [sydlincaddy@gmail.com](mailto:sydlincaddy@gmail.com) kappa moetapele wa ka, Dr Phatudi 0724961285 / [nkidi.phatudi@up.ac.za](mailto:nkidi.phatudi@up.ac.za) .

Key a leboha. Ke kopa o tekene foromo ena haeba o dumela hore ngwana hau a nke karolo.

Na wa tsena

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sydlin Caddy  
Moithuti MEd

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr N Phatudi  
Mookamedi

Nna, \_\_\_\_\_ Motswadi/ Mohlokomedi wa \_\_\_\_\_, ke hlaloseditswe ka botlalo mokgwa wa hlahlobo e tla etswa. Ke fana ka tumello/ ha ke fane ka tumello ho ngwanaka ho nka karolo ho hlahlobo ena.

Motswadi/ Mohlokomedi: \_\_\_\_\_

Letsatsi: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX I



University of Pretoria

Dear Parents

Please note that there will be a parent meeting held at Roodebeeck Laerskool on Friday 13 September from 14:00 - 15:00. This meeting is for any parents who have queries or require more information about the research to be conducted in their child's classroom. A translator will be present to assist in answering any questions.

Regards

Sydlin Caddy  
MEd Student  
University of Pretoria

## APPENDIX J



### Focus Group Interview Schedule

Good morning/ afternoon madam/ sir. Welcome to this interview session. I would like to ask you some questions about your experiences when teaching reading to English First Additional Language learners. The interview is expected to take approximately 30 minutes. Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study.

1. How many years have you been teaching in the Foundation Phase?
2. What is your opinion on the reading level of the learners in your classroom?
3. How do you go about teaching reading on a daily basis?
4. Why do you use this strategy?
5. What materials do you make use of when teaching reading?
6. Are there any other materials, that are currently not used, that could be of assistance to you when teaching reading?
7. How do learners respond to your method of teaching reading?
8. Have you ever made use of other teaching strategies? If so, explain them.
9. What are some of the challenges that are faced in your school?
10. Is there anything that you feel you could add to your teaching strategy in order to improve it?

Thank you for your time.

## APPENDIX K



### One-on-One Interview Schedule

Good morning/ afternoon madam/ sir. Welcome to this interview session. I would like to ask you some questions about your experiences when teaching reading to English First Additional Language learners. The interview is expected to take approximately 30 minutes. Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study.

1. What is the majority of learners in your class' Home Language?
2. What is your opinion on the learners English language proficiency in grade 2?
3. What elements do you believe are the most important in teaching reading?
4. What do you believe the most effective reading strategy is for teaching English First Additional Language learners?
5. Please explain to me the positive experiences that you have had when teaching reading?
6. Tell me about the disappointments that you have had when teaching reading?
7. Explain how you go about teaching reading on a daily basis in your classroom.
8. What impact does this specific strategy have on learners reading and overall academic achievement?

Thank you, I really appreciate the time that you have taken for this interview. Is there anything else that you feel would be helpful for me to know?

## APPENDIX L



### Classroom Observation Schedule

School:

Observation number:

Date of Observation:

Grade:

Number of learners:

Time of Observation:

Length of Observation:

Lesson:
---------

<b>1. Supportive classroom climate</b>	<b>Comments</b>
a) Many different types of reading materials are displayed and available for learners.	
b) Walls are filled with Literacy materials and media.	
c) Classroom has an area where learners are encouraged to go and read.	
d) An area is available for small group reading instruction.	

<b>2. Pre-reading phase</b>	<b>Comments</b>
a) Teacher asks learners to identify the purpose of reading, preview the text, make predictions, discuss about text, read title, look at illustrations and discuss context and positive content of text.	
b) Learners were encouraged to activate their background knowledge and make associations or connections with the text.	
c) By generating a discussion before reading, teacher created an interest in the reading text.	
d) Teacher introduced and discussed new vocabulary words in a meaningful context, focusing on new words that were central to the understanding of the story.	
e) Teacher continually assessed learners' pre-reading discussion and made adjustments.	
f) Teacher models the correct behaviour of reading and the correct use of strategy.	



<b>3. During reading phase</b>	<b>Comments</b>
a) At appropriate points during reading, learners were asked to evaluate their initial predictions.	
b) An appropriate mix of factual and higher level thinking questions were incorporated into the comprehension discussion.	
c) During the reading lesson, teacher modelled fluent reading and then encouraged the learners to read fluently and with expression.	
d) Teacher monitored the learners and gave proper assistance and feedback while they read or completed activities.	
e) The teacher modelled and encouraged the use of new vocabulary during discussion.	
f) Teacher periodically assessed learners' ability to monitor meaning, asking learners questions and learners generate questions.	

<b>4. After reading strategies</b>	<b>Comments</b>
a) Learners were asked to read sections of the text aloud fluently to substantiate answers to questions or confirm or disapprove predictions.	
b) Teacher asks learners to re-tell text, concentrating on major events or concepts	
c) Learners asked to explain their opinions and critical judgements.	
d) Learners summarise what they have read, determine what is important, and interpret the text on a variety of levels, literal, interpretive and evaluative.	
e) Learners were encouraged to use new vocabulary orally.	
f) Examples of modelling were provided by the teacher.	

<b>5. Teacher practise of teaching strategy</b>	<b>Comments</b>
a) Learners were grouped appropriately and flexibly.	
b) The teacher's management of the lesson provided for active learner engagement.	
c) The pace and flow of the phases of the lesson represented an effective use of strategies.	
d) The teacher's instruction was sensitive to the diversity of learners' experiences and their social, ethnic and linguistic needs.	
e) The teacher encouraged the learners to take informed risks and promoted safe failure and provided corrective feedback.	