# A dialogical approach for improving early literacy teaching in multilingual pre-primary contexts

by

Annaly M. Strauss

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR

In the Faculty of Education

at the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

August 2017

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| **DEGREE AND PROJECT** | PhD<br>A dialogical approach for improving early literacy teaching in multilingual pre-primary contexts |
| **INVESTIGATORS** | Mrs AM Strauss |
| **DEPARTMENT** | Early Childhood Education |
| **APPROVAL TO COMMENCE STUDY** | 01 September 2016 |
| **DATE OF CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE** | 19 June 2017 |

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## LANGUAGE EDITOR


*July 10, 2017*

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RE: Certificate of editing for Ms. Annaly Strauss

To whom it may concern

I have worked with Annaly for the past few years to refine and edit her doctoral dissertation, **A dialogical approach for improving early literacy teaching in multilingual pre-primary contexts,** which is being submitted to the University of Pretoria, South Africa, in 2017.

This included the following support to the document:

- Conforming in style to APA Publication style, 6th edition
- Correcting basic grammar and syntax issues to align with US academic writing style
- Elaborating key concepts for clarity
- Reviewing References for APA style alignment

Sincerely,

Virginia Navarro, Ph.D.

**DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to my late parents, Seth Jacobus Strauss and Dina Katharina Sofia Strauss who could not see this dissertation completed.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I am grateful to my supervisor, Prof. Ina Joubert (JC) and co-supervisor, Dr. Keshni Bipath of the University of Pretoria for their support to see my project through. My sincere appreciation for your time spent to read and to comment on my work.

This study wouldn't have been possible without the support of my previous dissertation committee chairperson, Prof. Virginia L. Navarro from the University of Missouri-St. Louis, USA. You shared my passion and your knowledge generously to increase the quality of my work. My sincere gratitude.

I cannot omit my professors from the University of Missouri-St. Louis who laid the foundation for research in teaching and learning processes. A special word of gratitude to Dr. Nicholas Husbye for the early literacy readings.

I would also like to acknowledge all the pre-primary teachers in the Khomas and Hardap education regions of Namibia who participated in this study.

A special word of gratitude to my family who supported me throughout this journey. First, my brothers, Johan Strauss, Christo Strauss, and especially my sister Charmaine Steyn with their families. Secondly, I also acknowledge my friend, Terence Thuys, and cousin Danella Strauss for their role during my studies.

To all my cheerleaders of First Baptist Church, Ferguson - St. Louis. Thank you for your encouragement.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge my children, Delmaine, Desmari and Dimitri for being part of this journey during challenging times.

**ABSTRACT**

This study explores how a dialogic approach toward professional development could be used to improve early literacy teaching in multilingual pre-primary contexts. Consequently, the purposes of the research were a) to develop an effective professional development (PD) model for pre-primary teachers that exposes them to research based early literacy texts and dialogic teaching practices for diverse language populations, b) to engage teachers in face-to-face and online dialogic learning, and c) to create on-going networks of teachers engaged in reflective practices for improving early literacy teaching. The theoretical framework, based on Vygotsky's (1978) and Bakhtin's (1986) theories, was used as an analytical lens to highlight the centrality of situated language learning and use within a socio-cultural context. The main question of the study is, "How might professional development, using a dialogic approach, transform teaching beliefs and practices for pre-primary teachers from diverse language backgrounds?"

The study used a mixed methods research design to document participants' reflections during focus group discussions, interviews, classroom observations, and in online forum discussions. Purposive sampling techniques were used to select a sample of 33 participating pre-primary teachers. The DeFord (1985) Theoretical Orientation toward Reading Profile (TORP) was administrated to pre-primary teachers selected from two education regions of Namibia before and after the PD. The qualitative data analysis, using Grounded Theory (GT) coding and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) yielded emergent themes that include: a) English second language (ESL) knowledge, b) pedagogical approaches (PA) for teaching and learning, and c) authoritarian discourse (AD). The quantitative pre/post-test results revealed no significant difference in overall TORP scores, but some significant changes on key pre/post-test individual items were noted. The overall results support the hypothesis that targeted PD can modify/change

teacher's beliefs about the relative value of teaching isolated phonics and reading skills versus a focus on opportunities for rich talk, interaction, and having an impact in a cultural moment. The study's contributions toward knowledge are captured in how to engage pre-primary teachers in dialogic training that may transform held didactic beliefs to acquire ESL knowledge and skills to overcome early literacy teaching challenges in multilingual contexts.

*Keywords*: professional development, early literacy, English second language, dialogic approach, multilingual pre-primary contexts

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| CDA | Critical Discourse Analysis |
| DA | Dialogic Approach |
| ESL | English Second Language |
| ELL | English Language Learning or Learners |
| GT | Grounded Theory |
| LK | Language Knowledge |
| PD | Professional Development |
| NDP 5 | Nambibia's National Development Plan |
| MoE | Ministry of Education |
| MoEAC | Ministry of Education, Art and Culture |
| MoRLGH | Ministry of Regional, Local Government and Housing |
| UNAM | University of Namibia |

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# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

## 1.1 Introduction

Worldwide, and especially in African countries, millions of young children are losing out on the opportunity to benefit from trained pre-primary teachers in public schools. When teacher training prepares pre-primary teachers to use a dialogic approach to improve teaching and learning in multilingual pre-primary contexts, English Language Learning (ELL) could support the diverse language needs of young learners. Research has shown that many teachers do not know research based literacy skills needed to teach early literacy effectively (Berninger & McCutchen, 1999; Bos, Chard, Dickson, Mather & Podhajski, 2001; Moats & Lyon, 1996; Spear-Swerling & Brucker, 2003). Teacher training plays a pivotal role in preparing teachers to meet the challenges of English Second Language (ESL) and early literacy learning in pre-primary classrooms. Buhl-Wiggers, Smith, and Thornton (2017) suggest that if teacher training varies across classrooms in Africa, there is a need to change current teacher training practices to impact teacher effectiveness on student learning and to redress policy to recruit more able teachers. Direct evidence on pre-primary training and the quality of teaching across African countries are scant.

As African nations shift from an agricultural model of work to a more technical and information driven work force, what Vygotsky (1978) labels 'schooled' or 'scientific' ways of knowing become critical to understanding and harnessing abstract concepts in the workplace. What Vygotsky implies is that systematic organised knowledge, accumulated over time and passed on in written and oral traditions, is learned through formal schooling opportunities that teach one to think critically and in culturally valued ways. Conversational language proficiency is fundamentally different from academic

language proficiency (Cummins, 1981; 2000), and it can take many more years for ELL's to become fluent in the latter than in the former (Cummins, 2008). A dialogic teaching approach promotes conversation, argumentative talk, multivoiced contructive engagement and writing. Alexander (2008) indicates that conversation tend to be relaxed whereas dialogic talk is more purposeful and coherent. This study based training on the social learning theory (Lave and Wenger 1991; Lave 1996) that calls for learning embedded within an activity in peripheral participation.

As such, pre-primary teachers require explicit preparation during pre-service training to stimulate and extend thinking and understanding of ELL's through dialogic practice. Brefeld (2015) states that a 'positivist paradigm that positions pre-service teachers as conduits of knowledge to passive learners' does not actually describe ESL teacher practice. Teachers do not just need to be prepared to learn about language or to use traditional language structures such as grammar, and syntax. They must be able to enact and sustain dialogic classroom conversations in ELL training settings that could prepare them to assess language strengths and weaknesses for further instructional decisions during practice. Early concepts and skills that are required for ESL literacy development can be categorized in three main areas: "print/book awareness, metalinguistic awareness, and oral language" (Notori-Syverson, O'Connor and Vadasy, 2007, p.4). When pre-primary teachers lack basic [academic early] literacy knowledge, the children's learning is negatively affected (Pittman, & Dorel, 2014). Teachers must possess a wide range of content knowledge in order to effectively scaffold learners' early literacy development. Knowledge of phonology, the structure of the English orthography and its relationship to sounds and meaning as well as grapheme or phoneme conventions in English enable pre-primary teachers to engage learners in well structured early literacy learning.

Children from homes without print rich and dialogic rich environments may have limited understanding of and/or mastery of oral language, phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, print awareness, and the ability to make critical connections to print when they start school. Vygotsky's (1987) sociocultural theory emphasizes the 'process and outcomes' of interactions between the 'child and other participants' in dialogue presented in verbal form, through different forms of discourse (Bordrova & Leong, 1998). Language learning in the early years requires not only mastery of phonemic decoding, but also a familiarity with a culture's way of harnessing linguistic formats to make meaning, to form relationships, and to construct roles and identities. This lack of teacher preparedness worldwide is similar to challenges faced by children in schools of poverty in Namibia, South Africa, and the United States. Yet, research documents that informed education of three to five-year-old children showed that pre-primary education can improve general cognitive abilities during early childhood and can produce long-term increases in reading achievement and learning (Neuman & Dickinson, 2001). Teacher training that prepares teachers about traditional language structures such as grammar, and vocabulary while using "chalk and talk" techniques does not prepare teachers for the challenges of ELL in pre-primary classrooms.

**1.2 Background**

Namibia is located on the south-west coast of Africa. Pre-primary education under the Ministry of Education was introduced in 2007 for the first time after the country became independent in 1990. Pre-primary education makes provision for the education of children 5-6 years of age in the public-school system. The biggest challenge faced since the introduction of the pre-primary education programme in schools are untrained teachers, lack of English proficiency, and lack of professionalism of the field. Several studies found that teachers with limited linguistic knowledge and professional

training negatively impact students' reading and writing and overall long-term learning outcomes (Larson & Marsh, 2013).

Namibia has a total population of 2,113, 077 people of whom 283,501 are under the age of four. Only 13.3 percent from this population attend child care. Literacy in Namibia is defined as 'the ability to read and write with understanding' (Population and Housing Census, 2011). Durando (2008) adds the idea that "literacy is the ability to use words" (p.40). Namibia has 1,808,390 children between the ages of 5-14; approximately 17,500 or 1.3 percent are enrolled in the formal school system for pre-primary education (Population and Housing Census, 2011). There is evidently a very low turn-out of pre-primary school children in public schools. Shortly after independence in 1990, pre-primary education in public schools and training institutions of Namibia was abolished for political reasons (MoRLGH, 1994). The biggest challenge faced since the introduction of pre-primary classes in schools again, is the shortage of professionally trained early childhood education teachers in both schools and educators in institutions of higher learning.

In my experience as an English Second Language (ESL) teacher in primary schools and an educator in a university, I have faced many challenges when teaching both learners and students from diverse language backgrounds. Because ESL teachers need to attend to both language and content learning of students, they need strong literacy teaching skills and a program that focuses on the growth of their word knowledge, fluency, meaning making, and writing (Alverman, 2004; Brefeld, & Strickland, 2015).

I have also experienced firsthand the dearth of opportunities for teacher development in pre-primary schools of Namibia. These experiences galvanized my resolve to pursue a doctorate to learn research based strategies to fill this gap. From my vantage point as a researcher, I have designed, and implemented an early literacy

professional development (PD) program for pre-primary teachers to expose them to up-to-date research in early literacy pedagogical approaches and to develop their dialogic skills to critique and improve their own beliefs and practice. The PD has layered possibilities for impacting pre-primary literacy practices. Teachers participated in an intensive 4-day *face-to-face* training workshop with field work components, followed by online follow-up sessions to track the impact of the PD on actual practice. The goal of each teacher's participation was to discover and map their own strengths and weaknesses when teaching early literacy. Participants had to discover the advantages and challenges of a dialogic teaching approach based on literacy research on best practice and reflect on their own practices while collaboratively participate in peer observations in early literacy multilingual classrooms.

**1.3 Rationale**

Namibia's language policy, which was implemented in 1990, states "that English shall be the medium of instruction from Grade 4 and that the mother tongue shall be taught from Grades 1-3" (Education Act, No.66 of 1990). The language policy of Namibia does not stipulate any provisions for pre-primary teaching. In Namibian pre-primary classrooms, teachers use English Second Language to mediate learning within a multilingual context. The majority of pre-primary teachers are not professionally trained (MoEAC, 2017) to use appropriate ESL or early literacy pedagogical approaches when teaching young learners. Namibia's National Development Plan - NDP5 (2017) states that there is "a lack of qualified teachers with a strong knowledge base at pre-primary level" (p.57). As a result, pre-primary learners do not have exposure and familiarity with multiple forms and uses of symbols in their native or home language or in additional languages, such as language of instruction to equip them for reading and

writing in the early phase as stipulated and required by the Education Act, No 66 of 1990.

Benson and Kosonen (2013) comment on "multilingualism as a social and individual reality that requires appropriately designed [teaching] approaches" (p.284). When teachers are not appropriately trained to use ESL teaching approaches, they cannot provide the necessary classroom support to help young learners master emerging language skills to move to advanced levels of language acquisition and literacy learning in ESL. High quality teaching provides the main access to academic learning, and therefore learning culturally responsive pedagogy is imperative for teaching learners from diverse language backgrounds. When the cultures of learners and teachers are not congruent or are not factored into the design of lessons, the learners lose out on potential learning (Banks & Mc Gee Banks, 2005).

PD can play a key role in transforming teacher practice in Namibian pre-schools. Even though Namibia has a national early childhood education and pre-primary teacher training curriculum --whose intentions are very good-- many teachers lack critical language and literacy skills to intelligently identify and address learners' complex learning needs. As a result, many learners may not benefit optimally from learning within this vast culturally and linguistically diverse environment. When PD is structured and modelled appropriately, it may be able to impact teachers' language knowledge, pedagogical beliefs and teaching approaches to transform teaching and learning in practice.

ESL education in pre-primary teacher training plays a critical role when preparing foundation phase teachers. When teachers disseminate information without learners having a chance to engage in meaning-making, learning is negatively affected. Yosso (2005) refers to schooling that aims at filling up passive learners with forms of cultural

knowledge deemed valuable by the dominant society as authoritarian, meaning with an intentional top-down communication agenda. Paulo Freire (1991) calls this a 'banking' model of education and exhorts educators to move to a more critical pedagogy that is transformative. Transformative education emphasizes inquiry, critical thinking, and reflective teaching and learning. Researchers such as Moll (1992) who have examined the limitations of deficit thinking models that blame the victims of poverty and neglect for failures in learning, argues that teachers need to seek out 'funds of knowledge' that exist in every community and build positively on strengths rather than blaming families for children's inability to excel at the same rate as their affluent peers.

When PD prepares teachers to become reflective practitioners, it could especially benefit children from less affluent homes who may not have had the opportunity to learn from language/conversation rich environments. My study would want to see ESL language teachers as co-explorers and inquirers instead of being given expensive pre-packaged curriculum solutions for classroom problems. The PD would need to model the inquiry based, multimodal pedagogical approach that I would want teachers to use in their own classrooms. Therefore, this study aims at engaging teachers in intensive PD training for early literacy development in pre-primary classrooms that mirrors teachers as active participants of dialogic teaching and learning processes.

**1.4 Purpose statement**

The purposes of this research inquiry were a) to expose pre-primary teachers to research- based early literacy text readings and dialogic teaching practices for diverse language populations, b) to engage them in face-to-face and online dialogic learning, and c) to create on-going networks of teachers engaged in reflective practices and dialogic exchanges. ESL teachers face unique challenges in multilingual teaching environments. Lack of academic language knowledge and teaching skills negatively affect teaching

practice. Becoming aware of learners' linguistic diversity as a resource in the classroom can bring benefits for all learners (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzales, 2005). Several studies confirmed that well-prepared pre-primary teachers are able to compensate for a child's limitations of early literacy experiences despite challenges (Miller, 2000). When dialogic training, using innovative strategies prepares teachers to address the language needs of young learners, they may be better prepared to actively engage learners in meaningful ways in the classroom conversation. Knowing how to provide classroom support fosters literacy learning (Neuman & Cunningham, 2009). In the long run, this study may reap improved early literacy dialogic teaching practices and better ESL language outcomes. The study contributes towards early childhood education research, and paves the way for further research to design training programs for pre-primary education training, especially in developing countries such as Namibia with underprepared early childhood and pre-primary teachers.

### 1.5 Research questions

The following main research question and sub-questions guide the research project. The underlying issue that this research investigates is as follows:

"How might Professional Development, using a dialogic approach for early literacy training, transform beliefs and practices of pre-primary teachers from diverse language backgrounds?"

I have also discerned several specific sub-questions to elucidate the main question: The quantitative question of the study is:

1. In what ways can the theoretical orientation of pre-primary teachers in Namibia, as measured by the De Ford (1985) Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP), change as a result of targeted dialogic PD?

The validation hypothesis is: As measured by TORP on each of the 28 items, using a 5-point Likert scale, is there any significant difference in the scores on each item/question of teachers who participated in the pre/post-test survey before and after the PD?

The qualitative research questions of the study are as follow:

1. In what ways can early literacy PD be designed and enacted to improve early literacy teaching and learning?
2. What specific curricular features of the proposed PD experience are most powerful in supporting teachers' understanding of research based literacy practices in a multilingual environment?
3. As a result of teachers' participation in early literacy PD, what actual changes in literacy instruction and practice do trained pre-primary teachers self-report?

**1.6 Delimitations of the study**

This research was conducted in only two education regions of Namibia within a set timeframe, and collected data based on two 4-day PD training sessions offered in these regions. Pre-test/post-test survey data were collected before and after these training sessions from a total of 33 participants. The participating teachers from two regions may not be representative of pre-primary teachers in general, but the sample was selected within the framework of sampling for qualitative and quantitative studies. Since this PD for pre-primary teachers, using a dialogic approach to early literacy and language learning was presented for the first time, there are possibilities for improvement and expansion of the current curricular features and framework used for training. The findings of this study are not generalized to another PD program, social group or community of practice; however, the findings are transferable. Transferability was accomplished by adequately describing the sample and the settings where the study was conducted.

### 1.7 Significance of the study

The study benefits the greater demand for pre-primary professional development training in Namibia in the following ways: 1) Participating teachers gained skills and ESL knowledge from research-based text readings, 2) Discovered their strengths and weaknesses in terms of ESL and early literacy knowledge, 3) Acquired new pedagogical approaches and strategies for early literacy classroom practices, and 3) Became aware of their theoretical orientations towards reading (phonics, skills, and whole language) and how didactic beliefs influence teaching pre-primary learners to acquire early literacy. The study paves the way for further research to design similar projects in the field of early childhood education. Based on the evidence obtained, teachers, administrators, and curriculum developers can transform curriculum policy to address specific early childhood training needs for ESL teaching in multilingual contexts. Effective documenting of the results of teacher participation during training sessions allow for tracking over time to evaluate the impact of PD.

### 1.8 Research methodology

This study used a mixed-method design to collect and to analyse data from a variety of sources. The general methodological roadmap of Cobin and Strauss (1990; 1998), Gee (2006); Fairclough (2011); and Kress (2010) supported by www.NVivo.com guide rigorous data collection and analysis.

According to Teddlie and Tashakkori, (2002), mixed methods research is a procedure for collecting and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study to understand research questions. The researcher used quantitative methods to collect data by means of a pre-test/post-test survey and to develop and validate an observation checklist instrument designed for classroom observations. The pre/post-test design elicited data to assess teachers' theoretical orientation toward reading instruction and

examined baseline demographic information. The use of an observation checklist validated lesson observations with regard to dialogic teaching approaches used in classrooms that promote ESL language/early literacy learning.

The qualitative methods of this study documented a process using "educative research which views excluded groups such as teachers, students, or parents – as having the authority to produce knowledge" (Gitlin, 1990, p. 448). In this sense, the participants became co-researchers. The qualitative nature of the research aims at teacher empowerment and sees teachers as transformative intellectuals (Giroux, 1988 as cited by Sleeter, 1998).

The qualitative method of this study assessed new early literacy knowledge and teaching strategies gained through PD. Pre-primary teachers participated in focus group discussions, interviews, classroom observations, and an online forum after the face-to-face training session. Grounded Theory (GT) coding and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) tools examined emergent themes as well as micro-and macro linguistic structures of observation transcriptions. The main themes in the qualitative data emerged from constant comparative analysis of data to document the evolution of teachers' thinking through comments and reflective assertions. Pre-primary teachers reflected and dialogued on training topics, readings and classroom observations in a community of practice within the training context and an online forum. An online forum gave the researcher the opportunity to dialogue and explore language knowledge and social issues that teachers were likely to encounter in everyday classroom practice.

From an epistemological or theoretical stance, the researcher combined approaches with the central aim to develop knowledge. Caelli, Ray and Mill (2003) propose a rigorous criterion for the design and evaluation of qualitative studies which was embraced in the execution of this study. This design and evaluation criterion includes:

1) The theoretical positioning of the researcher, 2) Congruence between methodology and methods, 3) Strategies to establish rigor, and 4) An analytical lens through which data are examined. The major terms and definitions used in this study are clarified in the next discussion.

**1.9 Clarification of terms**

**Professional Development (PD):** It is a process of improving or increasing the capabilities of pre-primary literacy teachers through face-to-face and online training opportunities while they are participating in this study. Face-to-face and online training is also referred to as hybrid mode training. Teachers' development is possible when they develop an awareness of possibilities for inner change of beliefs. PD presents an opportunity for self-reflection, questioning old habits, becoming aware of alternative ways and to embrace new perspectives. These professional learning opportunities for teachers are situated in the teacher's context of pre-primary practice.

**Student**: The term student and learner will be used interchangeably in this study and refers to learners or students within a specific teaching and learning context.

**Pre-primary teachers**: The term refers to both early literacy teachers or pre-primary teachers.

**Sociocultural theory:** This theory stems from Vygotsky's (1978) and Bakhtin's (1986) work that stipulates that 'learning is socially constructed with language, the prime source of mediation' as it is acquired in culturally and historically situated human communities.

**Culturally relevant pedagogy**: Emphasizes the use of cultural knowledge, prior experiences, styles and strengths of culturally diverse learners for the development of intellectual, social, and emotional growth of the learner.

**Bilingualism:** Refers to competencies in two or more languages "to the extent required by his or her needs and those of the environment "(Paredes, 2008).

**Multilingual:** The ability to use several languages or when a person is able to use several languages with equal fluency.

**Home language**: Refers to the language learnt at home.

**Mother tongue**: Refers to the language which a person speaks every day and has grown up with.

**Diverse language background**: When people are from different cultural or language origin.

**Early literacy**: Refers to the conventional forms of literacy namely, early reading and writing. The term early literacy explains a child's knowledge of reading and writing skills before the child actually can read and write words. It is the basis for later communication skills and concept development, the skills and knowledge that are required for children's reading and writing development before school. Early literacy also refers to the child's foundational language skills such as print knowledge, phonological awareness, learning to write such as invented and name writing, and the development of oral language skills. The acquisition of early literacy skills facilitates later reading and learning.

**Emergent literacy**: The term emergent literacy is attributed from the work of Australian Marie Clay (1966). During the early phase, birth to five years, early reading and writing refers to as children's emergent literacy (Clay, 1966). Emergent literacy has become a pervasive theory in the study of early literacy (Hall, 1987; Strickland & Morrow, 1993; Sulzby, 1993; Teale & Sulzby, 1986). The term "emergent" implies that becoming literate involves growth along a continuum rather than the mastery of a series of discrete pre-reading skills (Clay, 1996; Crawford, 1995; Hall, 1987). Emergent

literacy is the basis for later concept development, and skills and knowledge that are required for children's reading and writing development before school.

**Discourse/discourse**: "Discourse with a capital D refers to as a combination of language and social practices such as, behaviour, values, ways of thinking, clothes, food, customs, perspectives within a specific group, discourse while the little "d" refers to as language in use. Discourse/discourse enacts and recognizes socially significant identities, relationships, meanings etc. "(Gee, 1999). Students are socialized into the discourse norms of classrooms. These norms then become societal mechanisms as students participate in the civic arena outside the classroom. Early literacy classrooms require teachers to bring deliberative discourse into realization. Pre-primary classrooms present an ideal opportunity to enact and negotiate power relations, and to build children's identity. As such, pre-primary learning environments are designed to resemble a community of practice where learning is enacted.

**Discourse Analysis**: Is 'an analysis approach that examines the social and ideological underpinnings in texts.'

**Critical discourse analysis (CDA)**: "Critical discourse analysis connects micro-analysis of actual spoken language and written texts to macro-analysis of societal discourses and power relationships by tracing patterns of repetition words, synonymous phrases, or other linguistic features" (Gee, 1999; Rogers, 2011).

**Dialogic teaching**: "Harnesses the power of talk that stimulates and extend student thinking to advance their learning and understanding. Dialogic teaching is distinct from the question-answer learning of 'traditional teaching. It requires interactions that encourage students to think, questions that invite more than retelling, and answers that are justified and built upon rather than merely received" (Well, 1999).

**Authoritarian Discourse:** Is the word of ancestors and others in authority that stands unquestioned (Bakhtin, 1981) and strives to replicate power relationships. It may invoke the past, but it is basically monologic speech that resists critique and is not open to questions or challenge to establish unilateral and absolute power. When counter discourses are valued and allowed, they become beneficial for both the individual and the community of practice. The enforcement of an authoritarian school/teacher renders collective and/or individual action powerless to challenge or to change things (Rogers, 2004).

**Re-voicing**: This means 'saying something someone else says in a higher or lower pitch to call attention to the specialness of the words. This technique is often seen in discourse style or voice analyses.' Bakhtin (1986) argues that all speech echoes the words of others with re-accentuation. Our words have been used by others and situated cultural meanings still resonate in the language itself.

**Stanza: '**A set of lines devoted to a single topic, event, image, or perspective' (Gee, 2005). This is a unit of analysis used in CDA.

**Power: '**Is the ability to impose one's will on others, even if those others resist in some way.' Power is about privilege – and can be used either to improve the human condition or to simply maintain control. Power is a two-edged sword for good and evil.

**Research-based texts:** Emphasize the consistent use of instructional methods that have been proven effective based on up-to-date research in specialised fields such as teaching and learning processes.

### 1.10 Chapter outline

The chapters of the study are presented as follows:

**Chapter 1** An overview of early literacy teacher education from an international and a national perspective is presented. Chapter 1 situates the study within a socio-cultural

framework. The study specifically looks at discipline specific ELL in Namibian pre-primary settings when harnessing linguistic formats to meaning making. This chapter also reveals the researchers intend for the PD, presents the rationale, purpose statement, limitations, research questions, acronyms and clarifications of terms.

**In Chapter 2** a review of literature related to the title of the study is outlined. This chapter examines gaps of knowledge in professional development models, and the conceptual and theoretical framework for professional development (PD) for early literacy teachers. Language is a prerequisite for literacy acquisition, and therefore PD training is framed within Vygotsky's (1978) 'sociocultural theory,' and Bakhtin's (1981, 1986) 'dialogic theory.' Finally, this chapter examines teacher's theoretical beliefs and the challenges of teacher preparation in the field of early literacy for pre-primary teachers.

**Chapter 3** discusses the selection of the research design, and outlines the methodology of the study. This chapter describes the research design in three phases; discusses the selection of participants, and data collection strategies. Chapter 3 also presents a detailed account of the training plan and procedures of PD. Lastly; the trustworthiness and ethics of the findings are discussed.

**Chapter 4** presents the data analysis of focus group discussions, participant interviews, and observation transcriptions. Lastly, the analysis integrates online forum data collected with classroom observation data to emphasize overlapping and divergent themes self-reflected by participating teachers. A brief overview of a document analysis of the national early literacy and training curricula is presented as secondary data in this chapter.

**Chapter 5** describes the quantitative data collected and analysed from the DeFord (1985) Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) instrument, and lesson observation checklist instrument.

**Chapter 6** summarizes the qualitative and quantitative findings that answer my research questions, and discusses the main themes.

**Chapter 7** presents the implications of the findings of this research for early literacy professional development (PD), a suggested framework for designing effective activities, curriculum outline for training, directions for further research, limitations, and conclusions of the study.

### 1.11 Conclusion

Chapter 1 situates the study within an international and national framework for ESL teaching. Field specific principles for early literacy development are highlighted for developmentally and culturally relevant instructional practices. This chapter also presents the rationale, purpose statement, research questions, limitations, significance, and clarification of terms. The next chapter presents a theoretical and conceptual framework of the literature review, an analysis of gaps in literature, and finally frames the study within a socio-cultural learning context.

# CHAPTER 2

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Introduction

This literature review examines Professional Development (PD) models from a national and international perspective and provides a conceptual and theoretical framework for PD of early literacy and language training. Language is a prerequisite for literacy acquisition; therefore, the researcher used both Vygotsky's (1978) 'sociocultural theory,' and Bakhtin's (1981, 1986) 'dialogic theory' as a theoretical lens to argue that reading and writing represent social and cultural constructions of language learning. When drawing on socio-cultural theories, theorists posit that in joint activity collaborators construct knowledge from participation in a community of practice (Rogoff, 1994). The tools of mind are formed in dialogue with others and oneself. This chapter critically reviews literature with regard to teachers' beliefs, early literacy knowledge, instruction, materials and resources, language learning and semiotics, and correlates dialogic versus monologic teaching practices. Transformative pedagogy in response to the quest for innovative training approaches is briefly outlined. Finally, a review of the challenges of teacher preparation in ESL and early literacy, particularly in multilingual contexts is presented. A critique of PD models in Namibia, South Africa, and from an international perspective is presented first.

## 2.2. Professional development (PD) models

### 2.2.1 PD in Namibia

Namibia has adopted a continuing PD model for pre-primary education reform. The nature of the PD I envision differs in approach to current PD practices and models alternative pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning in the pre-primary phase to enhance early literacy and language development. The current Namibian PD model

locates professional development within the daily realities of school and classroom (Nyambe & Hengari, 2015). Ball and Cohen's (1999) idea also support PD to develop effective teachers within the learning context of teachers' practices. These authors bring several dimensions to the fore: 1) teachers' engagement to practice, 2) reflection on practice with a more experienced peer, and 3) incorporating new approaches that support learning and teaching strategies into the daily routines of teaching. In their study, Nyambe and Hengari (2015) do not reveal how PD relates to school and classrooms. Grounding PD in the realities of school and the classroom seems to be an ideal approach for PD, but how to offer PD that impacts teaching practice for pre-primary teachers remains a challenge. When PD, as an alternative to formal teacher training, becomes a repeat of strategies from an old era, education reform could remain "the emperor's new clothes" being deprived of new empirical knowledge and best practice approaches. As in the fairy tale, only a child is honest enough to call out the reality of "the naked emperor." Real 'emperors' do not take offense or feel attacked.

### 2.2.2 PD in South Africa

From a South African perspective, PD initiatives are widely criticized for not having the desired outcomes on teaching and learning practices. These teaching and learning practices are not specified. Ono and Ferreira (2010) state that many models of professional development do not achieve their ambitious learning goals. For example, one-day workshops, not related to identified needs of teachers in a specific context, are unlikely to impact actual practice in layered or deep ways. On the other hand, there is research that argues that PD is still the best means to change teaching practice (Supovitz and Turner, 2000). Lack of adequate PD in education reform remains a challenge within the South African education context. Happo and Määttä (2011) stress the importance of early childhood educators reflecting on their work in order to become

experts in this field and they need to recognise that 'early childhood education and care can be seen as educational interaction taking place in young children's different living environments' (p. 91). These authors also do not indicate how early childhood teachers could be engaged to reflect on their teaching practices. Uno and Ferreira (2010) further highlight different purposes of professional development. These purposes include the following: 1) certification of unqualified teachers, 2) to upgrade knowledge of teachers, 3) preparation of teachers for new roles, 4) curriculum related dissemination or refresher courses, and 5) workshops, seminars, conferences and short courses. The review of literature identified strengths in the international PD review that follows.

### 2.2.3 International PD

Studies reviewed reveal that the success of reform initiatives greatly rely on the 'education qualifications and the effectiveness of classroom teachers.' Darling-Hammond (2003) reveals that

> Teacher expertise is one of the most important factors influencing student achievement…Teachers knowledge of a subject matter, student learning, and teaching methods are all important elements to teaching effectiveness and contribute greatly to teachers' impact on student learning. (p. 77)

As a result, teacher PD is a major factor in any systematic reform initiatives (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman & Yoon, 2001). Other studies, (e.g., Neuman & Cunningham, 2009; Bowman, Donovan & Burns, 2000), indicate that quality PD programmes are especially important if early literacy skills of children from low-income homes are to be improved. Neuman and Wright (2010) recognise that

> effective PD is specific and targeted and involves many opportunities for practice with feedback in the context of one's own practice. Such PD provides teachers

> with adequate time to reflect on their own practices, set goals, dialogue with others, and self-evaluate their teaching. (p.3)

Neuman and Cunningham (2009) indicate that a practice-based approach includes both PD coursework and coaching and would result in improvements specifically associated with quality early literacy activities. Such an approach honours the centrality of the local context in developing effective literacy strategies for varying groups of young children who have been acculturated into language pragmatics in vastly different ways. Coaching provides information and examples of evidence-based practice and feedback on how teachers can improve their instruction (International Reading Association, 2004 cited by Diamond, 2010).

The preparation of pre-primary teachers requires a systematic approach to PD. Neuman (1999) demonstrates that engaging early childhood educators in specialized training in storybook reading had a significant impact on children's receptive and expressive language and phonological awareness. Furthermore, Morrow and Casey (2004) report on the impact of PD on teachers' willingness to change the instructional environment and their teaching strategies. These authors focus on specific instructional activities: e.g. 1) teachers' reflections on positive outcomes, and 2) sharing constructive ideas for change. Research further reveals (Bowman, Donovan & Burns, 2001; Hayes, Grippe & Hall, 1999; Joyce & Showers, 1996) that programmes succeed when supported by administration, are cyclical in nature and provide for diverse teaching and learning needs.

PD efforts aimed at education reform have to meet the challenges of developing pre-primary teachers for a new agenda to reconstruct colonial perceptions of education in this field. There is no extant research on targeted PD for early literacy instruction for pre-primary teachers in Namibia. Even though there is growing interest in the use of

innovative approaches to support teaching and learning, there is also limited research on technologically mediated delivery of PD for early literacy teachers in Namibia. In the next review, I discuss the impact of teachers' beliefs on practice.

### 2.3 Teachers' beliefs

When examining teachers' instructional or teaching choices, it is important to consider the theoretical framework from which they are working. The theoretical framework on which teachers base instructional or teaching choices defines the outcomes of the instructional practice. According to Clark and Peterson (1986) and Munby, (1982) teachers' beliefs have a direct bearing on their instructional practices. Teachers' beliefs within a literacy context of ESL teaching make up an important part of the prior knowledge through which they perceive the instructional process and act upon information in the classroom. Teachers who are continuously exposed to "chalk and talk" as an instructional practice, carry on this instructional culture which can negatively affects generations to come. Furthermore, beliefs act as a filter through which a host of instructional judgments and decisions are made (Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Shavelson, 1983; Shavelson & Stern, 1981). "Theoretical orientation" as it pertains to reading is defined as a teacher's particular knowledge and belief system about reading and reading instruction, including those principles which guide teachers as they make instructional decisions (Haste & Burke, 1977). It is believed that teachers' classroom practice is guided by often unexamined beliefs. DeFord (1985) designed an instrument that defines these beliefs. Figure 2.1 outlines teachers' plans and actions that filter through beliefs.

**Figure 2.1**

*Teachers' plans and actions filter through beliefs.*

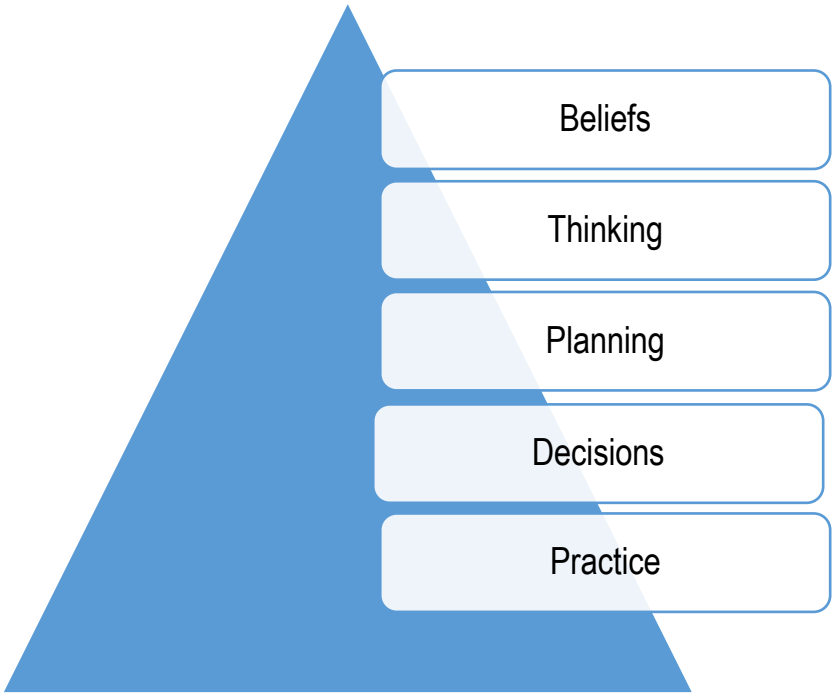



Figure 2.1 shows how teachers' beliefs affect their instructional practice through thinking, planning, decisions taken, and actual practice. The DeFord's (1985) theoretical orientation to reading profile (TORP) was used for this study to exam teacher participants' beliefs on literacy practice. Therefore, in my next review, I discuss this instrument in line with the constructs presented by the author. DeFord (1985) developed and validated the instrument to determine teachers' theoretical orientations to reading instruction. This instrument uses a Likert scale response to a set of assertions to measure the beliefs that teachers hold toward reading practices. DeFord's (1985) instrument uses a constructivist view that asserts that the knowledge one possesses has an impact on how one interprets others' behaviours, and thus also influences ones' actions (Magoon, 1977).

According to TORP, teachers fall into three categories of theoretical orientations towards teaching reading: 1) phonics, 2) skills, and or 3) whole language. I will first

discuss phonics as a theoretical orientation. In her examination, DeFord (1985) notes that the phonics construct emphasizes learning small language units with gradual movement toward whole word reading comprehension. A large amount of time is allocated for decoding isolated phonemes and letter patterns, while student texts introduce consonant-vowel combinations systematically (DeFord, 1985). Sight word instruction is only used for words not conforming to standard spelling rules, and fluency. Text comprehension is introduced after a foundation in letter-sound correspondence is built.

The second orientation, namely skills guides teachers towards literature, thus emphasizing story reading and text structure as a framework for dealing with smaller language units. The third orientation, the "whole language orientation" deals with shared reading and writing experiences (DeFord, 1985). Whole language has its roots in Vygotsky's zone of proximal development and emphasizes the relationship of a student's individual learning and his environment within a social context (Goodman, 1989; Vygotsky, 1978). Sacks and Mergendoller (1997) state that the whole language approach derived from writings of many well-known theorists in the field (e.g., Dewey, 1929; Piaget, 1952; Goodman & Goodman, 1979; Smith, 1988). The 'whole language approach' asserts that children learn language most effectively at their own development pace through social interaction in language rich environments and through exposure to quality literature. Whole language focuses on writing, children's literature, and authentic forms of assessment. This approach is in contrast with a phonics-oriented strategy in which children receive formal instruction emphasizing sound symbol correspondence. Teacher training in developing countries face several challenges to prepare teachers within a multilingual context. In the following review, I

examine basic early literacy learning content knowledge required for effective early literacy instructional strategies for practice.

## 2.4 Early literacy knowledge

Basic field specific early literacy knowledge equips teachers with skills to enact learning for both academic forms of mother tongue and English as a Second Language. Assel, Gunnewig, Landry, Smith and Swank (2006) focus on key foundational skills necessary for young learners to succeed in reading, conceptual knowledge, oral language comprehension, phonological awareness, letter knowledge and print knowledge. The figure below indicates these essentials of early literacy instruction.

**Figure 2.2**

*The 'essentials of early literacy instruction' (adapted from Roskos, Christie & Richgels, 2003).*

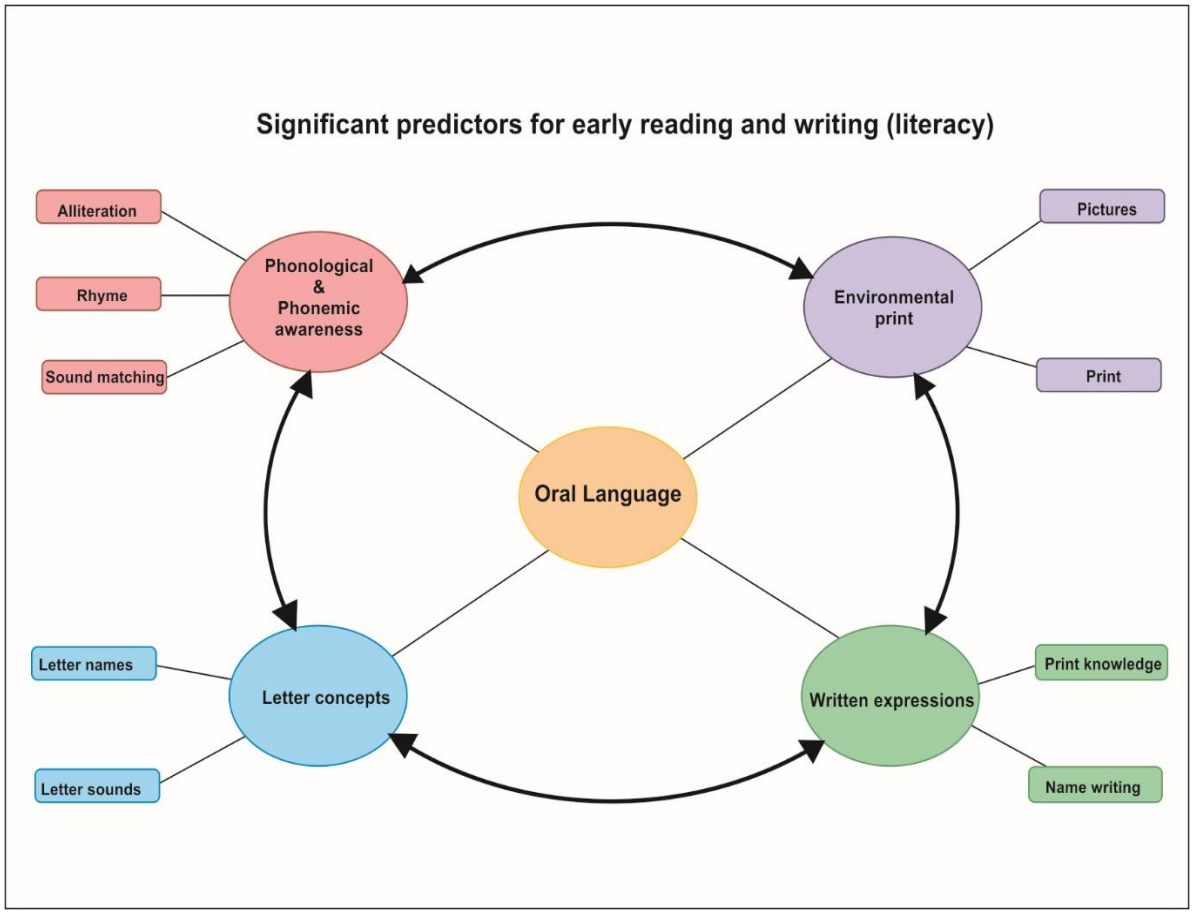


Figure 2.2 displays the significant predictors for early literacy practice. Teacher training must prepare teachers to become aware of the essentials of early literacy instruction for young children. Evidence shows that oral language abilities are closely related to the emergence of print knowledge and phonological awareness (Bowey & Patel, 1988). Phonological awareness refers to the way in which spoken language can be broken down and manipulated. It consists of a continuum of literacy skills from easiest, determining rhyming words and alliteration to the most difficult- phonemic awareness (Pittman & Dorel, 2014). The term 'phonological awareness' refers to the broad range of abilities related to awareness of the sound structure of language (Dickinson, Anastasopoulos, McCabe & Poe, 2003).

Some researchers relate the ability to manipulate sounds or phonemic awareness to reading development. Phonemes are the "smaller-than-syllable sounds that correspond roughly to individual letters" (Adams, 1990, p.40). In its finest form, a unit of sound is called a phoneme and are the smallest units of sound that distinguish words from each other. Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear phonemes. For example, to detect if two words begin or end with the same sound (McGee & Richgels, 2000). Hiebert and Raphael (1998) state that phonemic awareness involves the ability to focus on and manipulate discrete sounds, while phonics involves the connection between a written symbol and sound. The study of letter-sound relationships is called phonics. Each letter in the English alphabet is associated with at least one speech sound, but also with other speech sounds. For example, t, a, c or letter combinations such as, th, ch, ng etc are phonemes.

School provides the opportunity to gain phonological and phonemic skills when children might not have had the opportunity at home to nurture these skills. Stahl, Duffy-Hester and Dougherty (1998) indicate that good phonics instruction must 1)

develop the alphabet principle, 2) develop phonological awareness, 3) provide a thorough grounding in letter recognition, 4) not teach rules, 5) provide sufficient practice in reading words, 6) lead to automatic word recognition, and 7) be only one part of reading instruction. A study by Bowey (1994) examines kindergarten-aged children and found evidence of the interrelationships among phonological awareness, letter knowledge, word identification, and several measures of oral language (e.g., receptive vocabulary, sentence imitation). Alphabet knowledge becomes meaningful when learners are able to associate letters in specific contexts such as their names and the names of their friends. There are three dimensions of instruction that support letter naming: 1) pairing letters in contrastive (structural differences and similarities), 2) assuming a metacognitive stance, and 3) embedding letter naming in meaningful print use (Hiebert & Raphael, 1998).

When teachers teach letters in isolation, learners do not learn the relationship of letters to one another or to context with other letters that fosters reading. Gury (1994) found that through shared book reading, children's letter-naming abilities rose and their phonemic awareness or letter-sound awareness increased. Letter-sound correspondence is learned through exposure to books, and through daily activities to write. Extensive involvement in literacy activities are beneficial and provide the "basis for subsequent development of a variety of highly complex internal processes in children's thinking" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 90).

Written expression is the ability to communicate through ideas and information in written form. Berninger, Thomas and Raskind (2001) studied reading and writing in pre-primary and older children and found a significant interrelationship among reading and writing systems. Although reading and writing systems are highly interdependent, they draw on common language processes. Children's first writing attempts has its roots

in their growing desire to represent ideas and thoughts symbolically (Lenski, 2000). The development of children's writing begins through meaningful literacy activities.

Reviews of reading comprehension conceptualize comprehension as a complex cognitive process whereby a reader actively interacts with a text to construct meaning (Harris & Hodges, 1995). Second language learning is influenced by oral and print forms as well - i.e. meaning making with the reader's prior knowledge as a basis for meaning making. However, when pre-primary teachers lack educational qualifications that emphasize schooling concepts of the discipline, they may not be in a position to make meaning of empirical readings, dialogue, and guided practice with reflection to overcome this deficit. As a result, pre-primary learners do not have access to the kind of instruction and practice that is beneficial for them during their formative years to gain a literate discourse.

**2.5 Early literacy instruction**

In an early literacy pre-primary context, "teaching" encompasses modelling and interaction, rather than lecturing or telling (Hiebert & Raphael, 1998). When teaching young children, teachers need to apply various strategies to reach second language speakers in mini-lessons. Literacy involves using symbols and signs to communicate and assign meaning to objects and experiences (Notari-Sylverson, 2006). Teaching requires teachers to carefully plan classroom activities. "Meaning-focused work" involves teachers in comprehending, producing or interacting in the target activity (Nunan, 1989). This instructional cycle focuses on objectives, inputs, outputs, and lesson activities during the preparation of an early literacy learning task. In the following framework, Nunan, (1989) provides guidelines for the instructional planning process for second language teaching. The instructional planning process specifies both teacher and learners' roles in the instructional process for ESL instruction. When

teachers set clear lesson objectives that specify what both teacher and learner do, define inputs and outputs for instructional practice, and arrange classroom activities, explicit teaching can benefit ESL language learning. An adapted instructional planning process is presented in Figure 2.3.

**Figure 2.3**

*Instructional planning process (Nunan, 1989).*

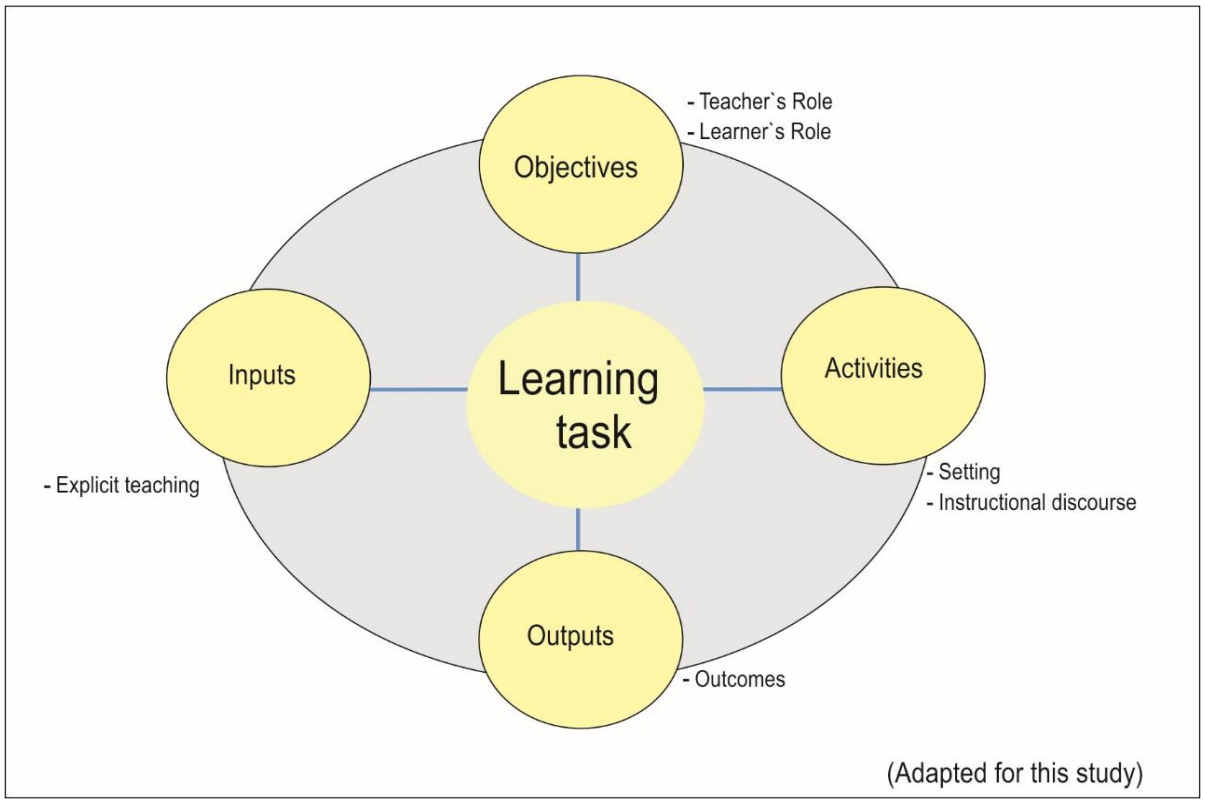



Figure 2.3 outlines the instructional planning process that facilitates ESL learning. In the next discussion, a perspective of language as a social semiotic resource for ESL instruction is given. There are many paths to making meaning and fostering understanding of text; therefore, the review focuses on knowledge of signs and symbols that are fundamental to early literacy and language learning.

### 2.5.1 Language learning and social semiotics

This study defines language as "the use of words within a specific context" (Aukerman, 2007). For language to be meaningful, one must be able to make sense of

words within a specific context. Making sense (in ELL) is a social process; it is an activity that is always situated within a cultural and historical context" (Bruner & Haste, 1987, p. 1). Language is the pre-requisite for early literacy instruction. Luke (2012) refers to the term literacy as reading and writing of text. Burke (1984) brings a semiotic perspective to the study of young children's literacy learning that shifts the thinking from adult conventions to child inventions. "Given the reading and writing responses of children we studied the multimodal nature of the linguistic sign is a key feature not only in literacy, but in literacy learning" (Haste, Woodard & Burke, 1984, p. 208).

"Semiotics" is an interdisciplinary field of study that examines how meaning is made through signs of all kinds - pictures, gestures, music - not just words (Siegel, 2006). According to Siegel (2006), Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) and Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) are linguists that are most closely associated with the development of semiotic thought in modern times. de Saussure (1857-1913) described a sign using terms that have entered ordinary usage: signifier (material form) and signified (concept). On the other hand, Peirce (1839-1914) is best known for his taxonomy of types of signs: index (direct connection), icon (resemblance), and symbol (connection that has been established).

On the other hand, Volosinov (1986) uses the idea of sign as a tool that exists in a social environment and in the mind of the individual almost simultaneously:

> A sign is a phenomenon of the external world. Both the sign itself and all the effects it produces...occur in the outer experience...Signs emerge only in the process of interaction between one individual consciousness and another. Volosinov maintains that the sign and its social situation are inextricably fused together. The sign cannot be separated from the social situation without relinquishing its nature as sign. (p. 37)

Volosinov maintains that the sign and its social situation are inextricably fused together. In fact, Volosinov goes even further when he asserts that

> The reality of the inner psyche is the same reality as the sign... By its very existential nature, the subjective psyche is to be localized somewhere between the organism and the outside world, the borderline separating these two spheres of reality. It is here that an encounter between the organism and the outside world takes place, but the encounter is not a physical one: the organism and the outside world meet here in the sign. (p. 26)

Clearly, Volosinov sees that language and language use in a social setting contain dynamics that are very complex. These views emphasize the importance of educators becoming aware of the power and value structures that are inherent within communities and community languages and how they operate in the social context (Paredes, 2008).

The goal of teacher education is to create a platform for educators to understand the complexity of early literacy within a multilingual society. An in depth understanding of language emphasizes the importance of language instruction for both pre-service and in-service training. Young learners are able to communicate through a variety of symbol systems. Sharing time in a pre-primary classroom (Michael, 1998) could be seen as a kind of oral preparation for literacy. Trained teachers play a key role in modelling alternative ways of communication with bilinguals. Since communication systems are rapidly changing beyond the narrow confinement of decoding and encoding print, alternative ways of communication have become necessary in changing times in a pre-primary classroom. In making the transition to literacy, both teachers and learners must learn more than sound/symbol correspondences and mechanical decoding skills. Increasingly, global business transactions make use of technology tools to bridge

language differences. Recognizing the interpretative nature of any cross-language negotiations becomes more critical in a growing multilingual world.

"Metalinguistic awareness" refers to the ability to reflect on the structure and properties of language. Learning a second language usually involves a conscious and deliberate effort, which promotes a level of linguistic awareness in a bilingual that is qualitatively different from that of a monolingual (Pang & Kamil, 2004; Vygotsky, 1962). Namibian children and teachers are coming from diverse language and ethnic backgrounds. To meet the educational needs of an increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse population, new spaces for multilingualism are needed (Layton-Cosguner, 2016). Through drawings and symbol systems metalinguistic awareness is enhanced. Layton-Cosguner (2016) states that the foundation for writing or emergent literacy begins with oral speech, and literate activities such as shared reading, and drawings that children engage into (Clay, 1975; Heath, 1983; Teale & Salzby, 1986). Teacher training must equip pre-primary teachers appropriately to render instructional support to develop evolving literacy skills. According to (Bourdieu, 1977 as cited by Evans, 2005), children's experience with multimodal texts is part of their cultural and literacy capital. However, the cultural context of the school and the classroom determines the extent to which other modes and forms of language are accepted and practiced to promote early literacy learning.

For Kress (2010), "the social semiotic theory is interested in meaning in all forms and meaning arises in social environments and social interactions" (p.54). Kress (2010) explains that the core unit of semiotics is the sign, a fusion of form and meaning. Kress brings a broader perspective to communication in general especially applicable for second language learning. For example, when a child draws circles and names this drawing "a car," this is a way in which the child interprets and makes socially

constructed meaning of the drawing. Kress (2010) argues that all signs are newly made and result from a metaphoric process which is a constructivist approach. All modes, such as recognized art, music, dance, drama, film or a combination of speech and action, are significant to shape and express the world in meaningful ways. Often, schools fail to recognize the alternative modes of representing knowledge available in culture and miss opportunities to build on native knowledge through dialogue and intentionally making connections to academic ways of knowing.

"Learning about written language is not just about learning new codes for representing meanings. It is about entering new social dialogues in an expanding life world" (Dyson, 2001b, p. 138). Therefore, social semiotics and its multimodal dimension have to do with meaning making. Social semiotics is also the process of sign-making in social environments, and the resources for meaning making and their potentials as signifiers in cultural and semiotic forms. The forms and function of instruction are largely determined by socio-cultural factors. A print-rich environment in a pre-primary classroom provides supportive experiences for mediation for both spoken and written language. In whole language theory, Goodman (1986) states that children's faculty with environmental print reflects their early print awareness and demonstrates the ability to derive meaning within context. Traditional environmental print is a source for word recognition and also serves as a meaningful mediation tool for literacy acquisition. Studies have found that many critical skills, such as phonological, and print knowledge, develop during the pre-primary phase, yet many young learners have limited access to high quality preschool experiences and thus begin formal schooling with stunted language and literacy skills (Wasik & Hindmann, 2011). Gettinger and Stoibe (2008) argue that PD supports early literacy development through high quality literacy and language rich environments.

There is a need for a study in Namibian pre-primary schools on how alternative forms of communication and more dialogic strategies might help second language teachers to manipulate semiotic tools and symbols in meaningful ways to present literacy experiences. In my next review, I contextualize bilingual teaching, and examine both Vygotsky's (1978) and Bakhtin's (1986) theories of learning.

## 2.6 Theoretical framework

Early literacy teachers within a multilingual language context face a number of challenges with regard to their own and their learners' meaning making: use of language as a mediating tool, using language and semiotic symbols, and using scaffolding as a dialogic teaching strategy. It is important to note that the majority of urban schools in Namibia use English as a Second Language and medium of instruction (Wolfaardt, 2005) even though a large number of African language speakers live in urban areas (NERA, 2000). The Ministry of Education (2012) reveals that there are approximately 4000 unqualified and under qualified teachers in the education system, 80 percent of whom are teaching in the early grades (junior primary level). Research reviewed for this study does not reveal significant evidence about the language proficiency of current pre-primary teachers. This research is designed to help fill this gap. An overview of the socio-cultural learning theory as central tenet of multilingual language learning is presented in the following review.

### 2.6.1 Socio-cultural theory: An overview

S**ocio-cultural theory** provides constructs that uncover reasons why some children learn a great deal about literacy prior to school entry and others not. Socio-cultural theory allows educators to look beyond blaming home and community environments to identify strategies that can be applied in school settings for children without prior

literacy experiences (Hiebert & Raphael, 2013). This study is based on the socio-cultural theory of Vygotsky (1962, 1978, 1987).

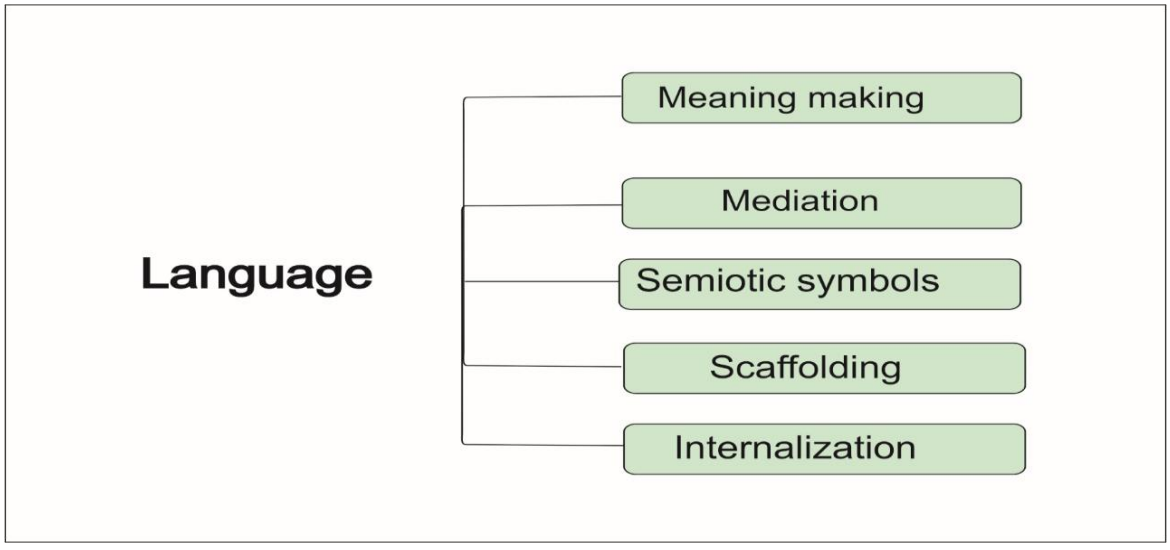
### 2.6.2 Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory

I used Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory to argue that language is the mediating tool for thought, and that situated social interaction is the foundation for learning and development. The current study uses Vygotsky's (1978) social cultural framework as a theoretical lens for professional development (PD) to draw teachers' attention to meaning making and the use of oral language and relational dialogue as tools that foster early literacy acquisition.

This review uses the socio-cultural framework to highlight the use of meaning making, mediation, semiotic symbols, and internalization within an oral language learning context. Scaffolding is used as an instructional strategy to foster meaning making. I discuss meaning making through the process of internalization as a key tenet for this study first. Figure 2.4 provides a conceptual framework for my review of literature within Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory.

**Figure 2.4**

*Vygotsky's (1978) theoretical framework.*



### 2.6.3 Meaning making perspective

The socio-cultural theory views language as fundamental to thinking and learning (Mecer & Littleton, 2007; Vygotsky, 1968; Wells, 1999). According to Vygotsky's (1978) theory, oral language skills, acquired socially in a situated human community of practice, enable us to develop and organize our thoughts to reason, to plan and to reflect on our actions. Both Bakhtin (1981) and Vygotsky (1978) hold strong views on meaning making within the classroom context. In the next review, I draw on Vygotsky's (1978) perspectives to discuss the process of meaning making and internalization.

According to Vygotsky (1978), learning involves two processes, one on a social level with others and later within ourselves: interpersonally and then intrapersonally or internally. The idea of Vygotsky's theory links the internal or psychological development to the external, which is the social and cultural development as stated in his famous quote:

> Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals. (Vygotsky, 1978, p.57)

Vygotsky argues that there is an inherent relationship between outside and inside activity, but that it is a developmental relationship in which the major issue is how external and internal processes are transformed to create internal processes in preparation of external activity. When teachers interact within a social and cultural context they internalize useful information that transforms their perspectives on early literacy. Literacy involves the use of a set of higher-level psychological processes both in

the manner in which it is acquired and in the functions in which it allows human beings to accomplish oral and written competence.

School learning pulls development along by exposing young children to the cultural body of knowledge developed over time and in this way, relates literacy in a major way to parenting and teaching styles of discourse as researched by Heath (1991) in *Ways with Words* (1983) and Bruner (1985) *Child's Talk*. School provides a platform to emphasise the role of the teacher in children's learning of scientific concepts, such as literacy. Bilingual learners, who come from diverse minority cultural and linguistic backgrounds are not less capable than their affluent peers with educated parents of becoming successful learners. Heath (1983) states that schools are less prepared to handle children from non-mainstream families in her well-known book *Ways with words* which reports on acculturation into language by children in working class, middle class and Black communities in the USA. By making language usage in varying cultural communities the actual subject of study in schools, young children of both affluent and poor backgrounds improved their learning outcomes. Therefore, it is appropriate to address the needs of school communities with PD for teachers and to equip them with pedagogical knowledge and instructional skills to teach bilingual learners within a multilingual context. Bruner's concept of "Peek-a-Boo" looks carefully at games and its importance in early literacy meaning making. This concept emphasizes 'voice' and interaction with an adult when learning language. Bruner's (1985) theory aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory in terms of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), scaffolding, and learning within a social community. The concept of ZPD represents individual differences in potential learning when a more knowledgeable person supports or scaffolds the learning with questions and prompts. Individual

independent paper/pencil tests fail to capture this potential for understanding, especially in literacy limited children and early literacy contexts.

Oral language as a mediational tool to thinking is used to get things done in a social, cultural and historic community of speakers and forms the tools of mind in an individual. Vygotsky (1968) emphasizes the primacy of language in thinking, and indicates that mind comes into existence through language and thought" (p. 218). PD for early literacy teachers develops their cognitive capacities, as they internalize oral and written language practices from a social and cultural-external plane - to an individual-internal plane/psychological plane (Vygotsky, 1978). As teachers try to make sense of new knowledge shared with peers in a dialogic PD, teachers can open themselves to new ways of framing the challenges of successful literacy development through reading, reflection and close observation of practice with supports such as language mediation.

### 2.6.4 Language as a mediating tool

A primary aspect of Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory is "mediation." Both Vygotsky's (1978) and Bakhtin's (1981) theories address perspectives of language as a mediating tool in the discourse of language. Language starts as social speech, and in dialogue. Vygotsky, (1978) like his contemporary, Bakhtin (1981), considers all language, spoken and written, as dialogical rather than monological. Bakhtin (1981) and Volosinov (1986) both acknowledge that authoritarian speech is meant to be monologic and does not want an answering word or to lay down a bridge to another's meaning. Bakhtin (1981) views authoritarian discourse as situated in socio-historical contexts of power, not subject to easily change; institutionalized discourse such as "religious dogma" or "acknowledged scientific truth" or even "a foreign language" (p. 342-3) can have authoritarian power depending on the purpose of the speaker. Both teachers and learners become objects of authoritarian discourse within the school as an institution

when the authority of a top-down administration silences other voices, generating feelings of powerlessness in both teachers and learners. Classroom discourse deeply impacts the possibility of dialogic language learning.

Vygotsky's (1978) concept of "mediation" is central to second language learning. According to this concept, higher cognitive functions are mediated through language and other semiotic artefacts. Cole and Wertsch (1996) regard language as the tool of tools that not only helps us to formulate our thoughts, but also fundamentally transforms individual cognition. PD as a mediating tool could guide early literacy teachers on how to use the practical application of language, for example, story reading as an interactive platform for oral language comprehension. Teacher-learner or learner-learner dialogue is fostered when both teacher and learner react to the story and each other's ideas and meaning - give reasons for thought, self-correct answers, or have alternative opinions than those of their peers or the teacher.

Vygotsky (1978) argues that the human mind develops through an interaction of natural, individual and social forces that surrounds the person. The integral component of this development is the acquisition of tool use and the ability to "read" signs to mediate one's thinking. Early literacy readings provide pathways to literacy acquisition and guide teachers in practical ways. Depending on the instructional goals, teachers could use different semiotic signs to ignite learners' thinking. Vygotsky's (1978) perspective of mediation draws teachers' attention to the use of practical tools that could advance early literacy acquisition. Caughlan (2013) refers to practical tools as the organized space in a classroom, to organize interaction, positioning of learners, and teachers' interaction with the intent to mediate dialogically organized instruction among others. Therefore, PD can enhance teacher's effective scaffolding to benefit ESL instruction modelled through planned classroom activities.

**2.7 Scaffolding as dialogic teaching strategy**

Using a variety of teaching strategies to scaffold early literacy learning can provide learners support as they master new skills (Bordova, Leong, Norford & Paynter, 2003). The notion of "scaffolding" is situated within Vygotsky's theory of instruction that emphasizes the importance of delivering instruction that advances a child's current level of skill with the support of a more knowledgeable other. Whole-class or small group activities enable social interaction that stimulates cognitive development. Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) label interactions when adults guide children to higher levels of processing as *scaffolding*. The term "scaffolding" describes and explains the role of adults or more knowledgeable peers in guiding children's learning and development within individual zones of proximal development (ZPD's) (Daniels, 2001; Hammond, 2002; Stone, 1998; Wells, 1999). This definition supports the view of Pentimonti and Justice (2009) who argue that scaffolding is a process through which one provides support to learners to enable them to complete a task or activity that is currently beyond their independent capacities. When teacher's model tasks and activities and learners still need clarification, scaffolding is a useful strategy to advance understanding.

Scaffolding occurs within the ZPD, and allows for collaboration to achieve a joint solution to a problem. Wells (1999) refers to scaffolding as "a way of operationalizing Vygotsky's (1987) concept of working in the zone of proximal development" (p.127). The ZPD refers to the distance between children's "actual" and "potential" levels of development (Vygotsky, 1978). When children independently solve problems, they function at the "actual" level of development. Justice and Ezell (2001) indicate that some children may identify all alphabet letters, while others know very few concepts about print (e.g. alphabet knowledge, directionality of print, concept of word) whereas

others know a great deal. PD prepares teachers to use a variety of scaffolding strategies that meet the individual and collective needs of young learners. Children who come from minimal literacy homes can still be engaged in dialogue about ideas and given experiences that can pull development along. The vocabulary children bring to school varies dramatically depending on the education and resources of parents and communities, yet they all have unique and important voices that need to be nurtured and expanded by scaffolding the words and structure that support value for expression and sharing. Learning to name and value the meaningfulness of one's own experiences helps level economic and social factors that shape one's identity as learner and student.

Vygotsky's (1978) principle of effective instruction includes a concern for learner's potential development. Learners from economically disadvantaged homes have their own 'funds of knowledge' such as gardening, caring for animals, religious practices, popular culture or media (Dyson, 2002, Marsh, 2000). When teachers are aware of learner's culture, and where they are along the continuum of knowledge and language acquisition, they may be in a better position to advance young learners to new levels of understanding. Successful scaffolding requires teachers to integrate information from various social and cultural sources in the classroom. Both Vygotsky's (1978,1968,1962) and Bakhtin's (1981, 1986) theories provide a framework for PD of early literacy teachers, and guides them to see the importance of language in children's early literacy development to impact early literacy learning. Both theories point out the reciprocal relationships that could be fostered through mediation, the use of cultural artefacts, signs and symbols, and mediating tools such as scaffolding strategies for early literacy learning. Teachers play a key role in modelling alternative ways of communication to enhance second language and literacy skills within a sociocultural learning context. The use of scaffolding is helpful to increase cognitive abilities and dialogic teaching. When

teachers realize the role of cultural systems of interpretation mediated through language, they can apply practical solutions to possible classrooms problems associated with early literacy and bilingual dilemmas. Figure 2.5 conceptualises Bakhtin's (1986) theory of language learning.

**2.8 Bakhtin's (1986) dialogic theory**

**Figure 2.5**

*Bakhtin's (1986) dialogic theory*

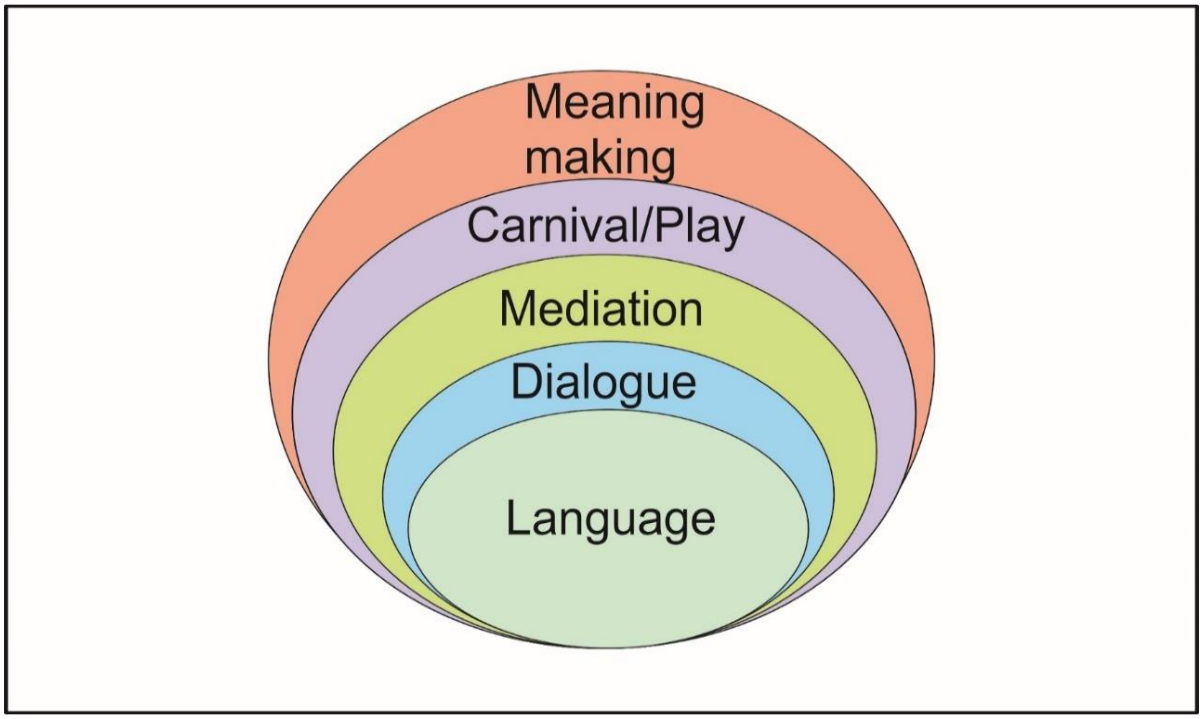



Figure 2.5 guides my discussion within the context of English Second Language instruction for pre-primary teaching purposes. This figure highlights dialogue, mediation, carnival/play, and meaning making as key constructs for ESL learning within Bakhtin's (1986) framework of learning.

Bakhtin's (1981, 1986) dialogic theory provides the discourse of second language instruction and provides a critical view of early literacy acquisition and second language learning. Bakhtin's (1981) philosophical argument claims that making meaning is a

dialogic process between self and others in relation to culture, history, and other contexts, real or imagined. “Dialogicality” as a term meant to capture the relational nature of all texts (Koschmann, 1999). Other researchers, Wertch and Smolka (1993) describe dialogicality as “the various ways in which two or more voices come into contact” (p.73); this means that two voices interanimate one another. In its simplest definition, dialogue is a conversation between two or more people, but this includes dialogic readings of text (authorial voice), interior dialogic utterances within our own consciousness (reflection), etc. Learning about the way today’s words are shaped and defined by past words and, ultimately, predict possible conversations of tomorrow highlights and dignifies the importance of utterances in everyday interactions.

Writing is a form of dialogue. For young children, learning to write involves work of imagination on the part of both teacher and learner (Dyson, 1999). When children learn to write, it means they are also learning cultural ways of knowing and situated social and intellectual skills.

Layton-Cosguner (2016), in her research on multilingual writers at a language immersion school in the US, reports on writing as second order symbolism. Layton-Cosguner (2016) cited Vygotsky (1978) and explained that unlike learning oral speech which is first order symbolism, learning to write, particularly academic writing, involves second order symbolism; it is more abstract and removed from our immediate needs to communicate. Bakhtin’s concept of *heteroglossia* applies to studying multilingual children’s writing and identity development. Layton-Cosguner (2016) refers to the term *heteroglossia* in the context which governs the meaning of utterances. This means that our utterances contain the voices of others – parents, ministers, heroes, enemies, etc.- within the very fabric of our choice of language and the illocutionary force or meaning we intend to deliver to a particular audience in order to have a particular

affect. In this sense, a word is always uttered in a particular social, historical context and "will have a meaning different than it would have in any other conditions" (Holquist, 1981, p. 428). Bakhtin explains that it is the process of taking words from other contexts and making them our own that leads to agency as writers, speakers and listeners.

Second language teachers face many behavioural challenges when teaching bilingual learners. Learners may act out, do nothing, or transform or re-create the context of the activity through "dialogic imagination" (Bakhtin, 1981). These behavioural challenges might be attributed to learners' inability to cope with the linguistic demands of second language learning. No wonder these learners who cannot cope with linguistic demands or cannot re-create learning content, are labelled deficit model learners. Yet teachers, who know how to build on the affordances of multilingual skills can transform such challenges into opportunities for growth. Often speech and writing samples will combine or mix multiple vocabularies and syntax. Teachers may assess these outputs as learning challenges.

Bakhtin (1981) studied chronotopes or dialogically constructed imagined or figured worlds. The discourse of instruction emerges from Bakhtin's (1986) idea of dialogism, but also in his notion of carnival. Carnival allows for a collapsing of social planes by turning the social order upside down (Da Silva Iddings & McCafferty, 2007). Different forms of carnival are largely enacted through various forms of language and strategies employed by literacy teachers such as playfulness, acting out/drama, parody or satire. These involve the use of rhyme, rhythm, song, repetition, substitution, and forms of verbal humour which is an important basis for literacy acquisition in pre-primary classrooms.

Young learners spontaneously appropriate words used by other people, concepts in print, phonemic awareness, and letter naming to eventually become independent

readers and writers. These meaning situated signs are born in dialogue (Bakhtin, 1981), and are the basis for children's "inner speech"- meaning "to capacitate them to think with words" (Genishi & Dyson, 2009, p. 83). The articulation of this possible self is a child's appropriation of cultural texts, including literal voices (i.e., "speaking personalities") (Bakhtin, 1981, p.434).

Through play, children learn, and become self-regulated members of a given classroom community. Play is essential to developing and organizing language capacity. When using Bakhtin's (1986) carnival square, teachers cultivate an intimate, playful, and unceremonious atmosphere in the classroom. Once children occupy this carnival square space, they are able to participate in a wide range of roles, and can therefore collaborate meaningfully, and enjoy a sense of agency as English second language learners to transform teachers' views of them as bilingual or ELL's. Dialogic teaching does not imply the use of dialogue only in a classroom. Instead, it entails teachers having a broad pedagogical repertoire of language patterns to foster dialogue (Alexander, 2008; O'Connor and Michaels, 2007). There is a need for the use of an alternative pedagogical approach that fosters early literacy acquisition in bilingual classrooms. PD allows teachers to develop language knowledge and teaching skills to conceive of teaching in significantly different ways than the traditional monologic classrooms where teacher talk is pivotal and the only 'right' answers reside in the teacher. The next review focuses on dialogic teaching for improved early literacy practices.

**2.9 Dialogic teaching approach**

Alexander (2010) reveals that dialogic teaching is not just any talk. It is distinct from the question-answer and listen-tell routines of traditional teaching. In a comparison, Lyle (2008) distinguishes monolgic and dialogic teaching approaches in the following

way. Common features of monologic teaching are 1) transmission of knowledge to learners 2) the teacher in firm controls of teaching and the goals of talk, and 3) communication geared towards achieving the teachers' goals. Research reveals that when engaging learners in dialogue about complex classroom issues, teachers continue to dominate classroom discussions, avoid contestable issues, and require students to mimic the teacher's thinking rather than to think for themselves (Alexander, 2008). The use of dialogue as a teaching approach shifts the attention to transformative ways of instruction, and language learning discourse. "Meaning making" is a central tenet of second language learning, therefore an interactive teaching approach has transformative potential for learners' cognitive development.

Researchers, (Alexander, 2006; Lipman, 2003; Reznitskaya et al, 2009; Soter et al., 2008; Wegerif et al., 1999; and Wells, 1999) confirm that "a dialogic approach" emphasises the power of talk to further students' thinking, understanding, problem solving and writing. Furthermore, the pedagogy of dialogic teaching strengthens the importance of social learning through teacher-learner and learner-learner dialogue. Talk is central to the process in which learners are given the opportunity to assume greater control over their own learning by initiating ideas and responses to shape any verbal agenda within the classroom (Alexander, 2006). While using a dialogic teaching approach, teachers must be aware of different patterns of classroom discourse and be equipped with teaching strategies to organize instruction to meet specific pedagogical goals. In her ethnographic study, Heath (1983) suggests strategies for teachers in schools who complain about learners who do not participate in lessons: 1) Start from what is known for learners to connect with content, 2) Provide opportunities for learners to practice new words, first out of the public arena with a partner and/or also on audiotape, and then in actual lessons, 3) Go on to new kinds of talk, still attribute

familiar content and provide peer models, available for repeated hearings and audio cassettes, and 4) talk with children about talk including studying 'talk' around them in various contexts. Learning to code switch then makes sense rather than judge some talk as superior. Teaching bilinguals shifts the attention from teachers' talk to learners' access to knowledge and forms of language to include them in a community of practice. Language practices should be a major topic of inquiry with appreciation for the richness of access to multiple discourses such as instructional choices and teachers' beliefs toward reading instruction. The lack of teachers' basic early literacy knowledge affects learners' overall literacy development and teachers' ability to reflect on practice. In the next discussion, I review reflective practice as an outcome of effective PD.

**2.10 Reflective practice**

Reflective dialogue, in face-to-face and online PD platforms allowed participating pre-primary teachers to discuss, and to evaluate classroom practices and early literacy knowledge. Additionally, modelling dialogic teaching strategies may increase pre-primary teachers' participation and engagement in PD learning environments. Self-reflection is a fundamental aspect of classroom teaching and learning. Moon (1999) defines reflection as integral to a deep approach to learning that plays an important role not only in the enhancement of learning, but also professional practice.

> … reflection is a mental process with purpose and/or outcome in which manipulation of meaning is applied to relatively complicated or unstructured ideas in learning or to problems for which there is no obvious solution. (Moon, 1999, p.161)

The purpose of reflecting is to act in a manner based on professional knowledge rather than habit, tradition, or impulse … or by applying knowledge without thorough analysis (Samaras & Gismondi, 1998). Recent research studies (Bos, Chard, Dickson,

Mather, & Podhajski, 2001; McCutchen & Berninger, 1999; Moats & Lyon, 1996; Spear-Swerling & Brucker, 2003) document that many pre-primary teachers have difficulty modelling the most basic literacy skills within an early literacy classroom such as oral language comprehension, phonological awareness, and print and alphabet knowledge. Therefore, pre-primary teachers should be prepared to systematically plan short lessons that reveal explicit language content from which young learners can make meaning and gain linguistically.

**2.11 Explicit early literacy instruction**

The term "explicit" can be defined in different ways. On the one hand, explicit means being clear—being precise in explaining what something means or how something works (Maloch & Bomer, 2013). Justice et al. (2003) show that increases in children's participation in classroom-based literacy experiences characterized by explicit, and purposeful experiences with print and sound can accelerate emergent literacy development. Further, Justice et al. (2012) show that,

> High quality literacy instruction features systematic and explicit direct instruction that teaches children about code-based characteristics of written language to include both phonological and print structures. (p.53)

Systematically refers to the teachers' organization and sequencing of lessons so that they "reveal the logic of the alphabet system" (p.74), whereas 'explicitness' refers to teachers use of clear terminology that focuses children's attention on the concepts being taught (Adams, 2002). Another feature of high quality literacy instruction is its purposefulness and functionality which refers to teachers' efforts to attach decontextualized code-based aspects of learning instruction to meaning and comprehension (Justice et al. 2003). Instruction ought to build on second language learners' knowledge and experiences—for instance, by making connections between

school and community-based knowledge sources (Moll, 1994). Systematic and explicit instruction linked to learners' experiences can transform meaning for ELL's.

### 2.11.1 Transformative instruction

Teaching face-to-face and online, while using transformative pedagogy became imperative in response to the education needs for early literacy teaching in multilingual contexts. Meyers (2008) indicates that transformative pedagogy include: 1) creating a safe learning environment, 2) encouraging students to think about their experiences, beliefs, and biases, and 3) using teaching strategies that promote student engagement and participation of students amongst others. Educators remain responsible to create this environment for participation and help students to self-reflect, connect experiences with real classroom issues, value learning from each other and from course material. The expansion of PD online, may attract a greater number of pre-primary teachers that could benefit from dialogic training that differs from the "banking model" of teaching (Freire, 1990) in which instructors mostly rely on lectures and consider students primarily as recipients of information in the educational process.

## 2.12 Instructional materials/resources

PD needs to model the use of materials that support student learning and effective teaching of basic early language and literacy. Vygotsky (1994) describes learning as being embedded within teaching events as a child or adult interacts with peers, objects, and events in the environment. Meaning making is a central tenet of the socio-cultural theory. Bomer (2003) indicates that the resources needed to create a range of texts is of prime importance if educators are to provide materials that support children's meaning making. Further research reviewed (Pang & Kamil, 2004) addresses specific issues of second language instructional materials. Having access to culturally rich materials for early literacy instruction is an important aspect for second language classrooms. In this

way, learners can build on their "funds of knowledge" (Moll, et al., 1992). Evans (2005) reports on the inclusion of media in the early year's curriculum, opportunities to engage young learners in different formats of media that advance language and literacy learning. The use of alternative ways to foster learning requires administrative support for the provision of resources. Saltmarsh (2007) emphasizes texts and early childhood in an economic context. Innovative practices extend knowledge when applied effectively during teaching and learning, while at the same time raising questions about current curriculum limitations for early literacy instruction and resources. With the introduction of online learning possibilities, there are increased possibilities to expand traditional classroom participation to allow for convenient participation and the use of online resources within the virtual space. In transformative education, communities of practice play an important role.

**2. 13 PD and learning in communities of practice**

In the same way that young learners benefit from interactions with others, teachers' learning is also enhanced through interactions with others. Effective communities of learning provide the most effective type of PD (Stigler & Hiebert, 1999). A fundamental aspect of the sociocultural theory, based on the work of Vygotsky (1978), is that higher order functions develop out of social interaction. Social interaction is the cornerstone of learning and development when teachers interact with colleagues or more knowledgeable others. Early literacy PD allows teachers to engage in communities of practice over time. They prepare and observe each other's lessons, communicate and interact with each other as they reflect on teaching practices. Some of the important aspects that one has to consider for PD are 1) time for reflection 2) opportunities for scaffolding from experienced or knowledgeable others, and 3) opportunities to engage in reflective conversations with participants. It is important to note that even though

Vygotsky's theory was derived from working with and observing children, this theory also applies to adults.

The term *communities of practice* (Lave, 1996) diverts the primary focus to people who are coming together around specific tasks in situated practices. The exchange of ideas in a community of practice allows for the combination of intellectual resources to collectively make meaning and to solve learning problems. As teachers reflect on their teaching practice, the instruction of their peers, and learners' literacy use, they identify questions or concerns that may be helpful when they deconstruct old ways to apply new knowledge and strategies. In these settings, "productive action and understanding are dialectically related" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p.102). In *communities of learners* (Rogoff, 1990, 1994) the primary focus is on the notion of learning-as/through social-interaction, where knowledge is not a commodity in the head of an individual learner, but instead lies between people; that is, it is an ongoing process of co-constructing meanings and understanding through interaction. Rogoff (1990) deconstructs the role of apprenticeships in learning in cultures with few print resources. Her work highlights the importance of experiential opportunities to acculturate into literate identities.

For teachers, participation in PD is a collaborative meaning making event that fosters language learning. Lave and Wenger (1991) emphasize the need for an "activity system" to be oriented deliberately towards learning and development – rather than an exclusive orientation toward production- in order to function as a context for apprenticeship and continuing professional development. Participation in professional learning communities affords the opportunity to learn from peers and benefit from the experience of others. Personal motivation and development are related to a position in an activity context, a commitment to the ideal forms inspiring this activity, and to identify the actor as a participant in this activity (Wenger, 1998). The close association

of action and meaning in Vygotsky's theory suggests that apprentices will have to orient themselves towards the meaning of teaching informing the practice in which they become participants (van Huizen, van Oers, & Wubbels, 2005). "Learning" is a process of apprenticeship and internalization in which skills and knowledge are transformed from the social into the cognitive plane for those who are learning.

Contrary to the above idea, "teacher education is often understood as helping individuals become teachers whereas learning how to teach is described as a process of transposing skills onto persons….so that the teacher education becomes [a project] of transposition rather than transformation" (Sumara & Luce-Kapler, 1996, p. 67). Unlike this perspective of teacher education, PD for early literacy involves aspects of practice from theoretical perspectives, requesting teachers to apply these perspectives to classroom practice while engaging in dialogue and reflection. From these experiences, teachers construct their own understanding of their role as early literacy teachers while participating in learning as active agents. The purpose of engaging teachers with reading texts is to guide them towards systems of meaning, utilizing new techniques and making choices while applying new pedagogies. The next review shed light on teacher preparation challenges.

### 2.14 Teacher preparation challenges

"The lack of training in teaching second languages is a serious weakness of teacher education in many developing countries" (Eisemon, 1992, p. 37). There is a need for teachers to be prepared in the language(s) learners speak and understand, as well as the language of instruction, in this case English as a second language. Pang and Kamil (2004) highlight the importance of teacher education and its impact on learning outcomes. Teachers are likely to need training in reading and writing their own languages, as well as in the pedagogical vocabulary they will need to teach academic

content (UNICEF, 2016). While some progress has been made to improve the quality of teacher effectiveness in Namibian classrooms, more needs to be done in the field of pre-primary teacher education.

Different factors contribute toward learners' success in school. Many researchers emphasise that a teacher's capacity to teach effectively is among the most important factors that influence school success (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002; Nye, Konstantopoulos, & Hedges, 2004. Research reviewed for this study indicates that teachers with many years of experience can provide a warm, positive classroom environment, yet knowing new teaching strategies related to how to promote literacy in the classroom is necessary to ensure reading and writing competence and thus learners' success (Bodrova et al., 2003). Constructivist ideas on the constitutive role of language in learning (Bruner, 1986) provide some insight as to the way in which the lack of language proficiency may constrain classroom discourse, classroom interaction, and the development of thinking skills. The literature review reveals limitations in terms of research in the field of ELL and teacher training. Thus, the study seeks to fill this gap in the literature to find a link between teachers' beliefs and classroom practices, and aspects of instruction, such as professional development to support classroom practices that could transform traditional approaches into innovative outcomes for early literacy practice.

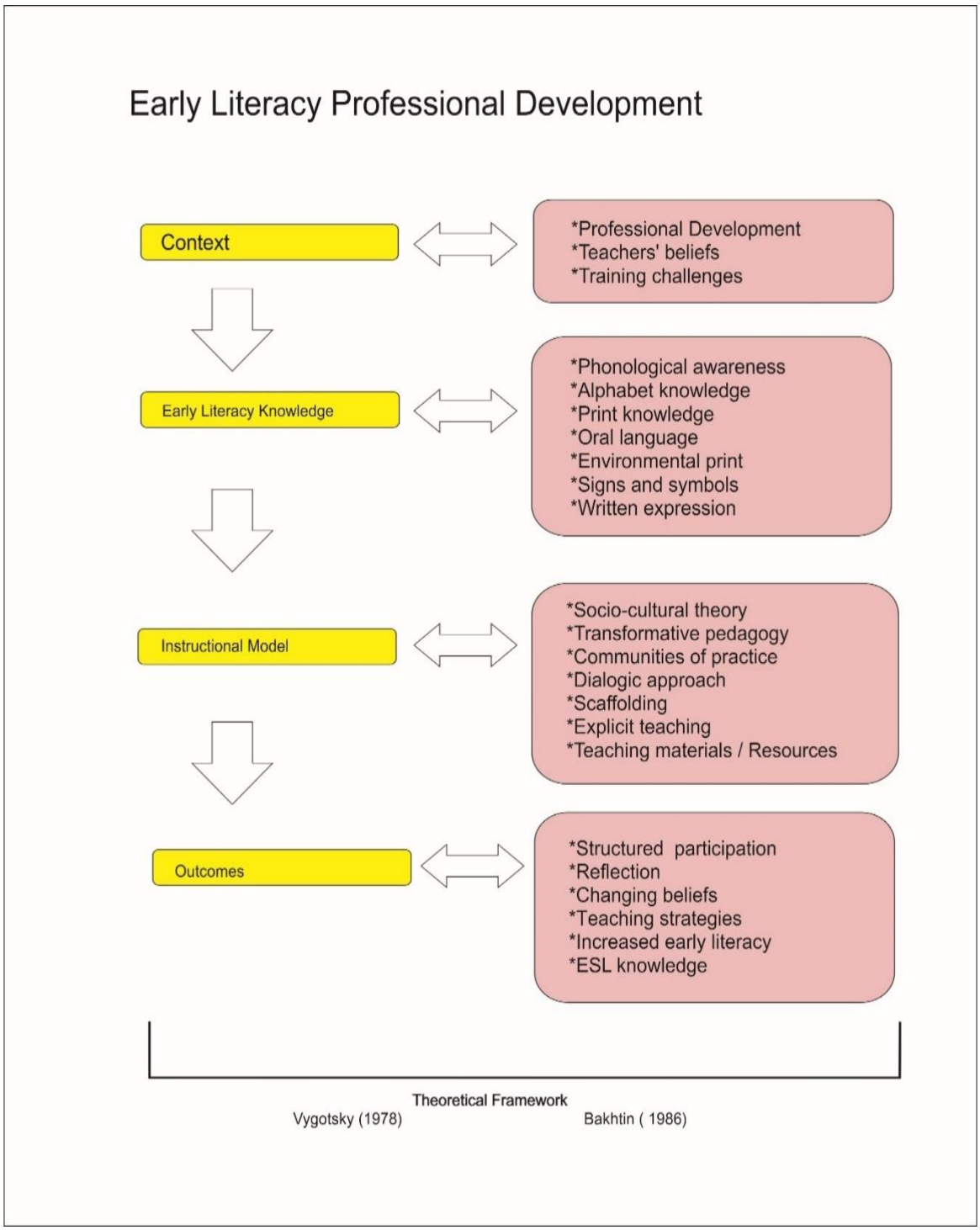
**2.15 Synthesis of literature review**

Consistent patterns in the literature reviewed (Berninger & McCutchen, 1999; Bos, Chard, Dickson, Mather & Podhajski, 2001; Moats & Lyon, 1996; Spear-Swerling & Brucker, 2003) show teachers' lack of early literacy knowledge. Although most international studies on first language acquisition and PD for early years teachers were done, no explicit research for early years language practitioners investigated early

literacy PD and ESL within the Namibian or South African context. Major weaknesses in the literature review confirmed that there is a need for a critical research study on early literacy PD that uses empirical readings on essential early literacy aspects while using technology mediated approaches to transform personal perceptions and teaching practice as a result. The review of literature revealed that teachers' beliefs play an important role in teaching and learning processes. Most of these studies such as (DeFord, 1985; Haste & Burke, 1977), have confirmed that teachers' beliefs affect their instructional practices. In a comparative analysis, Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) infer that unless teachers become clear of their beliefs, they will continue to make decisions that are conditioned rather than conscious when teaching. Furthermore, studies of early literacy knowledge (Pittman & Dorel, 2014; Berninger, Thomas and Raskind, 2001) and studies of diverse instruction skills (Nunan, 1989; Notari-Sylverson, 2006) show strengths to contribute and overcome the challenges of ESL in multilingual contexts. Meaning making plays a central role in ELL; therefore, effective models of PD engage teachers in reflective practice and highlight appropriate use of signs and social semiotics to enhance communication within multilingual contexts. This literature review frames early literacy PD from a socio-cultural perspective and uses Vygotsky's (1978) and Bakhtin's (1986) theories as theoretical framework for ELL. The conceptual framework of the literature review, contextualizes graphic links between the literature topics related to the study (See Figure 2.6). These topics affirm my research questions, and provide the theoretical premise for the study.

**Figure 2.6.**

*Literature review outline*




## 2.16 Conclusion

Chapter 2 provided a theoretical and conceptual framework of the literature reviewed for this study. Teachers' classroom practices are affected by their knowledge

and instructional practices. Therefore, specialised training plays a pivotal role to transform these practices and learners' outcomes in the long run. This literature revealed ESL teacher training challenges and identifies gaps in literature that support early literacy teacher training and PD research. The design and methodology of the study is outlined and discussed in the next chapter.

# CHAPTER 3
# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Introduction

In Chapter 3, I discuss the methodology of this study. The study uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods based on academic interests and deeper philosophical underpinnings. This research study engaged pre-primary teachers from diverse language backgrounds in Professional Development (PD) training to develop and modify a short course, focused on early literacy and language instructional strategies such as using a dialogic approach to teaching early literacy and language development. This PD training modelled interactive lesson plans, highlighted important skills needed for oral and written language learning, and critiqued the effects of environmental print, while using a whole language teaching approach. Instructional skills were emphasized through empirical text readings and presentations. Lastly, the participants' theoretical orientations toward reading were measured and correlated with teachers' instructional practice, especially in the areas of 1) phonics, 2) skills and/or 3) whole language.

This process entailed the formulation of a hypothesis, developed from the researcher's conceptualisation of a particular phenomenon. For this study, I wanted to measure any change in teachers' theoretical orientation toward reading instruction. Objectivists believe in causality, meaning, "there are independent causes that lead to the observed effects" (Remenyi et al. 1998, p.32), and therefore hypotheses are either verified or refuted by the observed effects (Holden & Lynch, 2004). However, in order to understand a phenomenon in an applied field, such as education, it is critical to look more holistically at a complex and situated set of variables and to seek out in depth perspectives of those whom you are trying to get to see the world with new eyes. This

study relies heavily on qualitative interviews, observations, and reflective feedback loops to hone the development of an effective PD experience in language and literacy practice for pre-primary teachers.

This study used mixed method to gather data although the bulk of the data collected and analysed was qualitative, given the exploratory nature of this project and the goals and purposes of the research. The DeFord Theoretical Orientation in Reading Instruction (TORP) (1985) gives a valid and reliable measure to gauge teachers' theoretical orientation (See Appendix C) and was used at the beginning and at the end of the PD intervention to track any change in beliefs. Although the study tracked participants' change in beliefs and attitudes in this pre/post-test survey, lesson observations and interviews provided reflective feedback loops on the PD process and content with the intent to adjust the curricular components. Additionally, the trustworthiness and validity of the qualitative findings play an important role in interpreting results and are discussed later (See 3.7). The questions of the study are outlined in the next discussion.

The qualitative question that this research investigated is as follows: "How might Professional Development, using a dialogic approach for early literacy training, transform beliefs and practices of pre-primary teachers from diverse language backgrounds?"

The sub-questions of the study are as follow:

1) In what ways can early literacy PD be designed and enacted to improve early literacy teaching and learning?

2) What specific curricular features of the proposed PD experience are most powerful in supporting teachers' understanding of research based literacy practices in a multilingual environment?

3) As a result of teachers' participation in early literacy PD, what actual changes in literacy instruction and practice do trained teachers self-report following the PD?

The quantitative sub-question of the study is: 1) In what ways can the theoretical orientation of early literacy teachers in Namibia, as measured by the DeFord Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) (1985), change as a result of targeted dialogic PD?

The validation hypothesis is: As measured by TORP on each of the 28 items, using a 5-point Likert scale, is there any significant differences in pre/post training scores overall or on individual items/questions by those participating in the survey administered before and after the professional development.

### 3.2 Research activities

Table 3.1 provides an overview of the research design of this study, executed in three phases. A detailed description of research activities is presented in Table 3.5-3.10.

**Table 3.1**

*Research activities*

| Phase 1 | Phase 2 | Phase 3 |
|---|---|---|
| Recruitment of participants for pilot study<br>Meeting participants | Recruitment of participants and meeting<br>for actual PD training | Online discussions |
| Pre-test survey | Actual PD training | Focus group/Follow-up meetings |
| Pilot PD training | Focus group/de-briefing sessions, Observations | Post-test survey: Hardap and Khomas regions |
| Focus group/de-briefing | Interviews: Hardap and Khomas regions | Data analysis |

### 3.3 Research design

This study used a mixed methods design, because of the transformative nature and intent of the PD training that aims at empowering teachers to challenge traditional ways of delivering literacy instruction. Creswell (2009) states that mixed methods research is a research design (or methodology) in which the researcher collects, analyses, and mixes (integrates or connects) both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or a multiphase program of inquiry. Mertens (2002) defines mixed methods research from a transformative stance. According to Mertens (2003), mixed methods research is the use of qualitative and quantitative methods that allow for the collection of data about historical and contextual factors, with special emphasis on issues of power that influence the achievement of social justice and avoidance of oppression. On the other hand, Burke, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007) define mixed methods research as involving the use of more than one approach or method of design, data collection or data analysis within a single program of study, with integration of different approaches or methods occurring during the study, and not just at the concluding point. Mertens (2003) conceptualization comes closest to my purposes for this study since my goal is to impact early literacy practices in transformative ways.

The methods of this study do not only include qualitative and quantitative data, but a combination of data sources, methods, data gathering, and analysis. A combination of primarily qualitative with a few quantitative data sources are catalogued as follow: 1) a normed survey (TORP) to measure changes in teachers' theoretical beliefs toward reading instruction using a simple t-test, 2) an assessment of demographic data included on survey for snapshot of patterns of practice, 3) the development and validation of an observation instrument to help teachers evaluate the degree of dialogic teaching in an assessment of language skills collected through peer classroom

observations and analysed using discourse analysis, 4) interview transcriptions that rely on grounded theory (GT) approaches to coding the data, 5) focus group transcriptions that also use GT coding for emergent themes, and 6) observation and reflective journal analyses. Glesne (1998) mentioned that the practice of relying on multiple methods of data collection is commonly called "triangulation." This variety of data collection and analysis instruments and tools are used to triangulate/validate empirical data. Triangulation helps to ensure validity and reliability of qualitative studies by intentionally seeking out multiple sources of information from varying perspectives.

Tashakkori and Teddlie (2002) argue that the 'mixed methods design' had historically been used for pragmatic purposes. Other paradigms that embrace pragmatic activist goals include the transformative-emancipatory perspective (Mertens, 2002). In fact, pragmatism is considered the foundation of mixed methods. In applied fields, such as education, complex environments should be examined using an eclectic mix of inquiry methods.

Since mixed methods research integrates a variety of perspectives and approaches, I discern that the concept of practitioner pragmatism best frames the ways in which I have gathered my data. Although participatory action research (PAR) does not generally claim to use mixed methods, it uses a reflective circle that heuristically collects data, reflects, and engages in corrective action. PAR pays attention to power relationships, advocating for power to be shared through active involvement (Baum, Mac Dougall & Smith, 2006). On the other hand, the concept of Action Research laid out by Merriam (2009) and others, involves self-study and may make use of both qualitative data such as interviews, field observations, and focus groups as well as quantitative data, such as

test scores, frequency of behaviour charts, and/or statistics on archival data on attendance, discipline referrals, etc.

Unlike PAR and Action Research this study had an intentional goal to transform perceptions and practices of pre-primary teachers and policymakers through targeted PD in order to have these teachers and others realize that early literacy/language learning cannot be undervalued in teacher training and ultimately in pre-primary classrooms. Mertens (2005) asserts that these transformative world views hold to more rigorous standards of objectivity by including input from groups whose voices have been too often excluded from the research endeavour. Transformative research seeks social justice for the participants under study (Canales, 2013). Critical researchers employ an ideological critique to understand how power imbalances serve as key sources to reproduce habituated narrative teaching behaviours. Part of the challenge is to interrupt authoritative top-down curriculum discourse by positioning teachers as capable of successfully identifying and solving learning problems within their own context, exposed to practice with tools of the reflective practitioner and exposure to quality PD. As a critical researcher, I aspire to go beyond interpretative understanding of instructional processes when adopting a dialogic teaching interventionist approach, active teacher engagement, and reflection to develop new perspectives and increase self-efficacy.

### 3.3.1 Ethical considerations

First, I have sought ethical clearance from the University of Pretoria (Appendix A: Ethical documents). Furthermore, I have sought ethical consent from two geographical education regions (Appendix A & B). I have made contact with the regional coordinators of pre-primary education in both regions, and obtained lists of schools and email contact details to schedule a meeting, and to request teachers to participate in the PD

training. In all my interactions with people, I have been as transparent as possible, stating my goals and beliefs so that there was no misrepresentation of the purposes for participation. In reporting the results of the study, individual identities or schools were protected through pseudonyms and omitting personal identifying information. Participants signed consent forms and were allowed to ask any questions they had about the research during my initial meetings in both regions. No incentive rewards were offered to participate in this study and teachers freely chose to do so.

### 3.3.2 Sampling and selection of participants

Purposive sampling techniques involve the selection of certain cases "based on a specific purpose rather than randomly" (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003a, p.713). Purposive sampling leads to greater depth of information from a smaller number of carefully selected cases. I first did a pilot study to mimic the training activities and process planned for the actual PD training. The pilot study sample comprised of 18 pre-primary teachers from public schools in the Hardap education region. Namibia has 13 education regions. In the end, the PD training was conducted in two regions only. Because of the intensive close-up look at each teacher's journey during and after the PD training, a small core collaborative group was essential for participation in this study. In general, Chen (2010) draws the attention to the following questions that need particular attention during pilot testing 1) Can the intervention be implemented in the field as intended? 2) Can implementers anticipate encountering certain problems delivering the intervention? 3) Will participants be receptive to the intervention or resist it? The pilot study data was used to refine the training process for the actual training and to use the data collected to enrich my qualitative findings. For example, the participating teachers were not trained in the field of early literacy, and therefore the selection of initial reading texts was reviewed, and language specific content was added to the program.

Furthermore, Hardap region is a geographical defined rural area while Khomas region is an urban region. Pre-primary teachers in the Hardap region speak Afrikaans and Koekoegowab and use these languages as medium of instruction. This region was purposefully selected because of its language of instruction to enrich the results of this study within the Namibian language diversity.

Patton (2002) explains that the intention and power of this type of sample selection rests in its ability to select "information-rich cases" (p. 230). The investigator can actively select the most purposeful sample by "developing a framework of the variables that might influence an individual's contribution and will be based on the researcher's practical knowledge of the research area, the available literature and evidence from the study itself "(Marshall, 1996, p. 523). Based upon this suggestion, the inclusion criteria were identified to maximize the information possibly received from participants. In selecting a study sample, Charmaz (2006) and Coyne (1997) suggest that the researcher pull participants from environments reflective of the subject under study. The actual training was conducted in the Khomas education region. Fifteen pre-primary schoolteachers in this region responded to the call for participation.

Recruitment involved notices through the Ministry of Basic Education, Arts and Culture circulars to school principals and e-mails to pre-primary circuit coordinators, and teachers. Merriam (2009) states that the first step in purposive sampling is to select an inclusion criterion. My criteria for the selection of participants were as follow: 1) A three-year basic diploma/degree in education, 2) At least two years of experience in teaching at pre-primary level, and 3) Access to Internet for follow up activities. I have used two selection variables, namely rural and urban to carefully select a balance of the participants. My assumption was that these teachers are mainly female. The participants had to commit themselves to the study and the planned professional

development training at the available teacher's resource center for the duration of **four days** face-to-face training, and **four-week** online participation, while I actively collected the data. For convenience, the actual training venue changed from the intended teachers' resource center to a local primary school that was strategically located for all teachers to meet together daily after school.

I contacted the regional pre-primary coordinators in both education regions, and arranged meetings with the participants before the pilot and PD training. The purpose of these meetings was to engage with and gain the teachers' trust, request their consent, and commitment for the entire duration of the training session, provide them with reading materials and the schedule/plan for the training session. During these meetings, I have introduced the objectives of the study, and provided the teachers with copies of the selected reading texts, and emphasized the purpose of pre-test survey: to determine teachers' theoretical beliefs toward teaching reading. We agreed that the teacher participants read and respond to prompts I provide after the face-to-face training, and the lesson observations. Participating teachers were selected to present lessons, while others freely observed and rate lesson observations (See Table 3.8). I posted video clips of teachers' lesson observations in the online forum for further peer reflection. I created the survey on Google Forms, and sent a link to all the participating schools. The teachers have returned a total of 33 pre-test surveys and 23 post-test surveys. Table 3.2 presents the training sessions, dates and location.

**Table 3.2**

*Training sessions, dates and location*

| Phase | Education Region | Dates | Training Sessions |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Hardap | 05-08 September 2016 | Pilot study |
| 2 | Khomas | 19-22 September 2016 | Actual training |

### 3.3.3 Modification of data collection plan

In this study, the online social media platform used may have influenced teachers' reaction among other factors such as poor Internet reception in the Hardap region. The teachers' lack of pedagogical knowledge, resistance to the use of innovative modes of communication, levels of ESL proficiency, and cultural space were limitations of the study. Lamproulis (2007) outlines the role of cultural artefacts such as symbols, language, and beliefs that play a role in how people interpret the surrounding environment to themselves. The creation of knowledge occurs, and is influenced by physical space. In Namibia, the use of the Internet, and especially online modes of learning is a new approach to learning and still needs to be explored and studied. During the pilot phase of the study, even though teachers from Hardap education region promised by signing the consent forms to stay in the training for the entire period of 4-5 weeks, the majority of them failed to actively participate in the online forum phase. During my initial meetings, I introduced the purpose of the online training component, and encouraged positive critique and openness which are characteristic of transformative pedagogy. Meyers (2008) argues that when students have the opportunity to examine contradictory information, they seek additional perspectives,

and ultimately acquire new knowledge, attitudes, and skills in the light of their reflections. I re-scheduled the PD training, and conducted the training session in the Khomas education region (See phase 2). I anticipated that I might experience some resistance, because of the use of online/Internet approaches which are not prevalent in Namibia. However, eight teachers from Hardap region participated in the pre/post-test survey, classroom observations, and interviews during the pilot study and in Phase 2.

### 3.4 Data collection strategies

This study used qualitative data collection strategies such as field notes, memos, teachers' classroom observations, interviews, and focus group/debriefings after each day's training session and a quantitative initial baseline and exit survey to collect quantitative data. I facilitated focus groups/de-briefing sessions as a data collection strategy to solicit views on specific PD topics. Detailed data collection procedures and analysis are discussed in Chapter 4 and 5. Table 3.3 represents the actual training and data collection schedule.

**Table 3.3**

*Phase 1 & 2: Actual training and data collection*

| Mode of training | Duration of training | Pre-test participants | Type of data collected | Number of participants | Type of data |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pilot study | 4 days | 18 | Quantitative & | Pre-test: 33 | Reflections |
| Face-to-face | 4 days | 15 | Qualitative | Post-test: 23 | Field notes |

**Table 3.3**

*Phase 1 & 2: Actual training and data collection*

| Mode of training | Duration of training | Pre-test participants | Type of data collected | Number of participants | Type of data |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 4 days | | Qualitative | 4 | Observations |
| | | | Quantitative | 10 | Checklists |
| | | | Qualitative | 4 | Interviews |
| Online forum | 4 weeks | | Qualitative | 6 | Reflections |

### 3.5 Research setting for training

I conducted the training at a local primary school in the Khomas education region. This school provides for learners from pre-primary to Grade 7. The medium of instruction at this school is English as a second language (ESL). The learner population comprises mainly Rukwangali, Oshikwanyama, Oshiwambo, and Oshidonga speakers (See Chapter 1 for the description of diverse languages spoken in Namibia). I have obtained permission from the principal to use the available facilities of the school. A room was allocated for the training and classrooms for observations. Interviews and following up sessions took place after the face-to-face training at this school. The training sessions were arranged after the official school hours, and started at 2.30 pm and ended at 5.30 pm from Monday to Thursday. The total population of 15 pre-primary teachers participated every day in the face-to-face training sessions at the school.

### 3.6 PD programme: Face-to face training sessions

**Phase 1** (*See Table 3.1*)

The development and planning of the PD training model were foreshadowed by a document analysis to deepen my understanding of the current state of early childhood teacher training. Document analysis as data collection strategy served as secondary data to supplement my primary data. These documents included 1) the pre-service undergraduate ESL training curriculum of the University of Namibia, 2) lesson planning documents gathered from in-service pre-primary teachers, and 3) University of Namibia ESL literacy in-service training PD notes, and 4) pre-primary school curriculum designed centrally for public schools at the National Institute for Education Development (NIED). Document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Strauss & Cobin, 2008). Document analysis supports triangulation and theory building. Glaser and Strauss (1967) reveal the usefulness of documents for theory building – a process that "begs for comparative analysis a fantastic range of comparison groups, if only the researcher has the ingenuity to discover them" (p.179). The pre-primary syllabus, undergraduate curriculum, and professional development materials are analysed and discussed in Chapter 4. Based on these artefacts and my informal conversations with the pre-primary teachers during the initial meetings, I designed my actual training plan.

#### 3.6.1 Actual PD training component

**Phase 2** *(See Table 3.1)*

The core literacy components of the PD training developed for this research were: 1) oral language 2) phonological awareness 3) letter knowledge, and 4) print conventions. The purpose of these training topics was to make teachers realize that oral language

skills, phonological awareness, letter knowledge, print conventions, vocabulary and syntax and discourse plays a prominent role in early literacy development. I could only assign two reading texts in both 4-day face-to-face training sessions. The title of Reading #1 was "The essentials of early literacy instruction," by Rokos, Christie, & Richgels (2003). I asked teachers to read pages 1-4 first, and for the second session to read, pages 4-8. The title of Reading #2 was "Sharing alphabet books in early childhood classrooms," by Bradley and Jones (2007). I obtained permission from the authors through Research Gate to use these texts. Further, I videotaped some of the focus group discussions after each session, but mainly requested that the teachers reflect in writing so that I could capture their thinking in the moment. These focus group/de-briefing sessions focused on what stood out for the teachers with regard to the reading, videos or presentations, and how they might apply new knowledge gained when they returned to the classroom. Table 3.4 consists of the training program of Day 1 with a summary Table for each Day.

**Table 3.4**

*Actual training: Day 1*

| **Phase 1 & 2**<br><br>**Day** | **Training topic** | **Activity** | **Activity type/media/materials** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | The concept "early literacy"<br><br>"Essentials of early literacy instruction"<br><br>Phonological and phonemic awareness Lesson plan | Define early literacy/language learning in pre-primary classrooms<br><br>Watch a video | Power Point<br><br>Videos<br><br>Van Alst, J. (2013). Teaching phonemic segmentation |

**Table 3.4**

*Actual training: Day 1*

| Phase 1 & 2 Day | Training topic | Activity | Activity type/media/materials |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | Step-by-step lesson plan linked to curriculum, assessment outcomes, and Text reading #1 | Teaching phonological awareness |

**Day 1**: This training introduced the concept of early literacy: "early literacy identifies what young children need to know and be able to do if they are to enjoy the fruits of literacy, including valuable dispositions that strengthen their literacy interactions" (Rokos et al., 2003, p. 52). The training highlighted the importance of teaching pre-reading and pre-writing in pre-primary classrooms. The participants watched two videos (See Table 3.4): 1) teaching phonological awareness, and 2) teaching phoneme segmentation. The first video is 1minute 43 seconds long, and the second video lasts for 9 minutes 41 seconds. A brief discussion on both resources took place, and teachers were requested to write down their challenges and how they could link the new knowledge to their current teaching practice.

A lesson plan discussion addressed aspects such as the lesson objectives, how to align the objectives to the curriculum goals, and assessment outcomes. The presentation guided teachers on the selection of materials, and how to enact learning through hands-on multi-sensory approaches. Reading #1 was discussed and the connection to the lesson plan outlined the following aspects: 1) teaching pre-school learners - what

reading and writing can do, 2) content of early literacy instruction, 3) how to support emergent writing, and 4) shared book reading, and 5) integrated content focused activities. The "essentials of early literacy teaching strategies" focus on rich talk in large group, small group, and one-on-one settings. It guides teachers on storybook reading, phonological awareness activities, such as rhyme, alliteration, and sound matching. Alphabet activities include ABC books, magnetic letters, alphabet books and puzzles, and alphabet charts. When teachers create an enabling environment for children's interaction with books and print they may support emergent reading. Reading #1 emphasizes valuable dispositions of early literacy instruction such as cultivating children's willingness to listen to stories, curiosity about words and letters, exploration of print forms, playfulness with words, and enjoyment of songs, poems, rhymes, jingles, books, and dramatic play. I have used a round table discussions approach to engage teachers. In the debriefing session, pre-primary teachers wrote their reflections of the day on a piece of paper. The teachers handed in these reflections at the end of the session for analysis. Table 3.5 shows the training topics, activities, activity types presented on Day 2.

**Table 3.5**

*Actual training: Day 2*

| Phase 1&2 Day | Training topic | Activity | Activity type |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | Whole language: Story telling<br>Integrated learning | Interactive story book reading, gain alphabet knowledge, sight word learning and environmental print,<br>Connecting knowledge gained to writing text | Video<br>Walsh, E.S. (2012). Mouse paint, San Diego<br>Power Point |

**Day 2**: The facilitator used the story "Mouse Paint" by Ellen Stoll Walsh to demonstrate whole language teaching through storytelling. I presented the story in two ways: using an Internet resource, YouTube and Power Point. I also demonstrated the use of innovative tools to cut and paste a story from the World Wide Web. The use of picture cues and predictable patterns in books to retell the story were emphasized. Interactive questioning was modelled to encourage "rich talk" and motivate student interest in the story to make connections to the story.

These sessions pointed out issues around ideas such as the following: 1) alphabet knowledge and the identification of letter names, 2) "M" upper case, and "m" lower case, 3) the use of letter "M" to enact learning from the known to the unknown, and 4) the identification of "M" in context of "mouse" and "mice." This session also emphasized directionality of print, environmental print to teach language skills through sight word learning, and writing to draw any object starting with letter "M." In the second part of Reading #1, interactive storybook reading, participants learned what to do at different stages of the story to learn about the plot, and I emphasized literacy in play.

Morrow and Gambrell (2001) indicate that 'reading aloud' has maximum learning potential when children have opportunities to actively participate and respond. Therefore, the following scaffolding support was modelled: 1) things to do before-reading activities i.e. to arouse children's interest and curiosity in the book. The facilitator introduced the author, the title of the story, and asked what the teachers think the story is about, 2) things to do during-reading i.e. prompts and questions that keep children actively engaged with the text being read. At this stage, the facilitator has stopped at a point in time during the story, and asked the teachers to guess what will happen next (prediction), 3) things to do after -i.e. reading questions and activities to give children an opportunity to discuss and respond to the story that was read. At this

stage of the story telling, the following questions were asked: 1) What are the animals called in the story? 2) How many mice were in the story? 3) Did the colours mix in the same way? 4) Is this a true story? and 5) Can mice really mix colours?

A Power Point presentation demonstrated how to support early literacy through environment print and sight word learning. The facilitator displayed a cup cake to celebrate birthdays, a weather chart, classroom rules, rhymes, and letter "M" in context of words to promote incidental reading of the first, middle, and last letter in a word, and to connect reading to writing. During the de-briefing session, teachers reflected on what stood out for them during the session of Day 2, and what they could take from the days' training to apply to their classroom practice.

**Table 3.6**

*Actual training: Day 3*

| Phase 1&2: Day | Training topic | Activity | Activity type |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | Language acquisition-pre-writing activities | Introduce Reading #2, Ways to move from reading to print conventions, using art work as writing, Center-based activities | Reading text: Bradley & Jones (2007). Sharing alphabet books in early childhood classrooms, *The Reading Teacher*, 60 (5), 452-463 |

**Day 3**: The training introduced and discussed text Reading #2, called "Sharing alphabet books in early childhood classrooms" (Bradley & Jones, 2007). This article

emphasizes early literacy knowledge to facilitate learning-to-read prior to formal school. Aspects such as letter-shape knowledge, letter-name knowledge, letter-sound knowledge, and letter writing are discussed. The purposes of this article are as follow: 1) to present the importance of alphabet knowledge, 2) to describe alphabet book read-alouds aimed at understanding what components of the alphabet teachers discuss, 3) to describe how various genres of alphabet books may be used to introduce and to teach young children about literacy, and 4) to share activities that teachers can use to teach children about the alphabet. The article also examines teacher talk and the effects of genre that leads to utterances that encourage children to recite after the teacher.

I have used the story "Mouse Paint," by Stoll Walsh (2012) to re-cap storytelling as a whole language approach, and to introduce art work while using Centers as an instructional strategy. Centers allow students to have some choice and focus on various needed skills. A distinction between writing and drawing was also made. The training session closed with a debriefing session.

**Table 3.7**

*Actual training: Day 4*

| Phase 1&2 Day | Training topic | Activity | Activity type |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | Dialogic teaching: Rich talk,<br>Theoretical Orientations | Use storytelling to activate teacher-learner, learner-learner talk, strategies for working with ELL<br>Observation checklist | There is 'an alligator under my bed,' by Mercer Mayer in Reading #1<br>Power Point |

**Table 3.7**

*Actual training: Day 4*

| Phase 1&2 Day | Training topic | Activity | Activity type |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | Dialogic teaching: Rich talk, Theoretical Orientations | Discussion of constructivist, socio-cultural and behaviourist teaching based on theoretical orientation to reading | |

**Day 4:** The topic "rich talk" to promote oral language was discussed. The facilitator referred to the story in text Reading #1, There's 'an alligator under my bed' by Mercer Mayer (See Reading #1). The before, during, and after reading strategies were emphasized. Rokos et al. (2003) point out that 'a literacy-in-play strategy is effective in increasing the range and amount of literacy behaviours during play, thus allowing children to practice their emerging skills and show what they have learned.' The use of the word "alligator" showcases how teachers could use rare words to encourage rich talk. Teachers' theoretical orientations towards: 1) phonics, 2) skills, and 3) whole language as measured on the TORP pre-test were aligned with a presentation on constructivist and behaviourist teaching. This training emphasized a constructivist approach and encourages teachers to use children's prior knowledge to build on, and engages children in hands-on literacy experiences within their socio-cultural context to construct new knowledge.

On the other hand, behaviourist approaches focus on observable and measurable aspects of human behaviour (Tompkins, 2007). This type of learning results in stimulus-response/recitation reactions. The training also suggested an effective approach that encourages teachers to stimulate the following literacy instructional skills 1) nurture a love for reading through storytelling and the engagement with print and books, 2) use explicit instructional strategies to teach phonological and phonemic awareness, and 3) integrate reading and writing activities. During this session, teachers were identified to present lessons and the classroom observations were scheduled. The use of an observation checklist (See Appendix E) was outlined and discussed. The pre-primary teachers reflected on what strategies they have learned, and how to use them in their classrooms.

### 3.6.2 Classroom observations

**Phase 2**

Classroom observations as a data collection method presents an ideal platform to capture actual teaching. I videotaped all my observations in the Hardap and Khomas regions and used Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to analyse my observation data**.** Discourse refers to "the forms of language use" (Van Dirk, 1997, p. 2), and examines who uses the language, how the language is used, and when it was used (Mazur, 2004). I have selected two excerpts from the classroom observations that demonstrated the following themes: phonemic awareness, the classroom discourse, and authoritarian discourse. I have then drawn on the diverse and intersecting traditions of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as outlined in the approaches of Gee (2006), Fairclough (2011), and Kress (2010) to analyse my classroom observation data (Appendix F, G).

Foucault (2010) uses linguistic text analysis and social theory to demonstrate the functioning of language. Fairclough's (2011, p.121) translation of these resources

includes the concepts of *genre, discourse, and style* or as he labels them *ways of interacting, ways of representing, and ways of being,* respectively (Appendix F). Gee's (2006) "seven building tasks" provide a common lens that directed the analysis and looked at how the form and patterning of semiotic signs construct identities, relationships, and power relations (Rogers, 2004). Kress's (2010) multimodal semiotic theory shows the boundedness of language, and has to do with meaning making (See Chapter 4). Teachers critiqued a classroom environment in the online forum. I used multimodal analysis to analyse one of the observations and visuals from the specific classroom observation (See Chapter 4: Multimodal analysis). I used a combination of Grounded Theory (GT) and CDA tools to analyse teachers' reflections on PD curricular features, aspects of the PD that were beneficial to teaching practice and the elements that need to be changed or modified.

Rogers (2011) defines "figured worlds" as picture or a simplified world that captures what is taken to be typical or normal. Teachers' figured worlds were outlined in the analysis of data. Gee's approach to discourse analysis is that people use language in purposeful ways, situated within social, historical, and political contexts. Multimodal analysis involves isolating, examining, and explaining aspects of child-centered teaching being promoted in the PD, and to understand how the teachers and learners use the available semiotic resources to represent meaning while carrying out social practices that enact power relations. By engaging participating pre-primary teachers in an exploration of their training experience through reflection and feedback loops, I have been afforded an insider view of their classroom realities while at the same time contributing towards the understanding of participating teachers' unique beliefs accessible through pre/post-test data. I videotaped classroom observations, and teachers wrote field notes after each session. As a participant observer, I conducted my

observation activities relatively unobtrusively by observing instructional patterns of teacher-student dialogue. As a researcher, one observes and interacts closely enough with members to establish "an insider's identity without participating in those activities constituting the core of group membership" (Adler & Adler, 1998, p. 85). I wanted to understand how teachers foster student participation during classroom exchanges.

Peer teachers observed and assessed these lesson presentations using an observation checklist (Appendix E). I transcribed the data of the observation videos, and selected excerpts that depict the teacher's authoritarian teaching style, a tendency that was evident throughout the lessons (See Chapter 5: Table 5.12). The participants in the transcribed data included the teachers and learners who had speaking turns. I analysed the observation checklist data to assess teachers' budding awareness of the importance of using a dialogic approach in early literacy teaching. See analysis of these results presented in Chapter 5. Such varied and triangulated data helped me to understand the nuances of transformation as participants moved through the PD curricula.

**Table 3.8**

*Phase 2: Classroom Observations in Hardap and Khomas regions*

| Region | Lesson activity | Number of observations | Observers | Data collection activity |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hardap | Alphabet knowledge | 2 | Peers | Video transcriptions |
| | Phonemic segmentation | | Researcher | Checklists |

**Table 3.8**

*Phase 2: Classroom Observations in Hardap and Khomas regions*

| Region | Lesson activity | Number of observations | Observers | Data collection activity |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Khomas** | Phonological awareness through storytelling | 2 | Peers<br>Researcher | Video transcriptions<br>Checklist |

The teachers requested to do the lesson presentations a few days after the face-to-face training session. The lapse of four days has allowed them ample time for the preparation of lessons. In the Khomas region, two teachers have volunteered to present lessons, and two teachers have presented lessons in the Hardap region. The teachers had the option to choose any topic from the curriculum, and to align this topic with the knowledge gained during the PD training. I used an observation checklist to engage peer teachers in the observations.

During the training session, we discussed the observation checklist and teachers had the opportunity to comment on aspects of the observation checklist. The discussions on the lesson plan guided the teachers on aspects such as "rich talk," lesson objectives, the use of classroom strategies such as Centers, scaffolding, and the use of multi-sensory materials, classroom environment etc. I wanted the checklist to call attention to the new ideas they were reading and talking about as they observed a live classroom event. The data gathered from observation checklists were analysed using quantitative data analysis tools. The observation checklist comprised 10 questions that addresses aspects of lesson presentation which include: 1) interactive roles that fosters dialogical teaching

and learning, 2) careful lesson planning and unfolding, 3) the use of different teaching approaches, 4) teachers' response to learners' literacy needs, and 5) learners' participation amongst others. The data was used to enhance the validity of observation findings (Appendix E).

### 3.6.3 Participant interviews

**Phase 2**

During interviews, participants can express an opinion or a perspective without being influenced by the researcher (Foddy, 1993). In my search for understanding, participant interviews have given me a glimpse of teacher's perspectives of dialogic teaching, teaching strategies and approaches, and suggestions to enhance training for maximized participant outcomes. My analysis hinged on the meaning that they have constructed around the reading materials and presentations. I interviewed all participants in their classrooms after school or in an office. (See teachers' profiles and analysis of data in Chapter 4).

There are three basic types of interviews. The informal conversational interview is highly unstructured and has no pre-determined set of questions to guide the interviewer. The standard open-ended interview is more specific, and questions are carefully developed beforehand to ensure that all the participants receive the same information (Merriam, 2009). I used a standard open-ended questionnaire as my interview protocol (See Appendix D). I audiotaped all interviews conducted with four participants selected during the training sessions. The selection included two participants who seemed eager to participate in the training and who embraced new ideas, two average level participants who were open to learning new things, and two teachers who appeared to resist change around their beliefs and practices. The last two participants had promised to participate, but in the end, did not shown up for the

interviews. Theory-guided analysis offers the chance to compare and complement the primary data collected within the research project with secondary data (Kohlbacher, 2006). This process allows the researcher to refine probes in subsequent interviews to deepen and clarify potential interpretations as the research unfolds. The goal is depth of understanding data rather than uniformity of interview questioning.

All interviews ranged in length from 15-20 minutes. I began the interviews with a general question: "Tell me about you." This question allowed participants to become at ease, and set the stage for subsequent questions that have followed. I provided ample time for participants to respond, because they were all ESL speakers. The interview probed teachers especially on the benefits and challenges of using a dialogic teaching approach. This interview also assessed the relevancy and the interest with regard to the use of reading texts to be used for future training. Analyses of teachers' interviews began with transcribing the audiotaped sessions using conventions adapted from Atkinson and Heritage (1999). I coded the interview transcriptions, using the Grounded Theory process of open and then axial codes to identify emergent themes and/or particular cases of interest. This careful line-by-line inductive coding process has also helped to ensure that the actual meanings of the participants' words are not distorted. Member checks have allowed each interview participant to review the transcript for inaccuracies to increase trustworthiness of data. I transcribed all interviews and coded them shortly after the interviews were conducted. I used www.NVivo.com a qualitative software programme for data analysis, as a secondary analysis tool to do a word frequency and text analysis of the interviews and teachers' reflections.

Qualitative validity means that the researcher checks for accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures (Creswell, 2003). After the transcription of interviews, I did a member check to clarify information obtained, and to clarify uncertainties with

regard to the information during follow-up visits. In my analysis, I have compared data collected from participant interviews, focus group, and observation data to cross-validate the findings of the study.

**Table 3.9**

*Online training*

| Phase 3 Training reference | Data collection |
|---|---|
| Week #1<br>Reading #2: "Sharing alphabet books in early childhood classrooms" | Reflection on reading materials/resources |
| Week #2<br>Reading #1: "Essentials of early literacy instruction." | Application of new knowledge<br>Classroom observations<br>Discussion of video clip on teaching phonological awareness through storytelling |
| Week #3<br>Dialogic teaching | Discussion of classroom observation video<br>Comment on student engagement – rich talk/dialogic approach |
| Week #4<br>Environmental print | In reference to photographs respond to environmental print in a classroom |

The PD was offered through two instructional modes: face-to-face and online. Table 3.9 outlines the topics of discussions for the duration of the online session. The online discussions focused mainly on the second reading text and the classroom observations. A total of 33 teachers from the Hardap and Khomas regions became members of the online forum, but only six participants from the Khomas region have responded thoughtfully in the follow up online discussion group. I have typed all the comments of

the discussions forum in a Word document. To ensure that the training had an impact on actual practices, I have requested to meet the teachers of the Khomas region on Wednesdays for at least one hour to emphasize aspects raised in the on-line forum.

### 3.6.4 Follow-up meetings

**Phase 3**

The follow-up meetings focused mainly on teachers' reflective engagement in conversations based on the online video clips that emphasized the application of reading texts. During these sessions, I probed the teachers on aspects of the discussion forum, and gave them the opportunity to talk about their teaching highlights and challenges when they have implemented new knowledge. The focus group method has its roots in the group interview method which is commonly used as a valid tool in social research (Bender & Ewbank, 1994). I have not video recorded all the sessions, but I have taken field notes and teachers wrote down their thoughts. I have requested the teachers to participate in the post-test survey during the last follow-up meeting in Week #4.

### 3.6.5 Quantitative data collection

**Phase 1 & 3**

Surveys allow for standardized questions and structure and provide a way to measure change over time with a simple t-test of individual and itemized scores. The De Ford (1985) Theoretical Orientation to Reading Instruction (TORP) instrument (See Appendix C) was used with permission from the author to measure the teacher's baseline teaching beliefs in early reading instruction. I collected pre-test data on the first day of both training sessions, and the outcomes were connected to the presentation on Day 4 of the PD training. This instrument is a one-group pre-test-post-test design that collects baseline and exit data for quantitatively assessing changes in beliefs,

attitudes and practice before and after the PD when teachers are back in their own classrooms. This outcomes measure uses a Likert scale response system consisting of 28 statements with a rating scale of 1-5 that ranges from strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree to strongly disagree. This survey also collected baseline data by demographic variables such as the medium of instruction, gender, mother tongue, level of education, institution where education was obtained, and years of experience in teaching. I have also compared pre/post-test scores with simple t-tests for each of the 28 items of the questionnaire. Eighteen teachers from the Hardap education region participated in the pre-test survey but, unfortunately, only eight completed the post-test survey. On the other hand, 15/15 teachers of the Khomas region participated in both pre/post-test survey requests. Additional correlations on demographic variables such as teachers' qualifications level, training institutions, gender, and language spoken were also run. Group means and standard deviations (SDs) for each question will be presented to gauge any significant differences found between pre/post-test PD answers of the teachers. This data was analysed, using IBM SPSS (2015) and is discussed in Chapter 5. Observation checklist data was used to mix methods and served as quantitative data to validate teachers' beliefs measured by the TORP and in classroom observations (See Observation transcriptions: Chapter 4 and Checklist results: Chapter 5).

### 3.7 Trustworthiness of the findings

Because of the problems of reliability, the coding of texts is usually assigned to multiple coders so that the researcher can see whether the constructs being investigated are shared and whether multiple coders can reliably apply the same codes (Mason, 2012). I have shared the observation videos and interview transcripts during my following-up visits and online with participating teachers. Qualitative researchers use trustworthiness to ensure that their work meets the criteria of credibility (internal

validity), transferability (external validity), dependability (reliability), and confirmability (objectivity) (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Shenton, 2004). In this study, trustworthiness was constantly reviewed during the data collection, and analysis processes. To ensure the quality of the data collected, Miles and Huberman (1994) state "Data quality can be assessed through checking for representativeness (1) checking for researcher effects (2) on the case, and vice versa; and triangulating (3) across data sources and methods" (p.289). I have used multiple methods to collect data. In fact, effectiveness of triangulation rests on the premise that the weaknesses in each single method will be compensated for by the counter-balancing strengths of another (Mason, 2009). Therefore, triangulation generated "thick description." "A thick description…. does more than record what a person is doing. It goes beyond mere fact and surface appearances. Thick description inserts history into experiences. It establishes the significance of an experience, or the sequence of events, for the person or persons in question. In thick description, the voices, feelings, actions, and meanings of interacting individuals are heard" (Denzin, 1989, p.83). A detailed account of the design and delivery of an intensive professional development experience for in-service pre-primary teachers from two regions of Namibia were presented in thick description.

The *TORP* instrument (DeFord, 1985) uses a Likert scale response system to determine teacher beliefs about practices in early reading instruction. The instrument uses three phases of data collection to evaluate the reliability of the instrument. Reliability is based on the following tested reliability measures: 1) A sample of 90 teachers, 2) Responses based on the profiles from phonics, skills, and whole language respondents; and 3) Observation of 14 teachers by trained observers who in turn predicted the responses of the teachers on the instrument. Based on the results

obtained through descriptive data, factor analysis, and discriminant analysis, the instrument was reliable.

### 3.8 Conclusion

This chapter outlined and discussed the research design and methods used to collect data. The chapter also provided a detailed overview of the PD training model for practical application and future training purposes. Chapter 4 comprises of the analysis and results of the qualitative data collection and analysis while Chapter 5 focuses on the survey data and observational protocol.

# CHAPTER 4

# QUALITATIVE RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

## 4.1. Introduction

In Chapter 4, I present a discussion of the results and data analysis of focus group/de-briefing discussions, participant interviews, and classroom observation transcriptions, and then integrate my analysis of online forum data as primary data results and analysis. A brief overview of the document analysis process as well as a critique of a classroom environment, using multimodal analysis is presented. Finally, a synthesis of qualitative data analysis and the themes generated from the data are presented.

Grounded Theory (GT) coding and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) tools were used to conduct this data analysis. Grounded Theory, also called constant comparison method is a qualitative data analysis procedure (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), which involves a three-step process – open coding, axial coding, and selective coding or analytical coding (Bogdan and Biklin, 1998). I have initially named my categories, determining the number of categories (See Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2), and coded categories (See Table 4.1-4.5), while expanding the codes into discussion and theory building. I used a computer software program, www.NVivo.com to verify my initial codes (See Figure 4.2). I combined information from all data sources: focus groups/debriefings, participant interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis to define and discuss my final themes in an attempt to answer my research questions (See Chapter 6). According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), the art of comparison has to do with the interplay between data and researcher when gathering and analysing data. In the analysis of participant interviews, a comparison within individual participant interviews was made. Since qualitative data analysis in its initial

coding phase is inherently inductive, I present my analysis of the results supported by sources inside the data in the form of participant quotes and outside the data grounded in literature.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) tools provide a multi-dimensional look at teacher-learner, and learner-learner exchanges during classroom observations. The analysis of classroom observations deals with the content of the functional grammar used during teaching. I organized my thinking around every piece of language derived from the observation transcriptions. Critical Discourse Analysis connects micro-analysis of actual spoken language and written texts to macro-analysis of societal discourses by tracing patterns of repetition words, synonymous phrases, or other linguistic features (Gee, 1999). In fact, experts in social research recommend conducting interpretations of results on two levels: interpretation of the results of one's own interpretation and comparative interpretation of results and conclusions of existing theories and research results (Kohlbacher, 2006). This implies that one first interprets the results from a researcher's point of view within the theoretical framework for CDA.

I used Gee's (2011) approach to discourse analysis to break the observation transcriptions into stanzas (See Stanzas 1-3). This technique is similar to open/initial coding in that the data is examined in linguistic phrases and clauses. Relevant segments from the transcriptions were then segmented into a narrative structure and presented before the analysis to track the process. Since I have done GT coding first, I was alerted to potential sub-categories of thematic meaning: e.g. early literacy, ESL, authoritarian discourse, and instructional strategies: dialogic approach, socio-cultural learning, and communities of practice. The analysis of the data from each participant during focus groups, interviews, observations, and the online forum was constantly compared to data as a whole to uncover themes that occurred across the PD training process and also

echoed the literature. In line with my research design (See Chapter 3: Table 1), this data analysis was conducted in phases.

### 4.2. Focus group discussions

#### 4.2.1 Analysis of focus group data

**Phase 1 & 2** *(See Table 3.1)*

Participants reflected during focus group/de-briefing sessions on their own teaching practice based on the PD training. Direct quotes of teachers' reflections highlight specific curricular features of the PD and reflect teachers unfolding understandings of early literacy practices based on research based literacy texts in the PD**.** In the focus group transcription analysis, I started to identify patterns inside the data to look for common codes that were relevant to my study. Coding means "assigning some sort of shorthand designation to various aspects of your data" (Merriam, 2009, p. 173). Open coding identified single words, letters, numbers, phrases, or a combination of these to identify my codes. While reading through my field notes to find commonalities (open coding), the first patterns that emerged included, "English language," "teaching strategies," and "benefits of training." Since qualitative data analysis is inherently inductive and comparative, I proceeded to compare and reduce themes identified from these codes, and categories for selective codes (final codes). I put the focus group data into www.NVivo.com to do a basic text search query and word frequency analysis. The most frequently occurring words that appear in the word cloud are teaching English, language, mother tongue, children's challenges etc. Figure 4.1 illustrates the results of my basic text search.

**Figure 4. 1**

*Word cloud and word frequencies*


This process allowed me to identify recurring words or concepts that were related to my initial codes and categories. These frequently occurring words identified from the word cloud overlap with the categories defined in the interview and observation data. The word frequencies give an indication of pre-primary teachers' attitudes toward PD. Even though pre-primary teachers were trained in various education institutions of Namibia (See Chapter 5), they were not trained in field specific pedagogical approaches for pre-primary education. This lack of knowledge had an impact on their responsiveness during the PD, and therefore pre-primary teachers have echoed the content of the PD, indicating their excitement when learning new knowledge. The text search revealed words such as 'English language,' 'helpful,' 'learn,' 'strategies,' and 'teaching.'

From the second set of focus group data collected in the Khomas region, new themes started to emerge. These included "barriers to change, training needs, and lack of

materials." When triangulated the data from focus groups, interviews, and classroom observations, the most frequently repeated themes included, 'ESL content knowledge,' and 'instructional strategies.' I wrote analytical memos that were useful in the interpretation of my data. These memos included,

- Pre-primary teachers do not critique the content of the PD. Some pre-primary teachers tended to be afraid to speak out.
- The majority of teachers were exited to learn new knowledge and repeated the knowledge when they reflected on aspects of the PD.
- Teachers' teaching approaches were inherently teacher-centred.

For the participating teachers, phonological awareness seems to be the only skill that learners need to acquire to become successful readers and writers without using strategies to manipulate sounds and to engage into dialogue. There is a need for more training to impact teaching in multilingual contexts. Even though participating teachers were trained, they lacked fundamental knowledge necessary to teach language awareness, such as symbolic representation, metalinguistic awareness, letter-sound correspondence or word awareness in pre-primary classrooms.

Open coding or initial coding allows the researcher to read through collected data several times and label important words and phrases. Emerging categories were then captured in subsequent axial coding (second level) after initially worked through the documents. Some typical quotes from participants included the following:

- "Matching pictures to words is a good instructional strategy" (*Instructional Strategy*),
- "English second language speakers take longer to decode from their mother tongue into a second language" (*ESL*),
- "Teachers need to learn how to teach phonics" (*Instructional Strategy*), and

- "Teachers have to work according to the syllabus "(*Authoritarian Discourse*).

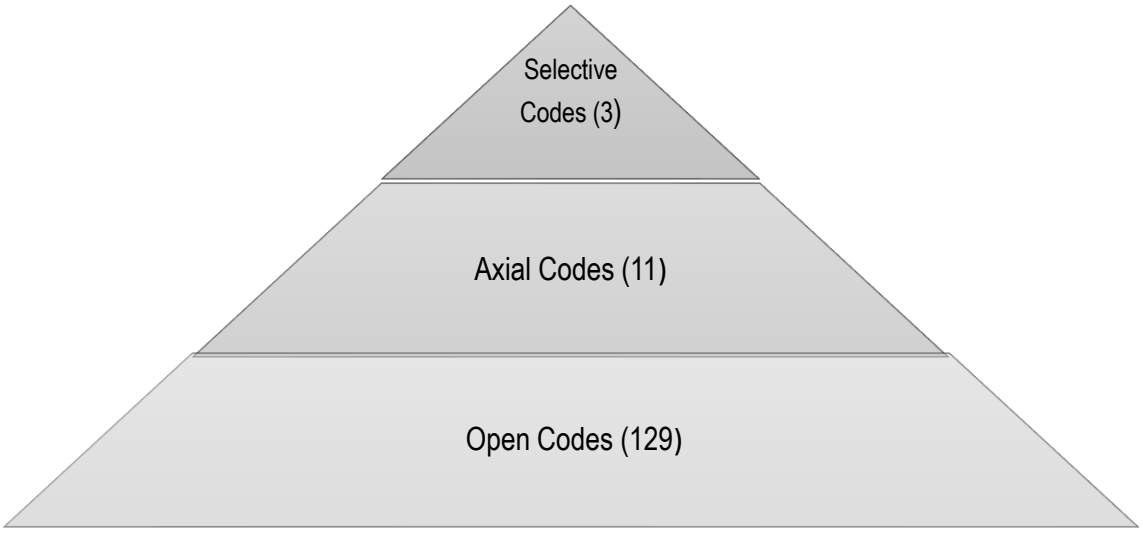
Open coding is closely tied to the exact words of the participant or a concept from the literature of interest. For example, teachers' comments included the following:

- "But I have learned to cut and paste my story from the Internet" (*Innovative Strategies*), or
- "Dialogic teaching is good to use in class; it motivates learners to speak" (*Dialogic Approach*)

I calculated the number of times that phrases or speech patterns were used or occurred. This process allowed me to identify and name categories, to determine the number of categories and what fits into it and what does not, and to figure out systems for placing data into categories. In the open coding of field notes, the analysis revealed a total of 129 initial codes (See Figure 4.2).

**Figure 4.2**

*Coding Levels*




The second level, axial coding, involves developing categories, and searching for possible relations among the categories. Some of my main groupings included language aspects such as "connecting sounds with letter names." I have used the category

"language knowledge," for example, to express meaning and analysed ways in which codes relate to this category. For axial coding, I have relied on interpretation and teachers' reflections in the context of the PD.

After rethinking the initial codes, I came up with new concepts. For example, instead of referring to a code as "teaching skills" or "instructional strategies" I refined it to "pedagogical practices for teaching and learning." In the analytic coding stage, I have also analysed sub-categories. In this phase of the analysis, I have divided "language knowledge" into "early literacy" and "ESL" which were finally discussed under the theme: *ESLK*>language knowledge. The 129 codes were collapsed into 11 axial codes from which three main codes and sub-themes were discerned. From these categories, I have developed my themes for discussions. These PD training domains for discussion (See Chapter 6): 1) *ESLK*>language knowledge, 2) *PA*>pedagogical approaches for teaching and learning, and 3) *AD*>authoritarian discourse. The sub-themes were defined from the main codes and are highlighted below.

- ESL knowledge
- Early literacy
- Pedagogical approach for teaching and learning
- Instructional strategies
- Dialogic teaching
- Innovative strategies
- Authoritarian discourse
- Syllabus

Each of these selective codes (themes) has at least one or two sub-themes for the main categories, *ESLK*>knowledge, *PA*>pedagogical approach for teaching and learning,

and *AD*>authoritarian discourse. Table 4.1 shows the codes and abbreviations used for the data of the focus group/debriefing sessions.

**Table 4.1**

*Phase 1 & 2: Focus group (FG) codes*

| Code Name | Code Abbreviation |
|---|---|
| Focus Group | FG |
| ESL Knowledge | FG> ESLK |
| Pedagogical approach | FG>PA |
| Authoritarian discourse | FG>AD |

The existing codes identified in the focus group data analysis, present categories and themes that make up the story line linked to the overarching research topic and title: "A dialogic approach for improving early literacy teaching in multilingual contexts." Selected excerpts are organized into a sequence which creates a compelling story line that facilitates the understanding that supports the core discussion. Emerson (1995) indicates that qualitative researchers work back and forth between coding and potential excerpts, and use analytical points to move the discussion forward. I include details of my analysis process in this chapter to clarify the sources of the sections that follow. These include direct quotes from participants to support identified themes and my interpretation of possible meanings. Additionally, I present a few selective stanzas from the CDA process and unpack specific words and phrases that reveal communicative intent within a situated context of the PD.

### 4.3 ESL Knowledge analysis

Many pre-primary teachers reflected on ESL knowledge that is required for early literacy acquisition. ESL Knowledge- *ESLK*> Several aspects of children's language skills are important at different points in the process of literacy acquisition. One of the teacher's reflections revealed that "phonics improves reading, but teachers need to learn how to teach phonics to improve children's language." Whereas many teachers may understand the importance of phonological awareness, it is equally important to gain the right skills through training and to understand how to teach phonological awareness. For example, a child just learning to read conventionally might approach the word "mouse" by sounding out /m/…/au/…/s/. Teachers must know how to render instructional support. Whitehurt and Lonigan (1998) reveal that teachers might encourage the child to blend the sounds together by reducing the delays between the sounds for each letter by saying the letter sounds more rapidly. "Phonological awareness" is one of the fundamental skills needed for early literacy development, but in itself is not sufficient for optimal literacy development. The Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) analysis showed that these teachers had mainly a phonics orientation toward teaching reading (See Chapter 5) and therefore, focused only on part of the optimal literacy equation.

For written texts, an utterance can be coded by sentence or by clause/s within a sentence (Geisler, 2004). Focus group (*FG*) analysis revealed the theme pedagogical approach for teaching and learning *(PA).* For example, a teacher wrote *FG>PA* "The biggest challenge in my teaching career is that I do not know how to teach literacy development in class." This code, *FG>PA* was defined through attending to what the teachers wrote: "I do not know how to teach literacy development," that was then categorized under FG>*ESLK*>language knowledge and *PA*>pedagogical approach. This

code overlaps with interview data and is dealt with later under "instructional strategies (*INIS*)" which is an emergent theme with new sets of codes from the participant interview data.

### 4.4 Participant interview data analysis

#### Phase 2

I interviewed selected participants using the criteria discussed in Chapter 3 to solicit their views about the PD training in reflection, and to understand pre-primary teachers' particular perceptions about bilingual teaching (See Appendix D). Chapter 5 highlights the teachers' demographic backgrounds. The results revealed that despite teachers' education qualifications, teachers feel they lack the necessary ESL background to teach early literacy in pre-primary classrooms. Table 4.2 presents the pseudonyms and profiles that were used in the interview analysis.

**Table 4.2**

*Pseudonyms and profile of participants*

| Pseudonyms | Years of Experience | Language proficiency | Teaching Context | Gender |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sarah | 0-3 | Otjiherero | Pre-Primary | Female |
| Abraham | 0-3 | Oshikwanyama | Pre-Primary | Male |
| Lee-Anne | 6+ | Oshiwambo | Pre-primary | Female |
| Martha | 0-3 | Khoekoegowab | Pre-Primary | Female |
| Sylvia | 6+ | Afrikaans | Pre-Primary | Female |

These practitioners' narratives reflect their perspectives of language. Table 4.3 outlines codes around instructional strategies derived from interview data.

**Table 4.3**

*Language knowledge codes*

| Code name | Code Abbreviation |
|---|---|
| Interview | IN |
| Language | INL |
| English Second Language | INESL |
| Signs and Symbols | INSS |
| ESL Challenges | INC |

Participants revealed many ESL Challenges – *INC.* Language - *INL* >Phonological awareness is an aspect of early literacy development and knowledge of phonological awareness in ESL teaching poses a challenge to bilingual teachers of English. The following excerpt reveals Abraham's thinking about learning English as a Second Language. *INESL, INC*>

> To pronounce words… You may know how to write a word, but it is difficult to pronounce it. It sounds different. It is difficult to communicate with the learners. You may say something, but the learners do not understand.

These are the challenges that ESL teachers and learners face in the teaching and learning process. They have internalized home language symbols, and find it difficult to keep up with the pace of speaking a second language. In other words, mother tongue or

home language speakers cannot easily identify grammatical structures of ESL or EL. Teachers, who were not trained, do not have specialized knowledge and experience of working with children to accurately distinguish different cueing systems. Cueing systems involve meaning (semantic), structure (syntactic), and visual (graphophonic) structure that help to make sense of words. English is an alphabetic language in which alphabet letters correspond to phonemes. As a result, acquiring phonemic awareness is important for literacy development (Nation & Hulme, 1997; Stahl, Duffy-Hester, & Stahl, 1998).

In the code Interview Challenges-*INC*> Teachers revealed the challenges faced; Lee-Ann states that she finds it challenging to translate children's languages into English. For example, *INSS*>, "Sometimes you have to translate or rely on orthography to explain aspects of English [sic]." *INC*>Lee-Ann further noted, "You are not supposed to translate to the language of the learners…. At times, I felt I had to translate and explain words for example 'an apple' in their mother tongue to foster understanding of what I am trying to say. It is not easy to engage in dialogue with ESL or bilingual learners in the junior primary phase." *INC*> Vygotsky (1978) emphasized the "central role of symbolic proficiency in development." He believed that higher mental functions depend upon the acquisition of cultural tools, including language and other symbols that expand and extend thought.

In the interviews (*IN*), comments about English Second Language (ESL) was a recurring theme. *INESL*>Meaning is at the heart of both spoken and written language (Halliday, 1975). This excerpt reveals Sarah's ESL challenges.

> Off cause I have difficulty to read and write and (to) learn English. Everything I learn in English I have to decode in my mother tongue. It is difficult to translate or find a word in Othjiherero before I get them in English, so I

> always code switch [sic]. At times it was difficult, because Otjiherero words do not have the same meaning in English.

Sarah may have related her personal experiences to her ESL instructional challenges. She also honestly describes the tension of teaching a language separate from the cultural cues that undergird it. Translation is not just about direct substitution of words and concepts; it is a complex nuanced process that reflects ways of knowing and being.

The importance of signs and symbols (*SS*) are revealed from the following comment: *INSS*>Martha felt that "The training taught me to incorporate writing in my lessons. I can ask children to draw an object and it does not matter how they draw. It's writing…." These drawings serve as conventions of language in print. *INSS*>Bakhtin's (1986) work applies to studying multilingual children's writing. Children must learn more than sound or symbol correspondences, and decoding skills. To bridge the gap between oral competence that children bring from homes, school provides the opportunity to acquire literate discourse in writing communication. Table 4.4 presents codes for instructional strategies.

**Table 4.4**

*Instructional strategy codes*

| Code name | Code Abbreviation |
|---|---|
| Instructional Strategies | INIS |
| Dialogic Approach | INDA |
| Socio-cultural Learning | INSCL |
| Communities of Practice | INCP |

During the interviews (*IN*), I have probed teachers on the anticipated challenges when using a dialogic approach (*DA*) to language teaching in early literacy classrooms. Sarah responded by saying, *INDA*> "In using the dialogic teaching approach, teachers have to talk less and give learners more opportunities to talk." This is a key insight for a traditional teacher. When learners get the opportunity to speak more they will participate actively in their own and each other's language development. In line with Lave and Wagner's (1991) theory of "communities of practice," ESL learners will be hesitant to contribute, because they may not have full control of the register and discourse of the subject matter. With the expectations of teachers and more capable peers they will become active members of a specific community and socialize into it (Walqui, 2006). Just as the intent of communication is responded to before grammatical mastery of form in first language learning of toddlers, so we need to create safe caring places for young children to explore and practice without judgement dimensions of second language communication.

Instructional strategies (*IS)* is an overlapping code that derived from the text utterances, such as "We can use Centers" and "When kids work together in a group, they learn from each other." Yet in the participant interviews, new codes arose, namely, "socio-cultural learning" (*INSCL*), and "communities of practice" (*INCP*). Abraham noted the following on collaborative learning: "Peer collaboration. We have shared ideas. Somebody else knows what I don't know." While, Sylvia said, "It was just good to sit there and to listen to what they [teachers] say. When you listen to others, you can learn from them." I have coded the assertion "We learn from each other" as communities of practice (*INCP*). Communities of practice have a shared goal, communal routines, habits, styles, and vocabularies which are constantly renegotiated by members (Wenger, 1998). Learning in this community could be associated with what occurs in ESL

classrooms in schools in many ways. First, learning is 'situated' in broader context of community activities (Lave & Wenger, 1991). New members of the community are 'apprenticed' by more experienced members and those who went through training. They engage in "legitimate peripheral participation" before fully participating in a group. In a sense, the researcher prepared the pre-primary teachers to apprentice into the online discussion group.

One of the newer codes, "socio-cultural learning (*INSCL*)" was defined from the following typical utterance: "Maybe this [training] must be expanded to parents so that they may [sic] realize that they can contribute toward literacy development, instead of keeping their kids at home and just waiting to send them for Grade 1." For Vygotsky (1978), learning begins long before school. The data analysis revealed other codes that focus on how teachers evaluated the PD training. Authoritarian discourse (*INAD*) is an overlapping code. Table 4.4 presents "other codes" of interest that were not as widespread as the selective thematic codes.

**Table 4.5**

*Other codes*

| Code name | Code Abbreviation |
|---|---|
| Authoritarian Discourse | INAD |
| Attitudes | INATT |

The teacher participants realised the value of PD for their practice, but they also mentioned aspects of authoritarian discourse that constrains them to improve and

change practice. Martha narrated, "…this training could be offered to our administration, because they have different ideas." I have coded this text under "authoritarian discourse" (*INAD*). For example," Teachers follow a standardized curriculum for pre-primary in Namibian schools. Martha's concern was "We are supposed to follow the syllabus. The training could also be helpful for our head of departments (HOD's). They do class visits, and want us to do things in a certain way." In this particular comment, "The HOD's need to understand what is expected to improve children's language learning," teachers revealed that they must work under administrative constraints, and school principals need training as much as they do. I saw this as a burgeoning understanding of the value of dialogic holistic teaching with a practical appreciation of the limits teachers feel from the expectations and knowledge base of administrators. This raises issues for leadership about the need to train principals, HOD's, and early childhood coordinators along with their teachers.

The authoritarian discourse theme also revealed in a second sub-theme around the teacher's own fear of losing orderly control if they share power with learners through authentic dialogue about learning. Teachers feared what they saw as challenges to using a dialogic approach to teaching. For example, Sarah said, "I think there will be less control for the teacher. The teacher will lose control."

When teachers become aware of learning and communication strategies, however, organized and controlled interactions are possible. "Social heteroglossia" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 278) is a concept that acknowledges that multiple cultural voices echoed in any speaker's utterances: this allows learners' voices to be structured in conversation and points to the reality that there is constant tension with multiple other voices. Who has the power to name a problem? Whose words have we borrowed and for what purpose? Dialogic engagement offers intentional space for unfolding social heteroglossia in turn

taking (Aukerman, 2012). Abraham noted, "All learners would want to talk at the same time. The teacher must guide them. The teacher must teach them not to speak out of their turn and apply disciplinary strategies. If you allow them to speak at the same time, it will end up in chaos." *INAD*> According to such a narrative, the authority of the teacher is portrayed as dominant, while learners are seen as powerless. Sylvia remarked, "The challenges of dialogic teaching are the influences of home language. It is also difficult to maintain order." There persists a set of beliefs about how an authoritative moral voice is established by a teacher. Teachers often fear collaborating with students around student learning strategies, because they are reluctant to share power and authority in new ways. Yet, research documents that students are vested in learning and often have solid ideas on how to improve classroom climate and learning. Bakhtin's (1986) theory of dialogism speaks to the challenges of ESL.

*INATT*>Overall, the teachers showed a positive attitude toward the PD training. Lee-Ann remarked, "This training was enlightening…. There is more to pre-primary than what we think or what my training has prepared me for. Actually, the training was an eye opener." She also noted, "There are teachers teaching for many years. The things that were given in this training are probably not the teaching strategies that teachers use today…. It is like a new version of what and how learners are supposed to be taught… It would be an update for them…Especially the teaching aids…" Another teacher narrated, "The training was a fresh breeze."

The analysis does not reveal any negative comments about the PD. To the contrary, teachers openly confessed their lack of specialized knowledge in the following comment: "I learned to teach from observations in the lower primary classrooms. I learned a lot from these teachers about phonics." Recently, pre-primary education was introduced to the formal education system for the first time after the country became

independent in 1990. Therefore, these teachers and many others were not formally trained in this field. The document analysis reveals a disconnect among the school and Higher Education language/literacy curricula which is an indication of the current situation with regard to teacher training.

In response to the question, what stood out during the PD, Abraham remarked on the research based reading texts in the following way: *INATT*> "I prefer "Essentials of early literacy" (Rokos et al. 2003). It taught me what to teach in early literacy. Both readings were good. It has helped me." With regard to the challenges experienced during the training, Sarah revealed, *INC*> "The reading part…. We had too many readings to do…. I could not make sense, because the level of English used in the reading. The training was not what I was taught in my training." Pre-primary teachers were required to read the text within a set timeframe. As second language speakers, the level of English or time required to finish readings obviously posed a challenge for teachers. Secondly, more training is needed to learn new knowledge that did not form part of the teachers' initial training curriculum. Phases 2 and 3 outline the teachers' profiles, transcription and analysis of classroom observations.

### 4.5 Observation data analysis

#### Phase 2

After the training, I asked voluntary participants to present lessons aligned with the pre-primary curriculum, using features that were learned from the PD. A brief profile of each teacher will be given below. Also, see Chapter 5: Background information of teachers. In the analysis of Observation 1, I examined teachers' beliefs about reading within the classroom discourse using classroom observation transcriptions. Since CDA examines language in use, narrative stanzas are presented first, and thereafter the analysis of the particular stanza.

**Observation 1: Analysis of videotaped lesson**

Ndeshi has six years of teaching experience, speaks Oshiwambo, and has an Advance Certificate in Education (Chapter 5: Background information). During her studies, she did not specialize in pre-primary education. She has 42 pre-primary learners in her room. I have first transcribed the videos of Ndeshi's and Elizabeth's teaching. These videos were both approximately 20 minutes long. Both teachers presented the lessons through storytelling. Their peers observed both lessons and rated their teaching, using an observation checklist. (See results of validity checks on observation checklist ratings in Chapter 5). During these lessons, learners re-voiced or repeated after the teacher. In Ndeshi's observation, I selected excerpts that depict the teacher's authoritarian teaching style, a tendency that was evident throughout all the lessons. I had to listen several times to the voice presentation of language to ensure an accurate representation of the scene.

The participants of the transcripts included two adult female teachers, peer observers, and learners. Pre-primary learners, Alberta, Cavin, and Toivo (Pseudonyms) are mentioned in Ndeshi's transcript, and have speaking turns. The native language of all learners and teachers is dialects of Oshiwambo and Rukangali. Elizabeth's observation transcript presents what she has learned because of her participation in early literacy professional development, and what curriculum features were self-reported following the PD during the classroom observation. Table 4.6 shows the distribution of speaking turns in Ndeshi's transcript. Turn taking, presented in genre (CDA) includes an analysis of participant structures to contextualize the sequence and structure of talk in the transcript (Rogers, 2011).

### 4.6 Analytic Procedures

**Table 4.6**

*Observation 1: Distribution of turns*

| | |
|---|---|
| Teacher | 52 |
| All Learners | 32 |
| Individual learners | 6 |

The speaking turns in the entire script were quite short (1 letter utterances) hindering accessibility or deeper CDA. I examined lexical features that were buried within these short turns (e.g. verbs, tenses, pronouns, repetitions). Therefore, I segmented the selected transcript into stanzas in order to deduce the transcripts' macrostructure (Gee, 2011). I identified salient information in each stanza (Appendix F and G). These stanzas were segmented into topics that align with the research sub-question: In what ways, can literacy teaching be enacted and improved in an early literacy classroom?

The transcription process relied on orthographic data transcription processes (Ochs, 1999). I have mainly captured the voice tone that depicts language while transcribing the data. The data was divided in narrative scenes as the teacher presented the lesson (Stanza 1-3). Furthermore, the CDA revealed that top-to-bottom biases were evident. This implies that learners only responded after the teachers' prompts. There were also left-to-right biases when learners were expected to respond only to the teacher. Ochs (1999) indicates that it may reflect perceived notions of dominance and control. This implies that the teacher dominates all turns. I selected a brief excerpt, 75 lines from the

total transcription of 198 lines, and did a theme analysis of how power is negotiated between these moments, teacher and student exchanges, and patterns of meaning making. "Theme" can be defined as the initial part of a clause that emphasizes meaning (Rogers, 2004). For a more detailed textual analysis in reference to my research question, I conducted Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by examining line 124-199 of the transcript for examples of genre, discourse, and style. I defined genre in the transcription of observation data according to the framework for CDA as "*ways of interacting*," discourse, as "*ways of representing*" and style as "*ways of being*" (Rogers & Mosley-Wetzel, 2014).

In Phase 3, I took pictures of classroom scenes during Sylvia's lesson. Multimodality is a CDA tool that conveys meaning that arises from social environments and social interaction (Kress, 2010). The multimodal analysis reveals several visual modes (gaze), action modes (object handling, gesture, facial expression, posture), and environmental modes (near/far) of selected classroom interaction to indicate how meaning is constructed through social practices. Stanza 1 is presented under the sub-theme "early literacy' next.

**Stanza 1: Early literacy**

**124 All learner**: The cow//

**125 Teacher:** What sound does the cow start with//

**126 All learners**: /k/

**127 Teacher**: Ok// The sound of the…//

**128 All learners**: /k/

**129 Teacher**: Correct// Try again//

**130 Child**: …. the /o/

**131 All learners:** Noo….

**132 Teacher:** Ok// try again//

**133 Child:** /k/

**134 Teacher:** Ok……. good, //ok/ let's say the sound /k/

**135 All learners**: //k/ /k/ /k// for// cow

**136 Teacher:** It's a /k/ for cow/

**137 All learners**: /k/ for cow//

**138 Teacher**: /k/ for cow//

**139 Teacher**: Again /k/ again /k/ /k/ again /k/

**140** Let's not look at ……let's look at the chalkboard…. né/

**141** Everybody say /k/ /k/ repeatedly /k/ /k/ for cow///

**142 All Learners**: /k/ for cow//

**143 Teacher**: Very good//

**144** Who can try for me the sound with another sound/

**145** You can just be matching the other sound of the alphabet//

Line 124-145 is described under the topic, early literacy. The talk in line 124-145 is directed at learners in a pre-primary classroom. The teacher asked, "…what sound does the cow start with?" (line 125). After each prompt, the learners re-voiced the alphabet letter /k/. In teaching, early literacy skills, it benefits learners to be exposed to activities that distinguish one phoneme from another. For example, the phonemes /k/ /au/ combined make the word cow. Explicit instruction in letter-sound relationships promotes early literacy. On the other hand, failure to see the relationship between written and spoken sounds letter impedes early literacy development. Line 132 "noo" shows learners disagreement after a peer attempted to respond to the teacher's prompt. This response cuts off further communication. Excerpt, line 132 "ok… Try again," shows affirmation. Taken together, this order of discourse does not inform a construction of

an effective, experienced teacher who may use "scaffolding" to guide the learner toward meaning making. The excerpt, line 124- 145 has a characteristic articulation of genre and figured worlds. In terms of genre, the text relies upon turn taking, topics and episodes, parallel structure, and inter-textual references to shared events within the lesson (Appendix A). Rogers (2011) defines "figured worlds" as picture or a simplified world or views that captures what is taken to be typical or normal.

Even though the teacher reinforced letter /k/, the metalinguistic or structural awareness of the letter is /c/. PD prepared teachers to introduce the similarity of sounds simultaneously, and to extend meaning in dialogue on aspects of ESL language and mother tongue. The narrative confirms the need for more PD to emphasize early literacy and pedagogical approaches for pre-primary teaching and learning within a socio-cultural context. Stanza 2 presents an analysis under the sub-theme "classroom discourse."

**Stanza 2: Classroom discourse**

**146 All learners**: me….me teacher……me

**147 Teacher**: Ok……Alberta? The /k/ sound//

**148** Who can identify?

**149 Alberta:** Positively identifies the sound with the letter /c/ on the wall chart in class.

**150 Teacher**: That one? Is she correct?

**151 All learners**: Yes

**152 Teacher**: Very good. Clap hands for her. Ok…. good//

**153** We have …again…. this one……What is this animal//

**154** Again, again,

**155 All learners**: Cat/ cat/ cat/

**156 Teacher**: Its starting with which sound? //

**157** Again/ again/

**158 All learners**: /k/ /k/ /k/

**159 Teacher:** It's starting with a ….

**160 All learners**: /k/ /k/

**161 Teacher:** Its starting with a….

**162 All learners**: /k/

**163 Teacher:** Come up with cool names of animals that start with a /k/.

**164** Later it's not a farm animal. //

**165** Any name that start with a /k/

**166** We have the /k/ for cat, /k/ for cow, /k/ for what again//

**167** For carrot//

**168** Ok/another one/ /k/ for what else/

**169** Any other word that start with a /k/ Hé//

**170** Is that all// Ok/ Janga//

**171 Child**: Cake//

**172 Teacher:** Clever// Clap hands /k/ for /k/ for

**172 All learners**: Cat////

In the second excerpt line 148-172, discourse is defined by the use of lexicalization, re-lexicalization, pronouns, and possible exclusion that position the teacher relative to the transfer of knowledge/teaching. Discourse is referred to as "construction of some aspect of reality from a particular perspective" (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 63).

Teachers' lack of language knowledge impedes student learning. The use of slang/form of language in the teachers figured world occurs in line 169 "Hé" seems to be normal in spoken language or classroom communication. This form of language

might be a result of the influence of the native language on ESL speakers. Learners re-voiced the teachers' discourse of phonics through direct speech /k/ for cow or /k/ for cat. Letter-sound correspondence is an essential skill that needs reinforcement in pre-primary classrooms for early literacy development. Learners must discover the connection between print and what the written word represent in a spoken word. Thus, what is spoken and how things are spoken matter in early literacy learning. Explicit instruction pointing out frequent use of the letter-sound relationship, signs from the environment, or letters in context of names will have meaning for learners. In this discourse, learners are denied access to specialized developmentally appropriate language, and alternative ways to perceive rich language experiences. Moreover, it is true that "issues of power are enacted in classrooms" (Delpit, 1988, p. 282). The learners had to submit under the teachers "figured world." Alternatively, the teacher could have provided more language rich opportunities to learners to discover the connection between the written and spoken word.

In line 148, the teacher requested an individual learner to identify the letter /k/ for cow from environmental print. In the excerpt, line 150, "That one? Is she correct?" The teacher encourages and engages the learners in self-evaluation of answers. Meaning making is an important aspect of applying knowledge of the content and language learned. The learner showed understanding of the form of /c/, and made the connection of the symbol or letter /k/ even though the teacher has not explicitly taught the graphic relationship among /k/ and /c/. In line 148-173 the teacher asked, line 148 "who can identify?" to get a turn, and permits the learner to point to a letter on a poster against the wall to have a speaking turn. She uses teacher-learner exchange procedures to enforce turn-taking. The learner submitted under the Discourse of teacher-centeredness and the teachers' authoritarian position in the classroom. Empowered

with new instructional strategies, line 163, “Come up with cool names of animals that start with a /k/, the teacher reinforced the awareness of dialogue in turn taking to access and transform student learning. The teacher allowed learners to come up with names from their own repertoire of words. These turns were to re-voice what the teacher said, thus highlighting monologic tendencies that deny young learners the opportunity to gain an essential foundation for early reading and writing. Stanza 3 presents the “authoritarian discourse.”

**Stanza 3: Authoritarian discourse**

**174 Teacher**: Ok// good// We have the///d/ for what//

**175 All learners:** dog.

**176 Teacher:** Again// Again//Again//Dog…. //

**177 All learners:** /dog/.../dog/... /dog/…/dog/

**178 Teacher**: Is there any other name that starts with a /d////There’s no other names// Né //Who thinks there’s other names///

**179** Who thinks there’s other names that start with /d/ for dog///

**180** For what again////

**181 Teacher**: /d/ for what// Toivo come up to the table to select a word. ///Ok////

**182** This is for what// The /d/ is what////

**183 All learners**: dog…

**184 Teacher**: it’s not a /d//// We are looking for the words////

**185 Child**: Points to word on the wall chart//

**186 Teacher:** The same sound as ……..this one////

**187** The /d/ for dog////

**188** Let’s start with /d/ Ok// thank you// Cool////

**189** What is this//

**190** Hé what is this// /dog/

**191** So /dog/ starting with the /d/ sound////

**192** Very good// Ok/stand up//

**193** **Teacher:** Stand up//

**194** **Teacher**: Now we are drawing a picture///

**195** Every group will draw the picture that they get//

**196** Just remain standing///

**197** **Teacher**: Ok/ Let's sing our song/ I am drawing//

**198** drawing// drawing all the day// Ok// Good//

**199** You can have a seat, Né.

In line 174-199, statements of inter-textuality, transivity, tense, and lexical relations define the style. Lexical relations refer to the relation and classification of experiences through an unfolding series of activities (Rogers & Mosley-Wentzel. 2014). While inter-textuality refers to quoted speech, irony, parody, negation, presupposition, and scare quotes. After reading the text again, I found more figured worlds echoed by learners. In line 175, "Again, again, again…. dog," and line 177 "dog, dog, dog…. The learners echoed the words of the teacher, also the words of each other, and captures a figured world of re-voicing the teacher. Learners identified the form of letter /d/, but do not make a letter-sound connection in context of the word /dog/, or the functioning of the word in writing.

In this parallel structure of language, the learners become objects of the authoritarian Discourse of the teacher. For example, line 176 "again, again, again…In Bakhtin's notion of authoritative discourse, Morson (2004) distinguishes between authoritarian and authoritative discourse and reflects on how each affects learners'

learning. For Morson (2004), authoritarian discourse is distinctively monologic. Authoritative discourse, on the other hand, may or may not be authoritarian. Even though there are signs or an awareness of using a dialogic approach through question and answer responses, and learners' engagement, this narrative is primarily monologic. Inter-textuality, lines 194-195, refers to the body of scholarship. The teacher's classroom control, in using pronouns, applies to the entire group of pre-primary learners. In line 174 "we," line 184 "we are looking for the words," and line 188 "let us start with /d/." The use of first person pronouns draws the learners into the narrative which shows the teachers' awareness of using a dialogic approach which may be beneficial for language/literacy development. In the entire narrative, the lexicalization positions the learners not only as recipients, but victims of teacher feedback. The school environment is teacher-centred; there is no evidence of negotiation of meaning with students. For example, line 193-196 "stand up. Now we are drawing a picture. Every group will draw the picture that they get. Just remain standing…" Roles are clearly defined in teacher-learner exchanges. Teachers are the possessors and givers of education, while the learners are the receivers, consistent with Freire's banking model (Freire & Macedo, 2000). Instead of being dispensers of knowledge, teachers need to engage learners in ways that foster structural, semantic, social and cultural systems useful for language learning. The online forum analysis is presented next.

### 4.7 Online forum data analysis

#### Phase 3

The comments from the online forum reveal the teacher's teaching style in the feedback comments from other participants. For example, "The teacher acts while telling the story." "Her teaching style encouraged participation and attracts the learners' attention. "In this case, the observer focusses on the AD.

Authoritarian Discourse (*AD*) is revealed in this comment made online: "The teacher must not tell the learners that they are wrong, she must help them to understand or motivate them to find the right answer." In this comment, we see a beginning recognition that the observed teacher is exercising power and control in defining what might be accepted as a 'right' answer to a query. *IS*> Vygotsky (1978) believed that new tasks and information needed to be modelled to learners. To enhance children's learning, the teacher may provide scaffolding and guidance. When a child no longer needs guidance, the teacher allows the child to practice the skill independently. Children can also scaffold for one another in a more horizontal way that can be understood.

Another teacher remarked *IS*>, "Negative comments discourage learners; they will be afraid to answer." According to Gutiérrez and Orellana (2006), "One strategy for adopting a substantive self-reflective stance is to pay keen attention when we find ourselves naming something that learners can't do or don't know" (p. 120). In other words, instead of focusing on what learners cannot do right, teachers' may focus on what learners know, and rely on the instruction and modelling provided to scaffold learning. The participant quoted above shows a beginning awareness of the importance of affirmation and positive modelling rather than criticism.

In a following-up discussion, a teacher asked, *IS*> "What if I asked a question to a learner, and he/she cannot answer. I move on to the next two learners who can also not answer the same question?" This scenario reflected on the PD under the themes pedagogical approach (*PA*): sociocultural learning (*SC*) that creates a platform for teachers to understand and acknowledge the concept of "funds of knowledge" (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzales, 2005) that bilingual or ELL's bring to the table that can help teachers consider classroom practices that enable more learners to participate in dialogic conversations in the classroom. The literature further reveals that in a

linguistically diverse society, "teachers of linguistically diverse learners face the challenge of mediating students' learning by creating opportunities to tap into students' first language while they learn English, even if a teacher does not know the language of the students" (Martinez-Roldan, 2003, p. 520). Therefore, there is a need for PD to support teachers over time to learn how to develop "sustained substantive dialogue" (Coughlan, Juzwick, Kelly, Borsheim-Black, & Goldering Fine, 2013, p. 213) with their learners to promote literacy development, and to learn how to "scaffold" learning. In the next discussion, I outline the analysis of Observation 2.

**4.8 Reflection of PD knowledge**

**Phase 2: Observation 2**

Elizabeth has eight years of teaching experience, speaks Oshiwambo, and is in possession of a Grade 12 certificate. She teaches a Grade 1 class, and has 32 learners in her group. During the first eight weeks of school, teachers prepare learners who did not have the opportunity to attend pre-primary, with a bridging course to ready them for Grade 1. Currently, she is enrolled in the UNAM INSET program. Elizabeth's teaching answers the following research question, "As a result of teachers' participation in early literacy PD, what actual changes in literacy instruction and practice do trained teachers self-report following the PD?" I have used an excerpt from her observation transcription to complete the following analysis.

Using Gee's (1999) genre, ways of interacting, - I analysed the texts below as representative of the inter-textuality of the talk. This data compares with the focus group code *FG>IS:* "matching pictures to words is a good instructional strategy" that the participants attributed to their PD experience. In the online forum, a teacher also invokes *IS*>learning: "She has pictures on the board that involve learners in the story reading [sic]." Matching pictures to words is an instructional strategy that allows

children to acquire new vocabulary when they match pictures to words. Young learners learn conventions of reading and writing systems in the early phase of learning. The awareness of graphic symbols plays an important role and teaches learners that pictures tell a story and could be linked to print. The analysis of Stanza 1, from classroom Observation 2 is presented next.

**Stanza 1**

**1**: **T:** It was an old woman. John I want you to come here. You select for me the name then you attach it to the picture. Old woman…. John I want you to select the word and match it to the picture [sic].

**2**: **Child:** Identifies the word "old woman," and matched it to the picture of an old woman.

**3**: **T:** You can go attach it to the picture. Very good! Clap hands for her.

**4**: **T:** This one is old who? Raise your hands, Justina?

**5**: **Justina**: Old man

**6**: **T**: It must start with old not just man.

**7: Justina:** Selects the right word

**8: T**: And this is what?

**9: Child**: Pig

**10**: **T**: Pig…. Someone come and select pig [Learners matched words: cow, horse, and fox accordingly.

In Stanza 1, CDA reveals relational cues in the use of pronouns, first person pronoun "we" and second person pronoun "you." Line 3, "you can go attach it to the picture," and line 11, "Now we are going to do our activities in a group." The teacher engaged the learners in group work activities. The comparative code*, INIS* >reveals a changing perception about the possibility that kids can learn from each other and not just the

teacher "I think if we can use Centers… when kids work together in a group, they can learn from each other." Such comments show a beginning level of transformation of beliefs about optimizing learning through shared dialogue.

The excerpt below, line 11-13 compares with the participant interviews with regard to second order literacy, *INSS>* A PD participant claims, "The training taught me to incorporate writing in my lessons. I can ask children to draw an object and it does not matter how they draw. It's writing…." Communicating through drawing is particularly useful for ESL's, as pictures are universal in terms of meaning and can act as a bridge to communication in writing (Morrow, Tracy & Del Nero, 2009). If dialogic practices are modelled through PD, participants can internalize experientially the value of such research based teaching and learning practice can continue to gain more facility to enhance ELL's development. Stanza 2 is presented in the next analysis.

**Stanza 2**

**11**: T: Now we are going to do our activities in a group. I will explain. Each group will do their own activities. This one is a gingerbread man. You are going to attach the body parts to make a gingerbread man. This is for this group. When this one is finished, you go to another group to make another activity. You cut out the head, and the body, and the arms. And this the ……. (child's response) legs. And this group, you are going to colour the pictures as instructed. Here it is…. I can colour the gingerbread man. Here it says (pointing to picture) I can colour the gingerbread man brown. Here it says, I can colour the river blue. And this is the horse. It says I can colour the horse yellow. What colour?

**12**: All children: Yellow

**13**: T: You know that colour?

In the excerpt above, line 11-13, the teacher taught explicitly what activities the learners have to perform. These skills include "cut out the head, and the body, and the arms." …you are going to colour the pictures…" Visual discrimination is also a reading readiness skill and includes the identification of colours, shapes, and letters, as well as left-to-right progression, visual – motor skills (cutting on a line), and large motor abilities (skipping and hopping). Worksheets are used in reading instruction (Morrow, Tracy & Del Nero, 2009). The teacher self-reported the use of instructional strategies learned during PD training. Learners participate in semiotic practices, e.g. drawing or colouring while using materials such as paper and pencils. These signs, created by attaching shared meanings to materials and actions through "mediated action", are the building blocks of literacy (Wertsch, 1991). The teacher used mediated actions that referred to the uses and particular kinds of language that relate to her lesson on storytelling. However, these activities were detached from important aspects such as alphabet principle or letter-sound conventions that promote language development for ELL's. There was no negotiation or problem-solving dialogue about how to make the gingerbread man or colour the picture. The excerpt shows only the teacher's way.

In the excerpt below, line 14-15, the teacher stopped at a point in time during the story, and asked the learners what will happen next. At this stage of the story telling, the following open-ended questions were asked: 1) What do you think? 2) Will he ask for help? These questions allow the learners to attach meaning to comprehend the story and identify with the characters as was modelled in the PD sessions. Stanza 3 is presented next.

**Stanza 3**

**14: T:** What do you think? Will he ask for help? But from whom? Because all these animals and the old woman and man want to eat him.

But behind the tree was the fox. He was looking at the gingerbread man. What do you think, will he swim or will he ask help from someone? Or will someone come and offer him help?

**15**: **Child**: Someone will offer him help.

From the online forum, teachers commented on Elizabeth's teaching. "I loved the voice tone of the teacher." Another comment indicated, "I like the way the teacher told the story." Stanzas 1-3 provide an overview of the assessment process during the 4-day face-to-face PD practice sessions. In Observation 3, Sylvia's teaching is presented from a multimodal perspective.

**4.9 Multimodal analysis**

**Phase 2: Observation 3**

Sylvia has six years of teaching experience, speaks Afrikaans, and holds an Advanced Diploma of Education obtained from the Institute of Open Learning. She taught for the greater part of her career in private early childhood centers, and has transitioned for the past years to Public Schools. She has 27 learners in her class and currently teaches in the pre-primary phase.

Multimodal analysis of the data shows the ways in which children create socially constructed meaning in their environment. The multimodal analysis involves isolating, examining, and explaining aspects of the teachers' instructional strategy to understand how the teacher and students use the available semiotic resources to represent meanings. In the discourse, the teacher and learners are foregrounded in the first scene during whole group teaching. The teacher gazes at the word chart, while the learner manipulates the objects in response to her prompt. For the second scene, a boy is portrayed. Both the girl and the boy interact while manipulating an object. The whole

class is engaged and repeats the beginning and ending letters of words, while listening carefully to the distinction of different sounds.

Learners need to identify sounds in words, segment parts of words, blend words together, substitute new initial sounds with a word ending to make new words (Morrow, Tracy, & Del Nero, 2009). The analysis of teachers' theoretical orientation to reading reveals that teachers with a phonics orientation believe that young readers learn by identifying letter-sound relationships, identifying word parts or smaller than word parts such as syllables, prefixes, affixes, endings, and root words. Scene 1 below confirms the phonics belief toward teaching reading as indicated on the TORP.

**Figure 4.3 Instructional strategy (*IS*)**

*Scene 1*

**Onderwyser**: Wys my die eerste en laaste klankies. Watter klankie hoor julle?

**Teacher**: Show me the first and the last letters. Which sound do you hear?

**Action mode**: Show me the first sound

**Movements**: Both the boy and girl took the object and point to first sound. Hands are in motion


**Posture**: Teacher holds up a word card; student leans forward, Others watch and one watched the camera

**Gaze**: Teacher watches what learners do. Learners gazed at object and letter

From the teachers' words, "Show me the first sound," the learners followed the teacher's directions in silence, and pointed to the beginning letters of words /b/ and /d/. The teacher sounded out letter /b/ and letter /d/ to differentiate between two sounds in the words /bad/, /bat/, /bus/. According to Morrow, Tracy and Del Nero (2009), phonemic awareness is the ability to hear different sounds in words, segment sounds in words, blend sounds together, and substitute new sounds at the beginning of a word to create a new word with the same ending (e.g. fat, cat, rat, bat, mat). Other learners watched, and engaged into sounding and repeating the letters, and then the word. There is movement with a toy to point to the letter that allows for meaning making, when identifying letter forms, and matching letters to sounds. The teacher is foregrounded. On the visual, the teacher releases power to the learner, and gazes authoritatively over the action. Analysing gaze as a mode reveals the meaning of the ways that students look at classroom materials and at each other, as well as the ways that they are gazed at by the teacher (Rogers, 2011). Social space for learning is created as a result. Other learners are disengaged, and back grounded. Kress (2003) indicates that children as players and designers strategically emphasize salient features of objects that represent essential aspects of reality. The facial expression of both learners shows that they enjoyed the activity.

In Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural orientation to learning, mediation is the key to guided participation and learning within apprenticeships (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1995). This teacher focused on the phonological skill that include rhyming, blending, and the segmentation or identification of individual sounds in spoken language. These skills are appropriate for older pre-schoolers, a profile that fits the multimodal analysis in scene 1. This teaching strategy promotes dialogue and helps learners to acquire the

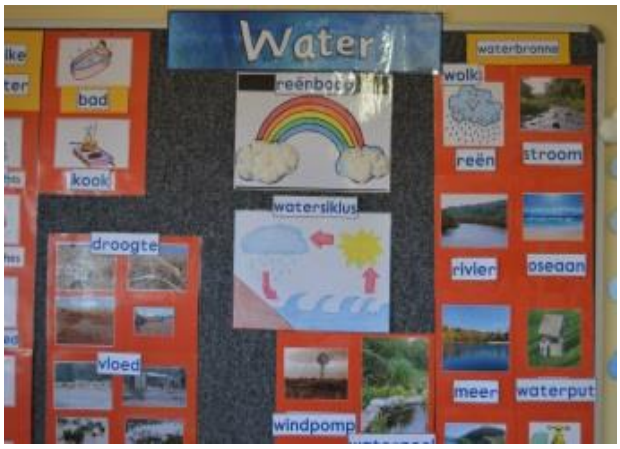
alphabetic principle of beginning and ending sounds /b/ and /d/ in the learners' mother tongue.

**Enviromental print**

During the online forum discussion in Week #4, the topic of discussion was "environmental print" in reference to photographs taken in Sylvia's classroom. I present an analysis from the online forum data set in the following analysis. Figure 4.4 represents visuals or graphics from this classroom environment observation.

**Figure 4.4**

*Environmental print*


The teachers commented, "This classroom promotes literature, because all the pictures, and objects are labelled. This classroom promotes incidental reading. Learners can make meaning from the pictures, match, and recognize words." Another teacher said, "This classroom promotes the love for reading and creativity from an early age." The next analysis focuses on the theme: "early literacy." These comments also indicate a heightened value for and awareness of interactive pedagogy that was not evident before the PD training.

### 4.10 Early literacy

**Phase 2: Observation 4**

Sarah has six years of teaching experience, and has finished her studies at University of Namibia (UNAM) She holds a Basic Education Teachers Diploma (BETD), and speaks Koekhoegowab. BETD studies have not prepared her to teach in the pre-primary phase, but she has taught pre-primary for the past four years. She has 32 learners in her class. Sarah has presented her lesson in Koekhoegowab. She displayed the alphabet letter "M' in context of student names, Melinda, and Menette. She also displayed the letter "S" and tied alphabet knowledge to socio-cultural learning when she displayed a three-leg pot, and soap to connect student's understanding to the letter "s." Sarah's lesson was posted in the online forum for reflection.

The comments from the other participants who viewed her posted video included the following: "The teacher had objects starting with /s/. The names beneath the pictures allow the learners to recognize the sound as well as the name of the objects or pictures." "Sarah directed the learning, and learners re-voiced her narrative." "The learners were passive during the lesson." Recurring comments in the online forum were, "The learners were quiet." "It was only the teacher that talks." "I think the teacher must engage the learners into more to talk." Another participant wrote, "The teacher speaks alone. She must give the learners also a chance to speak." I coded this comment under *AD*> authoritarian discourse, because this idea is unpacked further in Chapter 6. In the next analysis, my secondary data analysis is presented.

### 4.11 Document analysis

**Phase 1**

The document review outlines curricular features of the following sources: 1) pre-service undergraduate English language training curriculum, 2) pre-primary school

curriculum, and 3) PD English literacy training notes. I obtained the pre-primary curriculum from the website of the National Institute for Education Development (NIED) in Namibia, and the B. ED undergraduate curriculum from the University of Namibia. The Year 1 curriculum is comprised of a topical focus, time frame, and objectives, Year 2, 3, and 4 indicate the module content, sub divided into units, content knowledge (what students need to know), and pedagogical knowledge (how students should teach). In the analysis, I used Fairclough's concepts of *genre, discourse and style* with specific emphasis on discourse (ways of representing) to analyse the content captured by these documents. The key information focus of higher education curricula reveals a grammar orientation in Year 1. In Year 2, listening and speaking, Year 3, reading and writing, and Year 4, syntax/sentence construction and the use of a dictionary. The pre-primary curriculum focusses on receptive, expressive, and preparatory writing. Aspects highlighted in the pre-primary curriculum for public schools include such goals as the following: 1) distinguish between and identify different sounds they hear in the environment, 2) repeat a sound patterns or clapping rhythm correctly, 3) demonstrate adequate phonic perception and articulation, and 4) identify phonic sounds; far/close; loud/soft; high/low sounds etc. In Fairclough's genre (ways of interacting), I noted constitutive intertextuality. Constitutive intertextuality emphasizes features between texts, such as structure, form, and genre. In the higher education curriculum, grammar, and syntax stood out to be the focus for pre-service and in-service education and training.

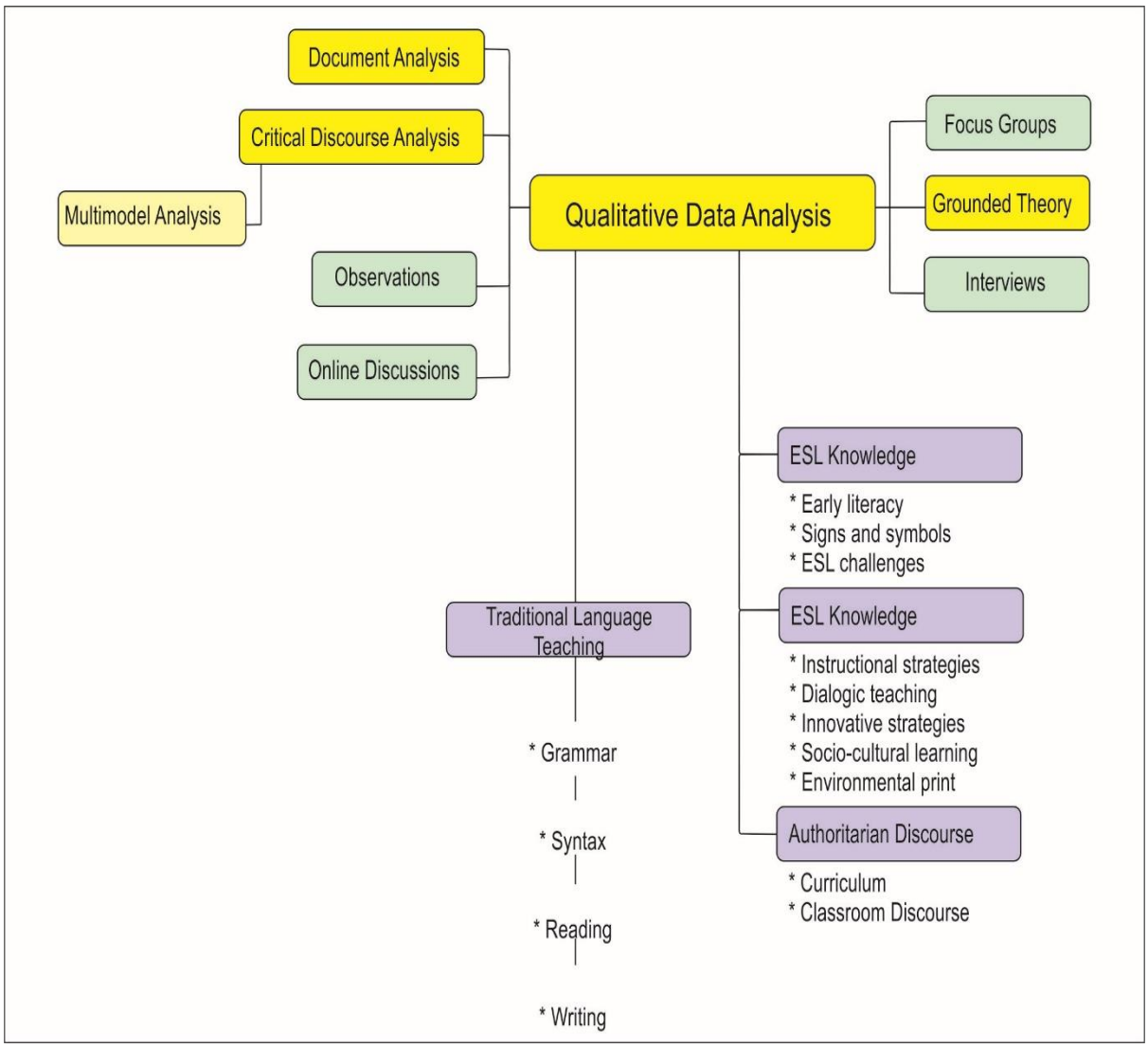
**4.12 Synthesis of Qualitative data analysis**

In the qualitative data analysis process, I identified initial codes, axial codes, and selective or analytical codes. I constantly compared these codes (See Figure 4.2 and 4.3), using the Grounded Theory analysis method, to identify themes from qualitative data

obtained from focus groups, interviews, and online discussions. This constant comparative method of data analysis involves equating one segment of data with another to determine differences and similarities. A text analysis of video and audio recordings of classroom observations and interviews demonstrates linguistic text analysis and the functioning of language within the classroom discourse. In the analysis of observation transcriptions and document analysis, CDA guided the analytical process through genre, discourse and style (See narratives outlined in Stanzas). The particular narratives identify the underlying genre while assessing the figured worlds and dialogical nature of voices that give meaning to the experience in the text. The narratives provide textual evidence and a better picture of voices echoed in the classroom discourse. These CDA codes were grouped together under specific themes based upon similarities for further discussion. The synthesis of the qualitative analysis shows similarities among the focus group, interview, classroom observation transcriptions, and online discussion data. However, there is no congruency with the document analysis that captures the higher education training curriculum content for pre-primary and in-service training in Namibia. Such a mismatch confirms a need to rethink teacher preparation for those who will be our children's first encounter with formal schooling. Table 4.7 depicts the final comparative themes identified in both sets of qualitative data analysis. Figure 4.5 presents a framework of qualitative data analysis and the themes generated from the data.

**Figure 4.5**

*Qualitaive data analysis*




## 4.13 Conclusion

Chapter 4 presented the analysis and synthesis of qualitative data, using Grounded Theory (GT), and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) tools. Concurrently, this chapter also presented key interpretations of qualitative data analysis and conceptualises coding, narratives, and pictures that provide visual evidence of the analysis. Quantitative data from TORP is analysed in Chapter 5, and the validation of the Observation Checklist sheet is presented.

# CHAPTER 5

# QUANTITATIVE RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

## 5.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 presents the results of the quantitative data and analysis from the TORP instrument, and the development of the lesson observation checklist. The quantitative research question of this study is: "In what ways can the theoretical orientation of pre-primary teachers in Namibia, as measured by the De Ford (1985) Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP), change as a result of targeted dialogic PD?" The validation hypothesis is: As measured by TORP on each of the 28 items, using a 5-point Likert scale, is there any significant difference in the scores on each item/question of teachers who participated in the pre/post-test survey before and after the PD?

The teachers' theoretical beliefs are divided into three orientations: 1) phonics, 2) skills, and 3) whole language. Specifically, the results of the statistical analyses to be presented for quantitative data analysis include: 1) establishing the baseline theoretical beliefs of pre-primary teachers and measuring if the PD changed them, 2) establishing the validity of the lesson observation checklist instrument, and 3) presenting descriptive and inferential statistical outcomes based on demographic variables such as language proficiency, years of experience, educational level, etc. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) (2015) was used to analyse the profile data collected. The independent variables include a) language proficiency, b) years of experience, and c) educational level. The dependent variable for this study is the TORP pre/post responses. A population (N=33) completed the initial theoretical orientation to reading profile (TORP), which uses Likert scale items, with added baseline and exit background information. Only 23 participants in both Khomas and Hardap regions completed the exit portion of the survey after the PD experience.

## 5.2 Results and analysis of Quantitative Research Sub-question 1

### *Return rate of pre-test post-test surveys*

A sample (N=33) pre-test surveys were distributed to pre-primary teachers in two education regions: Hardap and Khomas. Pseudonyms is used to protect the participating schools, and teachers. Chapter 3 discussed the selection of the sample. 23/33 (69.7%) pre/post-test surveys were returned. The teachers' theoretical orientation to reading establishes and influences goals, procedures, materials and classroom interaction patterns (De Ford, 1985). According to the results of the TORP survey, pre-primary teachers strongly reflected a phonics orientation of how they believe children learn to read. The results show that the PD training slightly influenced the pedagogical approach self-reported in the TORP and classroom observations. Table 5.1 and Table 5.2 present the findings on the TORP of the sample (N=23) teachers from two education regions, Hardap and Khomas.

**Table 5.1**

*Theoretical Orientation to reading: Phonics and Skills*

| **Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP)** Pre-primary teachers' beliefs | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | N | Percent (%) |
| Pre-test | Phonics (0-65) | 20 | 87 |
| Post-test | | 19 | 82.6 |
| Pre-test | Skills (66-110) | 3 | 13 |
| Post-test | | 4 | 17.4 |

Table 5.1 shows the distribution of scores of pre-primary teachers' beliefs self-reported on pre-post-test survey. I have tallied the scores on the TORP, using point values on each item, 1(one) for strongly agree (SA) and 5 (five) points for strongly disagree (SD). For items, 5, 7, 15, 17, 18, 23, 26, and 27, (Appendix F), reverse order point values were assigned: 5 (five) points for strongly agree (SA) to 1(one) point for strongly disagree (SD). All point values were added as indicated for each item. Ten Items 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 12, 20, 21, and 22 are phonics items, ten items 4, 8, 11, 13, 14, 16, 19, 24, 25, and 28 are skills items, and eight items 5,7, 15, 17, 18, 23, 26, and 27 are representing the whole language orientation. By using this scale, the researcher creates an outcome where a low score is actually a strong endorsement for an assertion. When this score is generally reversed, a higher mean actually means a higher affiliation with the statement, etc. The overall calculated point value for a phonics orientation is (0-65), for a skills orientation (65-110), and for whole language (110-140).

The majority of pre-primary teachers in both regions, 20/23 (87%) self-reported a phonics orientation in the pre-test, and 19/23 (82.6%) of the teachers held a phonics theoretical orientation in the post-test. Teachers with a phonics orientation believe that young readers learn by identifying letter-sound relationships, identifying word parts or smaller than word parts such as syllables, prefixes, affixes, endings, and root words. The post-test revealed some difference, (4.4%) from pre-to post-test, but results do not show a significant difference in phonics orientation as a result of the PD intervention. According to Ford (1985), participants who score 66-110, express a skills orientation. Pre-test scores indicate that 3/23 (13%) of teachers held a skills orientation while 4/23 (17.4%) held a skills orientation in the post-test. Participants in this orientation believe that young readers learn through rote memorization of sight words, and letters. No one

scored in the range of whole language orientation. Table 5.2 presents the results of the mean, and standard deviation of post-test items on the TORP survey.

**Table 5.2**

*Pre/post-test rank, mean and standard deviation*

| Pre-test | N | Range | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Post-test | 46 | 1 | 1.50 | .506 |

Table 5.2 depicts two sets of data (N=23), and shows that the pre-primary teachers' mean response for 28 items on the TORP for both pre-and posttest scores was 1.50, which suggests that teachers strongly practice a phonics belief in classrooms. In the analysis, the data was ranked (n=46) on the 28-item questionnaire according to the frequency of the response (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree) the standard deviation ($\sigma$ ) is (.506). There is a meaningful difference between the mean (1.50) and standard deviation (.506). A low SD indicates that a group of participants' scores clustered around the averaged mean and therefore actually indicates that the majority of pre-primary teachers feel the same when rating individual questions or items. A high SD indicates the variance within the group was large and therefore the mean has less validity as an indicator of overall participant response tendency. Table 5.3 displays the one-sample t-test and p-values of individual questionnaire items for phonics, and skills beliefs.

**Table 5.3**

*One-sample t-test of teachers' phonics orientation*

| PHONICS | | Test Value = 0 | | | | | 95% Confidence interval of the Difference |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Pre/Post-test** | **Questions** | **T** | **Df** | **Sig. (2-tailed)** | **Mean Difference** | **Lower** | **Upper** |
| Pre-test | Q1 | 13.371 | 22 | .000 | 1.391 | 1.18 | 1.61 |
| Post-test | Q1 | 13.371 | 22 | .000 | 1.391 | 1.18 | 1.61 |
| Pre-test | Q2 | 12.227 | 22 | .000 | 1.957 | 1.62 | 2.29 |
| Post-test | Q2 | 9.489 | 22 | .000 | 2.522 | 1.97 | 3.07 |
| Pre-test | Q3 | 9.766 | 22 | .000 | 1.261 | .99 | 1.53 |
| Post-test | Q3 | 7.942 | 22 | .000 | 1.565 | 1.16 | 1.97 |
| Pre-test | Q6 | 5.826 | 22 | .000 | 1.696 | 1.09 | 2.30 |
| Post-test | Q6 | 14.527 | 22 | .000 | 1.174 | 1.01 | 1.34 |
| Pre-test | Q9 | 9.474 | 22 | .000 | 1.783 | 1.39 | 2.17 |
| Post-test | Q9 | 8.853 | 22 | .000 | 2.043 | 1.56 | 2.52 |

**Table 5.3**

*One-Sample t-test of teachers' phonics orientation*

| PHONICS | | | | | Test Value = 0 | | 95% Confidence interval of the Difference |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pre/Post-test | Questions | T | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Lower | Upper |
| Pre-test | Q10 | 8.899 | 22 | .000 | 1.304 | 1.00 | 1.61 |
| Post-test | Q10 | 8.166 | 22 | .000 | 1.826 | 1.36 | 2.29 |
| Pre-test | Q12 | 13.844 | 22 | .000 | 1.217 | 1.04 | 1.40 |
| Post-test | Q12 | 7.633 | 22 | .000 | 2.087 | 1.52 | 2.65 |
| Pre-test | Q20 | 12.305 | 22 | .000 | 1.522 | 1.27 | 1.78 |
| Post-test | Q20 | 11.754 | 22 | .000 | 1.609 | 1.32 | 1.89 |
| Pre-test | Q21 | 9.198 | 22 | .000 | 1.609 | 1.25 | 1.97 |
| Post-test | Q21 | 9.721 | 22 | .000 | 2.174 | 1.71 | 2.64 |
| Pre-test | Q22 | 8.971 | 22 | .000 | 1.478 | 1.14 | 1.82 |
| Post-test | Q22 | 11.953 | 22 | .000 | 1.478 | 1.22 | 1.73 |

Table 5.3 consists of the results from population sample (N=23) that self-reported a phonics orientation toward reading instruction in the pre/post-test survey. For both Table 5.3 and Table 5.4, the (df=n-1). A one-sample t-test was performed to determine the change within the 10 questionnaire items (1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 12, 20, 21, and 22) on the TORP. From Table 5.3 the p-value is .000 which is less than *p<0.05. The results show that there was no significant difference in the pre-test and post-test results self-

reported after the PD intervention. There was a significant increase in scores on item 6 from (5.826 to14.527). The results show an increase of (8.701) on the rating of item 6, "When children do not know a word, they should be instructed to sound out its parts." Item 22 also shows an increase from (8.971 to 11.953). The increase of (2.982) was self-reported on item 22, "Phonic analysis is the most important form of analysis used when learning new words." The implication is that teachers strongly believe that young readers learn best through phonics instruction. Table 5.4 shows the results of the one-sample t-test for skills orientation.

**Table 5.4**

*One-sample t-test of teachers' skills orientation*

| | SKILLS | | | | Test Value = 0 | | 95% Confidence interval of the Difference |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pre/Post-test | Questions | T | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Lower | Upper |
| Pre-test | Q4 | 13.296 | 22 | .000 | 1.304 | 1.10 | 1.51 |
| Post-test | Q4 | 8.200 | 22 | .000 | 1.783 | 1.33 | 2.23 |
| Pre-test | Q8 | 10.388 | 22 | .000 | 1.435 | 1.15 | 1.72 |
| Post-test | Q8 | 9.068 | 22 | .000 | 1.652 | 1.23 | 2.08 |
| Pre-test | Q11 | 13.468 | 22 | .000 | 1.261 | 1.07 | 1.46 |
| Post-test | Q11 | 11.194 | 22 | .000 | 1.304 | 1.06 | 1.55 |
| Pre-test | Q13 | 13.663 | 22 | .000 | 3.174 | 2.69 | 3.66 |
| Post-test | Q13 | 11.953 | 22 | .000 | 2.957 | 2.44 | 3.47 |

**Table 5.4**

*One-Sample t-test of teachers' skills orientation*

| SKILLS | | Test Value = 0 | | | | | 95% Confidence interval of the Difference |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pre/Post-test | Questions | T | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Lower | Upper |
| Pre-test | Q14 | 9.474 | 22 | .000 | 1.783 | 1.39 | 2.17 |
| Post-test | Q14 | 8.203 | 22 | .000 | 2.261 | 1.69 | 2.83 |
| Pre-test | Q16 | 11.194 | 22 | .000 | 1.304 | 1.06 | 1.55 |
| Post-test | Q16 | 8.478 | 22 | .000 | 1.652 | 1.25 | 2.06 |
| Pre-test | Q19 | 10.817 | 22 | .000 | 1.913 | 1.55 | 2.28 |
| Post-test | Q19 | 14.333 | 22 | .000 | 1.870 | 1.60 | 2.14 |
| Pre-test | Q24 | 10.297 | 22 | .000 | 1.739 | 1.39 | 2.09 |
| Post-test | Q24 | 9.875 | 22 | .000 | 1.826 | 1.44 | 2.21 |
| Pre-test | Q25 | 7.358 | 22 | .000 | 1.696 | 1.22 | 2.17 |
| Post-test | Q25 | 10.969 | 22 | .000 | 1.522 | 1.23 | 1.81 |
| Pre-test | Q28 | 9.238 | 22 | .000 | 2.087 | 1.62 | 2.56 |
| Post-test | Q28 | 13.372 | 22 | .000 | 2.217 | 1.87 | 2.56 |

Table 5.4 shows the results from sample (N=23) teachers who self-reported a skills orientation toward reading instruction. A one-sample t-test was performed to determine the change within the 10 questionnaire items (4, 8, 11, 13, 14, 16, 19, 24, 25, and 28) (Appendix F) from pre-test to post-test. From Table 5.5 the p-value is .000

which is less than *p<0.05. The results show that there was a significant change in two items between the pre-test and post-test results self-reported after the PD intervention. Items 19, "The ability to use accent patterns in multi-syllable words (pho` to graph, pho to` gra phy, and pho to gra` phic) should be developed as a part of reading instruction, "and 25, "It is important to teach skills in relation to other skills," and 28 "Some problems in reading are caused by readers dropping the inflectional ending from words (e.g., jumps, jump*ed* shows a significant different in scores." For item 19 scores increased from (10.817 to 14.333), item 25 (7.358 to 10.969), and item 28 (9.238 to 13.372). The increase was (3.516) for item 19, (3.611) for item 25, and (4.134) for item 28. Table 5.5 presents the results of teachers' language proficiency item on the demographic sheet.

### 5.3. Teachers' background information

**Table 5.5**

*Language proficiency*

| **Frequency** | **Languages** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Oshiwambo | | | | |
| | Afrikaans | Oshidonga | Oshikwanya | Rukangali | Khoehoegowab | Oshihereo |
| N 33 | 16 | 10 | | 1 | 5 | 1 |
| % 100 | 48.5 | 30.3 | | 3.00 | 15.2 | 3.00 |

The total population (N=33) of pre-primary teachers speak seven different languages. Pre-primary teachers mediate communication in multilingual classrooms in

the Khomas region with ESL, and in the Hardap region, the main language spoken is Afrikaans. Minority learners in Afrikaans classrooms are immersed into Afrikaans. These minority speakers in the Hardap region are Khoekhoegowab speakers. Layton-Cosguner (2016) states that language immersion programs provide children with the opportunity to acquire a new language and learn academic content simultaneously (Tedick,Christian, & Fortune, 2011). The goal of language immersion education is to provide diverse groups of students with a bicultural and bilingual education. Bilingual or second language learners need additional instructional assistance to make meaning in a second language. Scaffolding promotes learners meaning making or comprehension of what teachers intend in second language classrooms. The teachers' gender is highlighted below as reported on the demographic sheet.

### 5.4 Gender

The majority of participants, 32/33 (96.97%) were female teachers, while 1/33 (3.03%) was male. The assumption was that the majority of teachers would be female. Table 5.6 presents the results of teachers' years of experience.

**Table 5.6**

*Years of experience*

| Years of experience | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 0-3 years | 12 | 36.4 |
| 4-5 years | 17 | 51.5 |
| 6-10 years | 4 | 12.1 |
| Any other | 0 | |
| Total | 33 | 100 |

Table 5.6 indicates that 12/33 (36.4%) of the pre-primary teachers have (0-3) years of experience, 17/33 (51.5%) has (4-5) years of experience, while 4/33 (12.1%) has (6-10) years of teaching experience. Table 5.7 presents teachers' education level.

**Table 5.7**

*Education level*

| Qualification | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| BETD | 10 | 30.3 |
| B. ED | 2 | 6.06 |
| Certificate of Higher Education | 3 | 9.09 |
| Advanced Diploma in Education | 9 | 27.3 |
| Advanced Certificate in Education | 1 | 3.03 |
| JP-in Set | 3 | 9.09 |
| Grade 12 | 5 | 15.15 |

Two out of 33 (6.06%) pre-primary teachers are in possession of an undergraduate degree, Bachelor of Education (B. ED) while, 10/33 (30.3%) have a Basic Education Teachers Diploma (BETD): 3/33 (9.09%) are in possession of a Certificate of Higher Education: 9/33 (27.3%) an Advanced Diploma in Education: 1/33 (3.03%) an Advanced Certificate in Education: 3/33 (9.09%) are in the Junior Primary in-service teachers' program: 5/33 (15.15%) haves only Grade 12 education. Table 5.8 highlights the different education institutions where pre-primary teachers have studied.

**Table 5.8**

*Education institutions*

| Training Institutions | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| University of Namibia | 12 | 36.36 |
| Colleges of Education | 3 | 9.1 |
| Institute of Open Learning | 9 | 27.27 |
| Grade 12 | 5 | 15.15 |
| Other (Specify) | 4 | 12.12 |
| Total | 33 | 100 |

Table 5.8 indicates the education institutions of Namibia. The University of Namibia (UNAM) is the leading education provider that prepares pre-primary teachers in the country. 12/33 (36.36%) of the participants have obtained qualifications at UNAM, 3/33 (9.1%) at the former colleges of education, 9/33 (27.27%) at the distance education provider, called the Institute of Open Learning, 12/33 (15.15%) do not have any professional qualifications after Grade 12, and 4/33 (12.12%) indicated other, such as Head Start and Colleges in South Africa or abroad. Table 5.9 presents a summary of observation checklist responses.

## 5.5 Results and analysis of Qualitative Sub-question 3

### Observation checklist data

I designed an Observation Checklist that rates pre-primary teachers' teaching and instructional planning process (See 2.11: Explicit teaching and Figure 2.3: Instructional

planning). A sample of ten pre-primary teachers participated voluntarily in peer ratings after the PD training. Table 5.9 presents the case processing summary.

**Table 5.9**

*Checklist case processing summary*

| Cases | N | Percent (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Valid | 10 | 30.3 |
| Excluded | 23 | 69.7 |
| Total | 33 | 100 |

Four out of 33 (12%) observations were conducted in both Hardap and Khomas education regions. The lesson presentation was rated, using a 5-point rating scale1- not at all, 2- a little, 3- a fair amount, 4- much, and 5- very much. The purpose of the checklist is to establish the validity of the lesson presentation results by seeing if there is inner consistency in how peers rate each other's performance. Table 5.10 provides the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for establishing the internal consistency (Reliability) of the lesson presentation checklist and ten questions (sample N=10).

**Table 5.10**

*Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients for establishing the internal consistency (Reliability)*

| Cronbach's Alpha | Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items | N of Items |
|---|---|---|
| 0.636 | 0.722 | 10 |

The overall Cronbach's Alpha for the 10 questions (items) of the lesson observation checklist (Table 11) is r=0.722 (p<.05), which is very high and indicative of strong reliability (internal consistency) among the 10 items of the observation checklist instrument. The results indicate that the items have relatively high internal consistency. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the 10 questions of the observation checklist is 0.636, which is high and indicative of strong reliability (internal consistency) among the 10 questions that comprise the lesson observation checklist. Table 5.11 presents the group mean, variance, and standard deviation of (N=10).

**Table 5.11**

*Scale data for 10 items*

| Mean | Variance | Std. Deviation | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| 39.00 | 15.111 | 3.887 | 10 |

In Table 5.11 show the mean, variance, and standard deviation of 10 checklist items for 10 participants used to assess the lesson presentation. The mean is 39.00, the variance is 15.111, and the standard deviation is 3.887. The mean is widely spread (35.115) from the standard deviation. The high SD indicates that there was lots of variability from high to low scores in individual answers, therefore the mean of 39 is not a true representation of the group's score.

Table 5.12 presents the means and standard deviation of 10 questions (items) on the classroom observation checklist.

**Table 5.12**

*Means and standard deviations of 10 checklist items*

| Item no. | Items | Mean | Std. deviation | N |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Presentation incorporated tasks for learners, and interactive roles that fostered dialogical teaching and learning | 4.00 | 0.667 | 10 |
| 2 | The lesson reflected careful planning and organization | 3.80 | 0.632 | 10 |
| 3 | The lesson reflected different teaching approaches that include pair work, and group activities | 3.40 | 1.265 | 10 |
| 4 | The teacher manages the class well | 4.30 | 0.675 | 10 |
| 5 | The teacher allotted sufficient time to a variety of activities | 3.90 | 0.738 | 10 |
| 6 | The teacher responded to the literacy/language needs of the learners | 3.50 | 1.080 | 10 |
| 7 | Learners were challenged and reflect on learning | 4.10 | 0.876 | 10 |
| 8 | The teacher used and incorporated material very well | 4.10 | 0.568 | 10 |
| 9 | The classroom environment fosters early literacy development | 4.00 | 0.471 | 10 |
| 10 | Learners were allowed to make choices and were listened to | 3.90 | 0.738 | 10 |

Table 5.12 indicates the lowest and highest scores rated during peer observations (See Chapter 3: Classroom observations). In Item 3 "The lesson reflected different teaching approaches that include pair work, and group activities" the difference between the mean and standard deviation is (2.135), and item 6, "The teacher responded to the literacy/language needs of the children" the difference between the mean and standard deviation is (2.42). These rankings triangulate the classroom observation data (See Chapter 4). Item 1: "the teacher manages the class well," had the highest mean 4.30 (SD =0.675) response followed by Item 8: "the teacher used and incorporated material very well," and Item 7: "children were challenged and reflect on learning "4.10 (SD=0.876; 0,568) and finally Item 9: "classroom environment fosters early literacy development" 4.00 (SD=0.471) as confirmed by the ranking.

**5.6 Synthesis of Quantitative analysis**

The quantitative data analysis comprises of TORP pre/post-test and Observation Checklist data. In the analysis of quantitative data, I compared pre-and post-test TORP survey data for both urban and rural areas, using a simple t-test. I also used descriptive statistics to analyse demographic variables such as language proficiency, gender, years of experience, education level, and education institutions. Group means and standard deviations are presented to gauge the reliability and validity of significant differences found in individual participant responses on the 28 questions/items of the TORP to identify participating pre-primary teachers' theoretical orientations to reading profile. The Observation Checklist solicited peer reviews during classroom observations and assessed the outcomes of specific teaching and learning strategies modelled during PD training. In Chapter 4, the classroom observations showed that most teachers in this study use whole class teaching or direct instruction which is essentially monologic and ensures that power and decision-making reside with the teacher. However, the results

showed that there was an awareness of using a dialogic teaching approach in classroom practices.

## 5.7 Conclusion

I designed an Observation Checklist to engage peer teachers in lesson observations. The internal validity and reliability of the observation checklist instrument were tested and it is hoped this instrument can be used to guide teachers and administrators to pay more attention to the level of real dialogue in an ELL classroom. The checklist is a valid and reliable instrument that gauged the impact of early literacy PD in classroom practice. Chapter 6 presents the discussion of the results of qualitative and quantitative data.

# CHAPTER 6

# DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

## 6.1 Introduction

Chapter 6 presents a summary of quantitative and qualitative findings. Pre-primary education is a relatively recent addition to the Namibian education system. Using a systematic approach toward PD for pre-primary teachers in the next few years could benefit education reform initiatives. Such an approach identifies specialised areas of PD training within a specific language context and aimed at impacting practices in an in-depth manner. It gives participants the opportunity to value the meaningfulness of their experiences within a community of practice. This approach encourages pre-primary teachers to share constructive ideas for practice and fosters an instructional environment that enhance language rich learning in early literacy classrooms.

This study describes Vygotsky's (1978) and Bakhtin's (1986) sociocultural theories of learning, as models for social practice for dialogic PD of bilingual and multilingual teacher training. Both theories provide a framework for PD, and guides teachers to see the centrality of language through processes of internalization, mediation, semiotic symbols, and scaffolding to make meaning (Chapter 2). The socio-cultural perspective of learning renders the opportunity for more investigations into teaching and learning using a socio-cultural framework. In the following discussion, I address my quantitative research question.

**6.2**. **Results of Quantitative Sub-question 1:** In what ways can the theoretical orientation of early literacy teachers in Namibia, as measured by the DeFord Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) (1985), change as a result of targeted dialogic PD?

This question tested a hypothesis. The validation hypothesis is: As measured by TORP on each of the 28 items, using a 5- point Likert scale, is there any significant differences in scores on each item or question by those participating in the survey administered before and after the professional development.

In Phase 1 of the data collection (See Chapter 3), teachers were surveyed to determine their theoretical orientation toward teaching reading before the PD training. The results of this survey were scored, using a 5-point Likert scale, and descriptive analysis of teachers' baseline demographic information. The survey items related to teachers' beliefs are divided into 10 items for phonics, 10 items or questions for skills, and 8 items or questions for whole language beliefs. In both the pre-and post-test survey, the results revealed that the 33 participating teachers had a strong phonics belief toward teaching reading.

From the t-test, the p-value is 0.000 which is less than $p > 0.05$; therefore, the conclusion is that there were no significant differences in the pre/post-test self-reported ratings before and after the intervention. The implication is that the intervention was not long enough for the teachers to rate themselves differently. Therefore, a PD intervention over a longer period of time is recommended, because held beliefs are not changed quickly or easily. The qualitative data provides evidence of an opening up to new perspectives, a disposition or prospect to possibly do things differently and some beginning problem-solving about how to move forward to engage in more dialogic activity with classroom learners.

To validate the hypothesis of this study, an analysis of 28 item scores was done to track individual differences on scores. The results indicate that there was a *statistically significant change on isolated items comparing pre-test answers to the post-test ones. (See Chapter 5: Table 5.3 and Table 5.4) phonics items (6, and 22) and skills items (19,

25, and 28) scores of teachers who participated in the pre/post-test survey before and after the professional development.

The findings also validated the effects of education level (Table 5.7), language proficiency (Table 5.5), education institutions (Table 5.8) where participants studied, and years of experience (Table 5.6). The quantitative results of the Observation Checklist revealed that: although overall changes in TORP scores did not reach significance, the movement of beliefs on individual observation checklist items do indicate a positive trajectory and a deepening critical stance towards current practices. The overall quantitative results support the hypothesis that targeted PD can modify/change teacher's beliefs about the relative value of teaching isolated phonics and reading skills versus a focus on opportunities for rich talk, interaction, and having an impact in a cultural moment. The findings generated from qualitative data questions assisted me in answering the sub-questions and the main question of the study.

**6.3 Results of Qualitative Sub-question 1:** In what ways can early literacy PD be designed and enacted to improve early literacy teaching and learning?

In answering this question, I selected a unit of analysis from the observation transcript (Chapter 4) to examine how teachers enact language conversations when teaching early literacy. The findings show that teachers still dominate talk and control turn takings in the classroom. Bakhtin (1986) loosely defines the "utterance" as the "change of speaking subjects" (p. 71). This change of speaker subjects is analogous to turn taking (Rogers, 2011). Teachers need training support over time to learn how to develop "sustained substantive dialogue" (Brefeld, 2015) with their learners. The implication is that even though teachers have realized the benefits of rich talk, they may need more practice on how to incorporate dialogic teaching into their teaching repertoires and in pre-primary classrooms.

Furthermore, the classroom observations engaged peer teachers to rate aspects of early literacy teaching (See Appendix E), using a 5-point rating scale (1- not at all, 2- a little, 3- a fair amount, 4- much, and 5- very much). The overall Cronbach's Alpha for the 10 questions (items) of the lesson observation checklist was $r=0.722$ ($p<.05$), which is very high and indicative of strong reliability (internal consistency) among the 10 items of the observation checklist instrument. The results indicate that the items have relatively high internal consistency. Item 3 of the Observation Checklist (Appendix E) which was: "The lesson reflected different teaching approaches that include pair work, and group activities" does not indicate a meaningful standard deviation to promote dialogic literacy learning for young learners. A meaningful standard deviation is <2. However, meaningfulness depends on the overall size of sample and the type of variable being measured.

The Observation Checklist data analysis (Chapter 5) also documents peer teachers' responses to the following literacy or language statement: "The teacher responded to the literacy/language needs of the children." On a 5-point Likert rating scale (1- not at all, 2- a little, 3- a fair amount, 4- much, and 5- very much), the results indicated a mean of (2.42/5), which shows a recognition that teachers are capable of higher levels of literacy support. Peer teachers realized their ESL shortcomings intimated a need for more PD in the assertion, "I hope to learn more. This was my first training."

**6.4 Results of Qualitative Sub-question 2:** What specific curricular features of the proposed PD experience are most powerful in supporting teachers' understanding of research based literacy practices in a multilingual environment?

In general, teachers responded positively on dialogically organized instruction. Vygotsky's (1978) and Bakhtin's (1986) socio-cultural frameworks to teaching supports a dialogic teaching method. The comment, "Dialogic teaching is good to use in class, it

encourages learners to speak" is an indication of teachers' changed attitudes, and prospects for improved student engagement to promote early literacy development. Brefeld (2015) indicates that careful attention to the many different facets of understanding through dialogic teaching should be an important focus for programs for both bilingual and multilingual learners in teacher education. Teacher educators are strategically positioned to implement change by taking many different routes to ELL instruction and language support in higher education.

Furthermore, teachers reflected on dialogic teaching during interviews. For example, *INDA*> "In using the dialogic teaching approach, teachers have to talk less and give learners more opportunities to talk." A participating teacher said that "Enriched talk was very interesting," while another teacher conveyed the need for more practice on how to apply the skill of dialogic teaching in the following comment: "I need to get clarity on how to do rich talk during storytelling." The implication is that pre-primary teachers are accepting to learning and applying new pedagogical approaches in their teaching and learning when they receive PD that supports teacher development.

**6.5 Results Qualitative Sub-question 3**: What specific curricular features of the proposed PD experience are most powerful in supporting teachers' understanding of research based literacy practices in a multilingual environment?

Participating pre-primary teachers expressed their knowledge and understanding of early literacy/language concepts gained through PD training and research-based readings through interviews, focus groups, observations, and online discussions (Chapter 4). The PD experience involved a 4-day face-to-face training from 14.00-17.00 pm with a 4-week online component. The PD training used videotaped and Power Point lesson examples to demonstrate and model new knowledge and pedagogical practices (See actual training schedule in Chapter 3). It was evident that participants' teacher

education had not prepared them to be aware of diverse approaches and aspects of ESL and early literacy learning for young learners. The information in the readings represented new ideas to almost all 33 participants. A participating teacher demonstrated a reflective reification of a phonics teaching approach in the following quote: “It was very good to learn alphabet knowledge and phonics. The letter “M” was emphasized in different contexts.” By focusing on presenting discrete letters without acknowledging that children can only appropriate this knowledge in meaningful ways through experiential exploration and dialogue with more knowledgeable others, this teacher reveals an incompleteness of understandings about research based ways to develop literacy. Many pre-primary teachers may lack well-articulated systems of belief that link understanding of the nature of language and literacy development with the notions of effective instructional strategies (Dickinson & Tabors, 2004). Therefore, the implication is that more practice, using research-based readings to guide understanding of key ESL strategies is recommended.

On Day 3 of the face-to-face PD training, I introduced integrated learning approaches through art work while using Centers as an instructional strategy to promote ESL learning. Participating teachers compared new knowledge gained in this approach to existing practices currently used in Namibia in this way: “In my teaching, I use a different approach: Art is Art. I teach things separately.” This shows the challenge of inviting teachers to recognize the power of integrated thematic learning that can simultaneously meet the needs of learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds in multilingual contexts. Artificial parsing of knowledge into narrowly segmented lessons can disadvantage learners with special needs.

On the other hand, one participant further supported integrated learning by saying, “Breaking down a theme into different topics, allows the teacher to teach various

aspects in different contexts. Integrated learning is beneficial for both learner and teacher to understand each other and learning better." Content-based teaching, as revealed in the comment "Art is Art. I teach things separately" fits the maturational or developmental readiness theory that dates back to Gesell's (1925) and Durkin's (1966) theories of school readiness (as discussed by Crawford, 1995). This methodology characterizes teachers who work through a content lesson, while asking questions with particular answers in mind - the recitative method. Learners' responses to questions are usually short and to the point (Swain, 1998). Little authentic dialogue is initiated since the teacher focusses only on what he/she perceives as the 'right' answer, not engaging with the minds of the learners.

Transcriptions of videotaped lessons initially show that exchanges or turn taking between teachers and learners were rapid and lively as learners' hands going up and down, typical of a monologic content knowledge method (See turn taking Chapter 4). Figure 6.1 represents major themes identified in the coding process. These themes provide a curricular framework for early literacy PD and answer the main question of the study.

**Figure 6.1**

*Qualitative Themes*

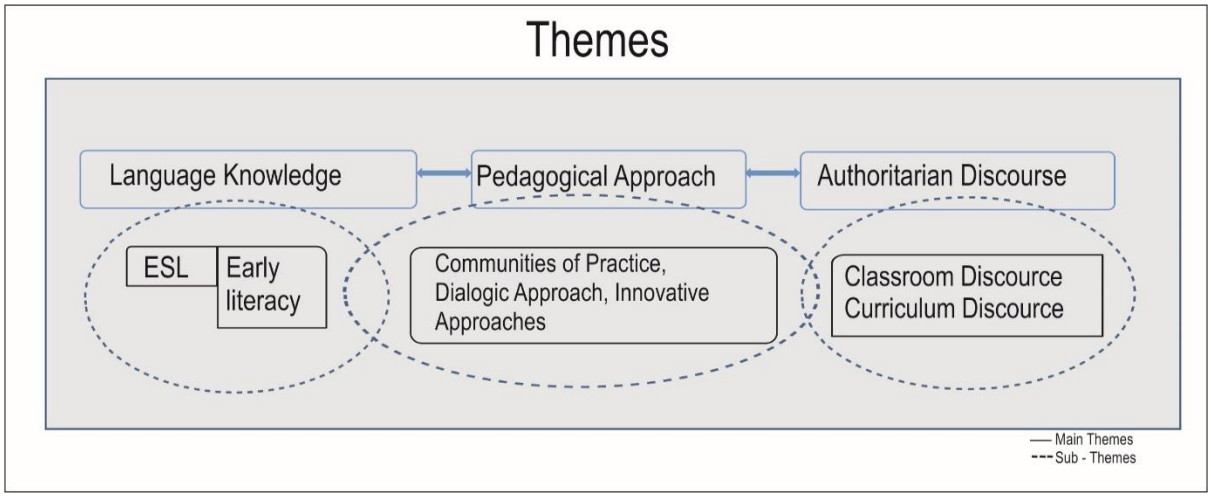


Figure 6.1 presents the main themes and sub-themes identified through Grounded Theory (GT) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) analyses of data, using a constant comparative method. These main themes are: 1) Language Knowledge, 2) Pedagogical Approach, and 3) Authoritarian Discourse. The sub-themes are: 1) ESL and Early literacy, 2) Communities of Practice, 3) Dialogic Approach, Innovative approaches, 4) Classroom Discourse, and 5) Curriculum Discourse. The themes and sub-themes were specific curricular features of the PD experience and were emphasised by participating teachers during training as the most powerful in supporting their understanding of research-based literacy practices for early literacy in multilingual environments.

**6.6 Results and discussion of the Main question:** "How might Professional Development, using a dialogic approach for early literacy training, transform beliefs and practices of pre-primary teachers from diverse language backgrounds?"

For this discussion, Language Knowledge (LK) (See Table 4.3 and Figure 6.1) refers to ESL and early literacy knowledge. These terms are used interchangeably in the discussion of themes or PD concepts.

The analysis of the qualitative data (See Chapter 4) revealed that participating pre-primary teachers may lack well-articulated systems of belief that link understanding of the nature of language and literacy development with the notions of effective instructional strategies (Dickinson & Tabors, 2004). A telling teacher quotes, "The biggest challenge in my teaching career is that I do not know how to teach literacy development in class," which sums up the problem that I have identified as a key challenge for teacher training as documented in this research. Teachers want and need more coordinated and updated training, both initially in teacher training and later when actually in practice. They recognize that literacy is a developmental phenomenon and that one approach, teacher led and controlled teaching, cannot meet the needs of

learners who live in complex multilingual contexts and varying economic and social conditions. ESL was a recurring theme and will be discussed within the teacher training context.

***ESL Knowledge (ESLK)>*** In my secondary data analysis (Chapter 4)***,*** a document analysis of current teacher education curricula revealed that teacher training in Namibia prepares teachers to focus on language structures such as grammar, syntax, and content knowledge to the exclusion of pedagogies more focused on collaborative construction of content congruent with cultural knowing that allows the teacher to build bridges to a wider world of information. In the analysis, I used CDA concepts of *genre, discourse and style* with specific emphasis on discourse (*ways of representing*) to analyse the content captured by these documents. The key information focus of higher education curricula reveals a grammar orientation in year 1. For example, the following are examples taken from syllabuses: "Explain and apply the spelling rules" or **"**Define the concept morphology and explore its relationship with meaning." In the higher education institutions' curriculum, grammar, and syntax stood out to be the focus for pre-service and in-service education and training.

In a comparative analysis, no congruency could be found among the pre-primary school curriculum, and the education training curriculum as well as the PD training offered for this study. There is also little information about how these structures of language are substantiated by research-based readings or a prescribed textbook. When teachers are given the opportunity to participate in dialogic PD, they are exposed to field specific research-based text readings designed to foster knowledge about best practices for teaching and learning, but not in a didactic way. Questions, comments, challenges and practical examples of actual pre-primary experiences are encouraged. Knowledge resides in the community of learners, and not just in the head of the

facilitator. Therefore, there is a need to rethink language instruction for pre-primary teacher preparation in higher education training.

Courses focusing on targeted language use, language acquisition, grammar, phonology and phonemics, lexico-semantics etc. do not preclude using reflective dialogic learning (Grabe et al., 2000). The implication is that higher education programs for teacher training in Namibia are still overly focused on decontextualized language skills and discrete traditional aspects of language which do not prepare pre-primary teachers for field specific practice. For example, one stated goal is to, "Demonstrate an understanding of the sound system of the language." Freeman (1994) claims that there is no evidence that knowing pedagogical grammar makes a person an effective teacher. Teacher education must rather prepare and develop in-service and pre-service teachers' awareness and control of operational principles for planning, delivering, and evaluating instruction (Hedgcock, 2002). In order to adequately assess children's development in a specific socio-cultural context, teachers also need to be taught the skills of Action Research so that they can systematically track the progress of each learner in a holistic way. Teachers' lack of ESL skills calls for an approach toward education and teacher development that systematically examines and addresses teachers' field specific training needs.

Teachers play a crucial role in supporting ESL for early literacy development in pre-primary classrooms. In the comments of the online forum, teachers made explicit connection between the PD curricular features and research-based reading text when noticing aspects of language and instruction that are important for early literacy learning. Despite teachers' initial documented beliefs, they acknowledged the context of early literacy learning through integration of oral language, ELL teaching strategies, phonological/phonemic awareness, letter knowledge, writing, and meaning making,

aspects that are key to better early literacy/language learning. Many expressed the idea that "Teachers need training to understand how to improve children's language."

In the online forum analysis, a teacher commented: "The teacher acts while telling the story. Her teaching style encouraged participation and attracts the learners' attention." However, dialogue to produce insights into essential ESL language knowledge of learners tends not to occur during such pro forma teacher learner exchanges. This methodology does not take into account teaching and learning in bilingual/multilingual environments, and leaves incomplete and partial the understanding of best practices in multilingual contexts such as Namibia.

For children coming from poor homes and homes affected by gender-based violence, the main source of second language input is the classroom. The playing field of village children or those who are socially marginalized is not even with those with greater resources and educated parents. The findings revealed participants' shortcomings in terms of ESL language knowledge, teacher-learner relationships, and how they situate themselves within the classroom discourse in terms of perceived power dynamics and teachers' educational philosophies. Therefore, the implication is that future teacher training needs to equip teachers with deep ESL knowledge and approaches to teaching that integrate both explicit reading instruction based on what learners already know and opportunities for rich language exchanges with peers and teachers. Pre-primary teachers also have a role to play in educating parents, possibly through home visits, or how to support literacy in the home. Research on this aspect of developmental support is needed as teacher preparation curriculum is updated.

Participating teachers linked ESL learning strategies to practice. In the following comment, a participant notes the importance of reflection time:

> We must not put pressure on second language learners to speak. We must give them time to reflect. When they have internalized language, and are ready, they will start speaking.

Teachers gained new knowledge and became aware of social mediation to teach ESL. Developing practical and descriptive knowledge is essential for making informed decisions about pedagogical procedures to teach ESL learners. PD, based on practice, prepares teachers to use appropriate pedagogical approaches for ESL teaching and expands their repertoire of approaches.

Participating teachers reflected on their experiences gained with regard to signs and symbols for ESL learning in the following statements: "Learners learn to speak and transact through writing. Sight words help children to recognize words and need to be changed often." The next quote also reveals teachers' gains around using signs and symbols (*SS*): "The training taught me to incorporate writing in my lessons. I can ask children to draw an object and it does not matter how they draw. It's writing…." This reflection demonstrated the awareness of using alternative forms of communication through second order language. Vocabulary needs to be relevant to the learners lived lives, not abstractions from a textbook (often using foreign words for animals, plants, toys etc.). Blending reading and writing may have positive affects for early literacy learning and especially for ESL learners to gain language skills.

The qualitative findings show that participating teachers realised the benefits of learning language when reading transacts into writing. On Day 1, the PD lesson plan addressed aspects such as the lesson objectives, how to align the objectives to the curriculum goals, and assessment outcomes. The findings revealed that written work in pre-primary classrooms was often seat-work and colouring blanks. From a language/literacy point of view, the actual written activity must relate to the objectives

of the language/early literacy activity. More training might benefit teachers' understanding of linking lesson objectives to problem-solving outcomes that foster "making meaning" opportunities in an ESL environment. Writing needs a purpose and dialogic feedback as in a writing workshop approach. Even young learners have thoughts to convey through their oral and written communications. A focus on their thinking rather than mechanics can yield rich affirmation of them as learners.

Sight words or environmental print are forms of language that help learners to make meaning from their first language translated into a second language. Participating teachers realised the importance of sight words or environmental print in the following comment:

> Sometimes we have [the same] teaching aids for the entire year. I don't think teachers change teaching aids according to new lessons taught. They don't update teaching aids... This training would be an update for them…. Especially the use of teaching aids.

If nothing else, committing to a more active role in creating richer and more varied language environments is a big step forward in improving outcomes for language learners. Therefore, the results show an awareness of the importance of environmental print in early literacy classrooms and that environmental print plays a role in early literacy development.

Teacher training needs to prepare teachers to become "language aware" (Carter, 1994). The field of early literacy demands of teachers a working knowledge and awareness of symbolic forms to transact language through mediation in pre-primary classrooms. ESL knowledge and proficiency help teachers to make effective links with classroom practice. Trained teachers play an important role in the classroom to improve learner's literacy learning, and ultimately impact reading outcomes. As

learners engage with the most basic print in their environment, at home or in school, they observe and internalize print concepts, logo, or labels until they can name them. Participating teachers were intrigued with the presentation on environmental print and the benefits of sight words for literacy development. On Day 2, I used a Power Point presentation to demonstrate how to support early literacy through environment print and sight word learning. I displayed a cup cake to celebrate birthdays, a weather chart, classroom rules, rhymes, and letter "M" in context of other words. Teachers indicated that they were "touched" and that the information was "an eye opener." Participating teachers felt that the training reminded them about small things in a pre-primary classroom that contribute toward early literacy development. A teacher shared, "I learned interesting ideas and will implement them in my teaching."

One can therefore infer that pre-primary teachers have learned useful skills, using signs and symbols beyond content-based learning to promote literacy development that could be applied in their practice based on my analysis of the qualitative data.

***Pedagogical Approach (PA)>*** The pedagogical approaches modelled during PD created an awareness of *dialogic teaching approaches* to learning, including the use of *innovative strategies,* and creating *communities of practice* within a *socio-cultural learning* environment. Teachers were invited into on-going dialogue to examine and critique each other's teaching practices to ensure reflective learning.

The findings show that "storytelling," using words to label pictures was commonly used. Learners sounded out isolated letters or words based on teachers' prompts. A monologic teaching style of whole class teaching relying on top-down transmission of knowledge was commonly practiced. Dialogic PD was designed to change such beliefs and influence traditional methodologies of teaching.

Participating teachers commented on the new skills gained through PD in this comment, "I have learnt how I can teach reading through storytelling. One way of doing this is to get learners interested in the story." Teachers also acknowledged that "storytelling develops language". Teachers' practices portrayed a strong oral language culture. Culture influences how children are socialized into being readers and writers (Richgels, 2000). In the same way, teachers' beliefs and attitudes influence their literacy practice. Heath (1983) refers to an American community where children observe parents and other adults as they *read aloud* and *talk together* about the *meaning* of texts. The findings reveal the social practice of storytelling in which learners *passively listen* to the teachers' oral presentation of "storytelling," and respond to teachers' prompts in *choir* do not optimize the capacity of the learners to create their own story lines with scaffolded language support. Modelling reading, inviting learners to predict, confirm, build a mental picture of the story, connecting the events to their experiences etc. promote dialogue and higher order mental processes such as making meaning – these aspects promote language/literacy development, but these skills clearly need reinforcement through targeted PD.

The findings show that learners were generally passive recipients of knowledge during storytelling, and only occasionally re-voiced the teacher's embedded speech in recitation. Finding and valuing one's own voice is a gift without price that teachers can and should be encouraging their learners to develop. With more PD, teachers may be in a better position to use dialogic approaches to nurture learners' participation.

Teachers with limited language proficiency and knowledge of dialogic instruction might not use innovative ways to probe ELL's into dialogue. A teacher re-voiced the PD content in the following comments: "Teach what is known, and then introduce the unknown." "Relate new knowledge to what is culturally relevant." Culturally responsive

teaching strategies are consistent with the values of learners' own cultures/language and aimed at improving learning (Richgels, 2000). Theorists reveal that emergent bi-literacy may be supported in both languages in different genres and for different functions (Larson & Marsh, 2013). The analysis revealed teachers' attempts to use new strategies when they engaged in lesson presentations. Participating teachers reflected positively on new approaches learned in their PD:

> The new strategies that we learned in this training are not the teaching strategies that teachers currently use in classrooms. Practicing teachers need to be equipped with the right strategies. Most teachers do not know what are the right activities and strategies to use when they teach early literacy. More teachers can benefit from this training.

***Innovative Approach (IA)>***Despite the promising practices of gaining improved language knowledge, and instructional skills through PD, there are factors that impede pre-primary teachers from gaining full currency of language. These challenges are revealed in the following narrative: "We do not have electronic devices such as tape recorders, projectors, story books…" Recognition of a need to integrate technology into learning is a huge first step by teachers in supporting learners' acculturation into 21st century demands.

Due to global economic and political changes, education policies in the developing world need to adapt to change. A study on technology use in schools for the past 25 years, (Norris, Soloway & Sullivan, 2002), showed that 42 percent of teachers used computers with their students less than 15 minutes per week. This research discovered that investments in technology and classroom usage have not been fully capitalized on through widespread instructional use. Participating teachers' reflections show positive attitudes toward the use of technology in early literacy practice in the following

comment: “In the past we have only used books, but I learned to cut and paste my story from the Internet.”

Digital stories afford the addition of images to stories; thus, enhancing effective communication in a multilingual environment. However, lack of materials/resources remains a challenge as revealed in the following comment: “The shortcomings in my classroom are electronic devices: tape recorders, projectors, story books, big print, and fantasy corner equipment. The use of the Internet in my school is restricted and can be used only in the principal’s office.” Such outdated policies show an ignorance of how essential technology skills are denied to the next generation of workers. Vygotsky’s (1978) theory states that learners first participate in social activities “in the world” or inter-mentally, often with the support of more expert others or even peers, as well as employing ‘cultural tools’ with scaffolds; then later internalize these ways of acting and thinking so that they can perform independently. Vygotsky (1978) argued that development is mediated by semiotic processes involved in using *signs* and *tools* to accomplish situated activities (Wertsch, 1985). The reflective use of Internet resources could be especially beneficial for learning in bilingual/multilingual environments. The findings revealed that participating teachers were inspired to use innovative strategies despite lack of resources and administrative challenges. Teachers do not see lack of resources as an impenetrable constraint to impact improved classroom learning. For example, one said, “I will get to my learners from a different angle without teaching aids. I will ask them different questions, explain, and guide them toward understanding.” Brefeld (2015) indicates that the effectiveness of instructional discourse is a matter of the quality of teacher-learner interaction and the extent to which learners are assigned challenging and serious epistemic roles requiring them to think, interpret, and generate new understandings.

***Authoritarian Discourse (AD)>*** Participating teachers had the choice to present a lesson to showcase any aspect of early literacy and dialogic teaching. The findings were presented according to the three analytical lenses: 1) Gee's (2011) theoretical framework, 2) Fairclough's (1999) genre, discourse and style, and 3) Kress's (2010) multimodality. Despite teachers' level of education, critical discourse analysis (CDA), (discussed in Chapter 4) of observation transcription data, revealed limited ESL knowledge and instructional skills to impact students' language/literacy development through whole language teaching. The specific articulations of *genre, discourse, and style* allow the teachers to position themselves as qualified language or early literacy teachers.

In communities of practice social language and the sharing of best practices engaged teachers in reflective practice. Participating teachers' talk anticipates apprentices of practice. For example, a participant narrated: "In education, and especially in the reading syllabus, there are confusing areas. Thanks to the training, it was an eye opener for reading and writing." In apprenticeship, newcomers to a community of practice advance their skills and understanding through participation with others in culturally organized activities (Bruner, 1983; Dewey, 1916; Goody, 1989; John-Steiner, 1985; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1990; Wertsch, 1995).

When teachers agreed, and planned to participate in the activities of this study, they constructed and positioned themselves within a pre-primary community of practice for cooperative dialogical learning. The assertion is that learning, specifically 'situated learning' occurs in communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Participating teachers established a Discourse within a Discourse (community of practice) through which they have not only received knowledge, but applied new knowledge to generate

the findings of this study. CDA reveals that the potential impact of the PD occurred, because of membership in such a community of practice.

Critical Discourse Analysis is a tool for uncovering the construction of power and dominant ways of seeing the world in a classroom. The teachers identified school/curriculum practices sometimes as oppressive and indicated an awareness of the system as the oppressor. A participating teacher commented, "The PD was 'good.' I do not want to miss out on the sessions. The only problem is that we have to work according to the syllabus. I will have to strategize to implement best practices."

These comments show teachers' fear and awareness of constraints imposed by administrative rules and regulations when applying new knowledge in practice. There was candid talk around strategies to engage in meaningful literacy work with learners despite administrative constraints. A lot needs to be done at policy level of education as well as PD for administrators and teachers if Namibia wants to move forward to raise literacy outcomes.

On the other hand, interview data also revealed teachers' concerns about authoritative discourse from a classroom perspective:

> All learners would want to talk at the same time. The teacher must guide them. The teacher must teach them not to speak out of their turn. Apply disciplinary strategies. If you allow them to speak at the same time, it will end up in chaos.

These comments apply to the deeper philosophy of schooling – control and order versus generativity and creative engagement. Helping teachers find balance, helping them let go of their fear that sharing power with learners will result in chaos, requires continuing modelling of dialogue and practices. The research literature attests to the

great ideas that even young learners have about how to improve their classroom experience and increase learning by lowering frustration and resisting silencing.

In a Freirean (1995) pedagogy, conscious recognition of the oppressor is one of the first steps toward eventual liberation from oppression. Freire studied and wrote about literacy issues in rural Brazil – also a multi-lingual high poverty setting. Consciously or unconsciously, teachers recognized what Freire (1991) would categorize as agency, revealed as 'superseding' the 1) top-down administration to teacher, and/or 2) teacher to student (oppressed: oppressor) contradiction as part of a larger process of seeking freedom from oppression. The discourse speaks to the liberatory potential of this PD and similar PD projects. De Vries, et al. (2002) indicate that many teachers do not really understand or accept the developmentally and culturally appropriate approach with its emphasis on play or alternative ways of fostering language/literacy learning. Consequently, teachers assimilate new knowledge into the politically correct notion of their own beliefs and understandings. For new knowledge to be accommodated, in Piagetian terms, new cognitive schema must be developed and nurtured to imagine what an effective classroom might be like. Freire (1990) introduced the concept of literacy as an introduction to democratization, conceptualizing learners as agentive subjects rather than passive recipients of knowledge. When children learn language, their learning is inextricably linked to learning with others and within the social context. The concept of agency also grows out of Vygotsky's (1978) and Bakhtin's (1986) theoretical frameworks that emphasize the "social formation of mind," that is, the importance of social interaction in the development of individual mental processes. Developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) (Bredenkamp, 1987) forms the mainstay of child-centred education, resting tenets of child agency and learner autonomy.

The findings in this research revealed that teachers tended to initiate the lesson interaction sequence with directions, thus positioning themselves within the classroom discourse and the authoritarian provision of the school as an institution of authority (See Chapter 4). The learners' voices were structured by the teacher. Figured worlds are ways in which we accept, and perceive the world. The figured world of the teachers reveals the teacher-learner dominance within the classroom discourse. Learners have the obligation to respond to teachers' prompts, and only the teachers have speaking rights. The teachers' voice functions as authoritarian discourse, which is indissolubly fused with its authority- the political power, an institution, a person – and it stands and falls together with that authority (Aukerman, 2012). When using a dialogic approach, the classroom culture assumes that all learners have equal access in the classroom discourse. Agency requires the teacher to focus during the development of work in class on who can shape and transform meanings (Millard, 2003). In Chapter 4, line 175 of the lesson transcript was cited: "Again, again, again…. dog," and line 177: "dog, dog, dog… these reveal the parallel structure of language and turn taking behaviour that was re-enforced through embedded speech, re-voicing or recitation.

The multimodal analysis (discussed in Chapter 4) confirms the dominant belief toward reading instruction as focused on – phonics as the main goal of literacy learning. This lesson used a thematic unit with key concepts to understand beginning and ending sounds, /b/ and /d/. This analysis could not reveal the interactional histories between participants and in-depth histories that may have influenced the teacher-learner engagement in this social practice. When teasing apart individual teachers' beliefs from the teaching moments, the qualitative findings confirm the teachers' theoretical orientation toward reading, and reflects the potentially transformative impact of PD.

Despite authoritarian school contexts that challenged teachers to overcome administrative rules and regulations, these pre-primary teachers felt positive about applying some of the techniques and strategies they learned in the PD in their classrooms. They showed in their peer critiques of observed lessons that they appreciated the need for more verbal interactions in the classrooms of young learners who must negotiate learning multiple languages for academic learning. They also suggested helpful modifications in the PD curriculum, such as choosing more accessible articles to read in English.

In summary, the specific authoritarian frameworks presented through CDA analysis, revealed unequal opportunity for voice since the teacher controlled the discourse. Such an approach can disenfranchise or marginalize social groups. Much of the conversations observed in pre-primary classrooms was one-directional and used simplistic language. However, critical literacy is a process of naming and renaming the world, seeing its patterns, designs, and complexities, and developing the capacity to redesign and shape it (New London Group, 1996). Positive classroom and critical literacy research can disrupt systems of knowledge and beliefs embedded in traditional ways of teaching ESL/early literacy, and seeing the world through practice. This analysis reveals the need for early literacy PD, using a dialogic approach that fosters inclusive and equal opportunity through training to advance field specific language learning beyond phonics for pre-primary teachers.

## 6.7 Conclusion

In Chapter 6, the quantitative results discussed (See Chapter 5) confirmed that there was no significant difference in the pre-and post-test scores on the 28 questions/items of the TORP. The implication is that the majority of pre-primary teachers self-reflected phonics beliefs. In the validation of individual scores on the TORP, a significant change

on individual item scores were detected (See 6.2). These results implicate positive effects based on individual item scores as a result of the PD training. The results also validate language proficiency, years of experience, gender, and education institutions. The diverse languages spoken in Namibia necessitates more focussed PD interventions to address critical field specific training to impact early literacy and ESL training for pre-primary teachers. The current training methodology for ELL in higher education does not take bilingual/multilingual environments into account, a situation that partial and leaves incomplete understanding of best practices in multilingual contexts such as Namibia. GT and CDA analysis revealed teachers' perceptions of PD and how teachers enact dialogue in practice. These results have led to the refinement of a PD model that focuses on specialised ESL and early literacy knowledge and skills, while using innovative pedagogical approaches for teaching and learning. In the next Chapter, I outline the implications for the proposed PD curriculum, suggests a curriculum outline for early literacy PD training, the implications for further research and point out the limitations of the study.

# CHAPTER 7

# SYNTHESIS AND IMPLICATIONS

## 7.1 Introduction

Chapter 7 presents the implications of the findings of this research for early literacy professional development, a suggested framework for designing effective activities, curriculum outline for training, directions for further research and limitations of the study.

## 7.2 Early literacy PD curriculum implications

The design of the PD has been modified in response to the feedback of the participants. A participatory PD format with reflection and hands-on activities designed to link theory and practice based on targeted readings was used in this research. Aspects of lesson planning for oral language development, strategies for working with English Language Learners (ELLs) for phonological awareness, letter knowledge, and writing, as well as how to link this knowledge to the curriculum, were introduced through readings and presentations, peer observations and discussions. Pre-primary teacher participants came from diverse language backgrounds and acquired their original professional ESL knowledge through studies. It was revealed during PD training that teachers experience some ESL challenges, such as to pronounce English words or to make meaning of English into learners' diverse languages. Participating teachers could not respond as anticipated to the assigned reading texts in a comprehensive way since some of the messages in the readings contradicted held beliefs about classroom practice. Additionally, feedback from students indicated that the level of reading and vocabulary needed to understand these text readings was too challenging for the participants. I later modified readings to communicate the latest research in more comprehensible and shorter texts. The insights I garnered from this study of pre-

primary teachers' appropriation of dialogic teaching methods through an intense PD includes the following:

1. Transforming held didactic teaching beliefs about how children acquire literacy in multilingual contexts cannot be accomplished without opportunity to observe master teachers, time to practice new skills in safe environments with feedback, and the support of administrators in schools.
2. Transformation of teaching practices requires specialised knowledge and skills to prepare current and future pre-primary teachers for the challenges of ESL learning, and quality provision of early childhood education.
3. Surprisingly, both rural and urban based pre-primary teachers had similar responses to the PD training context.
4. Texts and activities for PD need to be accessible at the participants' level of language mastery.
5. PD designs should create parallel PD training for both early childhood educators and school administrators.
6. The availability and knowledge about how to integrate technology into both the PD experience and into pre-primary classrooms in critical to sustain change.
7. Lastly, sociocultural theory and its implications for effective literacy development in multilingual worlds needs to become part of the core curriculum in teacher training as new teachers go out into the field. A content analysis of current curricular guides for higher education confirms the lack of such content.

Further studies need to embed the PD process over longer time frames in local contexts that are convenient to participants, require deep reflection, and include

supportive feedback to nurture change. Figure 7.1 presents the proposed early literacy PD framework.

### 7.3 Early literacy PD training framework

**Figure 7.1**

*Early literacy training inputs, outputs, and outcomes*

| Inputs | Activities | Outputs | Outcomes |
|---|---|---|---|
| Early literacy PD developed and refined for pre-primary teachers. | Identify and foster cooperation with key players. | Evidence-based training needs identified.<br><br>Refining PD design/delivery | • Pre-primary teachers show competence in using innovative strategies for early literacy teaching.<br>• Increase in early literacy knowledge and skills for teachers.<br>• Documentable student improvement in literacy skills |
| Document analysis and Pre/post-test survey.<br>Offer PD training.<br>Apply creative data collection strategies. | Create networks of teacher support groups with technology to provide ongoing feedback loops.<br>Use of Observation Checklist extended. | School and higher education leaders understand and support the benefits of research-based 21st century pedagogical approaches to literacy. | • Provide evidence of effectiveness of dialogic teaching approaches to literacy through pre-post PD surveys, children's performance on standard measures, etc.<br>• Integration into higher education teacher training.<br>• Buy-in from administrators and teachers leading to demand for PD.<br>• Pervasive use of dialogic teaching strategies, including use of ongoing Action Research to improve literacy practices.<br>• Broad use of Observation Checklist for classroom teaching. |

### 7.4 Pedagogical approach

This PD course is a shift from the traditional content-based learning, commonly used in Namibian training institutions, to a socio-cultural philosophy based on an identified scope of goals and objectives, activities, and assessments designed to meet course goals. Furthermore, this PD course models uses of innovative approaches for teaching and

learning that enable teachers to reflect in their own time through writing and critical examination of practices in order to share best practice within a community of practice. Since this PD research was offered for the first time after a brief pilot study, there is room for improvement and developing revised approaches to engage ESL pre-primary teachers around texts and activities to lead them towards deeper understanding of language and pedagogical approaches.

Overall, teachers expressed satisfaction and praised the PD as worthwhile and challenging. Positive critique expressed included the following comments: "very helpful," "I will use the readings in my practice," and the "readings were very good." In response to the question, "What stood out during the PD?" a teacher remarked on the research based texts in the following way: "I prefer 'Essentials of early literacy' [Rokos et al., 2003]. It taught me what to teach in early literacy." Another participant commented: "Both readings were good." "It has helped me." With regard to the challenges experienced during the training, another teacher shared: "The reading part…. We had too many readings to do…. I could not make sense, because the level of English used in the reading."

To improve the PD curriculum, I will do a cloze test first to assess the reading level of participants in line with the texts chosen. Further, negative critique of research-based readings revealed that it was "time consuming." Based on these comments, I have decided to search for shorter or easier texts to accommodate all reading levels or give more time for reading tasks. Alternatively, I would rather add more readings for PD trainings in future in an effort to increase teachers' existing repertoires of language knowledge and pedagogical skills. Another challenge to be met is to increase Internet accessibility to allow for communication and feedback over time.

Reflective dialogue during online participation provided hands-on teaching experiences within a community of practice. During the PD training teachers received, focused feedback on classroom practices to strengthen and create further understanding and feedback on early literacy practices. For example, a participant asked the group the following question: "What if I asked a question to a learner, and he/she cannot answer. I move on to the next two learners who can also not answer the same question?" Observations commonly revealed this practice in classrooms, because teachers expect a specific answer to questions in the old recitative method. Teachers do not engage learners in extensive authentic shared questioning or scaffolding to guide meaning making. I suggested to this person that teachers apply various scaffolding strategies and to connect learning to culturally relevant incidents in order to foster meaning making. In online discussions, the teachers had the opportunity to constructively critique teaching and learning processes demonstrated by volunteer teachers' ways of using questions, patterns of interaction in an ESL classroom, reaction to learners, teacher-learner exchanges, treatment of error, scaffolding, etc.

I developed an observation checklist protocol to guide teachers to 'see' a lesson with new eyes and to evaluate the opportunities for learners to engage in dialogue with each other and with the teacher on real questions around content. The use of the observation checklist tool provided standardized feedback for comparative purposes and to raise awareness about features of the teacher's pedagogical choices. Participating teachers became self-aware and realized their needs as ESL teachers when they exposed themselves to the narratives of peer teachers to expand their own understanding in the online forum. With more focussed exposure to PD, there are prospects to create a positive climate to improve mastery of language and early literacy knowledge and practice. Ideally, trained teachers could post dialogic lessons online to expose other

teachers to the possibilities of using and learning from new pedagogical approaches. Figure 7.2 shows a proposed PD curriculum format.

**Figure 7.2**

*Proposed early literacy PD curriculum format*

| Course Description | Learning Objectives | Reading texts | Teaching strategies/activities | Assignments/ Course Outcomes |
|---|---|---|---|---|

Figure 7.2 shows the proposed curriculum framework and indicates the course description, learning objectives, research-based texts, teaching strategies and activities and course assignments and outcomes. This PD research training modelled interactive lesson plans, highlighted important skills needed for oral and written language learning, and critiqued the effects of environmental print, while using a whole language teaching approach. Instructional skills were emphasized through empirical text readings and presentations. When early literacy PD offers explicit training, and activities linked to research-based texts, it has the potential to transform practices for young learners, classroom practice, and policy.

## 7.5 Implications for further research

This study has implications for pre-primary teacher education curriculum policy, and PD training of in-service teachers in Namibia. There is a need for policies to support parallel PD for administrators, and curriculum developers of pre-primary programs. Participating teachers and learners came from diverse language backgrounds;

therefore, it is recommended that the teacher training curriculum expose pre-service and in-service teachers to ESL training grounded in discipline specific language principles for ELL. Discipline specific PD can help teachers develop alternative pedagogical approaches that aid in acquiring ESL skills to improve teaching quality and students' reading outcomes in the long run. Research can promote dialogue on the process of pre-primary teacher preparation to support improved quality education service provided to teachers from bilingual and multilingual backgrounds. Further research studies that examine the academic success or failure of those taught in dialogic classrooms is key to affirming the value of this approach to literacy. A follow up study with the sample of trained pre-primary teachers can discern how and if actual practice has been influenced. Finally, future research could also reveal the efficacy of early literacy PD, and how teachers have appropriated discipline specific ESL knowledge through an intensive short plunge into theory and practice of dialogic teaching and learning.

Research on less named and explored matters of the field is also recommended. These matters include, among others, how teacher trainers could benefit from PD as well as how teachers can engage parents across socio-economic landscapes to support literacy development of young learners. Further research could reveal the effects of parental involvement in supporting early literacy development and could study and map Internet access and use of technology in regions across the country.

### 7.6 Limitations of the study

Since the initial PD training engaged a relatively small group of participants, and the training time was short, the study could not truly measure and document long term effects of participation in the training. Training required working within varying schedules constraints across two geographical regions. The use of ongoing feedback

loops and PD concepts needs to be reinforced, because translating new ideas into situated practice is necessary and a gradual process as internalization takes place. What came into focus during the training was the critical need to extend Internet connectivity for schools, especially rural schools so that teachers can be updated with PD opportunities and form communities of practice committed to improving instruction.

**7.7 Summary**

In an attempt to discern how PD, using a dialogic approach, might transform beliefs and practices for early literacy teachers from diverse language backgrounds, I identified outliers relevant to the topic of the study and related to my theoretical framework in the literature reviewed. These variables address specific instructional challenges such as using explicit approaches to equip teachers with ESL knowledge and pedagogical approaches to transform current beliefs and practices. The results of this study offer evidence that pre-primary teachers' participation has led to the development of new insights into ESL and early literacy teaching. The authoritarian discourse identified systemic matters such as top-down administrative and curriculum challenges that cannot be under estimated in the transformation of teaching and learning processes. Targeted PD can serve as a practical and cost-effective tool to overcome the challenges of helping pre-primary teachers becoming more skilled in fostering language learning in multilingual contexts. The use of face-to-face and online pedagogies afforded new opportunities for learning. Mixed methods identified codes, categories, and themes that highlight curricular features to build theory around the problem of PD design and delivery that has resulted into a distilled and the final PD model. The results show that this PD research project, using a mixed methods research design, socio-cultural teaching and learning strategies, and creative data analysis methodologies such as GT and CDA can support ESL and early literacy research in multilingual contexts. The overall results

support the hypothesis that targeted PD can modify/change teacher's beliefs about the relative value of teaching isolated phonics and reading skills versus a focus on opportunities for rich talk, interaction, and having an impact in a cultural moment.

This project could be extended to other parts of Namibia to make the desired impact in the field of ELL and early childhood education. Although there were significant challenges in recruiting participants and identifying a time and space to complete the PD, as well as insecure access to technology for follow up communications, this study provides a careful and reflective account of the design and delivery of an intensive professional development experience for in-service pre-primary teachers from two regions of Namibia.

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## APPENDICES

A. Consent letter

**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**
**HARDAP REGIONAL COUNCIL**
**DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE**

**Enquiries: Mr. M. Gqwede**
**Tel: (063) 245700**
**Fax: (063) 242053**
**E-mail: mgqwede.edu@hardaprc.gov.na**

**Private Bag 2122**
**MARIENTAL**

**01 September 2016**

To: Ms. Annaly Eimann

**RE: INFORMED CONSENT TO CONDUCT PHD DISSERTATION RESEARCH IN HARDAP REGION**

Your letter dated 01 August 2016 regarding the subject at caption has reference.

Approval is granted for you to conduct your PhD dissertation research at schools in Hardap Region. However, this activity should not disrupt the formal school programs.

Participation by either teachers or learners should be on a voluntary basis. Should you involve minors in your research activities, consent for participation should first be obtained from the parents/guardians of the minors.

Yours sincerely

**Mr. M. Gqwede**
**DIRECTOR**

HARDAP REGIONAL COUNCIL
DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE
05 SEP 2016
PRIVATE BAG 2122 MARIENTAL
TEL: 063 - 245700
FAX: 063 - 242053

All official correspondence must be addressed to the Chief Regional Officer

B. Consent letter

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

KHOMAS REGIONAL COUNCIL

DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

Tel: [09 264 61] 293 4356
Fax: [09 264 61] 231 367/248 251
***Enquiries: Ms TL Shivute***

Private Bag 13236
WINDHOEK

**File No: 12/3/10/1**

Ms Annaly Eimann
University of Pretoria
Republic of South Africa

**REQUEST TO CONDUCT A DISSERTATION RESEARCH IN KHOMAS REGION**

Your request on the above subject refers.

Permission in hereby given to you to carry out your PhD dissertation research with a topic study "Transforming early literacy teaching: A dialogic approach" in the Primary Schools with Pre-Primary of your choice in Khomas Region with the following conditions:

- The Principal of the school to be visited must be contacted before the visit and agreement should be reached between you and the Principal.
- The school programme should not be interrupted.
- Teachers who will take part in this research will do so voluntarily.
- The Directorate of Education, Arts and Culture should be provided with a copy of your thesis/findings.

We wish you the best in your studies.

Yours sincerely

Gerard N. Vries
**Director of Education, Arts and Culture**

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE
PRIVATE BAG 13236 WINDHOEK
09 -09- 2016
DIRECTOR
KHOMAS REGION

**C. Pre/Post-test Survey**


Dear Teacher,

The purpose of this survey is to determine the theoretical orientation to reading and reading instruction of pre-primary teachers. Your responses are critical to help me to realize my study titled "*Transformation of early literacy teaching: A dialogic approach."* Kindly read the following statements, and make a cross (x) that will indicate the relationship of the statement to your feelings about reading and reading instruction. Your responses will be treated confidential.

Thank you for your participation!

**Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (De Ford, 1985)**

| No. | Statement | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | A child needs to be able to verbalize the rules of phonics in order to assure proficiency in processing new words. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2 | An increase in errors is usually related to a decrease in comprehension. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3 | Dividing words into syllables according to rules is a helpful instructional practice for reading new words. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4 | Fluency and expression are necessary components of reading that indicate good comprehension. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5 | Materials for early reading should be written in natural language without concern for short, simple words and sentences. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | When children do not know a word, they should be instructed to sound out its parts. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7 | It is good practice to allow children to edit what is written into their own dialect when learning to read. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8 | The use of a dictionary or glossary is necessary in determining the meaning and pronunciation of new words. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | Reversals (e.g., saying “saw” for “was”) are significant problems in the teaching of reading. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10 | It is good practice to correct a child as soon as an oral reading mistake is made. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11 | It is important for a word to be repeated a number of times after it has been introduced to ensure that it will become a part of sight vocabulary. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12 | Paying close attention to punctuation marks is necessary to understanding story content. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13 | It is a sign of an ineffective reader when words and phrases are repeated. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14 | Being able to label words according to grammatical function (e.g., nouns, etc.) is useful in proficient reading. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15 | When coming to a word that’s unknown, the reader should be encouraged to guess upon meaning and go on. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16 | Young readers need to be introduced to the root form of words (e.g., run, long) before they are asked to read inflected forms (e.g., running, longest). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17 | It is not necessary for a child to know the letters of the alphabet in order to learn to read. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18 | Flash-card drills with sight words is an unnecessary form of practice in reading instruction. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19 | The ability to use accent patterns in multi-syllable words (pho’ to graph, pho to’ gra phy, and pho to gra’ phic) should be developed as a part of reading instruction. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20 | Controlling text through consistent spelling patterns (e.g., The fat cat ran back. The fat cat sat on a hat.) is a means by which children can best learn to read. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21 | Formal instruction in reading is necessary to ensure the adequate development of all the skills used in reading. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22 | Phonic analysis is the most important form of analysis used when meeting new words. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 23 | Children's initial encounters with print should focus on meaning, not on exact graphic representation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | | | | | | |
| 24 | Word shapes (word configurations) should be taught in reading to aid in word recognition. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | | | | | | |
| 25 | It is important to teach skills in relation to other skills. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | | | | | | |
| 26 | If a child says "house" for the written word "home", the response should be left uncorrected. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | | | | | | |
| 27 | It is not necessary to introduce new words before they appear in the reading text. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | | | | | | |
| 28 | Some problems in reading are caused by readers dropping the inflectional ending from words (e.g., jump*s*, jump*ed*) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | | | | | | |

29. Are you male or female?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Male | | Female | |

30. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

_____

31. At what institution did you finish your education?

| | |
|---|---|
| University of Namibia | |
| Windhoek College of Education | |
| Khomasdal College of Education | |
| Institute of Open Learning | |
| Any Other (Please specify) | |

32. How many years have you been teaching in the pre-primary phase?

| | |
|---|---|
| 0-3 years | |
| 4-5 years | |
| 6-10 years | |
| Any other | |

33. What is your mother-tongue?

……..

34. What is the name of your school?

……..

Thank you for your participation!

**D. Interview Protocol**

**Professional Development Early Literacy**

Interviewer:……..

Interviewee:……..

Place:……..

Time:…….

1. Tell me about yourself. What is your teaching background? How many years have you been teaching in the pre-primary phase?
2. What is your mother-tongue/home language/native language?
3. How long did it take you to develop fluency in your mother tongue?
4. What were some of your challenges when you started teaching, using English as medium of instruction?
5. What professional development readings and activities do you think is the most effective in learning new strategies that may positively shape literacy practice?
6. In what ways has the training equipped you to utilize early literacy teaching strategies in your classroom?
7. What stood out for you in the early literacy training?
8. Was it helpful for you to work in collaboration with peers? Explain why
9. What do you think are the benefits of dialogic teaching?
10. What challenges do you anticipate when using a dialogic approach to language teaching in your early literacy class?

11. What were some of your challenges during this training session? How do you think these challenges could be overcome?
12. Share one thing you feel you do now that really supports your students' literacy development.
13. What do you think is your biggest challenge in teaching literacy?

**E. Observation checklist**

| **Checklist** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The presentation of the lesson incorporated tasks for children, and interactive roles that fostered dialogical teaching and learning. | | | | | |
| The lesson reflected careful planning and organization | | | | | |
| The lesson reflected different teaching approaches that include pair work, and group activities | | | | | |
| The teacher managed the classroom very well | | | | | |
| The teacher allotted sufficient time to a variety of activities | | | | | |
| The teacher responded to the language/literacy needs of children | | | | | |
| Children were challenged and reflect on learning | | | | | |
| The teacher used and incorporated material very well | | | | | |
| The classroom environment fosters early literacy development | | | | | |
| Students were allowed to make choices and were listened to | | | | | |

**Transcriptions**

**F. Genre:** Ways of interacting

| **Discursive feature** | **Description** | **Illustrative quotes** | **Figured world** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Turn taking**<br>**Teacher introduced the sound /k/ for cow** | In stanza 1 are 18 short turns: 9 teacher turns, 2 individual child, and 7 group turns taken by all learners | All learners: The cow<br>Teacher: What sound does the cow start with | Phonological awareness<br>Teacher-student dominance<br>Students obligations, teachers' rights<br>learners repeat/re-voice what the teacher is saying |
| Topics and episodes | Line 125, 126, 130, 131 Phonological awareness<br>Line 131, 134 Agree/Disagreement<br>Line 129 Mood/appraisal<br>Line 132 Present tense | Teacher: "What sounds does the cow start with?"<br>All learners: /k/<br>Individual child: /o/ | The topic is introduced based on pre-primary curriculum: sounds from the environment.<br>Animal sounds<br>Question answer construction |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Line 135-142 Meaning construction/repetition | All learners: "Nooo" | |
| Parallel structure | Line 135-139 Level of semiotics or syntax | All learners: "/k/ /k/ /k/ for cow" | One letter sentence construction |
| Intertextuality | Line 127, 134 genre | Teacher: "ok"<br>Teacher: Ok…try again<br>Teacher: Ok….good | Social language |

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**G. Discourse**: *Ways of representing*

| **Discursive feature** | **Description** | **Illustrative text** | **Figured world** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lexicalization | Line 147 Selection of wordings | Teacher: Who can identify?" | |
| Re-lexicalization | Line 154-162 Re-voicing, meaning construction, parallel structuring | Teacher: "Again, again" | Teacher- centred |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pronouns | Line 155, 166, 167, 169 social language, 171 parallel structure, 172 present tense | Learners: Cat, cat, cat<br>Cow<br>Child: “Carrot, cake”<br>Teacher: “we have the /k/ for cat<br>“Hé”<br>“Teacher: “clap hands” | Re-voicing |
| Exclusion | 124-173 | /sss/ or /see/ for /c/ | Phonics |

**H. Style**: *Ways of being*

| **Discursive feature** | **Description** | **Illustrative text** | **Figured world** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Transivity | Line 181 Verbs of doing | Teacher: /d/ for what? Toivo come up to the table to select a word.” | Signs and systems of knowledge |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Tense | Line 184 Present continuous | Teacher: We are looking for the words" | Construction of meaning |
| Appraisal | Line 188, 192,198 | Teacher: let's start with /d/ Ok, thank you<br>"Ok, good" | Politeness<br>Social language |

**I. Description of terms**

| Term | Description |
|---|---|
| Turn taking | Description of the structure and sequence of an interaction |
| Parallel structure | Similar textual features within a text, at the level of semantics or syntax, across semiotic modes |
| Intertextuality | Intertextual features such as: quoted speech, irony, parody, negation, presupposition, and scare quotes<br>Constitutive intertextuality: interdiscursive features between texts such as structure, form, and genre |