Approaches to the teaching of literacy skills in English First Additional Language to learners in Grade 3

by

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MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS

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DECLARATION

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This Ethics Clearance Certificate should be read in conjunction with the Integrated Declaration Form (D08) which specifies details regarding:
- Compliance with approved research protocol,
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ETHICS STATEMENT

Sophie Deliwe Sibanda has obtained, for the research described in this work, the applicable research ethics approval.

I declare that I have observed the ethical standards required in terms of the University of Pretoria's "*Code of ethics for researchers and the Policy guidelines for responsible research,*"

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT:

DATE: 2018-11-12

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this research study to my father, Sydney Taizwirhewa Munhewa Mutizira Sibanda. Thank you for your guidance, patience, love and words of encouragement throughout my life.

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ABSTRACT

Teachers are the key players in the teaching of literacy skills to young learners. The teacher is primarily responsible for using different approaches to teach literacy skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing to young learners whose language is not the same as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) at schools. Teachers must plan activities that are learner centred and promotes interaction and participation. It has been found that the use of a variety of teaching approaches and various kind of texts improve literacy skills amongst learners.

This study aimed to qualitatively gain insight into the approaches teachers use to teach literacy skills in the Foundation Phase class. The study's primary and secondary research questions are as follows: *What approaches do teachers use to teach literacy skills in the Foundation Phase?* How do teachers integrate listening, speaking and writing when teaching reading in English as a First Additional Language (FAL)? In an attempt to answer the above research questions, semi-structured individual interviews were held with Grade 3 teachers.

The study found that teachers strongly believed that most schools in South Africa have a diverse learner population and most learners are not English first language speakers. Many learners speak one of the eleven official languages, however, these learners are enrolled in a school where the LoLT is mainly English. Furthermore, to accommodate all learners and to implement the principles of inclusivity, teachers had to adapt their teaching methodologies and find newer approaches to teaching literacy skills. Apart from stimulating pre-existing knowledge and enhancing learners' vocabulary, teachers acknowledged that the existence of diverse learner population in their classrooms implied that the learning preferences were also different. Teachers needed to have an understanding of planning and teaching for multiple learning styles. It was found that teachers took the responsibility to accommodate all learning styles in their classrooms. Further studies should be conducted to see the impact of the various strategies in the development of literacy skills among English First Additional Language learners.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAC: Alternative and Augmentative Communication

ANA: Annual National Assessment

CAPS: Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement

CNB: Common National Base

DBE: Department of Basic Education

DoE: Department of Education

EFAL: English First Additional Language

FAL: First Additional Language

LiEP: Language in Education Policy

LoLT: Language of learning and teaching

NCP: National Curriculum Parameters

NPPPPR: National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements of the National Curriculum Statement: Grade R-12

P: Participant

PBL: Problem-based learning

RT: Reciprocal teaching

SA: South Africa(n)

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

LANGUAGE EDITOR'S LETTER.

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This is to confirm that the thesis titled *"Approaches to the teaching of literacy skills to English First Additional Language learners in Grade 3"* by Sophie Deliwe Sibanda was proof read and edited by me in respect of language.

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KEY WORDS

Low literacy levels, early literacy development, foundation phase, experiences, teachers, grade, effects, diverse learner population, and reputable schools.

DESCRIPTION OF KEY TERMS

KEY TERMS	DESCRIPTIONS
Literacy levels	Include varying proficiencies performed on tasks of varying difficulty. In the context of this study, learners who struggle to read and write in the language of learning and teaching are less likely to succeed on tasks with higher difficulty values (Kirsch, 1993).
Early literacy	This refers to what learners know about reading and writing before they actually read or write.
Foundation phase	Foundation phase refers to the school phase that includes Grade R, the inception year, and Grades 1, 2 and 3. The learners are between the ages of five and nine years old (Joubert, Bester, Meyer, & Evans, 2008).
Experiences	Teacher experience often have a more sanguine contribution to defining how learners learn. Experience plays a key role in literacy skills teaching.
Teachers	These are educators and facilitators who are responsible for literacy skills teaching
Grade 3	The last grade in the foundation phase, and the grade included in this study
Effects	This refers to the "consequences or results of a phenomenon."
Diverse learner population	Include learners from different racial, ethnic and cultural groups
Reputable	Beliefs or opinions that are generally held about something.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), explains that learning to use language successfully is the learners' ability to "express their identity, feelings and ideas, through knowledge gained as well as interacting with others and to manage their life-world" (Department of Basic Education [DBE], 2016:10). Language is a vehicle that learners use to express their cultural and social diversity. Through language such constructions can be shaped, changed, widened and refined (DBE, 2011). The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), explains that the "language learning in the Foundation Phase covers all eleven (11) official languages in South Africa, namely, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sepedi (Sesotho sa Leboa), Sesotho, Setswana, Siswati, Tshivenda and Xitsonga–as well as Non-official Languages" (DBE, 2016:10). Recently sign language has been included as the twelfth language. Furthermore, these official languages can be offered at different language levels at school level (Durgunoğlu, Nagy & Hancin-Bhatt, 1993).

According to DBE (2011) the National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements (NPPPPR) of the National Curriculum Statement for Grades R to 12 points out that all learners must access education in "two official languages at school level, and one of these languages must be offered at the Home Language (HL) level and the other official language at the First Additional Language (FAL) level, yet the latter must not be the same official language" (DBE, 2015:8). Additionally, the NPPPPR referred to HL as "language proficiency that reflects the mastery of interpersonal communication skills in social situations and cognitive academic skills necessary for learning across the curriculum" (DBE, 2015: ix). However, the reality in the South African context is that many schools do not offer the home languages of some or all of the learners admitting in their schools. Instead they have one or two other languages offered at the home language and first additional language levels.

In addition, the Language in Education Policy (LiEP) of South Africa, language means "all official languages recognised in the Constitution, including South African Sign Language, as well as Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC)" (DBE, 1997:3). For the purposes of this study, any reference to First Additional Language (FAL) should be understood as "a language which is not a mother tongue but as a language which is used for certain communicative functions in a society as well as the medium of learning and teaching in education" (DBE, 2016:11). In the Foundation Phase, the primary skills in the First Additional Language (FAL) curriculum include:

"Listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Thinking, reasoning, language structure and use are incorporated into all four stated language skills" (DBE, 2011:8).

The focus of my research study will be to investigate how teachers approach the integration of listening, speaking and writing in a reading lesson in Grade 3 EFAL classrooms. According to Swanepoel (2017) the integration of the education system, at the time of political change in South Africa (SA), resulted in many learners being enrolled in schools where the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) was predominantly English. This is often not the language spoken at home nor the mother tongue of most learners. In the context of this study these learners are referred to as English First Additional Language (EFAL) learners. According to the policies of the DBE all learners are required to achieve a "high level of proficiency in English literacy skills at the end of Grade 3" (DBE, 2011:8). This means that they need to be able to communicate, read and write acceptably in English. The reality is that Grade 2 and 3 teachers must fast-track learners' literacy progress to meet with policy requirements.

The curriculum policy on additive bilingualism in South Africa assumes that learners come to school being competent in their home language and that they can transfer these skills from the home language to learn an additional language (DBE, 2011). In contrast, Caravolas (2004), Durgunoğlu, Nagy & Hancin-Bhatt, (1993) and Fashola, Drum, Mayer, and Kang, (1996) contend that learners who are not English speakers, but are learning to read and write in English may find that the foundation of their home language skills, including reading and writing skills, may not easily be adapted to learn literacy skills in a different language because of the differences of orthography among the languages.

At the same time Hoadley (2012) is of the opinion that most teachers in SA are not qualified to teach EFAL literacy skills to learners from diverse language backgrounds. He found that many teachers are not clear, and seem to be confused about the approaches to the teaching of literacy skills in Grade 3. Furthermore, Spaull (2013) highlights several factors which may contribute to teachers' inability to teach young learners, namely; poor teacher development and training, the absence of continuous support from school subject heads of department, subject advisors, limited amount of appropriate textbooks and other resources.

1.2 RATIONALE

I am a teacher with twelve years of teaching experience at schools with a diverse learner population. At my current school, we have learners who are from different countries other than South Africa, for example Maputo, Congo and Nigeria. Most learners in my school speak different South African languages such as Tsonga, Setswana, Ndebele, Xhosa, Zulu and Venda, while many foreign learners, especially from Maputo, Congo and Nigeria have no understanding or comprehension of the

South African languages. The LoLT in the school is English even though it is not the language spoken by these learners in the home or communities. During my teaching experience I have observed that Grade 3 learners are struggling with English as a subject and the LoLT of the school. Very soon, I realised that my personal approach to literacy teaching did not suit teaching EFAL learners in Grade 3.

The Grade 3 learners' Annual National Assessments (ANA) results of my school reflects poor literacy levels amongst these learners and the district as a whole (DBE, 2014). Most learners achieved between 30% - 47% in the system evaluation. The ANA report showed that learners were unable to read, understand, comprehend and respond to basic questions. This result is also evident in my school where learners' language performance were below average and the school was rated as underperforming for three consecutive years, from 2011 to 2013. After much investigation, I realised that the approaches to teaching of literacy at my school differed vastly from neighbouring schools that were performing well.

Teaching literacy skills in English appears to be problematic to me as a Grade 3 teacher. The purpose of phonetics instruction is to give the learners tools so that they can easily code and decode words. However, my English phonics instruction might have contributed to the learners' poor reading abilities. According to the DBE, phonics instruction is an important building block in the teaching of reading and writing (DoE, 2008). When learners put together phonics and vocabulary, then they are able to construct meaning. Again, in indigenous African languages the names and the sounds of the letters are generally not the same, and the letter-sounds do not vary depending on what other letters are near it. Therefore, it was challenging to teach phonemic awareness and phonics in the English language.

As part of my preliminary literature review, valuable and appropriate scholarly literature on the teaching of EFAL learners was discussed. Current research done by Caddy (2015), Lenyai (2011), Mudzielwana (2014), Pretorius and Mampuru (2007) and Swanepoel (2017) is on English as a LoLT and the teaching of reading comprehension and strategies for teaching reading to Grade 2 EFAL learners. No research seems to have been done specifically on the integration of the language literacy skills such as listening, speaking and writing in a reading lesson to Grade 3 EFAL learners.

For the purpose of this study, a competent learner in an additional language, is the one who has the ability to listen, speak, read and write well in English. Also, a competent learner should be able to use an additional language in different language contexts. As a result, I decided to select reputable state primary schools and independent schools that are performing well in the ANA standardised tests, to find the best strategies and techniques that teachers can use to integrate literacy skills when teaching English First Additional Language (EFAL) to Grade 3 EFAL learners.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The low literacy levels and the poor performance of learners in national assessments in South African schools are alarming (Motshekga, 2010). Learners are challenged with skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. Newer approaches to the teaching of literacy skills is required to improve the performance of learners. The Minister of Basic Education, Ms Angie Motshega, reported that there was an urgent need for teacher support and capacity building to improve the literacy levels across the education system (Motshekga, 2010). For the purpose of this study, I have formulated primary and secondary research questions to assist in answering the research questions. This study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1.3.1 Primary research question

What approaches do teachers use to teach literacy skills in the Foundation Phase?

1.3.2 Secondary research questions

To understand the primary question, the following secondary questions need to be looked into:

- How do teachers integrate listening, speaking and writing when teaching reading in English as FAL?
- What kinds of resources do teachers use to teach literacy skills?
- Which factors are likely to influence the teaching of literacy skills?

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to investigate the approaches teachers use in Grade 3 in the teaching of literacy skills such as listening, speaking and writing, in a reading lesson to EFAL learners.

1.4.1 Research aims

- To investigate different approaches used to teach literacy skills to Grade 3 EFAL learners.
- To observe the actual teaching (focus on the integration of listening speaking, and writing skills) when teaching reading lessons in English as FAL; and
- To examine factors which are likely to influence the teaching of literacy skills as well as kinds of resources used.

1.5 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

For this study, it is necessary to clarify the following concepts:

1.5.1 Approaches

An approach gives rise to methods, the way of teaching something through the use of classroom activities or techniques to assist learners to learn. An approach is a way of looking at teaching and learning. Hinkel (2006) suggests that an approach is a set of guidelines used to address the teaching and learning of a language. Approaches outline the nature of the subject matter to be taught. In the context of this study, approaches are methods and planned procedures and are designed to teach English literacy skills successfully to a diverse learner population in Grade 3 classrooms (Abadzi, 2006; Gunning, 2013).

1.5.2 Teaching

Teaching includes not only the practical application but also the imparting of knowledge and skills (Maganda, 2012). It also encompasses curriculum issues and the accumulation of theory that describes how and why learning takes place. Teaching can also be understood as providing support for the process through which learners construct knowledge and understanding, and building on existing knowledge (Coleman, 2010; Wallace, Seligman, Davis, Schillinger, Arnold, Bryant-Shilliday, Freburger, & Dewalt, 2009). For the purpose of this study, teaching attends to learner needs, experiences and feelings, and to making specific interventions to assist them to gain advanced English literacy skills.

1.5.3 Literacy skills

According to DBE (2011) literacy skills are all the skills needed for reading and writing. It also covers other types of knowledge and skills such as scientific and computer literacy. Literacy skills are not just about the learner's ability to read and write or the accretion and application of static skills and knowledge but rather it is the employment of a wide range of adaptable literacy practices, strategies and knowledge to effectively use texts within social and cultural situations for a variety of purposes (Anstey & Bull, 2010).

1.5.4 Grade 3 learners

Grade 3 learners are learners in the Foundation Phase, who are in their third year of formal schooling and who are normally between nine and ten years old (DBE, 2011).

1.5.5 English First Additional Language

According to the DBE (2016), First Additional Language is described as "a language which is not the learner's mother (tongue}, yet it can be used for certain communicative functions in a society such as medium of learning and teaching in education" DBE (2016:11). The curriculum strongly supports those learners who will use their first additional language as their preferred language of learning and teaching. Most learners in South Africa access their education in English at the First Additional Language level from Grade 4 onwards. In this study, teaching and learning of all subjects in the Foundation Phase are done in English even though it is not the learners' mother tongue.

1.6 LITERATURE OVERVIEW

Learning starts at the learner's home. Parents and other immediate family members are the young child's primary educators. Learners start to learn language from their immediate environment (Venketsamy, 1997). Being literate is one of our most valuable skills and assets as far as our personal growth, culture and development is concerned. It is even more important today because of the exponential way the basic building blocks of our economy and society are changing. Both the home and the school, according to Lee and Croninger (1994) play a critical role in the literacy development of learners. Variation in both the home and school environment can affect the literacy development which leads to significant changes in reading ability and behavior (Joubert, Bester, Meyer & Evans, 2008).

1.6.1 The global perspective on literacy skills teaching

1.6.1.1 United States

Europe, like any other continent has learners of diverse backgrounds, normally from low-income households, from African American, Asian American, Latina/o, or Native American ancestry (Au, 1998). Learners from these families speak in a mother tongue other than the standard American English (Almubark, 2016). Learners from diverse backgrounds do not have the opportunity to learn to read and write as well as their European American peers (Au, 1998). In an attempt to enhance the literacy skills teaching, educators provide learners with literacy specific activities and a substantial amount of teaching in the specific literacy skills necessary for a full contribution in a competitive culture. On the other hand, the European American learners' education is based on the constructivist orientation (Cenoz & Jessner, 2000).

With a constructivist approach to literacy skills teaching, there is more emphasis on the process rather than on the end product. Hence, constructivist educators view themselves as facilitators of literacy teaching, responding to the learners' work, but

not transmitting knowledge (García & Baker, 1995; Au,1998). Furthermore, these educators may not be keen to teach other literacy skills. Research by Kubota (1998) found that the teaching of literacy skills needs an amalgamated, systematic direct instruction of all language skills. In addition, educators with a diverse constructivist view concur with the said statement, by saying that skills must be taught within the context of authentic literacy activities (Kubota, 1998).

Accordingly, (García & Baker, 1995; Au,1998 & Almubark, 2018) bilingual Latino literacy skills learning as a passive activity because there is a high degree of dependency on educators' support and scaffolding of learning. Likewise, Janks (2000) argues that these learners are bound to be dependent on educators' assistance because they are from diverse backgrounds, outsiders to the culture of European American, and that learning in the language that is not their mother tongue is challenging. As a result, learners need all the support they can get in order for them to be proficient in English, and to contribute to the larger society (Janks, 2000).

1.6.1. 2 Brazil

In the State of Sao Paulo Portuguese, is a language spoken by nearly the whole population (Valian & Eisenberg, 1996). English was one of the foreign languages spoken in Brazil. In addition, the Brazilian Ministry of Education launched a literacy program called "Pacto Nacional pela Alfabetização na Idade Certa" [PNAIC]) to improve the literacy skills of young learners (Costa & Carnoy, 2015). According to Costa and Carnoy (2015), it was designed to help achieve five interrelated program goals in the early grades of Ceará's municipal schools: (a) reading promotion, (b) supporting municipal literacy strategies, (c) strengthening municipal management, (d) supporting early childhood education, and (e) providing external learning evaluation.

According to Holm (2003) it was difficult for public schools to recruit highly qualified teachers and to secure the necessary funding. Gimenez (2015), supported Holm (2003) by revealing that teachers in Brazilian public schools relied on blackboard and learner notebooks as the basic media for literacy skills teaching. Teachers spent most of their time on four distinct activities such as simple routines like passing out mimeographed worksheets, collecting homework, writing, or on dictation activities or reading exercises, either as shared reading or independent reading (Abadzi, 2004).

In addition, teachers spent most of the teaching time in the class room marking homework while learners are engaged in other activities (Gimenez, 2015). The majority of academic work focus on mechanical writing or reading tasks using the black-board and learners' own notebooks (Richards & Lockhart, 1994). In general, English literacy skills teaching often involved repetition using copied work sheets, spelling activities, or dictations (Tyler, 2006.). Teachers integrate the limited educational materials into the teaching program (Gimenez, 2015).

1.6.1.4 Ghana

According to Ehrman, Leaver and Oxford (2003), English is one of the official language in Ghana. The teaching of literacy skills in Ghana is mostly based on the summary and comprehension of language, while reading and spelling skills are ignored. Strevens (1960) argues that the teaching of oral language is the most important in literacy as speaking comes before reading and writing, and it should always be included as the main part of any teacher's course (Strevens, 1960). Learning in a language that is not your mother tongue depends on how much time is spent on language activities that include listening, speaking reading and writing. It should not only be activities which will require learners to be dependent on the teacher, but should include learning that is interactive in nature (Ehrman, Leaver & Oxford, 2003).

Research findings by Duthie (2004) indicate that the nature of the letter-sounds in English obstructs the attainment of the actual literacy skills, especially if learners are taught in a language that is not their mother tongue. The classroom is a suitable environment in which first additional literacy skills teaching and learning must take place, however, in other countries teachers do not spent time on essential skills of language because it could be that teachers are not well qualified to teach literacy skills in both African languages and English (Owu-Ewie, 2006).

Furthermore, Duthie (2004) explains that teaching literacy skills in the learner's mother tongue would support language learning in English as first additional language. In addition, Saah & Baku (2011) maintain that that after liberation Ghana has been unable to institute a reliable language policy that would allow fast-tracking of literacy skills development of the indigenous languages and their use in education.

1.6.1.5 South Africa

According to Taylor and Von Fintel, (2016), LiEP of South Africa does not "prescribe which of the eleven official languages should be used, the choice of the medium of instruction is the responsibility of the School Governing Bodies" (Taylor & Von Fintel, 2016:3). English has become the dominant language of power, thus, South African language classroom practice experienced subdivisions in an intricate manner. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), literacy skills teaching in English as FAL can be taught through simple action songs, games, poems and rhymes which integrate learning and play. This encourages learners to engage more sincerely with teachers.

Likewise, Caddy (2015) believes that the learners' concentration span in the Foundation Phase is very limited, thus, language learning through physical activities stimulate their interest, through play activities, the spoken language, and confidence is enhanced, as they create their own learning through play and enjoyment. In the

same way, research findings by Setati, Molefe and Langa (2008), have shown that integrating the learners' mother tongue with the English language is essential to support learning in a language that is not their mother tongue (Adler, 1996; Moschkovich, 1996). The research findings by Taylor & Von Fintel, (2016:19) emphasised that

> "Many of these practices are taught discretely and links are not made in ways that make the attainment of literacy skills meaningful. The fact that these practices are repeated in the primary school affirms the findings from the assessment studies that show that learners are unable to read for meaning."

The advocates of exploratory talk, argue that if not supplemented by strategies for learning specific subjects for educational purposes, it may be dangerous and extended writing may be compromised (Setati, Adler, Reed & Bapoo, 2002).

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theory defines, shapes and structures the work of the researcher within the existing body of knowledge and also positions the research (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004; Maree, 2012). Vygotsky connected the exigencies of educational practice to some aspects of his socio-genetic law of cognitive development:

> "Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first on the social level, and later, on the individual level: first, between people, and then inside the child. This relates equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originates as actual relations between human individuals".

Central to the teaching of literacy skills, is the understanding that proficiency in one language is an important resource for learning an additional language (Thomas & Collier, 2002).

At the same time, Cummins (2000) explains that if learners have mastered literacy in their mother tongue, it is a substance for learning EFAL language and literacy skills (Cummins, 2000). Also, learners can use the mother tongue literacy to extract knowledge while learning in English as FAL, thereby enabling them to learn subject matter and a new language simultaneously (Cummins, 2000). Thus, a one-size-fits-all method for literacy skills teaching in English as FAL is not going to be successful, considering the fact that learners bring varying language and academic experiences to the classroom (Cummins, 2000).

According to Eun, Knotek & Heining-Boynton (2008), a learner is neither a recipient of renowned knowledge, nor a disengaged liberated character. Consequently, Taylor and Hegarty (1985) argue that a learner is a participant in learning activities, shared by learners and a knowledgeable other (Eun, Knotek & Heining-Boynton, 2008).

Significantly, the ZPD makes this process possible as it is a social activity, there is collaboration between learners and teachers, or other more competent partners, in which learners are provided with access to semiotic resources (Vygotsky 1978; Holzman & Newman, 1993). To summarise, Vygotsky's zone of proximal development appears to be ideal for this study, since it enables the teacher as the capable other to facilitate literacy development through the integration of listening, speaking and writing skills in a reading lesson.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The term methodology refers to the strategy that is important in selecting the research approaches. Silverman (2016) points out that qualitative researchers aim to provide a broad understanding about the social phenomena that is being investigated. On the other hand, Shrestha (2015) states that qualitative research covers a wide range of approaches for the assessment of personal and social understanding, insights, motivations and actions. Furthermore, according to Shrestha, (2015) data gathered may be in participants' own voices as well in a written format.

1.8.1 Research design

In this study, a qualitative research approach is followed, as I intend to understand what Grade 3 teachers do and say and to listen to the manner in which literacy skills approaches are presented to English First Additional Language (EFAL) learners. Accordingly, a number of researchers agree that qualitative research methods are suitable for understanding complicated subjective and social issues (Creswell & Clark, 2007; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007).

1.8.1.1 Research paradigm

According to Guba (1990), a simple set of views guide the research. These views have been called paradigms and are also referred to as theoretical assumptions, epistemologies, and ontologies (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Also, these theoretical assumptions are sometimes considered to be research methodologies (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006; Scotland 2012).

This study followed an interpretive paradigm, to know and understand how English First Additional Language learners access knowledge through teachers' own words and to gain insight into the relationship between the nature of literacy skill approaches and the actual teaching practices, and how these methods are presented in Grade3 EFAL classrooms (Scotland, 2012). Accordingly, Lincoln, (1995) accepts that, in interpretivists' view, there is no single truth or a particular method to knowledge. At the same time, Andrade (2009) posits that reality is socially constructed through language and shared meanings.

To gain in-depth understanding of what type of approaches teachers use, and how they are presented when teaching literacy skills, I will collect data through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews (Aikenhead, 1997). Through this process, I can interpret, evaluate and match collected data with abstract patterns (Aikenhead, 1997). The study is based on a specific phenomenon, yet the aim is not to generalize the findings to a population (Farzanfar, Frishkopf, Migneault & Friedman, 2005). I intend to explain participants' personal reasons and meanings based on their social actions (Kaplan & Maxwell, 1994).

1.8.1.2 Research approach

I chose a qualitative approach to pursue the phenomenon in a specific context, in this case, the study takes place in the Grade 3 classrooms of English First Additional Language learners (Patton & Cochran, 2002). This study was conducted with the aim of reporting on multiple realities, and how different participants shared their own experiences of different approaches and how EFAL literacy is taught (Moustakas, 1994). The research questions in a qualitative approach are broad and general, to provide participants with ample opportunities to construct the meaning of a situation (Lewis, 2015). A qualitative approach allowed me to listen to and understand what approaches teachers used and how teachers comprehended literacy skills teaching in the foundation phase (Creswell, 2008; Lewis, 2015).

1.8.1.3 The type of research

A case study in a qualitative study provides tools for researchers to investigate a complex phenomenon within their contexts, using multiple sources of data (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Case study research enabled me to observe, record, analyse and report on teachers' approaches to literacy skills teaching within a specific context (Yin, 2003). I also listened to teacher's utterances during individual semi-structured interviews.

Often, cases are used to represent the larger population, it performs a heroic role (Seawright & Gerring, 2008) wherein a small sample stands for the whole population, as long as it is with the context of a phenomenon that is being investigated. A case study research was employed to understand each case within a certain boundary, in a specific time. Participating teachers shared their experiences, beliefs and ideas on approaches to literacy skills teaching. The selected cases comprised of two government owned primary schools and one independent (private school) primary school. In each school two teachers participated in the study. The names of the schools and participating teachers will be kept confidential.

1.8.2 Research methods

1.8.2.1 Participants

The study involved foundation phase teachers, qualified to teach Grade 3 English First Additional Language learners.

1.8.2.2 Data collection

I gained permission from principals of all the schools in which research study was to be conducted. Data was collected through classroom observations in all three schools and through individual semi-structured interviews, to obtain a deeper understanding of approaches to literacy skills teaching. The sampled schools were within close proximity to my place of employment. This ease the burden of traveling expenses for both the participants and myself.

1.8.2.3 Data analyses

Qualitative data analysis attempts to comprehend different elements of data collected and investigating relationships between concepts, and find patterns or trends that can be established to create themes (Mouton, 2001). My intention with data analysis is to realise contradictory features of one's data, scrutinising the relationships between concepts, seeing if there are any patterns or trends that can be recognised to create themes (Mouton, 2001).

1.8.2.4 Trustworthiness

According to Creswell & Zhang, (2009) and Shank (2006) to enhance the reliability and validity of the research a number of factors must be considered namely; credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The researcher built rapport with the participants and remained involved on site in the field until the quality of the information obtained from the participants was acceptable and rich (Creswell & Zhang, 2009; Shank, 2006).

Member checking was done to clarify the interpretations and contexts of the participants' experiences and so ensure that the data collected was presented truthfully. The field notes fostered reflexivity (Shank, 2006). A thick description of the findings was made to ensure transferability as the benchmark for applicability of the data (Creswell & Zhang, 2009). Triangulation was done by using the field notes, complete observations and transcripts from individual semi-structured interviews to enhance the dependability of the results (Shank, 2006). Methodological issues including data collection, data analysis as well as other methods were discussed in detail (Shank, 2006). Analysis of data was done in order for the researcher to isolate biased thoughts and expectations in order not to influence the data collection or analysis processes (Creswell & Zhang, 2009).

1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Conducting a qualitative study requires one to protect research participants, develop a rapport with them; uphold the trustworthiness of research; guard against bad behaviour and indecency that might reflect on the university and cope with new, perplexing obstacles (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Participants were provided with information about the research and a consent form was made available to them {see Appendix B). The information session outlined the research aims, research processes and data collection methods and time frame of the research.

Through briefing sessions, a good partnership between the participants and the researcher was ensured. Participating Grade 3 teachers were guaranteed that taking part in the study was voluntary and they could revoke their participation at any moment without attracting any punitive act (Israel & Hay, 2006; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Pseudonyms were used to refer to the schools and the participants (Lichtman, 2013). According to the research ethics researchers must protect the privacy of their participants. Individual rights as well as the welfare of all participants were respected and participants were treated with dignity (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). I took responsibility to make sure that participants did not feel threatened in any way. Upholding these ethical standards, the relationship between the researcher and the participants was honourable.

1.10 SUMMARY

Chapter 1 introduced the research study, research methods, sampling procedures and data analysis process. Chapter 2 focuses on the literature review, based on existing literature on the teaching of EFAL reading lessons incorporating listening, speaking, reading and writing as the main skills in English First Additional Language literacy.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

A literate person engages in reading or writing, whether as an individual, at home, at school, at work or elsewhere. According to UNESCO (2014) literacy actions take place in a social context. Learning literacy skills is a fundamental human right, and the substance for lifelong learning (its development generally starts early on, in the family, and continues throughout one's life, with its peak in the initial years of primary schooling). However, Smith, Baker and Oudeans, (2001) note, that precisely what constitutes literacy has been a topic for discussion for many years. Some descriptions highlight the importance of reading, others place more emphasis on reading and writing, while still others include the socio-cultural, historical and political context of the learner.

2.2 A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE ON LITERACY SKILLS TEACHING

According to Street (2002) literacy is a phenomenon which is inseparable from the child's social context. Street (2002) interprets literacy as the manner in which people comprehend reading and writing skills taught. An ever-changing social context has an effect on teachers' approaches to literacy skills teaching (Street, 2002).

Storybook reading has received the most attention in the context of parent-child literacy activities that might enhance oral and written language skills (Dunning, Mason & Stewart, 1994; Scarborough & Dobrich, 1994; Bus, Van ljzendoorn & Pellegrini, 1995). While learners may learn oral-language skills such as vocabulary from listening to storybooks they may need direct instruction to learn print-specific skills such as recognising the letters of the alphabet.

Snow (1983) has supplied strong theoretical grounds for distinguishing between oral and written-language skills. She noted that oral-language skills are acquired by all learners to various degrees before formal schooling, but written-language skills are not necessarily acquired before formal schooling and require the use of print. Disagreeing with these views, various emergent-literacy researchers believe that oral and written-language skills are interrelated and develop at the same time, and therefore should be treated as a single construct (Teale & Sulzby, 1986; Teale, Hiebert & Chittenden, 1987; Mason & Stewart, 1990). Bus, Van ljzendoorn & Pellegrini (1995) suggest that learners learn how to use and understand the written language register before learning the mechanical skills of encoding and decoding printed information. According to Sulzby (1985), emergent reading scale suggests that American learners internalize knowledge about the written language register long before they turn into conventional readers.

More attention should be focused on the development of learners' speaking and listening skills because of their inherent value and because they are capable of

responding to and participating in high quality phonic work (Rose, 2005). The teaching of phonics should be taught carefully and within a balanced and varied language curriculum that ensures the full development of all four interdependent elements of language: speaking, listening, reading and writing (Whitehead, 2004).

Research conducted by a number of researchers found that fourth grade teachers used coaching as a teaching method to lead their learners into discussion and inquiry as they collectively constructed meaning in response to text. (Taylor, Pearson, Clark & Walpole, 2000; Allington & Johnston, 2002; Taylor, Pearson, Peterson & Rodriguez, 2003)

Studies by Taylor et al. (2003) found that effective teachers involved students in higher level responses that were linked to text as a component of what the researchers envisaged as a framework of instruction for enhancing cognitive involvement during reading lessons. In addition to higher level interactions, cognitive engagement has three additional practices: (a) teaching learners word recognition and comprehension strategies that they can utilise during reading, (b) rewarding active rather than passive learner response activities, and (c) coaching rather than just telling as the main interaction strategy (Pressley, Wharton-Mcdonald, Allington, Block, Morrow, Tracey, Brooks, Cronin, Nelson & Woo, 2001; Taylor et al., 2003).

Many scholars and policymakers argue that there is no relationship between learners from low income as well as other stigmatised groups and that literacy approaches are designed to accommodate the learners' abilities and learning styles (Hauser-Cram, Sirin, & Stipek, 2003). Research by Gill and Reynolds (1999) found that teacher expectations seem to be predominantly essential in the Foundation Phase. However, Kuklinski and Weinstein (2001) reported that teacher expectancies emphasised success variances to a greater extent both in the early grades as well as in higher grades. To this extent, Allington and Johnston (2002) and Shapiro and Solity (2008) proposed that a literacy teaching approach must be meaning-centred, and targeted to involve realistic conversations. This will ensure that literacy skills teaching promotes and develops learners' cognitive development.

In addition, some research studies found that teachers in high performing schools have moved from a teacher-centred approach to involving learners in activities comprising of deeper understandings (Langer, 2001; Pressley et al., 2001). McKeown and Gentilucci (2007) explain that an integration of top-down approach and bottom-up processing is referred to as an interactive approach, and is the main component for successful literacy teaching methodology, because both these processes are essential for literacy skills development.

A study by O'Sullivan (2004) also found that practically a reader frequently moves from one focus to another, adopting a top-down approach to guess possible meaning, then moving to the bottom-up approach to check whether that is actually

what has been intended. Research findings by Dutro and Moran (2003) revealed that a literacy approach which commences from general to specific is engaging, rich with meaning and focuses systematically on certain written structures. Literacy skills teaching and learning based on this approach allow learners to draw their own conclusions about oral knowledge and to apply those inferences to reading and writing activities (Taylor et al., 2003; Shapiro & Solity, 2008).

Different words are read in different ways, some words will be decoded, while others will be sight-read, especially words that cannot be decoded such as the word 'the', so a diverse learner population requires a wide range of literacy skills approaches (Hamayan, 1994). Similarly, Ediger (2001) recommends other strategies to facilitate language and literacy learning through various uses of printed material, creating more opportunities for extensive reading, setting objectives for oral, reading and writing activities and constant scaffolding of literacy learning. Literacy practices are both the actions people take as well as the ways in which they are understood and valued (Volk & De Acosta, 2003). These concepts reinforce individual people's perspective that literacy is socially constructed and situated in social practices (Volk & De Acosta, 2003).

On the other hand, August and Shanahan (2008) identified five essential components of literacy skills teaching programmes namely; phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary development and reading comprehension. There is no doubt nowadays that a balanced-literacy approach is best, including different methods for various reading purposes and engaging learners in language learning through meaningful reading activities of various books (Johnston & Watson, 2005; Wynne, 2005; Coltheart & Prior, 2006).

2.3 LITERACY SKILLS TEACHING AND THE CHALLENGES IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

Research done by scholars (Bloch, 2006; Lessing & De Witt, 2007; Mudzielwana, Joubert, Phatudi & Hartell, 2012; Spaull, 2013; Van Staden & Howie, 2014; Swanepoel, 2017) found that in most South African schools, literacy learning was done through chanting.

Chant learning makes complete sense when it is about oral performance, such as learning to sing in a choir, but it is more questionable when it is the main mode for learning to read and write (Prinsloo & Stein, 2004). The learning task becomes joint repetition of a sequence, not with any higher meaning or cognitive review in any other way. There is little space for developing any deeper awareness of how sounds and letters combine to make specific meaning, or any intention to reflect on these resources in any other way (Prinsloo & Stein, 2004).

Likewise, Hoadley (2008) and Reeves, Heugh, Prinsloo, Macdonald, Netshitangani, Alidou, Diedericks & Herbst (2008) found that the strong literacy teaching approach was based on reading aloud, the whole class chorusing text after the teacher. Teachers themselves were not in the habit of reading, they were located in profound communities of oral cultures (Macdonald, 2002; Pretorius & Machet 2004).

Bloch (2000) found that literacy learning was defined as formal learning, it was not seen as part of an informal, play-based curriculum, with the exception of reading stories and rhymes done mainly in English speaking contexts (Laugksch, 2000). In addition to the afore-mentioned perception on literacy learning, such understandings was compounded by the fact that there is constant scarcity of adequate resources for teaching (Neuman & Roskos, 1993; Bloch, 2000),

As a result, story reading and storytelling have been understood as extra rather than fundamental to early literacy development and most teachers have been trained to teach reading without using books at all (Bloch, 2000). The combination of factors outlined by Bloch (2000) and Kim (1999) had a detrimental effect on literacy learning and immensely contributed to keeping most young learners away from developing the kinds of understandings and positive attitudes towards print which were needed in the foundations for learning success (Bloch, 2005).

A study by Ballantyne, Sanderman, & Levy, (2008) highlight that teachers were reluctant to elaborate on learners' responses. Seemingly, it was obvious that teachers did not know how to teach literacy skills, or follow correct steps to develop learners' literacy skills and the scale of exposure to vocabulary (Reeves et al., 2008). Learners were struggling to read from left–to-right and to punctuate when reading and writing (National Research Council, 2000; Reeves et al., 2008).

Pretorius & Mampuru, (2007) explained that the South African Education system was plagued by the lack of teaching and learning resources, large classroom sizes, and limited time was spent on literacy tasks and teachers' unpreparedness to teach literacy skills were found to be discouraging. It was apparent that in both the African languages and English, little attention was given to literacy skills development in primary schools (Matjila & Pretorius (2004).

2.4 APPROACHES TO ENHANCE LITERACY TEACHING

Based on the literature review of approaches to literacy skills teaching in Grade 3 English First Additional Language (EFAL) classrooms, some strategies were identified and discussed. These strategies included shared reading, guided reading, reading aloud, vocabulary instruction as well as guided writing.

Gardner (2013) views vocabulary as the manner in which individuals communicate with other people and how well they can learn new words through interacting. Words

are considered to be the building blocks of communication, it enhances all areas namely speaking, listening, reading and writing (Gardner, 2013).

Silverman and Crandell (2010) explain that meaningful vocabulary teaching demand teachers to "read-aloud as it offer rich contexts for teaching new words to learners, and often the words introduced through reading-aloud of picture books are words that learners may not hear in their everyday environment" (Silverman & Crandell, 2010:320).

In addition, shared reading strategies help learners to focus on the concepts conveyed in different formats including print, text features and phonics as well as phrases in a paragraph. Several scholars point out that learners can benefit from listening to storytelling and book reading aloud because it is another way of encouraging EFAL learners to learn about words and language; develop listening skills and vocabulary knowledge (Ellis, Tanaka & Yamazaki, 1994; Meyer and Felton 1999; Isbell, Sobol, Lindauer & Lowrance, 2004; Barsade & Gibson, 2007).

Therefore, teaching literacy skills to EFAL learners demand that teachers use various strategies because of the diverse challenges that EFAL teachers are faced with. Apart from the literacy teaching strategies mentioned,, alternative strategies to the teaching of literacy skills are reflected below. The alternative strategies that are discussed below include; evidence-based, problem-based, play-based and reciprocal teaching strategies.

2.4.1 Evidence-based approach

Teaching literacy skills through evidence-based approach, provide opportunities for learners to engage in a dialogue and the teacher models listening and speaking skills in an additional language and provide feedback for learner's participation. Discussions limit factual questions and responses, because both learners and teachers need to think critically before an honest response or solving real problem.

According to Justice and Pullen, (2003:101), teachers need to engage learners in "meaningful literacy activities, yet providing regular, structured opportunities for teacher-directed, explicit exposure to key literacy concepts, because there must be an explicit-embedded balance means engaging learners throughout the day in child-centred, contextualized" (Justice & Pullen, 2003:101). Evidence-based approaches support learners with phonological challlenges because through shared book reading the teacher models reading with understanding through actions and facial expressions (Rack, Snowling & Olson, 1992; Wagner, Torgesen & Rashotte, 1994; Brady, 1997; Stanovich, 2000).

2.4.2 Problem-based learning

By ensuring that problems depict real life situations that learners could relate to, their interest could be maintained and their motivation could be enhanced, especially if they are required to make decisions and exercise judgement (Abdullah, 1998). The important thing is that the problems should be real life problems, not just information-gathering tasks and it must include a question or set of questions that are open-ended and which are likely to produce a variety of opinions. Accordingly, James (2006) perceives a problem-based teaching approach as a mechanism that shift facilitation responsibility from teachers to learners. Learners construct their own knowledge, their own learning. The approach creates independence in a controlled learning context. Problem-based learning shifts facilitation responsibility from teachers to learners as it allows learners to construct their own knowledge, to become responsible for their own learning, be more autonomous as well as to be able to transfer the skills learned in the classroom to their daily lives (James, 2006).

2.4.3 Play-based approach

According to Moyles (2002) language plays a major role in literacy skills development. Research by Wood and Attfield (2005) has proven that learning through play enhances learners's oral communication, their social, innovative and creative use of play material together with divergent thinking and problem-solving skills. Both Piaget and Vygotsky value symbolic play as an important place where chidren can use their voices to role play characters in a storybook using a range of different props that have functions in the real world (Piaget, 1962; Vygotsky, 1967; McCune-Nicolich, 1981; Pellegrini & Galda, 1982; Whitehead, 2009).

Play is central to learners's literacy learning because during play activities, learners think about things, events, people and share and develop their own ideas to extend their play (Frost, Wortham & Reifel, 2001). Thus, a play-based approach to literacy skills teaching is significant in relation to learners's higher order cognitive development, especially their flexible thinking and problem-solving skills (Frost, Wortham & Reifel, 2001). Despite the vast evidence of the contribution of play to early literacy development, there is a deep concern about current issues such as the loss of free play in schools in favour of teacher-directed instruction (Sutton-Smith, 1966; Frost, Wortham & Reifel, 2001).

2.4.4 Reciprocal teaching (RT)

Reciprocal teaching is a step-by-step approach to literacy skills teaching (Salehi & Vafakhah, 2013). This approach was originally developed by Palinscar and Brown, (1984) and Wolmarans (2016). During reading literacy, the teachers' role in the Foundation Phase is to introduce learners to the four key components of this strategy namely; predicting, clarifying, question generation and summarising to

increase learners' reading comprehension. (Palinscar & Brown, 1984; Wolmarans, 2016). The strategy is valuable as it is in a form of systematic training and can be used to enhance English First Additional (EFAL) learners' reading comprehension to become independent readers as it promotes a dialogue between teachers and learners (Ostovar-Namaghi & Shahhosseini, 2011; Salehi & Vafakhah, 2013; Wolmarans, 2016).

Furthermore, through cognitive dialogue, teachers can monitor discussions among learners and provide scaffolding through a shared language linked to the thinking strategies such as predicting, clarifying and question generation as well as summarising. Reciprocal teaching promotes cognitive dialogue in a reading process, the exchange of ideas occur before reading, during reading and after reading (McAllum, 2014; Meyer, 2010).

2.5 FACTORS INFLUENCING THE TEACHING OF LITERACY SKILLS

Factors relating to poor literacy skills teaching include the lack of suitable teaching material as well as overcrowded classrooms. A conducive and safe environment is essential for literacy skills teaching, particularly where learners are from diverse language backgrounds. Attempting to manage poor disciplined learners is time-consuming and contribute to poor literacy skills development in the limited time of the lesson (Smit, 2014).

According to (Smit, 2014) teaching literacy skills especially to EFAL learners may be a challenging task because diverse learners have different learning needs that will require teachers to understand each learner's learning style and challenges. The overcrowded classroom impacts negatively on literacy skills teaching. Teachers are forced to spend more time managing their diverse class discipline instead of supporting learners learning. (Smit, 2014; Meier, 2014).

According to O'Connor and Geiger (2009) effective literacy skills teaching in the Foundation Phase depends on various factors and most importantly, support from relevant stakeholders. Without adequate support from key contributors such as the local district, school management teams, school based support teams and parents, teachers feel overwhelmed with workload. As a result teachers have to carry the burden of teaching learners with language difficulties and they are expected to create miracles for those learners to allow them to achieve the best results (O'Connor & Geiger, 2009). At the same time Nkambule and Amsterdam (2018) expressed their concern by stating that educator support is inadequate in most state owned schools. In addition to these challenges, Grade 3 learners access their education in English as FAL whereas most of these learners are not from English speaking households (Pretorius & Naudé, 2002). According to Nel and Müller (2010) EFAL learners are faced with a double challenge, that of mastering literacy skills in

their mother tongue and being competent in English as the language of teaching and learning.

2.6 THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN FOSTERING LITERACY SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

According to Cooper and Greive (2009) the learners' poor literacy skills cause them to become poor thinkers, and therefore they lack strategies needed to think critically. At the same time, research findings by Spaull (2013) found that currently there is a national outcry about the increasing number of learners whose literacy levels are not on grade level, and that the low levels of reading abilities are reflected in Grade 12 learner performance. Hence, this study aims to investigate what approaches do teachers use to teach literacy skills. In the process of literacy skills development the ZPD "promotes learning processes through exchanges among learners, among learners and adults, or among adults; these processes are important ingredients in cultural differentiation and social progress" (Ferreira, 2014:27).

Thus, before learners can use the reciprocal strategy with any measure of success, they must be allowed enough time and learning space to practice the process (Wolmarans, 2016). With reciprocal teaching strategy, the teacher as the knowledgeable other, first demonstrates and shows English First Additional Language learners when and how to use the four thinking strategies namely; predicting, clarifying, questioning and summarising before reading, during reading and after reading. In the constructivist view of teaching language, teachers are "no longer seen as dispensers of information or walking tape recorder, but rather as a facilitator or manager of the learners' learning" (Crosby, 2000:338). I concur with Cosby (2000) when arguing that in addition to knowledge of approaches to literacy skills teaching, "subject-based knowledge" is essential to model the four thinking strategies in English as FAL (Crosby, 2000:338).

According to Wolmarans (2016) "teachers demonstrate to learners how to predict, clarify, ask questions", and how to summarise Wolmarans (2016:5). By so doing the teacher takes learners by hand on a step-by-step journey towards literacy skills development through reading with understanding (Ostovar-Namaghi & Shahhosseini, 2011; Wolmarans, 2016). Figure 1 below indicates how teachers scaffold literacy skills learning through reading, using the four thinking strategies of reciprocal teaching.

Predict	Read	Clarify	Ask Questions and Discuss	Sum up
I predict …… (title/ subheading/ chapter) will be about …… Would anyone like to add to my prediction or ask any questions?	Let's read to check the prediction/s and find out more.	Is there anything you need to clarify, such as tricky words, phrases or ideas?	What did we learn? What else are you wondering about?	….. (Title/sub heading/ chapter) was about …… Would anyone like to add to my summary?

Figure 1: The illustration of the four thinking strategies of reciprocal teaching

Furthermore, Blatchford, Baines, Rubie-Davies, Bassett & Chowne, (2006), Doolittle and Hicks (2003), Mercer and Littleton (2007) and Smidt, (2013) posit that through discussion, reflection as well as sharing of ideas amongst peers, learners can create their own knowledge with minimal and corrective intervention from their teachers.

2.6.1 Making predictions before, during and after reading

Prediction during the reading process develops the learners' language because learners are engaged in guessing activities to tell what they think will happen next in the story (Wolmarans, 2016). Though, learners are the ones predicting, they can never do that independently, the teacher scaffold their predictions through the use of clues such as titles, the front cover of the book to be read, headings and pictures that appear in the text (Doolittle, Hicks, Triplett, Nichols, & Young, 2006; Wolmarans, 2016).

Myers (2005) believes that for effective predictions, learners' prior knowledge is important, because learners use previous knowledge about the topic to share ideas, opinions as well as what they think about the new text. Teachers allow learners to predict before reading, during reading and after reading the story, the aim is to promote the learners' speaking, reading, writing as well as thinking skills (Gill, 2008). Learners predict what the text is about before reading and then check their prediction during reading (Myers, 2005). During the prediction phase learners combine their

own prior knowledge with what they have gathered from the text (Doolittle et al., 2006).

2.6.2 The use of questions to foster thinking, reasoning and speaking skills

According to Wolmarans (2016) reciprocal teaching strategy enables both teachers and learners to exchange roles, ask questions, during and after reading, to search deeper into the content of the text. Questioning as a strategy used in reciprocal teaching plays a key role in self-monitoring of learning. During questioning session learners ask themselves questions such as, *"Does this make sense*?" (Wolmarans, 2016:5), this is to verify their own understanding. The focus is on the main idea of the text and the questions help learners to find out about the author's intentions or about the content of the text read (Wolmarans, 2016). Questioning can be used as a thinking strategy to stimulate learners' prior knowledge and to constantly clarify, promote the learners' thinking and reasoning as well as the speaking (Vick, 2016). Teachers can create questions from stories that accommodate learners' interests and likes, making teaching more fun and stimulating (Porras González, 2010).

2.6.3 The use of clarifying to improve speaking and comprehension skills

Research findings by Stricklin (2011) revealed that "clarifying words and ideas helps learners to make connections in the text rather than skipping unknown words" (Stricklin, 2011:620). Additionally, after reading the text, learners use metacognitive strategies by clarifying confusing parts of the text that doesn't make sense (Wolmarans, 2016). The teacher provides direct instruction and encourages group work (Vick, 2016). In the second phase the teacher becomes the expert scaffolder (Porras González, 2010; Stricklin, 2011; Vick, 2016). The learners engage with the text by completing a worksheet in a small group, using cue cards and taking turns to ask questions. Gradually, the teacher's support is reduced; learners can now work on an independent level (Wolmarans, 2016).

2.6.4 Promoting creative thinking and speaking through summarising

Vygotsky's zone of proximal development regard teachers as the knowledgeable others, thus during reciprocal teaching, the teacher facilitates creative thinking and speaking through summarising the text read. The teacher engages learners in a discussion, inspiring them to creatively think through asking questions. These discussions nurture literacy skills development as well as cognition (Doolittle et al., 2006). Additionally, Weinstein, Husman & Dierking (2000) suggest that reciprocal thinking strategies provide opportunities for "learners to cognitively manipulate information through repetition, elaboration, or reorganization of the material in such a way that the new information is able to be stored in the learner's associative network and accessed for retrieval" (Weinstein, Husman & Dierking 2000:729). The use of reciprocal teaching strategy guarantees meaningful dialogues as capable peers are able to help the weaker peers through interpretations and reasons ascribed to

comments made and it ensures cooperative learning between the teacher and students" (Rosenshine & Meister, 1994:481).

Similarly, Verenikina, (2008) comments that teaching in the ZPD includes the "resources by which the educator meets the level of the child's understanding and leads the child to a higher, culturally mediated level of development" (Verenikina, 2008:168).

> "The teacher models and explains, relinquishing part of the task to novices only at the level each one is capable of negotiating at any one time. Increasingly, as the novice becomes more competent, the teacher increases her demands, requiring participation at a slightly more challenging level" Palinscar and Brown (1984:13).

The teacher scaffolds learning through summarizing, modelled as an activity of self-review; learners engage in summarising activity, briefly interpreting the text in their own words indicating advanced comprehension skills (Doolittle et al., 2006). As soon as there are indications that EFAL learners have not reached adequate synopsis, it does not mean that learners do not want to perform a specific task, rather it means that both learners and the teacher must re-read the text to collaborate and negotiate meaning or re-visiting difficult parts of the text is necessary (Palinscar & Brown, 1984; Doolittle et al., 2006, Porras González, 2010).

Likewise, questioning as a thinking strategy must not be performed independent of other literacy teaching strategies (Doolittle et al., 2006). The teacher can only clarify if he or she realises that learners were confused, or either the text was not clear or the learner's interpretation of the text was out of the context (Doolittle et al., 2006; McAllum, 2014).

2.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Vygotsky's theory of language development (zone of proximal development) outlines this research study. Vygotsky's proposition became known as the zone of proximal development (Weegar & Pacis, 2012). Linked to this, are Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism and Piaget's cognitive theory of language learning (Weegar & Pacis, 2012).

The theoretical framework supporting this study is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Vygotsky's key proposition was that learners' cognitive development is influenced most by interaction with people, especially their parents, other learners, teachers, and mentors in the child's social environment (Weegar and Pacis, 2012; Kivunja, 2014). The social constructivism theory is linked to Piaget's assumptions about how learners learn, although Vygotsky placed more emphasis on the social context of learning. The social constructivism paradigm was developed by cognitivist theorists, who promoted the understanding that learning was a social

experience rather than an individual one (Donato, 1994; Weegar & Pacis, 2012; Kivunja, 2014). Vygotsky defines ZPD as:

> "the distance between actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers embraces this concept" Vygotsky (1978:86).

Learning activities in constructivist settings are characterised by active engagement, inquiry, problem solving, and collaboration with others. Teaching literacy skills can be done in various ways, for example, the reciprocal teaching approach allows teachers to group learners to enhance literacy skills development. "The teacher is a guide, facilitator, and co-explorer who encourages learners to question, challenge, and formulate their own ideas, opinions, and conclusions" (Weegar & Pacis, 2012). Reciprocal teaching comprises of "four main strategies: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing" (Ahmadi & Gilakjani, 2012). In order to prepare learners for their future roles in life, the cognitive and metacognitive reading skills are explicitly taught to English First Additional Language (EFAL) learners (Rowe, 2005). Similar thoughts were shared by Pentimonti and Justice (2010); Skinner, Furrer, Marchand & Kindermann (2008); and Schmitz (2008), highlighting that literacy skills awareness in the Foundation Phase is the stepping stone towards further academic achievements.

The ability to read with understanding and write well, contribute greatly to academic success. Teachers who do not teach effective literacy skills to their learners are not preparing them for their future (Adams, 2006; Pentimonti & Justice, 2010; Schmitz, 2008).

This study investigates approaches that teachers use to teach literacy skills to Grade 3 learners in English as FAL. The study draws on Vygotsky's ZPD, seeking to identify literacy instruction that uses the competence of Grade 3 teachers as the guide for learners' participation in an activity (De Vries, 2000). The diagram below illustrates the teacher-learner relationship and the intervention into the learner's zone of proximal development.
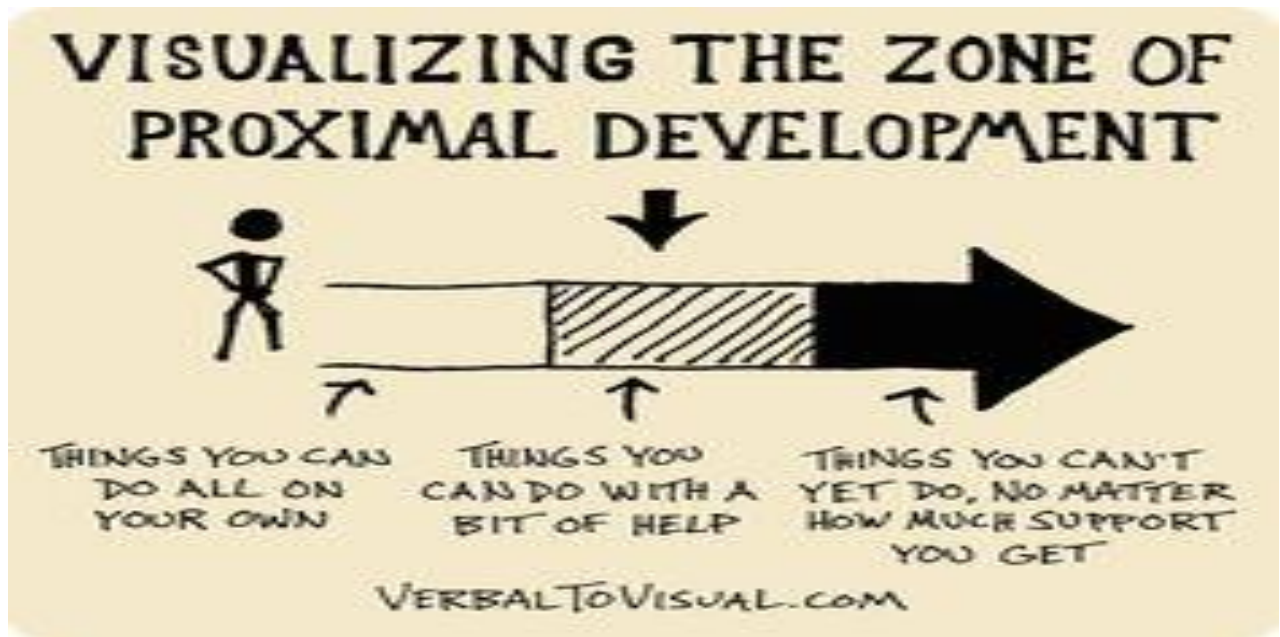
Figure 2: Visualising teacher-child relationship and the intevention into the learner's ZPD

2.7.1 Lev Vygotsky's Social constructivism

According to Vygotsky (1980) from the very first days of the child's growth, meaning is constructed and normally altered through the prism of the child's environment (McAllum, 2014). At the same time McAllum (2014) claims that through dialogue the child is able to shape current knowledge to construct new ideas and understanding. Research revealed that literacy skills teaching takes place in a real life context, that is, in the classroom, during discussions amongst peers and with the teacher, at home, during parent-child talking and story reading as well as when learners engage in the question and answer session during the reading processes, be it at home or at school (Cole & Wertsch, 1996; Badger & White, 2000; Gibbons, 2002; Hyland, 2003; Lin, 2006; McAllum, 2014; Kufakunesu & Chinyoka, 2017). Initially the teacher models, paraphrases and questions, then the understanding of the text is co-constructed through discussion, with each learner using the aforementioned theory to guide interactions (Teale & Sulzby,1986; McAllum, 2014).

Reciprocal teaching was developed as an instructional practice from research that originally targeted the monitoring of text and created models to extract meaning from text (Choo, Eng & Ahmad, 2011). It is closely aligned with the models of learning created and described by Vygotsky and with social constructivism (Kozulin, 1998). Vygotsky (1978) linked dialogue and metacognition to explain his theory of how an individual develops an understanding of concepts. He used the model of a Zone of Proximal Development to create a mental picture of how the theory could be depicted. In this zone the learner would enter into dialogue with another individual supporting his learning efforts.

Through dialogue the learner is able to mentally shape current knowledge (schemas) to construct new ideas and understanding. The process is supported by scaffolding which provides timely and needs-based support, allowing the learner to progress from one space of understanding to another across the zone of proximal development. Dialogue happens in reciprocal conversations and takes place in small groups of learners with teacher and learners taking turns at leading the discussion. Initially the expert (teacher) leads the process through explanations and questions, then the learners gradually assume the roles as dialogue leaders. Understanding of the text is jointly constructed through discussion, with each learner using prescribed thinking strategies such as predicting, questioning, clarifying and summarising (Kozulin, 1998). Figure 3 illustrates Vygotsky's process of language acquisition.
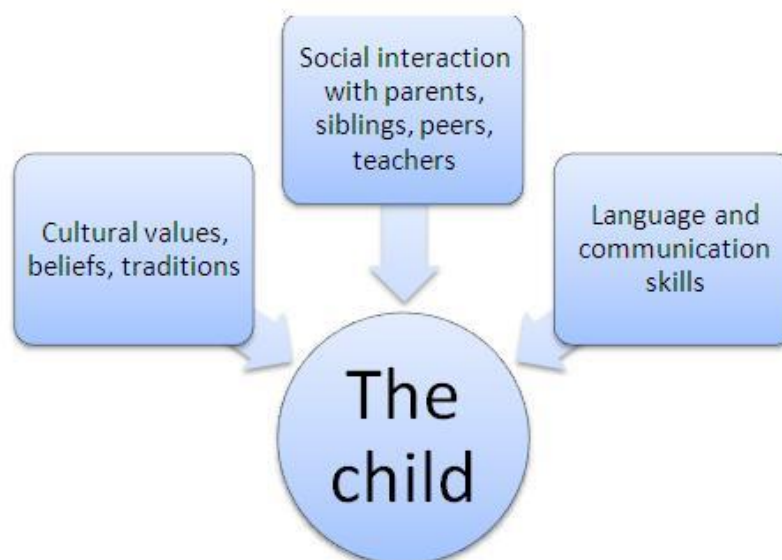
Figure 3: The process of language acquisition

2.7.2 Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory

According to Vygotsky, language acquisition arises as a result of interaction between two different processes, that is through the biological and the socio-cultural roots (Lantolf, 1994). Research findings by Lantolf (1994) indicate that language develops as soon as learners initiate the integration of symbols as a back up means of mediation into their physical and mental activity. Learners's literacy skills are promoted through adult-child interaction, or siblling-child interaction and the child's self-directed explorations of speaking, reading and written language (Teale, Paciga & Hoffman, 2007). Furthermore, language development and literacy skills learning are basically known to be societal processes (Szwed, 1981; Snow, 1983; Scribner, 1984; Bus, Van Ijzendoorn & Pellegrini, 1995; Pikulski & Chard, 2005). However, the anthropological, psychological and language research highlight that even though

language acquisition consistently involves learners' interaction with print and oral language, there are more than one way to be literate, therefore, the manner in which literacy enters into the social life of a child affects how it is integrated into the child's mental life (Scribner & Cole, 1981; Teale, Paciga & Hoffman, 2007).

2.8 THEORIES OF LANGUAGE ACQUISITION – PIAGET'S PERSPECTIVE

2.8.1 The cognitive theory

The cognitive theory of language acquisition was developed by Jean Piaget. According to (Piaget 1971), children's thinking is accompanied by Piaget's four stages of cognitive development, the stages are: sensory-motor stage, pre-operational stage, concrete-operational stage as well as the formal operational stage (Piaget, 1971). For the purpose of this study, the focus is on the concrete-operational stage, wherein learners' thinking skills are supported by "concrete, tangible objects" (Grassian & Kaplowitz, 2001:33).

The concrete operational stage is perceived as a field in which learners move from being biased to being objective in decision making (Pawlowski, Badzinski & Mitchell, 1998). As Ferreira (2014) explained, with Piaget's cognitive theory, "the cognitive structure tends to preserve itself, whatever the context in which it is found because learners' responses vary according to levels of schooling" (Ferreira, 2014:32-33). Both Piaget and Vygotsky agreed on the "the active role of humans in the construction of knowledge" (Ferreira, 2014:24).

Piaget, like Vygotsky, believed that language acquisition needed to be facilitated by a more knowledgeable other (Pawlowski, Badzinski & Mitchell, 1998). During the concrete operational stage learners tend to become more objective in their decision making (Pawlowski, Badzinski & Mitchell, 1998; Muñoz, 2007; Kufakunesu & Chinyoka, 2017) and become less biased. According to the Curriculum and Policy Statement (CAPS) teaching literacy skills in English as First Additional Language demand that teachers ensure that every child is proficient in English because it will be the language used to teach all subjects from Grade 4 onwards (DBE, 2011).

In the current study, Grade 3 teachers' approaches to literacy skills teaching to EFAL learners are investigated. This means that by the time Grade 3 learners transit to Grade 4, they are expected to have a full understanding of spoken and written English language.

2.9 CONCLUSION

The literature review explained the importance of the principles of integration to listening, speaking and writing skills in the teaching of reading in the Grade 3 classroom to EFAL learners. Teaching, listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in isolation can create meaningless learning. It is of vital significance that teachers

need to consider integrating these skills during reading lessons. Through integration the development of EFAL literacy skills can be achieved with relative ease. The use of different strategies and approaches such as scaffolding, teaching in the ZPD and considering Bloom's taxonomy when teaching and assessing reading will ensure that the different learning styles of learners are accommodated. The different approaches to teaching literacy skills will definitely produce learners who are confident and capable of reading and writing English in an acceptable manner in Grade 4.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 2, I reviewed literature on the various approaches teachers could use to improve the teaching of literacy skills to learners. In this chapter, I will explain the paradigmatic perspectives of the study and explain the research design I chose. The research design is very important to a research project, as it provides the strategy and framework of how the research would progress (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Creswell, 2014; Mouton, 2001). In this chapter, I will describe and discuss the data collection strategies I used to gather data, as well as the analysis techniques I employed. Trustworthiness and ethical considerations are also discussed in the chapter.

I chose a qualitative research paradigm because data collection was done through observation and interviews, listening to participants' responses during the process of individual interviews. The reason for choosing qualitative research was to understand the teaching of literacy skills by investigating teachers' practices, perspectives, attitudes as well as behaviour within the context of English First Additional Language (EFAL) instruction (Kaplan & Maxwell, 2005). A qualitative research was conducted in sampled schools and data collected was in the form of words rather than numbers (Kaplan & Maxwell, 2005). This chapter was concluded with a detailed discussion about ethical consideration in my research.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Kothari (2004) a "methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem" (Kothari, 2004:8). It may be understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically (Kothari, 2004). Additionally, Kothari (2004) suggests that researchers need to be well-informed about the process and procedures for conducting research as it will assist in assessing research findings with ease.

Methods refer to techniques for collecting data, according to Carter and Little (2007), or the processes and ways to conduct a research project (Lewis, 2015). Methods can be thought of as research action. In the simplest terms, methodology justifies method, which produces data and analyses. Knowledge is created from data and analyses. Epistemology modifies methodology and justifies the knowledge produced (Carter & Little, 2007).

3.2.1 Research paradigm

A paradigm is another way of investigating a phenomenon, an understanding of what participants view as reality or as truth (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2002; Mustafa, 2011). At the same time Nieuwenhuis (2007) and Oppong, Asante and Kumaku

(2014) outline a paradigm as expectations or opinions about central features of the truth which gives rise to a specific world-view and carry on to enlighten us that these assumptions contain our views about reality (ontology) and epistemology, as well as methodologies. The study is guided by the model of the researcher which implies how the researcher perceives the world, reason about it and the opinions he or she should deliberate. Similarly, Denzin, Lincoln and Giardina (2006) state that an inquiry is completed according to how the researcher perceives the world, contemplates and the insights that should be studied (Denzin, Lincoln and Giardina, 2006).

An interpretivist research is also named as the constructivist paradigm as it is entrenched in the fact that realities are multiple and socially constructed (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). In this study, I employed an interpretivist paradigm to pursue and understand a phenomenon of interest through participants' eyes and to analyse the meanings assigned to the phenomenon by the participating teachers (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). Furthermore, Nieuwenhuis (2007) argued that there is a connection between the researcher's beliefs and the research, as a Grade 3 teacher of EFAL learners, the study contributed to the manner in which I asked questions, made inferences as well as reach conclusions that would be made in the long term.

Investigating approaches to literacy skills teaching helped me to gain an in-depth understanding of how different teachers teach literacy skills, as well as integrating listening, speaking and writing with a reading lesson in English as FAL. Jaladanki and Bhattacharya (2015) and Mackenzie and Knipe (2006) explained that without nominating a paradigm as the first step, there is no basis for subsequent choices regarding methodology, methods, literature or research design. This study investigated the teachers' personal meanings of their experiences directed toward the topic under study (Lietz & Zayas, 2010).

This study focused on the approaches used by teachers to teach literacy skills to EFAL learners in Grade 3. This has generated findings beyond the common scientific knowledge (Lietz & Zayas, 2010). The interpretivist paradigm allowed me to be part of the participants' lived experiences (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2002). Table1 below, revealed Nieuwenhuis' (2007) assumptions and the manner in which interpretivists viewed these expectations as well as how they featured in my study. Although, the interpretive paradigm required me to be part of the participants from the inside, I intended to be unbiased in all my research efforts. Throughout the research study, participants were treated fairly (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2002).

Table 1: Expectations of an interpretivist view and the application thereof to this study (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:59-60)

Expectations of an interpretivist view	How it features in this study
"Human life can only be understood from within", therefore we study the subjective experiences and interpretation with their social environment.	Through semi-structured individual interviews, I generated opportunities for participants to share their skills and insights of the influence of good approaches to literacy skills teaching on day-to-day literacy activities.
"Social life is a distinctively human product" and the meaning people give to a certain phenomenon is linked to the unique context thereof.	The contexts in which the phenomenon of teachers' approaches to literacy skills teaching is entrenched, play a key role in how it is understood. Both the learner's home and Grade R environment where emergent literacy skills need to be developed as well as the Grade 1-3 classroom atmosphere where integration of literacy skills need to be advanced are essential. This aligns with the theoretical framework of Vygotsky.
"The human mind is the purposive source or origin of meaning." Exploring the complexity of a phenomenon, leads to a better understanding of the meaning it has for people.	Through an in-depth literature study, the intricacy of literacy skills teaching was exposed, allowing me to have a more holistic opinion and a clearer understanding of the challenges faced by Grade 3 EFAL teachers.
"Human behaviour is affected by knowledge of the social world." Understanding more about reality enriches our conceptual framework and provides a link between the concrete world and the abstract theory.	The one-on-one interaction provided me with opportunities to meet my participants and discuss with them, resulting in a better understanding of the matter under investigation and bringing the abstract part of the study to life.
"The social world does not 'exist' independently of human knowledge." Our prior knowledge, values, beliefs and intuition influence the way we understand reality.	My prior teaching experience and the knowledge I gained through reading about various approaches to literacy skills teaching, provided the lens through which I included my own investigation on the teaching of literacy skills and guides my understanding of the matter.

By looking at teachers' multiple viewpoints of the same situation, I made sense of individual teacher's approaches and shared their experiences through interactions on what their teaching approaches are like from an insider's perception. It is the choice of paradigm that sets down the intent, motivation and expectations for the

research and influences the way knowledge is studied and interpreted. Without nominating a paradigm as the first step, there is no basis for subsequent choices regarding methodology, methods, literature or research design (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006).

Furthermore, Nieuwenhuis (2007) argued that the power of an interpretivist viewpoint is in the rich understanding it brings to the phenomenon being studied. However, the results of the study was restricted to the specific research context and cannot be generalised beyond the boundaries of the study. This study investigated the teachers' personal meanings of their experiences directed toward the topic under study (Lietz & Zayas, 2010).

3.2.2 Approach

This study had qualitatively investigated the approach that teachers used to teach literacy skills and provided suggestions on how teachers could integrate literacy skills when teaching reading among Grade 3 learners in English as FAL. A qualitative approach is to explore and interpret the meaning that participants assign to the topic being studied (Creswell, 2014). I chose a qualitative research approach because this study relies on participants' views and experiences and the participants were allowed to respond to open-ended questions freely. Creswell (2014) states that qualitative researchers conduct studies because they want to understand the contexts in which participants address issues of concern. This indicates that researchers may not separate what participants say from the context where issues of concerns are happening.

This research study is on approaches to the teaching of literacy skills to English First Additional Language (EFAL) learners in Grade 3. It demonstrated the variety of perspectives of the participants' knowledge and understanding of the practice (Flick, 2014). A qualitative research approach allowed the researcher to analyse interactions about EFAL teaching practices in Grade 3 classrooms (Flick, 2014). The interrelations were described in the concrete context of the case and explained in relation to it. Qualitative research takes into account that participants' views and practices in the field are different, because of different personal perspectives as well as social backgrounds linked to individual Grade 3 teachers (Barbour & Kitzinger, 1998). Thus, a qualitative research approach was relevant to this study as it allowed me to create a general picture of participants' practices, their genuine thoughts and performances.

3.2.3 Type of research

Case study design was employed as the research methodology because of the uniqueness and complexity of approaches to literacy skills teaching in the Grade 3 EFAL learning context, which was regarded as highly relevant to the phenomenon

under study (Yin, 2003; Luo & Wang, 2003). Data was collected from complete observations and interviews using a semi-structured questionnaire and through document analysis. This approach allowed me to gain an in-depth view and understanding of the phenomenon being studied. I was able to understand how the design features and implementation of early literacy skills and teaching approaches enhanced learners' speaking, reading and writing skills in the EFAL learning environment (Luo & Wang, 2003; Yin, 2003; Xu, Luo, Carroll & Rosson, 2011).

I chose a case study design because the focus of the study was to "respond to the 'how' and 'why' questions" (Baxter & Jack, 2008:545). Through a case study research I wanted to cover the contextual conditions linked to literacy instruction in Grade 3 EFAL classrooms, because I believed that they were relevant to the phenomenon under study (Baxter & Jack, 2008). In evaluating and unfolding my data, it was possible for me to generate a comprehensive picture of the effect of approaches and good practices to literacy skills teaching on the daily events in Grade 3 EFAL classrooms. According to Nieuwenhuis (2007), case study research gives a voice to those who may be powerless to do so. I strongly believe that Grade 3 learners who entered Grade 4 with poor ability to express themselves, to write and read with understanding any text written in the language of learning and teaching (English) experienced a lot of trauma. Figure 4 below describe a composite of cases with deep-rooted units of analysis
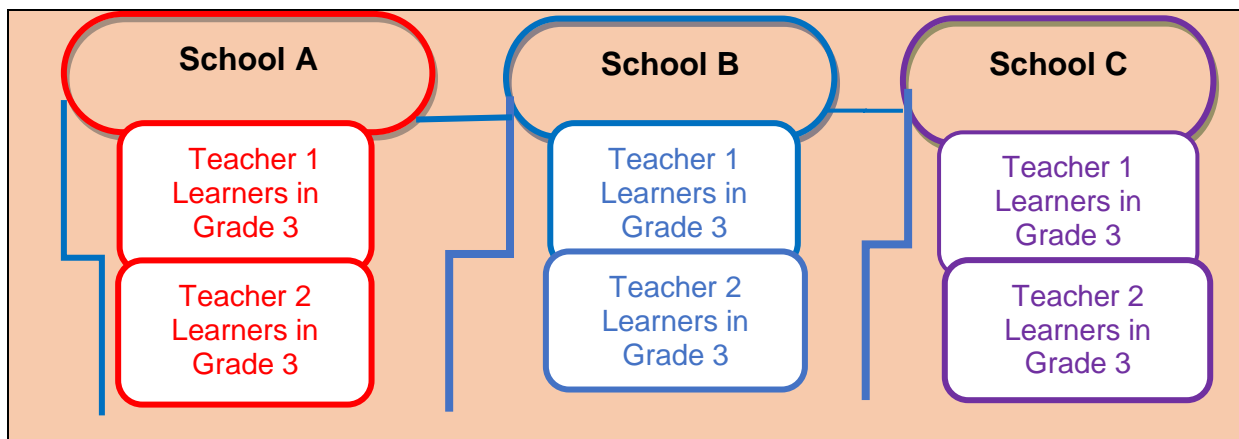
Figure 4: Multiple cases with embedded units of analysis

To generate a holistic understanding of the cases, I sampled three primary schools, amongst the three, two of them were state primary schools and the third school was an independent (private) school. All three schools were sampled based on good teaching practices and approaches used to teach literacy skills to Grade 3 EFAL learners (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2002; Abma and Stake, 2014; Creswell, 2014). The three schools were based in Gauteng province.

3.3 RESEARCH METHODS

3.3.1 The role of the researcher

According to Maree and Van der Westhuizen (2007) qualitative researchers form a collaborative partnership with participants in order to collect data, analyse and come to a better understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Furthermore, Maree and Van der Westhuizen (2007) emphasised that researchers need to observe, ask questions, probe and interpret what they see and hear in order to fully understand the intricacy of the results. The following functions apply to this study, namely; facilitating individual semi-structured interviews, observations, analysis and interpretation of data.

Observation is a complex research method because it often requires the researcher to play a number of roles and to use a number of techniques, including his or her five senses, to collect data. In addition, despite the level of involvement with the study group, the researcher must always remember his or her primary role as a researcher and remain detached enough to collect and analyse data relevant to the problem under investigation. Gorman, Clayton, Shep & Clayton (2005) were of the opinion that observations encompassed the systematic recording of visible phenomena or behaviour in a natural setting. The researcher can assume several positions while collecting data as an observer. The investigator can move from being a member of the group being observed, to being a bystander (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In this study I assumed the role of a complete observer, my role was to listen and observe the behaviour of participants. Table 2 summarised the relationship between the observer and the observed as well as advantages and disadvantages.

Table 2: The relationship between observer and the observed as well as advantages

Data collection type	Options within types	Advantages	Limitation to the type	Data collection method in this study
Observations	Complete participant - researcher conceals role.	Researcher has first-hand experience with participant	Researcher may be seen as intrusive.	
	Observer as participant- role of the researcher is unknown.	Researcher can record information as it occurs	Private information may be observed which the researcher cannot report	
	Complete observer- researcher observes without participating.	Useful in exploring topics that may be uncomfortable for participants to discuss	Certain participants (e.g. learners) may present special problems in gaining rapport.	Complete observer – though present does not interact with participants; I am completely detached from the group my role is to listen and observe,
	Participant as observer- observation role secondary. to participant role	Unusual aspects can be noticed during observation	Researcher may not have good attending and observing skills.	

3.3.2 Participants and research sites

Qualitative researchers select individuals and sites for their studies as they can purposefully enlighten an understanding of the research problem in the study

(Creswell & Clark, 2017). Therefore the general guideline for sample size in qualitative research was not based on the number or sites or individuals, yet it was to gather extensive detail about each individual case (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2008).

Similarly, Merriam (1998) explained that purposive sampling creates the criteria that matches the sample. At the same time, Nieuwenhuis (2007) mentioned that purposive sampling means that participants were selected according to the research question. In this study, I used purposive sampling, by selecting reputable schools and teachers with more than five years teaching experience.

I sampled three primary schools, amongst those, two were state primary schools and the third school was an independent (private) school. All three schools were situated in the Gauteng Province. Most Grade 3 learners in the sampled schools were from diverse language backgrounds and cultures, as a result, parents preferred English to be the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) from Grade 1. Since most learners had a basic knowledge of English in Grade 3, the focus was more on the approaches teachers use to integrate listening, speaking and writing when teaching reading lessons (Zainal, 2007).

Participants in the sampled schools were recommended by the school principals and Foundation Phase Heads of Departments. Furthermore, teachers were willing to share their experiences and good practices with regard to different approaches to the teaching of literacy skills in EFAL lessons. The quality of teaching in all three schools as well as academic results were good. Purposive sampling was used because I wanted to gain in-depth understanding of a specific context based on a certain criterion.

Patton, Sawicki and Clark (2015) are of the opinion that purposive sampling depends on selecting information-rich cases from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the study. Accordingly, Patton, Sawicki and Clark (2015), argued that information-rich cases yield insights and in-depth understanding. The above sampled criteria were carefully considered to provide rich information on how teachers approached the integration of literacy skills (Maree, 2012). The sample was small, yet not randomly chosen and the results cannot be generalized (Nieuwenhuis, 2007; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Participants (Grade 3 teachers) and parents of Grade 3 learners signed consent letters (see Appendix B and Appendix C) giving me permission to conduct a research study and observe teachers in Grade 3 classrooms in the presence of the learners. The school principals also signed letters of consent (see Appendix A**),** allowing me conduct a study in the school. Data was collected through individual semi-structured interviews, complete observations and document analysis. Grade 3 teachers were observed teaching literacy skills during a reading period. The lesson was presented in English as FAL.

3.3.3 Profile of sampled schools

School A was an independent (private) school surrounded by brick houses and the school previously enrolled English speaking learners. Most parents in School A were employed by the municipality, South African Police Service, the Department of Education as well as the Department of Health. The school's Annual National Assessments (ANA) results as well as the results from the common district papers were good. Thus, most parents preferred to send their learners to the school.

Due to a high influx of people coming to urban areas for employment purposes, School B was surrounded by informal settlement houses. The school was in a low socio-economic residential area. As a result, most learners in the school were from low-income households. This was regarded as one of the most challenging factors to literacy skills teaching. Though the school's building had a mixture of brick and corrugated iron classrooms, it had adequate infrastructure as well as good teaching materials. This made the school's academic results outstanding.

School C was surrounded by informal settlement households. The school had a feeding scheme and some of the learners' transport was funded by the state. Though some learners walked to school daily, others were transported to school by private owned mini buses. The school has good literacy teaching aids. Though teachers were not English speakers, they had a good command of English. Based on the outstanding results from the District common papers, the official from the local District recommended the school. As a result, the quality of teaching in School C attracted learners from nearby areas. The main focus of this study was to investigate the characteristics and uniqueness of a particular case rather than using the case 'instrumentally' to understand an issue or theory (Stake, 2000). I used a case study to discover and understand the uniqueness of each participant's approach to the literacy teaching.

3.3.4 Data collection

3.3.4.1 Semi-structured individual interviews

Data for this study was collected using observation, semi-structured individual interviews, and document analysis. Semi- structured interviews were suitable for a qualitative study because participants were able to focus on what they thought was most relevant to the question, and they responded in their broadest set of perspectives. Semi-structured interviews provided a more conversational style of interview (Creswell & Clark, 2017). To record all my observations, I used field notes. Classroom observations were documented using an observation checklist, my reflections were recorded on the field notes. According to Maree (2012), the soundness of qualitative research can be enriched by collective sources of validation. Data collection commenced with complete observations, so that I can be

able to ask teachers questions about why such teaching methods were used during observations prior to interviews, also, to compare teaching approaches to what was said during individual interviews.

I prepared an interview schedule prior to the interview with a set of open-ended questions in a particular order. The open-ended questions enabled participants to freely share and express their ideas, views, beliefs and opinions about the teaching techniques to be used when integrating listening, speaking and writing during the teaching of reading in Grade 3. The individual interviews were conducted in Grade 3 classrooms after school. The classroom was a noise-free atmosphere, without any disturbances. It was important for me to maintain the role of good interviewer and careful listener but at the same time I remained as neutral as possible by not revealing my emotions, feelings and opinions in any way that was likely to influence the participants' views (Mukherji, 2010). I was neutral with reference to the knowledge expressed by each participating teacher (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The research questions were essential to understand the selection of the approach and teachers' reasons for using specific approaches.

3.3.4.2 Data analysis

Qualitative research seeks to gain rich data, the use of multiple data sources provide thick and rich descriptive data. Due to dense and rich data, I had to go through all the collected data (Creswell & Clark, 2017). To ensure the data is appropriately analysed and interpreted the researcher used the method proposed by Creswell (2014) as follows: read through all the data; divide the text into segments of information; label the information with codes; reduce the overlap and redundancy of codes; and collapse the codes into themes.

In an attempt to understand how teachers approached the teaching of literacy skills I also looked into Grade 3 English lesson plans, the English First Additional Language (EFAL) annual teaching plans (ATPs) and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy (CAPS) for First Additional Language together with the teachers' curriculum management files. With document analysis, I have gained in-depth understanding on how teachers document their strategies for the teaching of literacy skills or whether there was a correspondence between the language curriculum policy and the teachers' documents. In the teachers' lesson plan I wanted to confirm the link between curriculum planning and literacy teaching approaches. Prior to classroom observation, I asked teachers to provide me with documents relevant to the lesson. Table 3 provides an overview of documents and sources wherein documents were collected for data analysis.

Table 3: Documents used for data collection

Documents	Source	Collected from
Policy documents – CAPS (English First Additional Language - EFAL)	Department of Basic Education	School A, B and C
Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs)	District office	School A, B and C
EFAL lesson plans	Ready-made lesson plans from the District	PA1 and PA2
	Self-made lesson plans (Participant 1 and 2)	PB1 and PB2
	Self-made lesson plans from the District	PC1 and PC2

Table 3 indicates that in School B and School C teachers work together to plan and prepare their own lesson plans. As a result, their lesson plans were the same. I collected three copies of lesson plans, between the two lesson plans, one was a ready-made lesson plan which I got from PC2 and one copy was collected from PA1 and the third copy was from School B. I could not collect a total number of six lesson plans because in PB1 and PB2 lesson plans were the same. The same thing applied to PC1 and PC2. In School B and School C the lesson plans were the same as teachers worked together to prepare lesson plans. Thus, the total number of copies of lesson plans were three. The document analysis was based on the three copies of lesson plans. To analyse data collected through individual semi-structured interviews, I had to read through the interview transcripts line by line. I also read through the notes from completed observations more than once.

To identify key issues and interesting aspects I used colour coded pens to separate participants' facts. I combined text into small categories of data. I developed code labels from different sources. In the coding process I gave a full explanation of the participants and the classrooms where the teaching of literacy skills in English as FAL took place. Creswell (2013): posits that, "The process of coding involves aggregating the text data into small categories of information, seeking evidence for the code from different data bases being used in the study" (Creswell, 2013:184).

Codes were explained using the actual words of participants, to best signify data that is surprising, interesting or unexpected. Then from coding I created smaller controllable themes, with sub-themes from the categories. Here I was looking for views and opinions about individual participant's experiences of approaches to literacy teaching.

Lastly, themes comprising of data from completed observations, interview transcriptions and notes from completed observations were analysed, and the results

(presented in Chapter 4) matched with data gathered from reviewed literature in Chapter 2. With analysis the unique characteristics and structure of the data were uncovered so that it could be described, explained and interpreted to make sense of the data (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2002). In analysing data, I have handled data with confidentiality and protected participants' privacy (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative data analysis identified contributions that re-appeared in each of the individual interviews. Research findings by Braunschweig, Gerhards, Kirschfink, Martyn, Bock, Fischer, Hartmann, Hartmann, Hilger & Jocksch (1988) suggested that content analysis begins with a comparison of the words and their intensity in the discussions. This suggestion was used as a guideline in discussing the findings.

A qualitative research approach enabled me to create patterns, categories, and themes from participants' own words. Data was consolidated progressively from the bottom up to form more tangible parts of evidence. This inductive process demonstrated that the researcher had read through the text a few times until she recognised a complete set of themes (Creswell & Clark, 2017). I looked back at the current data from the themes to decide if supplementary proof could support each theme or whether I needed to collect additional evidence. Consequently, although the data analysis process begun inductively, deductive thinking also played a key role as the investigation unfolded and progressed (Creswell & Clark, 2017).

3.4. TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness refers to the manner in which data was collected, organised and categorised, particularly if participants' voices were verbal and recorded (Maree, (2012). Furthermore, Creswell and Clark, (2007) and Maree, (2012) maintain that some values need to be observed as credibility, validity, transferability, dependability and confirmability, as the naturalist's equivalents for internal validation, external approval, reliability, and fairness. Throughout the research study, I applied trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability because they were essential in this research study.

In gathering data, I used multiple methods of data collection. The individual interviews, observations and document analysis in all three schools, inclusive of comparisons, could be made when analysing data and this increased consistency of the outcomes. Interviews of all six Grade 3 teachers and complete observations of literacy skills teaching in all three schools were documented and transcribed to guarantee correctness of data. Below is the brief discussion of credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability as they were closely linked to trustworthiness.

3.4.1 Credibility

Credibility answers questions such as: Were the results trustworthy, honest and was data presented satisfactory? (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002; Anney, 2014). Interpreting teachers' views should be accurate and original (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). The interview questions should be reasonable and create truthful accounts of the phenomena (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002; Anney, 2014). When evaluating qualitative research, credibility stems from the intended research purposes, and credible research decisions are those that are consistent with the researchers' purpose (Thomas, 2006). To ensure credibility of research findings for this study, I took interpretations back to participants to confirm the sincerity of the findings (Carlson, 2010; Harper & Cole, 2012). In addition, prolonged engagement in the research site is one of the pre-requisites for ensuring credibility of a qualitative research study (Bitsch, 2005; Carlson, 2010; Harper & Cole, 2012).

3.4.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts with other participants, it is the interpretive equivalent of generalisability (Tobin & Begley, 2004; Bitsch, 2005). According to Bitsch (2005), through thick description and purposeful sampling the transferability of judgement by a potential user is enabled. At the same time Merriam (1998) proposed that the findings of a study must demonstrate that they can be applied to a wider population. However, the research findings for this study were specific to a small number of primary schools with six Grade 3 teachers, consequently, the findings in this study may not be applicable to other situations.

According to Shenton (2004) and, Petty, Thomson and Stew (2012), it does not matter that each case was unique, the findings resembled an example within a broader group and the prospect of transferability should not immediately be rejected. Furthermore, Houghton, Casey, Shaw and Murphy (2013), Lincoln and Guba (1985) specified similar facts by saying that the researcher must ensure that there is adequate contextual information about fieldwork provided to enable the reader to make such a transfer.

3.4.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to the solidity of findings over time (Bitsch, 2005). For this study, interview questions and an observation checklist were designed to be clear and easy to understand by both the researcher and the participants. Furthermore, the researcher's biases were reduced through self-assessment of subjectivity, increasing dependability of the findings. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Patton (1990), there is a close link between credibility and dependability. They argued that in order to address the dependability issue more directly, the processes within the

study should be reported in detail, thereby allowing the future researcher to repeat the work if not necessarily to gain the same results.

3.4.4 Conformability

According to Patton (1990) the concept of conformability is the qualitative investigator's comparable concern to objectivity. In this study I ensured that the findings were the experiences and ideas of Grade 3 teachers, rather than my own preferences. Similarly, triangulation of results promoted conformability. Miles, Huberman, Huberman & Huberman (1994) contended that the main condition for conformability was the extent to which the researcher admitted his or her own biases.

3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Conducting a qualitative study requires one to protect research participants, develop a rapport with them; uphold the trustworthiness of research; look out for bad behaviour and indecency that might reflect on the university and cope with new, perplexing obstacles (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). To ensure that I adhered to ethical considerations, the principles below were addressed as follows:

3.5.1 Informed consent

Participants were provided with information about the research and consent forms were made available to them (see Appendix B). The information session outlined the research aims, research processes as well as the data collection methods of the research study. Prior to conducting the study, I consulted with Grade 3 teachers who were willing to participate in this study and informed them of the nature of my study. Through the briefing sessions a good partnership between the participants and the researcher was guaranteed. Creswell (2014) pointed out that participation in the research study needs to be voluntary, and participants need to know prior to the study the nature of the research and what will happen to the findings of the research.

3.5.2 Voluntary participation

Participating Grade 3 teachers were assured that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time without any punitive act (Kjetland, Ndhlovu, Gomo, Mduluza, Midzi, Gwanzura, Mason, Sandvik, Friis & Gundersen, 2006; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Participants signed letters of consent prior to data collection. Prior to finalising the research findings I allowed participants to read and comment on the narrative descriptions about the approaches to the teaching of literacy skills in English as FAL to ensure accuracy of results (Anney, 2014).

3.5.3 Confidentiality and anonymity

Confidentiality and anonymity were discussed with participants. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, as well as the freedom to withdraw from the research at any given time. Patton (2002) specified that only the researcher has access to the participants' data and therefore, he or she is indebted to totally keep the names and information provided confidential and anonymous. The confidential information gathered in this study will be known by me and the participants only. Throughout the research study, pseudonyms were used for both the schools and the participants to ensure anonymity and confidentiality (Lichtman, 2013). As the researcher, I had an ethical responsibility to protect the privacy of my participants at all times.

3.5.4 Privacy

Throughout the research process, I made sure that participants and other parties were not harmed in any way. Whenever conflict arose, it was solved amicably as soon as possible. Participants' rights as well as their welfare were protected at all times (Onwuegbuzie, Johnson & Collins, 2009). I treated all participants with respect and dignity.

3.5.5 Safety

According to Martinez, Pitts, Brkich & De Robles (2018), the researcher must respect the rights, needs, values and desires of participants. Throughout the research process participants were not threatened and were protected from any harm.

3.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I discussed the research methodology of the study, elaborating on the research design and methods chosen for this study. I also described the data collection strategies employed and the analysis techniques used. Finally, trustworthiness, the role of the researcher and ethical considerations were also discussed. In the next chapter, the data analysis process will be discussed and the results of this research project will be presented.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 3, the research design and methods were presented. The aim of Chapter 4 is to present the research findings and analysis of results. This will be done according to the themes and subthemes that emerged from the data during the thematic analysis. The process will start off with a description of the participants in each of the individual cases.

4.2 DESCRIPTION OF SEMI-STRUCTURED INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

The findings are reported verbatim from the individual participants. Schools and participants' names are kept confidential and anonymous to protect the identity of the school and the participants. The three schools are referred to as School A, B, and C. In each school, two teachers are sampled as participants. The letter 'P' represent 'Participant' and the letter 'S' represent 'School'. One of the reasons for selecting teachers from these schools is due to proximity and convenience to both the participants and the researcher. Another reason is that the teachers are also members of the same professional learning community which makes it convenient for them to collaborate and share best practices. The following section presents a description of each case followed by an analysis of the observations, interviews and document analysis. The table below summarises participants' data and research sites as well as codes assigned to participants' and schools' names.

Table 4: An overview of the selection of participants and research sites

Participants	Sampling technique	Criteria used for sampling	Participant category
Grade 3 teachers	*Non-probability purposive sampling*	*Qualified Grade 3 teachers*	*Primary participant*
Grade 3 EFAL learners	*Non-probability convenience sampling*	*Different African languages*	*Secondary participant*
School B and C were state primary schools in Gauteng where the LoLT is English			
Participants' codes, qualifications, and participants' mother tongue			
Participant Code	*Qualification*	*Mother tongue*	
PB1 (Participant 1 in School B)	*Teachers' Diploma and a four year degree in Education*	*isiZulu*	
PB2 (Participant 2 in School B)	*Teachers' Diploma and a four year degree in Education*	*Setswana*	
PC1(Participant 1 in School C)	*Teachers' Diploma*	*Sepedi*	
PC2 (Participant 2 in School C)	*Teachers' Diploma*	*Setswana*	
Independent (private) school in Gauteng where the LoLT is English			
School A			
Participant qualifications, teaching experience and participant's mother tongue			
Participant Code	*Qualification*	*Mother tongue*	
PA1 (Participant 1 in School A)	*Teachers' Diploma and honours degree in Educational Leadership and Management*	Xitsonga	
PA2 (Participant 2 in School A)	*Teachers' Diploma and an Advanced Certificate in Inclusive Education*	isiXhosa	

4.2.1 School A

From School A, two teachers participated in this study. This school caters for a diverse learner population and the medium of instruction is English. Both the teachers were qualified to teach in the Foundation Phase. Participant (PA1) speaks Xitsonga as home language. She was a Grade 3 teacher with a teachers' diploma and an honours degree in Educational Leadership and Management. She had been at the school for more than seven years and have been appointed as the lead

teacher for languages. In addition to her normal workload, participant (PA1) had the responsibility to convene and chair meetings on language and literacy skills development in the foundation phase.

Participant (PA2) speaks isiXhosa at home. She has a teacher's diploma and an Advanced Certificate in Inclusive Education. She is a specialist in the field of learner support. Participant (PA2) was the coordinator of the School Assessment Team (SAT) because of her knowledge and understanding of learner supporting strategies. She was responsible for learners who experienced difficulties with literacy skills. PA2 had ten years teaching experience in the Foundation Phase.

4.2.2 School B

Two teachers participated in this study from School B. This school caters for a diverse learner population and the medium of instruction is English. In this school too, both teachers completed the teacher's diploma and completed a four year degree in education. Both are Foundation Phase specialist who teach Grade 3 classes in English First Additional Language (EFAL). Participant (PB1) is a Zulu speaking teacher. She has been teaching at this school for seven years. She was actively involved with the professional learning committee meetings within their cluster.

In those meetings teachers share ideas and expertise on literacy skills teaching to EFAL learners in the early grades. Participant (PB2) is a Setswana speaking teacher. She has been teaching at this school for nine years. She is keen to broaden her knowledge and understanding of approaches to literacy skills. She was constantly attending cluster workshops conducted by the local district. At the same time, participant (PB2) indicated that she continuously searches the internet and read other sources for newer teaching strategies to improve her teaching practice.

4.2.3 School C

From School C, two teachers agreed to participate in this study. The school caters for a diverse learner population, and the medium of instruction is English. Both teachers have a teachers' diploma, qualifying them to teach Grade 3 learners in the Foundation Phase. Participant (PC1) is the head of the department in the Foundation Phase. She is a Sepedi speaking teacher. She has been teaching at this school for more twelve years. She constantly encourages learners to practice to speak in English. She believed in practical activities and encouraged both the learners and teachers to become involved in this practice.

Participant (PC2) is a Setswana speaking teacher. She has been teaching at School C for five years. This teacher is very involved in the development and improvement of quality teaching and learning at her school. Both participants at School C

mentioned that they help in the school media centre. They try to support learners with resource materials. Both teachers indicated that they broaden their understanding of literacy skills through reading various educational journals on approaches to literacy skills teaching as well as differentiated teaching strategies. According to them, learners are unique and present different learning challenges, needs and learning styles. As a result PC1 and PC2 valued differentiated literacy instruction.

4.3 DATA ANALYSIS

According to Xu (2012) teachers adopt various teaching and learning methods to improve their practice and enhance learners' understanding. Teachers lay a strong foundation for learner's personal growth (Xu, 2012). The individual semi-structured interviews allowed me to listen to the teachers' voices about literacy skills approaches they employ in their classroom. The research questions concentrated on teachers' instructional methods when teaching literacy skills. Emerging themes and categories were analysed, clustered together and supported by participants' quotes from the transcribed individual semi-structured interviews. Each theme, and subthemes, if relatable, was introduced and linked to approaches to literacy skills teaching. Below is the primary research questions and the secondary research questions which guided data collection.

4.3.1 Primary research question

What approaches do teachers use to teach literacy skills in the Foundation Phase?

4.3.2 Secondary research questions

To understand the primary question, the following secondary questions need to be looked into:

- How do teachers integrate listening, speaking and writing when teaching reading in English as FAL?
- What kinds of resources do teachers use to teach literacy skills?
- What value do Grade 3 teachers add to the teaching of literacy skills?
- Which factors are likely to influence the teaching of literacy skills?

4.4 RESEARCH FINDINGS

The data collection and analysis procedures were driven by the phenomena of the study. The data from several collection sources such as interviews, complete observations as well as document analysis were organised to provide a clear understanding to the research question. This study summarised teachers' approaches, opinions, beliefs, teaching practice, lived experiences as well as factors

influencing the teaching of literacy skills. Table 5 illustrates emerging themes and sub-themes from the data collected.

Table 5: Emerging themes and sub-themes from semi-structured individual interviews

Emerging themes and sub-themes– semi-structured individual interviews
Theme 1: STRATEGIES FOR LITERACY SKILLS TEACHING Understanding of literacy skills approaches

Theme 2: ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO TEACHING LITERACY SKILLS
 	
    i.   Shared reading
    ii.   Reading aloud
    iii.   Word study
    iv.   Justifying the use of literacy skills approaches

Theme 3:THE TEACHER AS A ROLE PLAYER
 	
    i.   The teacher as a role player in teaching literacy skills
    ii.   Teachers should know what to teach
    iii.   Incorporating multiple intelligences
    iv.   Teacher creativeness in literacy skills teaching
    v.   Teachers set the example and the value to literacy teaching

Theme 4: THE GAP BETWEEN POLICY AND CLASSROOM PRACTICE
    i.   Quality versus quantity
    ii.   Knowing your learners
    iii.   Types of resources
    iv.   Teacher content knowledge and teacher development

Theme 5: Factors influencing the teaching of literacy skills
    i.   Factors at home
    ii.   Factors at school
    iii.   Socio-economic background and
    iv.   Learner-cognitive development

I have used the codes below to reference presentation of research findings:

Table 6: Participant coding method

Semi-structured interviews	Teachers	Coding used in discussion of themes
School A	Participant 1	P1A
	Participant 2	P2A
School B	Participant 1	PB1
	Participant 2	PB2
School C	Participant 1	PC1
	Participant 2	PC2

4.4.1 STRATEGIES FOR LITERACY SKILLS TEACHING

Teachers believed that literacy skills teaching was not only meant to teach learners to listen, speak, read and write. Rather, it should be seen as providing learners with literacy skills to participate in, understand and gain control of the social and literacy practices that are entrenched within their society (Heron-Hruby, Hagood and Alvermann, 2008). Thus, language learning has never been independent of the social world because it occurred inside it and is shaped by a cultural context. Likewise, literacy skills embrace and integrate written language with specific ways of talking, acting, interacting, thinking, feeling, valuing and using various sorts of symbols and tools to transfer knowledge transfer from situation to situation (Samuels, Shorter & Plaut, 2012). According to PB1, she indicated that:

'Strategies to teach literacy skills include decoding and understanding the meaning as well as the manner in which words can be used in a sentence.' (PB1)

Other comments from participants included:

Literacy instruction integrates the teaching of phonics through interesting stories (PB2).

Teaching literacy skills in the Foundation Phase involves various reading approaches because learners' abilities differ' (PA1).

Strategies to teach literacy skills must integrate listening, speaking reading and writing (PA2).

Teaching strategies that I use involve vocabulary teaching during a reading lesson (PC1).

4.4.1.1 Understanding of literacy skills approaches

This section is devoted to approaches that teachers used to expose learners to literacy skills in Grade 3 English First Additional Language (EFAL) classrooms. Teaching reading in isolation from other concepts of literacy is not possible because during reading, learners have to engage in listening, speaking, reading and writing activities. The following participants explained what they understood about the term literacy skills and its significance in classroom:

> *PB1 and PB2 explained that: literacy skills does not only involve the ability to listen, speak, read and write, in my opinion it is important for children and to have knowledge, skills and the ability to comprehend the written texts of the curriculum to actively participate in classroom activities and outside school. For children to learn to speak, read and write, I think it starts with pre-literacy skills, long before the child comes to school through active engagement at home and in Grade R through listening to stories, singing songs and performing rhymes (PA1). The low socio-economic status contributes to poor literacy skills as a result children's literacy skills development is delayed (PA2).*

It was evident that participants understand that learner exposure to pre-literacy skills is another literacy approach which takes place at home and in Grade R, and participants felt that the pre-literacy skills approach had a key role in developing learners' literacy skills. Furthermore, participants acknowledged that there are factors which contribute to the learners' literacy skills development. It was clear that without pre-literacy skills, it was unfair to expect learners to read and to learn in English as FAL in Grade 3, given the fact that most learners were exposed to English as FAL only at Grade 3 level. Furthermore, PC1 and PC2 expressed their views on how literacy skills can be enhanced.

> *I think literacy skills can be enhanced through shared reading, group reading, reading aloud, and teaching vocabulary teaching (PC1). Word recognition, word identification, language structure and language use during reading can enhance learners' literacy skills (PC2).*

4.4.2 ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO TEACHING LITERACY

   SKILLS

The current research study by Arshavsky (2009) expressed that reading is a complex cognitive process, reliant on an interaction between information processing and background knowledge combined with social experiences. Teachers as facilitators of literacy skills, assist and guide learners to practice reading using various strategies such as choral reading, echo reading, repeated reading, partner

reading, and discussions to promote learners' literacy skills development (Arshavsky, 2009).

At the same time, the Department of Education (DoE) (2008) recommends that teachers must provide a literacy-rich-environment that consists of interesting reading material, displays and engaging multimedia resources (e.g. audio, video and overheads) that reflects the cultural diversity of the school community. Through reading teachers offer opportunities for dialogue, collaboration and other social interactions that make reading interesting and fun (DoE, 2008).

4.4.2.1 Shared reading

Arshavsky (2009) agrees that the reading process involves much more than decoding from print to sound. It also involves cultural, social and personal knowledge, and the ability to map this knowledge to understanding of a text. During individual semi-structured interviews participants described different ways of teaching literacy skills through shared reading techniques to Grade 3 EFAL learners.

> *I use shared reading to expose learners to new vocabulary using text that is accompanied by colourful pictures. I do this to attract learners' interest to the text, to enhance their literacy skills as well as comprehension. Shared reading approach enables me to scaffold learning because children have the opportunity to read, imitate good reading habits, ask questions and respond to questions and construct own knowledge from the text read (PA1). Through shared reading of a book, learners are engaged in questions and answer method. The words and phrases in the book help them to create own meaningful sentences (PB2). Uhm . . . with shared reading approach my Grade 3 learners have the opportunity to listen to the story read with gestures, expressions. They listen with excitement and for enjoyment. Shared reading approach activates learner's ability to remember, to repeat parts of the story in pairs, groups as well as individually (PC1). Of course, shared reading assist learners to understand how language is used to sequence the order of events in the story (PC2). During the reading process, learners have the opportunity to ask questions including questions which are challenging. Language is used to search for answers through speaking, reading and writing. This nurtures the need to know more about the topic that is being discussed (PC2).*

During the interviews with individual teachers, PA1, PB2, PC1 and PC2 elaborated on the practicality of integrating literacy skills with shared reading of stories. However, when observing the actual teaching in PB2 and PA1 classes, some learners looked as if they needed more support from the teacher's expert knowledge to enable them to read and write as well as to take part in conversations. According to research conducted by (Arshavsky, 2009) much emphasis is placed on shared reading in EFAL classrooms (to promote language development, reading for

enjoyment, vocabulary development and fluency. Through shared reading, learners begin to emulate and learn from their peers. In my observations, both sources remained clear on teacher support for effective language use and language learning. Effective language learning and language usage depends on the learner, the society as well as the learners' cultural background (Arshavsky, 2009).

4.4.2.2 Reading aloud

According to McGee and Schickedanz (2007) interactive read-aloud is an effective approach to literacy skills teaching, it is a two way communication activity, wherein learners take a more active role through verbal responses. Participants in School A explained the value and reasons why they thought read-aloud strategies helped to promote the learners' literacy skills. PA1 explains that:

Reading aloud to a small group of learners provides them with the opportunity to hear rich language, learn new vocabulary, and grasp story structures. Read aloud strategies provide learners with the opportunity to listen to stories read to them, to interact with text, and to develop the love for reading (PA1).

PA2 clarifies that:

…reading aloud strategies lays the foundation for literacy learning, because listening for comprehension comes before reading comprehension. As reading aloud on its own will not automatically turn learners to be effective listeners, speakers and writers of English, the teacher's guidance, knowledge of the subject as well as good selection of books and the methods used along with reading aloud contribute to the learners' literacy skills development (PA2).

From my observation of the learners reading in School A, I have come to realise that reading aloud is an important strategy to promote a love and appreciation for reading. In School A, teachers plan their lesson in detail on this approach. Appropriate skills such as listening, feedback and comprehensive and developed in learners through reading aloud. It was evident that in School A, the standard and level of literacy skills that learners displayed are of a high standard in comparison to my school. One of the participant in School A said.

Well, for me the amount of discussions before reading, during reading and after reading improve the level of literacy skills of my learners. I also involve learners interactively while reading the story aloud. It helps in improving comprehension and encourage learners to connect the story to events from their personal experience (PC2).

Reading aloud is a strategy that enables teachers to model reading. The tone of the voice changes as the characters in the story are changing, also the facial expression and gestures must match what is happening in the story.

PB1 adds by saying that:

> *…with reading aloud strategies, learners could do word manipulation, develop listening skills, expand vocabulary and be able to talk about the characters in the story, the plot and settings as well as relate events in the story to own personal lives. Moreover, reading aloud, enables learners to gain knowledge about diversity of topics and expose them to a wide range of writing styles and text structures (PB1).*

Research findings by Costa and Kallick, (2008), Pang, Muaka, Bernhardt and Kamil, (2003) and Peregoy and Boyle (2000) revealed that reading aloud by teachers guide learners on good reading habits because teachers do not say things over and over again in a boring manner, they model softening the voice and whispering especially when they think that some characters in the story are sleeping. The voice normally goes up when characters in the story are shouting, are amazed, screaming or scared.

> *According to PC1 self-generated factual questions about the story that was read aloud, are very important as they get learners to think and use language to respond to questions related the text read. In my class, I differentiate activities amongst stronger, weaker and average learners. For example, advanced learners are asked to write a paragraph to demonstrate comprehension, or to indicate that they understand why and how something happened. Weaker learners draw pictures or sequence sentence strips to narrate the story. Average learners write simple sentences (PC2).*

Linked to the findings of this research study, (Rosenshine, Meister and Chapman,1996) argued that, questions generated by learners before reading, during reading and after reading the story may not be a direct link to comprehension, rather it could mean that learners have intensively interacted with the text to respond to peer-generated questions Rosenshine, Meister and Chapman (1996) It became clear that most participants were aware of the process of literacy teaching because it was mentioned in individual interviews that literacy skills teaching was about engaging learners through reading, self-generated questions as well as the teacher's question and answer method. Responses from PC1 and PC2 clarified that teaching reading in isolation from other literacy skills was practically impossible, as it was mentioned during the individual semi-structured interviews that the utilisation of reading aloud strategy, enabled them to integrate listening, speaking reading and writing skills.

4.4.2.3 Word study

Word study is an approach to spelling instruction, it has moved away from memorization. Its focus is on the learners' zone of proximal development according to Vygotsky (1978). Learners may not automatically be able to transfer word knowledge to other literacy activities, hence, McCarrier, Pinnell and Fountas (2000) advise that teachers as capable others could demonstrate to learners the process of transferring word knowledge to other literacy contexts and teach learners that sometimes different sounds in words are represented by more than one letter. PC1 elaborated on how she utilised word study to enhance learners' literacy skills:

> *I use the word wall repeatedly as a teaching tool support vocabulary and spelling rules thereby promoting writing learners' skills. My Grade3 learners use words from the word wall as a resource for writing own simple stories (PC1). In my class, I provide children with different words and alphabet cards, engage them in sorting of words according to word families, words which are rhyming (PC2). Since I have learners with different abilities, the alphabet cards serve as a resource to support the word building as well as blending activities (PC2). I keep learners busy and motivated with hands-on word games, it is an entertaining and guided game. Learners play mind game which involve the searching of the word or the meaning of the word to support the inquiring mind and critical thinking skills (PB2).*

During individual interviews I established that participants were well informed on the use of word study, yet they called it a different name (word wall). I learned a number of appropriate strategies and approaches to the teaching of literacy in the early grades from the participants. Most of the strategies supported the activation of leaners' prior knowledge. In my opinion, learning opportunities that demand learners to draw from their previous knowledge, were remarkable as it does not complicate teaching and learning. The research findings to this study is supported by Wagner, Torgesen and Rashotte (1994) and Torgesen, Wagner, Rashotte, Burgess and Hecht (1997) claim that in order for EFAL learners to engage in authentic written activities, teachers need to guide and provide learners with opportunities to practice the use of different words in their context.

4.4.2.4 Justifying the use of literacy skills approaches

PA1, PB2 and PC2 explicitly stated that teachers could justify the practice of phonics teaching that is embedded in pre-literacy skills strategies. According to participant responses, teachers are more likely to employ phonics instruction before engaging learners in serious reading and writing of complex sentences. Throughout every step of shared reading, PA1 demonstrated how learners must sound letters especially if the word was difficult, learners followed by shared practice.

PC2 explained that phonics instruction is another approach that teachers used to expose learners to literacy skills and it can be used to prepare them to read and write well in English, as it allowed learners to recognise letters, say the sound of the syllable and to form a word from printed material and objects.

In addition, PB2 thinks that:

> *Phonics instructions provide learners with adequate opportunities to sound and name words orally before writing them down. Although phonemic awareness is a prerequisite for addressing word recognition, spelling and comprehension (PB2).*

Teachers are key players in developing the learners' literacy. The classroom serves as a platform to experience lots of printed words, pictures with captions, word cards; sentence strips; learners' own created easy-to-read text, learners' magazines; newspaper clips as well as time and comfort to access literacy resources. Based on complete observations, I discovered that PB2, PC1 and PA2 used sentence strips created by them, each with one simple sentence about the story. Participants create the sentence strips based on a story previously read with the whole class This is another strategy to promote literacy skills by having the learners retell a story through the sentence strips, one sentence at a time. I think participants do this to encourage all learners to speak, listen and read, thereby promoting knowledge of how to spell different words. Learners work independently as individuals, in pairs, and in groups. I have seen that learners enjoyed being involved in this way.

4.4.3 CLASSROOM PRACTICE

These sections discussed the methods and how participants applied literacy skills techniques during the teaching of literacy skills in Grade 3 EFAL classrooms.

4.4.3.1 The teacher as a role player in teaching literacy skills

Teachers' approaches can help to facilitate the integration of different knowledge bases because literacy skills teaching is more than just being able to decode words (Gee, 1999). The absence of this critical literacy skill makes decoding, reading of words and sentences as well as stories a complex task for EFAL Grade 3 learners (Dickinson & McCabe, 2001; Konza, 2014).

4.4.3.2 Teachers should know what to teach

Most participants still believed that if learners could read aloud without making mistakes, it meant they could master the speaking, reading and writing skills in English as FAL.

> *Knowing what to teach is the ability to integrate knowledge and different kinds*

Based on participants' responses, from A1 and PC1 they shed insight into the methods and processes of literacy skills teaching, while PB1, PB2, PC2 and PA2 were still not sure.

> *Being literate does not only mean to be able to read aloud, I think during the reading process the teacher must have the knowledge to integrate questions asked with relevant discussions of text read involving a particular topic (PC1)*

Literature reviewed in Chapter 2 revealed that effective teaching of literacy skills to Grade 3 EFAL learners commenced with decoding and encoding of words in print to assist learners to read with understanding (Treiman, 1998; Levy, 2008). In addition, research studies by McCandliss, Beck, Sandak and Perfetti, (2003) and Pikulski and Chard (2005) found that teaching literacy skills had to involve the four features of decoding, namely; (a) phonological and phonemic awareness (b) alphabetic knowledge (c) word recognition as well as (d) oral reading fluency). It was stated by Pikulski and Chard (2005) that upon mastering all four features of decoding, learners were in a position to read to learn and were able to read with understanding.

4.4.3.3 Incorporating multiple intelligences

Integrating literacy skills approaches with inquiry processes involves both analytical skills as well as creative communication skills. To free the learners' minds, Gardner (1995) proposes that it is essential to teach skills and abilities which will enable learners to read and understand their world with its many layers of messages.

> *PC1 notes that media messages are conveyed through various mental processes. Thus integrating multiple intelligences in literacy skills teaching helps to free the learner's mind because it deepens their understanding and gives them perspective as well as meaning and motivate them to want to learn more about speaking, reading and writing in English as FAL. (PC1).*

It was obvious from the interviews and opinions of participants that the value of differentiated instructions should not be underestimated. As PC1 explained, integrating multiple intelligences in literacy skills teaching helped to free the learner's mind because it provided increased comprehension as well as perception and the reason to learn.

The paradox between offering differentiated instruction and literacy learning takes place when learners experience uneasiness through rejection, disappointment, pressure and intimidation which makes them not feel safe within the learning context (Tomlinson & Kalbfleisch, 1998; Tomlinson, Brimijoin & Narvaez, 2008). Literature reviewed in Chapter 2 found that the lesson content had to be meaningful, compelling learner interest and providing a foundation for the use of mediated tools

like language (King-Friedrichs, 2001; King-Friedrichs & Browne, 2001; Monzo & Rueda, 2001; Subban, 2006).

4.4.3.4 Teacher creativeness in literacy skills teaching

Creativity goes hand-in-hand with motivation and encouragement. Teachers use various strategies to inspire as well as to heighten learners' literacy skills development (Reeve, 2009).

> *Asking learners to sing a song or listen to recorded songs related to the topic which is to be introduced provides learners with lots of opportunities to verbally interact with the teacher and the text to be read (PB1). In addition, PA1 points out that children need to be taught how to use language, for example, to ask questions, and explain feelings and emotions, to describe things and events as they happen. I may ask questions about what learners are doing and how they are doing it, just to make them feel significant and valued (PC1).*

Based on participants' responses it was evident that most participants understood the importance of acknowledging, valuing, as well as showing interest in what learners said and did (Katz, Kaplan & Buzukashvily, 2011; Reeve, 2009). Accordingly, Taylor (2013) pointed out that teacher-learner talk was important. However, according to Reeve, really controlling, they intrude into the learners' ways of thinking, they push and pressurise learners to think, feel, or behave in a specific way, which will damage the learners' creative thinking. In addition Grolnick (2002) and Reeve and Assor (2011) agreed that adults sometimes misuse their authority to express a controlling behaviour through their voices, directly or indirectly pushing learners towards the direction they want learners to go. Adults fail to understand that in order for a child to be creative, he or she needs some thinking space, to feel autonomous, to think and reason in the manner which will make him or her realise his or her potential. Through the adult guidance and patience, learners have the ability to approach literacy challenges in a positive way according to Assor, (2012) and Reeve (2009).

4.4.3.5 Teachers set the example and the value to literacy teaching

According to Biggs (2011) teachers are expected to add value to literacy skills development through the knowledge and expertise gained from the institutions of higher learning. Though teachers may have conflicting views of what constitute values in education, which value must be given a priority and for what reason, and asked questions wanting to know the learning theory involved (Tharp and Gallimore, 1991; Bright & Hensley, 2010; Biggs, 2011). Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development views teachers as the knowledgeable other, who are

entrusted with the responsibility of effectively teaching literacy skills to EFAL learners without fail (Vygotsky, 1978).

It is expected that learners from diverse language background may have challenges with conceptualizing EFAL story listening and comprehension, merely because they have inadequate English vocabulary. The EFAL teacher is therefore assumed to be knowledgeable in selecting suitable reading material. The language level of the story must be at the learner's ability also, the story has to be within the context of the learner, the story is meant for meaningful literacy skills learning and enjoyment. PB1 and PC2 have considered the learners' context when selecting stories to teach literacy skills in Grade 3 because learners appeared to enjoy the story, however, with other participants like PA2 and PC1 the story seemed difficult for most learners and for me no value was added by those teachers to the learning. This is evident in PA2 and PC1's response

> *Sometimes I feel that some stories are too difficult for our learners to understand. They do not link the child's context in which he lives. For example, in the workbooks and readers, there are stories about some animals that my learners are not aware of. They have not seen a polar bear and the story is all about polar bears. As teachers we must go and research some of these animals so that we can make learning meaningful.*

I observed that even teachers with years of experience struggled to engage all learners especially if the classroom was in its full capacity. PC1 struggled to manage learners who were disrupting the smooth running of the lesson. As a result, things got out of hand and the teacher lost her temper and tried to smack the learners. To justify her behaviour, PC1 stated

> *I sometimes get so angry with these children. They are so disruptive and they stop other children from learning. It's so unfair. I have not manage these children, and sometimes, I just have to smack the child. I do this out of love and not because I enjoy smacking a child. I cannot spare the rod and spoil the child.*

What I observed was that the learners were just teasing her, maybe because I was there as an observer or maybe that was how they behaved every day. I could not interfere or manipulate the situation because I was a complete observer. In my opinion, I think it was not her fault that learners behaved the way they did. I personally blame the education system for allowing overcrowding with one teacher in the classroom, overwhelmed with the responsibility of literacy skills teaching and keeping order at the same time.

One other thing that I think could have caused the unacceptable behaviour, could have been that PC1 looked very stressed on that day, and I believe that learners can

sense how adults feel and they try to survive the situation in different ways, others may disengage. Overcoming learner disengagement is very difficult especially if you yourself cannot deal with your own challenges. It was expected that learners from diverse language backgrounds may have challenges with conceptualizing EFAL story listening and comprehension, merely because they have inadequate English vocabulary.

Based on complete observation results, some participants seemed to be knowing what they were doing while others were doing what they thought was right. It appeared to me that continuous teacher development is a necessity to constantly revive the teaching methodologies because education like technology evolves and because every learner is a unique being with unique challenges. Furthermore, it was obvious during classroom observations that most teachers misunderstood the CAPS policy. This was seen in the self-made lesson plan from School B, the lesson plans did not reflect all four literacy skills. PB2 used a shared reading approach, but surprisingly, reading was done by her alone until the end. After reading, learners were asked questions based on the story read.

4.4.4 THE GAP BETWEEN POLICY AND CLASSROOM PRACTICE

Theme 3 deals with the actual teaching of literacy skills in Grade 3 classrooms and what is recommended by the CAPS policy document.

4. 4.4.1 Quality versus quantity

Participants were asked how they interpreted and implemented the CAPS document in relation to literacy skills teaching. Participants' responses were as follows:

> *The CAPS document is sufficient to guide me on literacy skills strategies. However I sometimes feel frustrated by the ready-made lesson plans that I receive from the District, because officials from the District expect me not to deviate even though the lesson plan does not work for the kinds of learners I have in my class (PC2).*

It appeared that participants were frustrated by the basic conditions which come with the so called "ready-made lesson plans", participants claimed that District facilitators were hard on them regarding curriculum coverage.

> *For me, I think, District facilitators care about how many activities have I done with the learners, not how much quality of work I did in class because with ready-made lesson plans fifteen minutes is allocated for writing which in my opinion is not fair for learners who need support (PA1). I design my own lesson plans, teach according to the learners' pace but, District facilitators when they visit the school, they count the number of activities in the learners' books, and therefore, quality of work does not mean anything (PB1).*

In analysing lesson plans, particularly in School B, it was found that their documents were haphazardly done, not dated, the format was also mixed up with grammatical errors. From the analysis, it seemed like teachers wanted to follow the guidelines of the CAPS document, but the curriculum coverage will always be the obstacle, which in my opinion influences learner performance, because teachers are in a rush to complete the syllabus.

> *In my opinion, learner performance is influenced by various aspects other than the level of teacher performance or teacher content knowledge as well as efforts on literacy skills practice (PB2).*

Based on participants' responses, ready-made lesson plans were meant to ease teachers' workloads, so that teachers could spend their time on teaching and giving support to struggling learners. Care should be taken that learners who need support receive support in the manner which will promote literacy skills development.

> *If I feel that I am being forced to work with learners in a rush, learners are disadvantaged (PC2). Instead of putting the learners' interest at heart, I maliciously comply with curriculum coverage (PC1).*

Linked to this paradox is the ability to interpret the CAPS document. The research findings to this study was supported by a report from a task team (Task Team for Review of the Implementation of the National Curriculum Statement) which stated that: "Addressing the need to upgrade teachers' skills would not be appropriate with a 'one size fits all' approach" Motshekga, (2009:10).

This was a concern which was voiced in all provinces, that in order for teachers to excel in interpreting and implementing the curriculum policy, future teacher development needs to be subject specific (Subban, 2006; Motshekga, 2009).

4.4.4.2 Knowing your learners

PA1 used predominantly illustrated books for a group of learners whom she knew struggled to read words. In addition, the illustrated books encourage creative thinking in learners because the teacher asked learners to create a sentence for each picture they saw. Though learners did not read any words, the teacher has integrated literacy skills because learners listened to the teacher's instruction, then participated through thinking, reasoning and speaking. With the wordless picture book, PB2 told learners the story based on the pictures because she thought that these group of learners were auditory learners and had a challenge to read by themselves. PC1 used illustrated books because these books allowed learners to be and draw from personal experience and write the story at their own ability levels from personal vocabulary. Her reasons for using illustrated books echoed in these words

I am fully aware that my children cannot read words. Through pictures they are able to tell me their life stories. They sometimes become very creative and make up stories as they go along. The children and I enjoy the creativity of these small children. They have vivid imaginations. Some stories are about their families, people in their community, but mostly the stories are about themselves and their life

PB2 read aloud a book titled "I am Mangi", which was the name of a boy who used his bike to transport different commuters. The book attracted the attention of most learners. I thought to myself that the story book was interesting, familiar to the learner's knowledge as well as to their experiences. The type of transport was the taxi, ambulance, bicycle and a train. Each learner had something to say because the story was about things they see and experience on a day-to-day basis. At the end of the lesson, PB2 managed to integrate listening, speaking and writing through a guided reading approach.

Teachers need to work together with parents, give learners the reading books to use at home and have one-on-one meetings with parents to share ideas on how to use limited resources to the advantage of the child's cognitive development. Partnering with parents may motivate both learners and their parents to become actively involved in education. Parents enjoy feeling that they are valued by teachers and will be encouraged, and become interested in the education of their learners. This could also build learners' confidence. Both parents and learners could be inspired to work harder.

4.4.4.3 Types of resources

According to Fountas and Pinnell (2001) there are different types of texts that teachers can use to teach literacy skills to EFAL learners. The kinds of text that teachers can use are wordless books, predictable texts; controlled high frequency vocabulary texts; authentic literature as well as created easy-to-read text. Based on complete observation in PA1's, PB2's, PC1's and PB1's classes, it was obvious that participants carefully selected text used to teach literacy skills to EFAL learners because I have observed both teacher-to-learner and learner-to-learner talk. Learning involve discussions of text processing at a number of levels, from clarifying basic material explained in the text to drawing interpretations of text to linking the story to other texts, experiences as well as reading objectives. The following participants (PA1; PC1 & PB2) aired their views regarding the types of resources:

A resource can be any material that the child or teacher can have in his or her class. We must not restrict our reading materials to just books that are prescribed by the Department. We can also use magazines, newspaper clippings, adverts and sometimes the media. Children will enjoy reading what they like, instead of what the teacher gives them. I like to put up pictures on the walls and ask my children to tell

their own stories. At other times I show them a video and ask them to write a story about what they saw.

4.4.4.4 Teacher-content knowledge and teacher development

Research studies by Girolametto, Sussman & Weitzman (2007), uphold that teachers in most child care-centres in the United States of America lack the knowledge to facilitate emergent literacy skills. South Africa is not immune to these findings. The findings are supported by Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir (2004), pointing out that "in isiXhosa-rich environment", the language of teaching and learning seemed to be a challenge to the knowledge of language (*English*) as well as literacy skills development (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2004:78). The study conducted in South Africa's isiXhosa-rich environment, proved that "the medium of instruction is a language that neither the teachers nor the learners can use sufficiently" (Brock-Utne, & Holmarsdottir, 2004:81).

PC2 argues that:

> *Although CAPS is a good literacy policy, in her opinion, teachers as classroom managers and implementers of CAPS were not involved in the curriculum planning. In my opinion, CAPS policy implementation need ongoing mediation, it must not be a once-off workshop for one hour when teachers are exhausted from the day's activities (PC2). The CAPS document is a good literacy policy, my concern is I am not thoroughly supported with the best approaches to literacy skills teaching (PC1).*

From the analysed data, I found that teachers may not have challenges with the interpretation and implementation of the CAPS document per se, but there could be some other factors such as teacher-support and societal issues which needed parents to be involved in the learners' school life.

PA2 stated that: *"My teacher training did not develop me for this. I am faced with social, emotional systemic challenges as well as my own personal frustrations" (PA2).*

PA2 blamed the institution of higher learning in which she obtained the teacher's diploma. Though she had an additional certificate in inclusive education, she felt that the institutions of higher learning did not prepare her for all the challenges that she is faced with in the classroom.

PB2 explained that:

> *I can teach literacy skills but there are so many obstacles in my classroom, most of the time I play many roles, such as being a police, care-giver, social*

worker, and a mother. I am so overwhelmed with the conditions I am working under, and that affect what I teach (PB2).

4.4.6 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO LITERACY SKILLS TEACHING

4.4.6.1 Factors at home

The environment in which the child is born can either encourage or discourage literacy skills development. Thus, becoming literate is influenced and intertwined with experiences learners have with language and reading material from birth onwards (Baker, 1994). PB1 explains that:

> *Parents at home have a role to play in helping children to become literate. Children who get the opportunity to talk to their parents are like to perform well in class (PB1). Lack of children's books at home may influence literacy skills teaching and cognitive development (PC2). Most children in my class have teenage mothers, and these young mothers do no love reading to children, they watch television most the time or are on WhatsApp talking to friends, neglecting the needs of their children (PA1). Learners in my class are from diverse language and cultural backgrounds, therefore, culture and language difference play a major role. One of the reason could be English as the medium of instruction and for most parents it is seen a barrier as parents cannot read or write in English (PB2). Most parents leave their homes for work as early as four in the morning and come back very late at nine or ten in the evening. Thus time factor may badly impact on literacy skills teaching at home, also homework sessions are adversely affected (PA2).*

Participants' responses in the individual interviews gave me a glimpse at understanding why teachers have challenges with literacy skills teaching in EFAL classrooms. It was evident that even though parents were eager to assist with homework activities, the factors mentioned in the individual interviews made it difficult for parents to get involved in the child's education.

Although literature and research findings support parental involvement in the child's education, both sources were clear on the support that learners needed in order to progress in literacy skills learning and cognitive development. In principle, learners in totality, be it at home or at school, needed literacy resources at literacy-rich-homes (Hawes & Plourde, 2005).

4.4.6.2 Factors at school

PC2 indicated that in order to learn to read, the reading text need to be age appropriate and must address the learner's literacy needs. The text at school need to match learners' reading levels.

Based on the response from PC2 it was evident that pre-literacy skills elements such as phonics awareness, matching sounds to words, word recognition, fluency and comprehension need to be explicitly taught, if we want to see Grade 3 learners being able to read and write well in English as First Additional Language (DBE, 2011). According to PC1: "*Kids need to be taught reading every day*" (PC1).

It was obvious that teachers were cognisant about the fact that prolonged time spent on literacy activities have enhanced their learners' listening, speaking reading and writing as well as comprehension skills.

> *Differentiation of teaching is likely to be impossible in overcrowded classrooms. Hence, in some of our township schools, most learners struggled to read to learn and with reading for understanding (PB1).*

However, PB1 contradicted what PC1 was saying. She argued that in most township's schools are overcrowded, teachers are overwhelmed, frustrated and demotivated to be innovative and creative in the teaching of literacy skills. Furthermore, the general concerns from most participants were the language of teaching and learning, it was clear that participants' did not have a say in that as English was preferred by most parents. PA2 agreed with other participants and mentioned that:

> *Teachers are struggling to teach reading, writing or speaking as most learners are from different neighbouring countries. Teachers' inability to communicate with EFAL learners may lead to miscommunication, mismatches in teacher-learner expectations and thus both teachers and learners become frustrated during literacy skill lessons and other content subject since all subjects are offered in English (PA2).*

However, I noticed that teachers went the extra mile to assist learners in developing conceptual knowledge of each content area. For example, some participants used the total physical response theory of language teaching, to make sure that all learners accessed equal education despite the fact that there was a challenge of language barrier. Teachers, gave commands to which the learners reacted with their bodies as well as their brains to indicate if they understood. I learnt that the Total physical response (TPR) strategies helped learners to cope with literacy challenges.

4.4.6.3 Socio-economic background and learner-cognitive development

Amongst the multiple factors that are likely to influence early literacy and language development, parents' low-socio-economic status is one of the major contributing factors of poor literacy acquisition at school. Being able to read and write depends on early immersion in language, exposure to text and many other environmental factors (Brown, 2000). Learners who had the opportunity to acquire verbal and

written language prior to attending school are likely to perform well and grasp concepts of literacy skills much easier (John-Steiner & Mahn 1996). These factors include the availability of books at home and parents' literacy status.

The availability of books may not impact much on the child's early literacy development, the question is what are the parents doing with the limited books available at home? Do parents have the knowledge to assist learners at home with literacy skills through story reading or storytelling? If not, then it means the books and time are available but the child cannot access the knowledge contained in those books. *PC2 explains that: "Knowledgeable parents contribute to the child's literacy development by exposing him or her to books, inculcate the culture of reading, retelling of stories read, responding to questions based on the passage read").*

PB2 said that:

> *Parents can create literacy-rich homes, often allow children read and talk about what is written on containers and food packaging. In addition, when buying groceries parents must involve learners by giving them the task to write a list of items they are going to buy (PB2). Literacy-rich homes can actively engage learners in the preparation of food. Parent-child dialogue during food preparation enhance the child's vocabulary and promotes literacy skills (PB1).*

PA2 supported parent-child talk by saying that:

> *The mother-child talk is important because if you tell them, they will forget, when you show them they might remember, involve learners, they will understand (PA2).*

It was a general feeling amongst participants that learners who were engaged in adult-child talk, grasped concepts better at school than those who were normally chased away to stay in their rooms. Linked to the findings of this research study was the correlation between two factors, firstly, the child who was actively engaged in parent-child communication could participate in familiar conversations, secondly, the child who is hands-on, helping while asking questions at home could be identified when literacy activities involved colouring in, cutting out, labelling pictures as well as drawing imaginative pictures.

> *I think parents' level of education counts, because adults who cannot read or write themselves, do not see the significance of talking to their learners or involving them in things like buying groceries, for them the child's role is to play outside with friends or watch television (PA1).*

4.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the main focus was on teachers' approach to teach literacy skills during a reading lesson taught in English as FAL. During the process of interviews and complete observations, I discovered that teachers were experiencing challenges which hindered literacy teaching approaches. Participants were concerned about the pace at which Grade 3 learners acquired English First Additional Language literacy skills. This was due to various factors such as parents' education levels, English as the medium of instruction, teacher-learner-ratio, teacher development and the lack of parental involvement as well as the CAPS policy developers. To add on, some participants mentioned that communities where most of their learners were coming from were very poor and that due to a large number of parents who work as unskilled labourers, they were more often absent from home, which made literacy skills teaching difficult

CHAPTER 5: INTERPRETATIONS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 presented data collected through interviews, observations and document analysis. The themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data were analysed carefully. Chapter 5 offered an interpretation of the research findings in relation to the existing body of knowledge. The research findings were compared with literature reviewed in Chapter 2 about teachers' approaches to literacy skills teaching in English as First Additional Language (FAL). The study's theoretical framework, Vygotsky's theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) offered a recognisable experience against which the findings were interpreted and explained (Vygotsky, 1978). Furthermore, Chapter 5 provides reference to and attempts to respond to the study's research questions found in Chapter 1. The primary research questions and secondary research questions were answered from collected data.

5.1.1 Primary research question

What approaches do teachers use to teach literacy skills in the Foundation Phase?

5.1.2 Secondary research questions

- How do teachers integrate listening, speaking and writing when teaching reading in English as FAL?
- What kinds of resources do teachers use to teach literacy skills?
- Which factors are likely to influence the teaching of literacy skills?

To generate a detailed understanding of the research findings and provide valuable interpretation of results, Vygotsky's zone of proximal development theory was applied in agreement with the themes that emerged from the data in the previous chapter (Chapter 4). Finally this Chapter presents an in-depth summary and concluding interpretations as well as the researcher's recommendations of the research study.

Literature reviewed in Chapter 2 highlighted a number of approaches used globally and in South African multilingual schools as well as teacher's understanding of literacy teaching. In addition, both the National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements (NPPPPR) as well as the South African Language in Education Policy (LiEP) recommended that learners must access their education in two official languages, wherein one must be offered at home language (HL) level and the other official language at First Additional Language (FAL) (DoE, 1997; DBE, 2015).

5.2 INTERPRETATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.2.1 Understanding of literacy skills approaches

According to the findings of this research study, Grade 3 teachers perceive literacy skills approaches as methods used to expose learners to literacy skills. Literacy skills exposure starts long before the child comes to school. Teachers do not view literacy teaching and learning as a mechanical skill but rather as the manner in which people who are themselves entrenched in conceptions of knowledge expose learners to reading and writing. As mentioned by Wasik, Bond and Hindman (2006) most learners learn language and pre-literacy skills through communicating with parents, siblings and peers who practice language correctly, or in a manner that agrees with the printed word.

When looking at the following statement, children lag

> …*behind their peers in the acquisition of vocabulary and oral language skills because they inadequate use of correct language and access to literacy material (PA1).*

It is clear that teachers did not say that learners cannot be exposed to literacy skills, but, emphasised the importance of using appropriate approaches and content knowledge to help to promote literacy skills. Teachers agreed that the context and learners interests should be taken into consideration when planning to teach literacy skills. They also agreed that the socio-economic environment contributes significantly to the pace at which learners learn and develop their skills.

In their responses teachers strongly believed that pre-literacy skills acquisition has benefits for learning to read and write. They agreed that the development of vocabulary skills can make a significant impact in promoting literacy skills. They also felt that learners who had limited exposure to vocabulary skills will benefit immensely from this approach to teaching and learning. According to the research findings by Gredler, Snow, Burns and Griffin, (2002) of a similar study on teacher perspectives regarding approaches to literacy skills teaching, teachers support literacy teaching that directs learners' attention to alphabet knowledge and sound structure of oral language. Teachers believe that learners with general oral language weaknesses plus phonological weaknesses need special teaching in a broader knowledge.

Teachers acknowledged that there are parallel and projecting relationships between phonemic awareness and attainment in reading a First language. Correlational studies have shown strong concurrent and predictive relations between phonemic awareness and success in learning to read and write (Stahl & Murray, 1994; Foorman & Torgesen, 2001).

5.2.2 Reasons for literacy teaching

All the participants' agreed that phonics instruction in the Foundation Phase was the starting point for learning to read, write and spell words. PA1, PB2 and PC2 felt that the learners' inability to sound out words leads to severe literacy learning challenges. They felt that teachers need to spend more time on teaching phonics in the early grades to ensure that learners have a strong foundational base.

PC2 explained that phonics instruction is another approach that teachers use to expose learners to literacy skills. She strongly advocated that this method of instruction can be used to prepare learners appropriately to read and write English in an acceptable manner. She, with PC1 agreed that phonics allows learners to recognise letters, say the sound of the syllable and to form a word from printed material and objects. In addition, PC2 believed that phonics instructions provide learners with adequate opportunities to sound and name words orally before writing them down.

Although phonemic awareness is a prerequisite for addressing word recognition, spelling and comprehension, some participants in general felt that phonics teaching cannot be the only method for teaching English literacy skills. PC2 indicated that phonics instruction is a way of improving reading skills and a means to assist EFAL learners to recognise, identify and say words correctly when speaking and reading in English as First additional Language (FAL). As a teacher we need to consider different approaches to developing reading skills in learners.

According to Stahl and Murray (1994) teachers need to understand that though phonological awareness is an awareness of spoken sounds and is revealed in activities like rhyming, matching initial consonants as well as counting number of phonemes in spoken words, these tasks can be challenging for some learners because spoken words do not have recognisable segments linked to phonemes.

However, research evidence by Cameron (2003) revealed that learners gradually develop sounds and words in their mother tongue through interactions with adults. It is therefore, the teacher's responsibility in the Foundation Phase to create meaningful contexts wherein learners can actively participate in the use of sounds, words and simple sentences through songs, rhymes, dialogue with the teacher and peers and through shared reading with the teacher (Monroe & Orme, 2002; Adger, Snow, & Christian, 2003).

In addition, research evidence by Ellis, Tanaka, & Yamazaki (1994) and Mukoroli (2011) suggest that the knowledge of words require conscious and explicit learning mechanisms whereas the skill aspect involves mostly implicit learning and memory. Vocabulary knowledge does not mean only the amount of times learners encounter a

lexical item, but it concerns how well the word is retained and how much learners are involved in using the word (Ellis, Tanaka, & Yamazaki, 1994).

5.2.3 Pre-literacy strategies

Teachers employed pre-literacy strategies that involved the learner's pre-existing knowledge of reading to integrate literacy skills in a lesson. The learner's pre-existing experience in reading were used as the strongest pointer of how well learners can understand new knowledge. The pre-literacy strategies such as phonics awareness, decoding and encoding skills, vocabulary teaching as well as sentence structure, were amongst the strategies that teachers used to help learners to remember (Lonigan, 2007). Teachers appeared to be knowledgeable that their teaching need to be within the learners' zone of proximal development. As a result, remembering or recalling relates to the ZDP 1- as it required learners to retrieve information learnt prior to the reading lesson and apply that to the listening, speaking, reading and writing activities as it is "a prerequisite for all subsequent objectives" (Swart, 2010:259).

5.3 CLASSROOM PRACTICE

As part of classroom practice, during a reading lesson teachers activate the learners' background information, knowledge, experience and culture to the printed word. This means that teachers use the schema theory. The Schema theory is when teachers provide learners with opportunities to understand and select meaningful data among all the information provided through reading. Learner contribution in "semantic mapping process activates learner's background knowledge about the topic" and they can get rid of expected routine traditional ambiance in the classroom" (Dilek & Yürük, 2013:1534). Thus, learners in this case are at liberty to decide what to preserve and what not to retain in their memories (Dilek & Yürük, 2013).

Learners were immersed in the process of sorting, sequencing and constructing meaning from the text read. Teachers encouraged learners to integrate both top-down and bottom-up processes during reading. To ensure understanding and application of knowledge, teachers normally involved learners in a question and answer session. Through question and answer methods, teachers apply the ZPD 2 level, (Understand). Questions can prompt answers ranging from simple recall of information to abstract processes of applying, synthesizing, and evaluating information.

5.3.1 Alternative strategies to literacy skills teaching

The two strategies to literacy skills teaching which teachers use are shared reading and reading aloud. Shared book experience takes place before reading, during reading and after reading. Before reading, "shared reading" draws attention to

concepts such as details of the cover, left-to-right, and top-to-bottom sequence and encourages learners to read along on the parts of the story when they are familiar to the text.

According to Goldman & Rakestraw (2000) text structure has proven to be one of the best strategies in advancing learners' literacy skills. In addition, studies by Hall, Sabey, & McClellan, (2005) Rapp, Broek, McMaster, Kendeou and Espin, (2007); Williams, Stafford, Lauer, Hall, & Pollini, (2009), Stevens, Van Meter and Warcholak, (2010) indicated that within a six-week period of literacy intervention in guided reading instruction, children were able to compare/contrast text structure while reading expository texts. The instruction included the use of graphic organizers, explicit instruction emphasizing clue words, and practice analysing exemplar texts. With the text structure intervention, learners had a better conceptual understanding of the text, they were able to compare/contrast structure and could produce more structured summaries of expository paragraphs. This suggests that including text structure instruction in the teaching of literacy skills in the Foundation Phase is not only valuable but also accessible.

During reading, the teacher' role is to help and take advantage of unfamiliar and difficult words found in the text and use them as source for clear vocabulary teaching. Also, during reading, teachers help learners to explore print and develop phonological awareness. After reading, learners respond to questions posed by the teacher and sequence a series of pictures to support a retelling of the text, they also respond to higher order questions paying attention to specific elements of grammar. Reading aloud engages learners to logical and critical thinking. Teachers use reading aloud strategies to expose learners to numerous enjoyable stories, poems, and information books. It also provides supportive conversations and activities before, during, and after reading.

It has become clear that teachers understand that play and academic work are inseparably related. When learners are engaged in purposeful play they are discovering, creating, improvising, and expanding their learning. Teachers are even aware that learners should be able to learn sight vocabulary in context rather than in isolation. Reading is complex and the multiple literacy elements need to be simultaneously coordinated. However, if any of these skills are not well developed it will naturally compromise the overall efficiency of the reading process.

The developmental pathways of the different skills on which fluency relies also need to be recognised and their relative importance in reading identified. For example, although phonological awareness and knowledge of letter-sound relationships are important predictors of early reading development, by Grade 3 their influence diminishes as other skills at the lexical and text level exert greater influence. Though the use of such effective teaching strategies is indeed important, effective teachers of EFAL must also know how to address the language demands of their subject.

A number of teachers provide opportunities for learners to listen to stories read to them, or for them to read to the teacher, and reading individually, and in groups. This process encourages progress in literacy, and stimulates an interest in learning the language of the school. Teachers must be in a position to show how literacy skills are developed through play, we can improve the reading and writing competence of students through playful activities. Through play learners may also develop competence in social skills.

Based on the research findings, teachers' understanding of what EFAL literacy skills teaching is, seems to be inadequate. Teachers seem to have partial knowledge about how to engage learners in purposeful play, or to provide opportunities for learners to listen to stories, to teach vocabulary in context. The findings revealed many EFAL teachers were not proficient in the English language. Thus, teachers were not in a position to support Grade 3 EFAL learners with literacy skills teaching and cognitive development.

According to Theme 5, there are categories which discuss different factors likely to influence the teaching of literacy skills in Grade 3. These findings include factors at home, school context and the language of instruction and teacher competence in literacy skills teaching.

5.4 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO LITERACY SKILLS TEACHING

5.4.1 Factors at home

The learner's socio-economic status at home plays a key role in developing the learner's literacy skills (Chan, 1999). The limited reading resources and inadequacy of literacy activities at home affect the teaching of literacy skills at school (Auerbach, 1989). Language acquisition theorists believe that knowledge is socially constructed, it is based on personal experiences. This means that every child brings past literacy experience which will serve as a basis for teaching literacy skills (Anderson, 1985).

Learners who are from disadvantaged communities are likely to lack the confidence, knowledge and skills. As a result, their parents do not perceive themselves as role players in the education of their learners. Also, inappropriate resources at home add to the challenge of embarking on literacy-related activities. However, poor literacy skills are not always the result of low earning households; there are other factors such as lack of time due to parents' long working hours. Spending too much time watching television may prevent parents from shared story reading time at home.

Sharing stories, rhymes, games, and daily talk in a family's home language supports language and literacy development, which in turn supports academic success. Parents who talk more with their learners during mealtime provides an opportunity for learners to gain knowledge with narratives. Through oral stories, learners gain

experience about the world around them, especially if the story is told in the past tense. This kind of talks at home play a key role in developing language literacy skills needed for academic purposes.

5.4.2 Factors at school

Apart from the identified factors that are likely to influence literacy skills teaching, the context and conditions in which teachers function may impact negatively on literacy skills teaching (Klieme & Vieluf, 2009). To illustrate, the selection of suitable literacy and reading material needs to address the learners' needs. From the individual semi-structured interviews and classroom observations it was evident that the learners in these schools were from diverse language and cultural backgrounds which demanded teachers to practice differentiated teaching approaches. Thus, the learner-teacher ratio may be an obstacle to differentiated teaching. With differentiated teaching approaches it enables teachers to integrate a range of literacy skills teaching approaches as well as using a small group approach since learners are unique.

Furthermore, teachers' knowledge of Grade 3 literacy teaching is crucial in teaching and preparing learners to be critical thinkers. However, care must be taken not to force learners to perform literacy skills activities which are more difficult and too abstract for the learners' level of intelligence and ability. Teachers need to scaffold literacy skills learning. Within the conceptual framework, in particular, the ZPD 5 – level (Synthesis) teachers need to support learners through differentiated literacy skills, teaching and assessing as well as help to develop learners' higher thinking skills.

To scaffold the literacy skills teaching involved, the application of a variety of questions which served as a mechanism to check learners' understanding through ZPD 6 – level (Evaluate) before reading, during reading and after reading were required. Learners were asked to combine, create, design, develop, imagine, make up, predict and solve.

5.4.3 Language of learning and teaching

In real life, language acquisition and the ability to use language in different situations do not take place in isolated components (Hoff, 2006). This implies that teaching practice in Grade 3 needs to incorporate the four main language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in meaningful and purposeful interaction as it normally happens in the real world to learners' literacy skills (Alyousef, 2006). Teachers need to provide literacy activities which focus on listening, speaking, reading and writing, to develop English language vocabulary.

However, I noticed that in all three schools, Grade 3 classrooms have multiple home languages within the same classroom which makes it difficult for the teacher to know all the languages. At the same time, some participants were not confident in presenting literacy skills lessons in English. The language of learning and teaching (English) contributes to the learners' poor literacy skills.

5.4.4 Teacher training

According to Obiekezie and Timothy (2011) a competent teacher is the one who offers literacy instruction in the manner that makes EFAL learners grasp the content or skills taught. To be knowledgeable does not stop at just getting information about the subject; it is about imparting the knowledge to the learners in an efficient manner. Therefore, knowledge of the subject matter is a holistic package which involves lifelong learning, the effective use of available resources to empower learners towards being independent readers and writers in English (Kalu, Uwatt & Asim, 2005). Participants explained that teacher-training and development influenced the learning and educational achievement. During classroom individual interviews and observations, I discovered that there was a concern amongst participants with regard to the amount of time spent in writing, participants claimed that it was limited considering the fact that learners were struggling with the language of teaching and learning (English). In addition, the classrooms were overcrowded which I thought hindered differentiated teaching.

Participants suggested that it would be better if the education department could make sure that in-service training workshops could equip them with strategies to deal with fifty plus EFAL learners in one class with limited resources

5.4.5 Importance of parent involvement

Parents' illiteracy level was a major concern. However, teachers wished for literacy workshops with parents, to advise them on the importance of their involvement and further stated that "evidence shows that many parents want to become involved but are not encouraged or do not have the open communication or support from the school to do so" (DePlanty, Coulter-Kern & Duchane, 2007:362). In addition, participants in general recommended continued oral reading with learners at home.

5.6 QUALITY TEACHING VERSUS QUANTITY

5.6.1 Adding value to literacy teaching and learning

The quality of teaching have increased learners' knowledge. In other words, the teaching practice has contributed to learner achievement. Grade 3 learners need teachers who will add value, inspire and motivate them to learn, they also need plenty of time to practice reading and writing in English as FAL. However, teachers

with a limited command of English lack confidence and enthusiasm and cannot add value to learners' literacy development.

5.7 COMPARING RESEARCH RESULTS WITH APPLICABLE LITERATURE

The literature available on approaches to the teaching of literacy skills to EFAL learners in Grade 3 was compared with the results found in Chapter 4. It was obvious that there were a number of issues involving literacy skills teaching that could be recognised. These could be seen in (Table 7), providing conflicting evidence.

Table 7: Comparing outcomes to prevalent knowledge

Themes and subthemes	Existing knowledge (literature)	Findings	Interpretive discussion
Theme 1: Teachers' understanding of approaches to literacy teaching **Category 2**: Reading to learn	Literacy skills teaching is of no value if it does not promote social interaction, peer collaboration, and learning experiences. Literacy teaching is linked to pleasure and success motivates the learner's interest to read and write. Learning becomes meaningful if integrated with the learner's prior knowledge and experience (Duke & Pearson, 2009.).	Literacy skills teaching and language development depend on the learners' knowledge, cognitive development, socio-cultural background as well as the experience that learners bring to the text.	Literature and research findings agree that learning needs to be linked to real-life experiences that are meaningful and practical. There is little or limited literature available on teachers' understanding of literacy skills teaching.
Theme 2: Strategies for literacy skills teaching **Category 1:**	Previous experience and vocabulary development Teachers activate prior knowledge through reading,	**Activating background knowledge** It is the teachers' responsibility to activate the learners'	Literature and research findings agree that unknown words need to be explained before a new concept is taught. For learners to be able to use the ionary effectively, they need to be able to read and understand each definition, and have background knowledge about the content in the text. If not, learners may be confused by different meanings for the same word, or the wording

Pre-literacy skills strategies	writing, discussing, thinking out loud, and visual cues or organizers. By meeting learners where they are with vocabulary knowledge, teachers can make informed, strategic decisions about which new content to teach (Donovan & Bransford, 2005; Stecker, Lembke & Foegen, 2008.).	background to determine how much literacy skills learners know. For example, how much they know about the letter-sound relationship, the grammatical patterns, word meanings and high frequency words that learners can use to construct a sentence in a meaningful context.	in a dictionary entry may be too difficult to read or understand (Carlo, August, McLaughlin,Snow, Dressler, Lippman, Lively & White, 2009)
	Making predictions Learners predict what will happen next using their memories and prior knowledge. (Ajideh, 2003). Learners use textual knowledge in consolidation with prior knowledge to	**Making prediction** Making predictions are one of the comprehension strategies used to teach literacy skills in English reading lesson. Teachers seldom use this strategy when teaching reading in English as FAL.	Both literature and research findings emphasise the importance of predictions, because the strategy relies on background knowledge (Barrows, 1986) Learners use their everyday experiences to demonstrate prediction. During prediction, learners respond to questions using own knowledge to make basic predictions about actions, time, cause and effects linked to pictures. Also, learners can sequence pictures to confirm their predictions.

	think about what will happen next as the story unfolds. Hattie (2009) identifies that learners need to be exposed to new knowledge a number of times, "rehearsal" and "review" strategies to help students go over new knowledge until it is internalised and then it can be revised and synthesized with knowledge already secured Hattie (2009).	Teachers need to enable learners to automatically use strategies to understand what they are reading. In order to evaluate text structure, teachers need to tap into the learner's background knowledge, and allow them to internalise text so that learners can make predictions. Making predictions appeared insignificant to some participants even though some mentioned it in passing that it can provide learners with a reason and encourage them to read more. However, teachers focused more on activating learner's prior knowledge other than integrating the two strategies when teaching reading as	

		part of literacy skills development	
Theme 2: Strategies for literacy skills teaching **Category 2:** Classroom practice	**Exposure to literacy skills utilisation** With literacy skills exposure the essential principle is that learners who actively engage in cognitive and metacognitive approaches usually grasp and remember more of what they read than those who do not use these strategies Dickinson, Tenhula, Morris, Brown, Peer,Spencer, Li, Gold and Bellack (2009). Research studies confirm that reading aloud support memorisation, concentration and enhances classroom instruction and improves academic achievement; and,	**Exposure to literacy skills utilisation** Practical activities literacy skills activities give learners opportunities to understand and use grammatical knowledge, as well as enhance their listening, speaking, reading as well as writing skills. Story reading aloud to provide opportunities to experience different texts, writing, language structure and genre. Reading aloud, thus expose learners to a new vocabulary and other comprehension skills modelled by teachers in the classroom as well as by parents at home.	Literature and research findings agree that exposing learners to literacy skills is essential for social interaction in real-life situations and for academic purposes (Alyousef, 2006). Literacy, in the modern view, is not just a mechanical aptitude to read and write, but the ability to function in a literate society. Both literature and findings agree that central to any literacy experience is interaction between the reader and text. Thus, classroom practice needs to involve adequate literacy activities which enhance the reading, comprehension, writing, speaking as well as listening skills. Literacy activities need to be practical, hands-on activities

	most importantly, assists in the transfer of oral comprehension skills to understanding the written text as in Alshumaimeri, (2005); Grabe, (1991); Literacy skills teaching integrate bottom-up and top-down processes in reading, which suggests that learners engage in discussing the topic of a text before reading it, increasing expectations, prompting learners to link what they already know to the text (Grabe & Stoller 2013). Meaning is thus created through reading, not because a text carries it, but because the learner brings information, knowledge, experience and		

	culture to the printed word.		
Theme 2: Strategies for literacy skills teaching **Category 2:** Classroom practice	**Literacy instruction through play** Language is a social notion that develops through social interaction. A child's intellectual development appropriate instruction in early literacy skills and teaching is crucial to language development (Moyles, Adams & Musgrove, 2002; Burke, 2008; Arce, 2000). Jang, Reeve and Deci (2010) discuss play – based approaches as learning that gives learners the opportunity to go beyond just remembering and understanding, and to take part in higher-order thinking, asking	**Literacy instruction through play** Instruction through play is a good approach to teaching literacy skills. Learning through play and games that make learning experience fun. Learners explore their physical world through the five senses. In fact, play develops many skills that are necessary for learners to later learn to read and write. Play allow learners to express their own thinking better as they experience language development. The literacy through play is a teaching practice which allows learners to thoroughly enjoy playing and learning together with peers	Literature and research findings agree that the teaching of literacy skills in English as FAL is made possible by a dialogue, Dialogue foster learners to think, respond to the teacher's or peer's questions and to defend their responses. In doing so learners interact with the text, peers, their teachers to create meaning from text led by their previous knowledge and experiences

	them to reflect, connect and apply their learning, in order to analyse, evaluate and create.		
	Phonics instruction Stahl (2001) describes phonics instruction as any approach in which the teacher does or says something to help learners learn how to decode words. This may encompass teaching sound-symbol correspondences directly, having learners manipulate sounds in written words through spelling tasks, pointing out patterns in similarly spelled words, or anything else which helps learners learn about	**Phonics instruction** One way to implement phonics instruction during shared reading or reading aloud sessions, is to engage learners in activities which will allow them to recognize letters, say the sound of the syllable and form a word from printed materials and objects. Also, to name the words as they spelled the words throughout the activities.	

	orthographic patterns in written language Phonics instruction is teaching reading explicitly and sequentially, through the relationship of letter-sound correspondence in words. Individual phoneme patterns are studied by segmenting, blending, decoding, and manipulating individual words (Gass & Selinker; 2001).		
Theme 2: Strategies for literacy skills teaching **Category 2:** Classroom practice	**Directed activities related to text** Although it is difficult to explicitly teach all of the new words that learners must know each year, it is useful to provide direct instruction in some words. This embraces		Literature and research findings agree that in the absence of fluency, sooner or later learners tend to read less and avoid reading more challenging texts. With direct literacy activities, teachers need to make sure that learners become aware of how written language is different from everyday conversation by drawing their attention to the distinctive structures of written language such as compound and complex sentence structures, phrasing within sentences, how punctuation is used to signal phrasing, and paragraph structure.

	pre-teaching key vocabulary to reading or telling stories to learners. Teachers utilise direct teaching approaches to provide EFAL literacy using content-rich materials. Language learning requires learner interaction with text through participation in meaningful discussions. Graves, Gersten & Haager, (2004) and Langer, (2002) highlight that direct teaching engage learners in purposeful reading and writing. The direct instruction affords learners the opportunity to explore how to use the strategy and to clarify concepts across diverse contexts.		

Theme 2: Strategies for literacy skills teaching **Category 2:** Classroom practice	**Questioning** The strategies taught in Reciprocal teaching (RT) encourage learners and teachers to take turns asking each other questions about the text. It occurs as learners and teachers read the story. The instruction uses four comprehension-monitoring techniques such as summarisation, question generation, clarification, and prediction. At first, the teacher model how the strategy should be used, modelling happens through the think-aloud process, group practice, partner practice and independent use of the strategy (Block & Israel, 2005).	**Questioning** Questioning relates to reciprocal teaching and most participants regard this strategy as unique and inclusive because learners and teachers take turns to ask questions (PC1). This model of teaching differentiates learning because even those learners who are afraid to speak to the teacher can have the opportunity to ask clarity seeking questions from peers and learners (PB2). The strategy does not only cater for group work, learners can work independently, predict, re-read the text to confirm their predictions, and write summaries to	Questioning is one strategy that participants like to use as learners' literacy skills improve, through questioning, learners are able to read with understanding.

		demonstrate how they understood the text. The strategy benefits both the teacher and the learners because teachers use questions to monitor learner comprehension of texts read	
Theme 2: Strategies for literacy skills teaching **Category 3:** Resources used in teaching literacy skills	**Access to resources** Guthrie, Griffiths, and Maron & (2008) believes that the availability of a variety of literacy materials provided together with literacy-rich environments provide lots of opportunities to interact with texts, strengthen self-confidence and ensure that learners stay focused. There is overwhelming evidence that those who read more read better, write with a	**Access to resources** Access to books refers to the accessibility of quality literature in the classroom, school, community, home, and libraries. Availability of books does not mean just books, but, the content of the literacy materials need to match the learner's interest. Attention to using more strategies in constructing meaning from text.	Literature and research findings agree that access to books is not sufficient if the content does not match the learners' interest and learners are not given enough time to experiment with text. Apart from literacy teaching resources, the teacher is an important resource to facilitate literacy skills teaching. However, little attention has been given to rethinking the use of existing instructional resources, especially teachers, schools' most important and expensive resource. Teaching time is also a significant resource. . Given the significant resources devoted to instruction-free time, schools rethinking their use of resources should consider ways of creating longer periods of time for teachers to plan and develop curriculum together (Miles & Darling-Hammond, 1998).

	more acceptable writing style, have larger vocabularies with better control of complex grammatical constructions, and spell better than those who read less. Access to literacy resources enable learners to have access to a variety of knowledge across the curriculum		
	Looking at the Grade 3 classroom practice, literacy skills teaching cannot rely on the same text for learners with diverse levels of literacy development.

Consequently, Chard, Pikulski & Templeton (2000) note that the learner's literacy development mandate teachers to use six different types of texts namely; wordless books, predictable texts; | | |

	controlled high-frequency vocabulary texts; decodable texts; authentic literature as well as created, easy-to-read texts.		
Theme 2: Strategies for literacy skills teaching Category 4: Literacy skills and multiple intelligences	**Bringing together creativity and literacy** In most cases EFAL learners are faced with challenges as they are taught in a foreign language. Therefore, Aladrović Slovaček, Sinković & VIšnjić (2017) believe that teachers as one of the key role players in the education of the child are responsible to explore different methods and techniques that can teach Grade 3 EFAL learners how to solve the posed challenges	**Bringing together creativity and literacy** Creative literacy is the understanding of how to participate in the creative process and how to use creative thinking to see beyond what exists to what can be. The aspect of creativity in literacy skills teaching was illustrated during observation of PB2. Creative teachers perceive learners as	

	in a creative manner.	thinkers, they always leave room for uncertainty and the unknown, fostering the autonomy of learners in the process of showing considerable creative assurance, building on unexpected contributions and enquiries (PA2).	

5.8 Silences in the literature

Theme 2: Alternative strategies to teaching literacy skills

i) **Pre-literacy skills approach**

The research findings of this study revealed that teachers used a pre-literacy skills approach as another method to stimulate the learners' prior knowledge. A pre-literacy skills approach is important for decoding and encoding and to improve the learners' comprehension of new vocabulary. PC1 mentioned that she used pre-literacy to allow EFAL learners to use language verbally and to know the procedure to follow during the reading and writing process. Furthermore, it was obvious that through the pre-literacy skills approach teachers can integrate the phonics awareness along with sentence construction which assist learners in developing the speaking, reading, and writing skills.

However, in the literature, there is not enough evidence on the role of pre-literacy skills approach in the teaching of literacy skills which will be needed by learners in other subjects as well as in Grade 4 and onwards.

Theme 2: Alternative strategies to teach literacy skills

ii) **Phonics approach**

The findings to this study highlighted that providing a platform for learners to sound out letters in a word and to know the relationship between letters and sounds before reading, during reading and after reading was another strategy which made learning of new concepts memorable. In addition, the transferring of knowledge in other subjects becomes easier for EFAL learners. PC2, PB2 and PA1 declared that the learners' success in phonics knowledge helped them to solve problems involving higher order thinking. Literature does not say much about the significance of phonics awareness in relation to higher-order thinking. The research findings explicitly stated that phonics knowledge goes a long way in preparing learners to read and write meaningful sentences and be able to respond to questions which need learners to apply knowledge learned.

Theme 3: Classroom practice

The teacher as a role player in teaching literacy skills

i) **Inquiry-based teaching and learning**

Despite responding and asking lower-order and higher-order questions, inquiry-based approach help learners to learn to write about something they think about using the knowledge gained through the word study approach. It is practically

impossible for learners to write anything if their vocabulary knowledge is inadequate. PC1 highlighted that the word study approach help learners to gain content knowledge, to be able to know the sentence structure and write meaningful phrases. Literature comments on the role of the inquiry-based approach in developing learners' critical thinking skills, but does not discuss the approach or the role of inquiry-based in relation to the learners' success throughout his or her schooling career.

5.9 THE RESEARCHER'S ENDEAVOUR

According to Maree (2012) research study provides new evidence. Through research data will be collected and recorded while research methods will determine new understandings that can be contributed. The objective of the research study was to provide new information by setting research questions. Researchers define their paths to collect, record, and report new knowledge. The answering of the following research questions below was the main objective of this study.

What approaches do teachers use to teach literacy skills in the Foundation Phase?

To further understand the approaches to literacy skills teaching, the following sub-questions formed part of the researcher's effort:

- How do teachers integrate listening, speaking and writing when teaching reading in English as FAL?
- What kinds of resources do teachers use to teach literacy skills?
- Which factors are likely to influence the teaching of literacy skills?

After in-depth analysis and interpretation of the data collected during the semi-structured individual interviews, the researcher concluded the following.

In the South African context, teachers prefer pre-literacy skills teaching to EFAL learners with the hope that it will promote learner's literacy skills development. However, the research findings have proven that learners are unique, and have different learning needs. This statement is supported by the literature reviewed in Chapter 2.

The research findings of this study have proven that teachers experience different results in terms of learners' literacy and cognitive development. Apart from empowering learners with the ability to communicate and for academic success, teachers thought that literacy and cognitive skills development could also assist in contributing to the learners' socio-economic development as well as to capacitate them for public awareness and provide a critical reflection as a foundation for personal and social change.

According to the general aims of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement DBE (2011), "inclusivity is an essential part of the organisation, planning and teaching at each school, this could only happen if all teachers have a sound understanding of how to identify and address barriers" (DBE, 2011:5).

In contrast, Louw & Wium (2015) dispute the statement by stating DBE policies did not make any provisions for factors contributing to literacy skills teaching in EFAL classrooms such as, for example, illiterate parents, unemployment, poverty, overcrowding in the classrooms, child-headed families, ill-disciplined learners etc. In similar fashion, teachers justify that literacy skills guidelines as outlined by the DBE policy are complicated to teach especially if they have to deal with learners from diverse language backgrounds.

According to the research finding in this study, some learners might have benefited from approaches to literacy skills teaching whereas the others did not. Consequently, there are endless ways to control how approaches to literacy skills teaching will affect each learner.

5.10 A SHORT OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

According to literature reviewed in Chapter 2, substantial research was conducted on strategies to teach reading and other literacy skills elements to EFAL learners internationally and nationally. There are various reasons why different approaches to literacy skills instruction are implemented, ranging from learner's literacy and cognitive development to educational abilities as well as better academic results. Teachers in the Foundation Phase trust that approaches to literacy skills teaching is practiced to support learners who are struggling with the spoken and written English language and to decrease the number of persons who are illiterate as well as for scholastic success.

Teachers mentioned success of differentiation of approaches to literacy skills with regard to learner achievement. However, due to contextual factors such as large class sizes, lack of parental involvement, the language of learning and teaching, poor socio-economic factors, limited and unsuitable literacy resource, differentiation of approaches to literacy skills seemed to be a waste of time. The process of literature review on approaches to literacy skills teaching enabled me to gain substantial experience on how approaches to literacy skills must be implemented, teachers' views, and language acquisition theories as well as recommendations by DBE policies against the actual teaching practice of collected data.

To gain rich data, I conducted semi-structured individual interviews with six participating teachers in the Foundation Phase. Participants supported the effectiveness of approaches to literacy skills teaching to EFAL Grade 3 learners. Regardless of participants' beliefs, the inability to successfully practice approaches

to literacy skills teaching in English as FAL, became detrimental to learners' cognitive development.

Based on the research findings of this current study, teachers are struggling to work with learners from diverse language backgrounds, participants themselves are not from English speaking backgrounds and they argue that during their teacher-training at universities and teachers' colleges they were not thoroughly prepared to address the challenges that most learners are faced with in South Africa. According to participants' lived experiences, practising approaches to literacy skills teaching is helpful to learners who are struggling with the LoLT of the school (English). Based on literature reviewed on teaching, speaking, reading and writing, the research findings link to what other researchers have commented on similar topic.

5.11 THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK'S RAPPORT TO THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory outlined this study (Vygotsky, (1978). Vygotsky's ZPD aimed to establish human aspects of behaviour and cognition, he paid attention to the sociocultural development in the history of individual persons as well as collaborative development of people in the learning context (Wertsch, 1991).

It was also established from the research findings in this study that literacy skills development does not start in the classroom, learners come to school having a basic knowledge of listening and speaking skills learned from adults at home and in their communities.

Language is a tool through which the child is initially instructed on what to do and what not to do (Turuk, 2008). The child listens, imitates and simulates the actions of adults around him or her. Vygotsky refers to this initial social interaction as the inter-psychological plane (Turuk, 2008). At school, learners add what they have already learned at home to personal value, but this addition of knowledge does not just happen through imitating the teacher's competencies, according to Lantolf and Appel (1994), learning at school encompasses remembrance, analytical thinking and evaluation. Literacy skills teaching as pointed out by Williams and Burden (1997) must be supported by a set of values and beliefs about the community that is being constructed.

Additionally, Vygotsky's ZPD, view literacy skills learning as a concept which arises from the interplay between school teachers, learners as well as tasks provided. The ZPD theory is concerned with the experience and knowledge that the child brings to school (Turuk, 2008). According to Wertsch (1985) the learner' mental functions, that is, the cognitive skills which have not yet developed but are in the process of maturing. Grade 3 teachers have a key role to play in influencing the child's transition from inter-psychological to intra-psychological practices through the

implementation of various approaches to literacy skills teaching. Consequently, Shabani, Khatib, and Ebadi (2010) uphold that the learner's literacy development may not be isolated from his or her social and cultural context. In addition, teaching literacy skills is of key importance when competent individuals such as teachers, capable peers as well as parents participate in a learning dialogue, executing cognitive strategies that the tasks anticipate (Hedegaard, 2005). The research findings to this study are cemented by Vygotsky's ZPD theory of second language teaching and learning.

5.12 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.12.1 Limitations of the study

A qualitative research study in an interpretive paradigm has benefited the research findings to this study because it has attempted to uncover, interpret and understand participants' experience (Tuohy, Cooney, Dowling, Murphy & Sixsmith, 2013). However, due to the small sample size the study results do not claim wider generalisation to other contexts (Lam, 2015). On the contrary, Meyer-Parsons (2011) argues that both quantitative and qualitative, no educational research ought to be regarded as generalisable, because too many contextual variables can shape the findings. To illustrate, in qualitative research, a learner's poor literacy skills development indicates that the teacher is to be condemned yet, literacy test scores in quantitative measures fail to consider the classroom environment, learners' home life, and other crucial factors (Silverman & Crandell, 2010).

5.12.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, I have made the following recommendations for Grade 3 teachers in the Foundation Phase, mainstream primary schools as well as parents in advancing the investigation on approaches to literacy skills teaching to EFAL learners in Grade 3.

5.12.3 Recommendations for foundation phase teachers and schools

- The teacher's role is to facilitate literacy skills teaching through the use of various literacy skills approaches. Having learners from diverse language and cultural backgrounds, demands that teachers differentiate teaching strategies.
- Pre-literacy skills approaches might hold benefits for learners who are struggling to learn in English as First Additional Language, but differentiation of approaches in respect of literacy skills teaching can best accommodate all learning needs and intellectual abilities. However, there is a possibility that pre-literacy skills approaches might benefit some learners and at the same time delay the progress of others.

- Additional investigations are necessary to understand, the methods and ways which teachers can follow in teaching literacy skills through the use of multiple modalities without disadvantaging other learners (Turkan, Bicknell & Croft, 2012). South African schools have a role to play in the development of teachers on approaches to literacy skills teaching to EFAL learners. The local District facilitators have uncomplicated the CAPS policy guidelines. Policy makers need to make provisions for factors obstructing the teaching of literacy skills in the Foundation Phase.

5.12.4 Recommendations for parents

- It is the parents' task to ensure that they establish literacy rich homes, where learners can access literacy skills practices outside formal school structure. Limited access to literacy skills materials and support at home may delay the learner's progress in the development of literacy as well as cognitive skills.
- Parents should encourage young learners to visit school and public libraries to ensure their young children become acquainted to different reading materials.
- Family literacy should be encourage through the media to all families who lack the necessary reading materials and resources at home.
- Parents should collaborate with schools and form partnerships to help their young children to read. Parents should be encouraged to become "reading mums and dads" on a voluntary basis at school to support teachers in promoting literacy skills and the significance of their roles in the child's education.

5.12.5 Recommendations for further research

Based on analysed data and research findings to this study, parents have a key role to play in introducing learners to their inter-psychological plane as well as give continuous support to the education of their learners. Studies need to be conducted on parents' understanding of the importance of their role in the child's literacy progress as well as the methods which they can use at home to support literacy skills development.

In addition, investigations on parents' levels of literacy skill, as it was mentioned by most participants that parents are willing to help learners with school work, but the challenge was they didn't know where to start since the DBE policies were always changing and most parents seemed to be illiterate rather than ignorant. Moreover, further research on the cognitive development of learners is necessary in determining how approaches to literacy skills potentially affect a learner's ability to solve real problems by asking questions, analysing problems, conducting investigations, gathering and analysing data, making interpretations, creating explanations and drawing conclusions as suggested by Marx, Blumenfeld, Krajcik, Fishman, Soloway, Geier &Tal (2004).

5.13 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study aimed at investigating teacher's approaches to literacy skills teaching for English First Additional Language learners in Grade 3. A thorough literature study was conducted with the aim of discovering teachers' beliefs, practices as well as understandings of approaches to literacy skills teaching in EFAL contexts. I cannot generalise the findings of this study to a wider population, due to a small sample of participants. However, participating teachers believe that with appropriate implementation of approaches to literacy skills teaching, EFAL learner's literacy and cognitive skills may improve significantly.

5.14 SUMMARY

In this chapter (Chapter 5) I presented my understanding based on research findings. The research findings were outlined with reference to Vygotsky's ZPD theory of language acquisition (Vygotsky, 1978). Lastly, recommendations and limitations to this study were discussed.

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7. LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: Letter to the school principal [4]

Appendix B: Letter to participating teachers [5]

Appendix C   Letter to parents of Grade 3 learners [6]

Appendix D: Permission from GDE to conduct research

Appendix E: Classroom Observation Checklist

Appendix F: Semi-structured interview schedule

Appendix G: Transcription of semi-structured interviews

APPENDIX H: Example of resources used

Appendix I: Example of resources used

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[4] Signed documents not included for anonymity and confidentiality reasons, as they contain participant names and signatures

[5] Signed documents not included for anonymity and confidentiality reasons, as they contain participant names and signatures

[6] Signed documents not included for anonymity and confidentiality reasons, as they contain participant names and signatures

LETTER TO REQUEST PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN PRINCIPAL'S SCHOOL

RESEARCH TITLE: Approaches to the teaching of literacy skills to English First Additional Language learners in Grade 3

Dear Principal

I am a student at the University of Pretoria, presently enrolled for my Master's degree in Early Childhood Education, Faculty of Education, I hereby wish to request permission to conduct research at your school.

The purpose of this study is to investigate and understand teachers' interpretation of approaches to literacy skills teaching in the Foundation Phase. A gap in South African schooling literature exists with regard to the benefits and limitations of literacy skills approaches in the South African schooling system. The study will address the controversy surrounding teacher practices of approaches to literacy skills teaching that creates a difference of opinion among teachers, parents, policy writers, researchers and even learners.

Education research and literature provides several ideas and research findings on approaches to literacy skills teaching in English and its influence on English First Additional Language (EFAL) learners as well as learner cognitive development, however, a lack of concrete proof in support for teachers is present. The existence of educated opinions and credible theories might enable stakeholders in education to form a deeper understanding of implementation of various approaches to the teaching of literacy skills means with regard to EFAL and learner's cognitive development. The aim of this study is to provide teachers, parents, principals and policy writers with new and present information on approaches to literacy skills teaching in Grade 3 EFAL and the effects thereof on learner cognitive development as viewed by the teachers who implement it, within a distinguishable South African context.

The aim of this study is to provide teachers, parents, principals and policy writers with new and predominant information on approaches to literacy skills teaching and evolution in the Foundation Phase and the effects on learner language acquisition as well as cognitive development as viewed by the teachers as practitioners, within an identifiable South African context.

This research study will involve a semi-structured individual interview with teachers of your school. The individual interview will be conducted at your school (with permission), as it suit the teachers. The interview will be recorded and transcribed by me for analytic purposes.

The interview will not last longer than 1 hour. The data gathered will be treated with the strictest confidentiality, and used only for the purpose of this research study.

Find attached a copy of the interview schedule.

Participation is completely voluntary, with participants being able to withdraw from the research study at any time, should they wish to discontinue. The identity of the participants and school will be protected, and handled confidentially by me and my research supervisor's, for confidentiality purposes. No identifying information would be shared. Upon completion of the research study, the outcomes and finalised thesis will be stored at the University of Pretoria, as well as sent to you electronically, providing valuable evidence subject to your specific school, teachers and learners.

Should you allow me to conduct this research study at your school, please complete the consent form that is attached. For any questions or uncertainties, do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor via the information given below.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

S.D. SIBANDA (Researcher)   DR. R.VENKETSAMY (Supervisor)

E-mail address: Email address:

mohau2009@live.co.za   roy.venketsamy@up.ac.za

Faculty of Education

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Appendix B: (2 pages)
Participants' letter of consent

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REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

RESEARCH TITLE: Approaches to the teaching of literacy skills to English First Additional Language learners in Grade 3

Dear Teacher

I am a student at the University of Pretoria, presently enrolled for my Master's degree in Early Childhood Education, Faculty of Education. I would like to request you if you would agree to participate in a research study I will be conducting.

The purpose of this study is to investigate and understand teachers' understanding of approaches to literacy skills teaching in the foundation phase. A gap in South African literature exists with regard to the benefits and limitations of literacy skills teaching approaches in the South African schooling system. The problem this study will address is the argument surrounding various strategies to teach literacy skills that creates difference of opinion among teachers, parents, policy writers, researchers and even learners.

Education research and literature provides several ideas and research findings on approaches to literacy skills teaching in English and its influence on English First Additional Language learners as well as learner cognitive development, however, a lack of concrete proof in support for teachers is present. The existence of educated opinions and credible theories might enable stakeholders in education to form a deeper understanding of implementation of various approaches to the teaching of literacy skills means with regard to EFAL and learner's cognitive development. The aim of this study is to provide teachers, parents, principals and policy writers with new and present information on approaches to literacy skills teaching in Grade 3 EFAL and the effects thereof on learner cognitive development as viewed by the teachers who implement it, within a distinguishable South African context.

What does participation entail?

- One semi-structured individual interview between the researcher (as interviewer) and teacher.
- The questions to be discussed will be pre-set.
- Every participant will have the opportunity to answer the questions according to their own point of view – feel free to answer honestly and express your opinion. Your opinion is the reason for this project.
- The interview will be recorded, where one person will speak at a time.
- Please note that you cannot be identified based on the answers you provide – no personal information would be requested from you.
- The interview (with permission from your principal) take place at your school, at a time that will suit all participants.
- The interview will not last longer than 1 hour.
- The interview will not interfere with planned school activities.
- You as participant may discontinue the project at any time, should you wish to do so.
- Your answers and opinions will be kept anonymous – so please share as much information as you feel comfortable with.

Your participation in this research study will enable other educators and policy writers to better comprehend what teachers are dealing and struggling with. Please know that your participation is completely voluntary and that you may withdraw from the study at any time if you choose to. The research findings will upon completion of the study will be shared with the school principal. Remember that you and your school will not be mentioned, but referred to by pseudonyms such as Participant Nr.1, Nr. 2 as well as School A, School B and School C.

In the transcription of the recorded data, written research report and other possible academic communication, pseudonyms for all participants will be used and no other personal information would be mentioned. The information you choose to share will only be used for academic purposes, leading to the probability of being published in an education related research journal. If you agree to participate in this research study, please fill in the consent form provided.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or my research supervisor at E-mail addresses given below.

Yours sincerely

MS SD. SIBANDA (Researcher)   DR R. VENKETSAMY (Supervisor)

E-mail address: E-mail address:

mohau2009@live.co.za   roy.venketsamy@up.ac.za

LETTER OF CONSENT: PARENTS

Dear Grade 3 parents

RE: Provision of informed consent for learners to take part in study

I am a registered Master's Degree student at the University of Pretoria. The proposed title of my study is "***Approaches to the teaching of literacy skills to English First Additional Language (FAL) learners in Grade 3***". The focus of my research is to investigate approaches to literacy skills teaching in English as First Additional Language among Grade 3 learners. Your school, with specific reference, Grade 3 teachers, has been approached to participate in the study.

For this study, I will observe Grade 3 teachers while teaching literacy skills in English as FAL. I will particularly observe whether teachers' understanding of the theory to teach literacy skills in English as FAL meets their classroom practice. Grade 3 learners will act as secondary participants during the observation of the Grade 3 teacher teaching literacy skills. Learners would be expected to go about in the same manner as all other lessons taught. I will however observe learners' response as a way of observing the teacher's approaches to literacy skills teaching in English as FAL. Please note that the school's name as well as your child's identity, will remain confidential at all times.

Participation in this activity is voluntary. Choosing not to allow your child to take part in the lesson, will not disadvantage you or your child in the school environment in any manner. Your child is free to withdraw from the study at any point. You are most welcome to contact me or my supervisor, Dr R. Venketsamy, if you wish to know more about the study. The contact details are supplied below.

S.D. SIBANDA (Researcher)   DR. R.VENKETSAMY (Supervisor)

E-mail address: Email address:
mohau2009@live.co.za   roy.venketsamy@up.ac.za

For administrative use only:
Reference no: D2017 / 174
enquiries: Dave Bunting 011 843 6503

GAUTENG PROVINCE
EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	22 July 2016
Validity of Research Approval:	22 July 2016 to 30 September 2016
Name of Researcher:	Sibanda S.D.
Address of Researcher:	3 Botha Road; Brenthurst; Brakpan; 1541
Telephone / Fax Numbers:	011 421 0157; 064 339 1064; 011 422 4135
Email address:	evshsd999@live.co.za
Research Topic:	Grade 3 teachers' views of English First Additional Language instruction to second-language learners
Number and type of schools:	THREE Primary Schools
Districts/HO	Ekurhuleni North and Gauteng East

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to the Principal, SGB and the relevant District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted. However participation is VOLUNTARY.

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher has agreed to and may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted.

CONDITIONS FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN GDE

1.   The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned, the Principal/s and the chairperson/s of the School Governing Body (SGB.) must be presented with a copy of this letter.
2.   The Researcher will make every effort to obtain the goodwill and co-operation of the GDE District officials, principals, SGBs, teachers, parents and learners involved. Participation is voluntary and additional remuneration will not be paid.

2016/07/25

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management ER&KM
6th Floor, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001

3. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The *Principal and/or Director* must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researchers may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.

4. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded by the end of the THIRD quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.

5. Items 5 and 7 will not apply to any research after being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.

6. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written consent from the SGBs, principals, educators, parents and learners, as applicable, before commencing with research.

7. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions, staff and/or the officers visited for supplying such resources.

8. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research title, report or summary.

9. On completion of the study the researcher must supply the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management, with electronic copies of the Research Report, Thesis, Dissertation as well as a Research Summary (on the GDE Summary template). Failure to submit your Research Report, Thesis, Dissertation and Research Summary on completion of your studies / project – a month after graduation or project completion – may result in permission being withheld from you and your Supervisor in future.

10. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.

11. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director/s and schools concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking, and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards

Dr David Makhado

Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 2016/09/75

APPENDIX E: CLASSROOM OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Component	Description	Coding
The classroom environment	• How is the classroom atmosphere? • How is the sitting arrangement? • Are there aspects that you find psychological or physiologically distracting? • How is it set up physically?	
Resources	• What kinds of resources are available? • Who is using those resources?	
Literacy skills activities and interactions	• What approaches did the teacher use to teach literacy skills? • Was there any activation of learners' prior knowledge? • Did the teacher provide opportunities for interaction between the teacher and the learner and amongst learners themselves? • Were all learners involved in the lesson? • Was there any integration of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills? • Did the lesson accommodate all learning abilities? • Questions asked – did they include higher order and lower questions?	
Adding Value to Literacy skills teaching	• Teacher's contribution to literacy skills teaching • Teacher 's competence • Content Knowledge • Teacher's attitude	
Factors influencing literacy skills teaching	• Factors at school • Factors at home • Socio-economic background • Learner cognitive development.	

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION NOTES

Data collection : Complete classroom observation notes	Coding
School **A** **B** **C** **Class:** **2** **2** **2** **Date:** **24 August 2017** **Lesson structure: Story reading aloud** An interesting lesson was observed in PA2 class, learners were involved in real-life issues, I enjoyed watching literacy activity in action. Learners were also excited, because they all contributed to the discussions and the play. The lesson encouraged learners to use language creatively. However, I also observed that not every learner was as active as it was expected. I think some learners' active participation was disturbed by the language of learning and teaching (English). Whenever, learners had challenges of saying a particular word in English, the teacher was there to scaffold cognitive development and literacy skills learning. What amazed me was the manner in which learners were organised. I think the teacher did not group the learners according to their abilities, rather she used mixed group abilities because in each group I observed that there was two or three outstanding learners who were able to lead the discussion about what they were going to say and write as their own script. The unfortunate part of the lesson was that most of the questions asked in school A were questions which needs learners to remember, recall facts from their previous knowledge. Teachers in School B, allowed learners to discuss the meaning of the words in the story. The lesson was though-provoking for learners. Teachers provide learners with the opportunity to interact with each other and with the text cognitively. **Resources used:** I observed English written word wall charts – which for me was inspiring incidental learning. The schools used different reading series such as the beehive scheme, new heights readers as well as English First Additional Language platinum reading books. However, other schools could not afford to purchase the	

reading series. I could see that teachers were creatively teaching literacy skills. I learned that using songs, when teaching literacy skills to English First Additional Language learners enhance the leaners' listening, speaking and reading skills.

The use of sentence strips provide learners with the opportunity to learn how to write correct sentences and motivates them to read and construct own meaningful sentences.

Factors influencing literacy skills teaching

I picked up that, low socio-economic status of the school did not stop teachers from developing learners' literacy skills. Teachers brought toys, empty packets and packaging of food, as another of enhancing learners' vocabulary in an additional language.

Due to the fact that teaching and learning was done in English as First Additional Language, most learners seemed to be appeared to have challenges with comprehension. However, I observed that teachers in some instances were using gestures to ensure that all learners access knowledge equally. As a result, lack of resources did not much effect on learners' literacy skills development.

APPENDIX F: SEMI-STRUCTURED INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

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1. **How do you (as teachers):**

   a. Define literacy skills?

   b. Understand English as FAL?

   c. Believe literacy skills teaching can be enhanced?

---

2. **What approaches do you as a teacher use when teaching literacy skills to EFAL Grade 3 learners?**

---

3. **How do teachers view the literacy skills teaching in English as FAL?**

   a. What do you understand by literacy skills integration in English as FAL to be?

   b. Are learners born with the ability to listen, speak, read and write, or should this skills be taught to them?

---

4. **What factors are likely to influence the teaching of literacy skills in English as FAL?**

   a. Factors at school?

   b. Factors at home?

   c. Socio-economic background?

   d. Learner cognitive development?

---

5. **How do teachers influence the teaching of literacy skills to Grade 3 EFAL learners?**

APPENDIX G: TRANSCRIPTION OF SEMI-STRUCTURED INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Date	
Time of interview	13h30
Interviewer	Sophie Sibanda
Interviewee code	PA1, PA2, PB1,PB2,PC1,PC2
Interview question and response	

1. How do you as (teachers): **a. Understand by literacy skills?** *"I acknowledge that CAPS policy prescribed four literacy skills which must be taught daily in English as FAL". "My understanding of literacy skills is that learners need to be able to read, write speak and do as well as understand written information on the internet". "Literacy skills includes listening, speaking, reading and writing. It is therefore very important for learners to listen to the language first before they can try to speak. I think approaches to literacy skills teaching has to involve the four skills that I have mentioned, for example when I read a story to the whole class, they all listen, I ask questions about a paragraph read, learners respond using language and what they already know and heard in the story." So reading aloud to learners is good because I automatically combine listening, speaking reading and writing unconsciously, but that is what I normally do in my class". "Creating opportunities for learners to listen, speak, read and write during a reading lesson can enhance the learners' cognitive skills".* **b. Understand English as First Additional Language?** *"In my opinion, learners who access their education in English as First Additional Language, their mother tongue is different from English". Learning in English as FAL means teaching literacy skills in English to learners who have a different home language other than English". "For me English as FAL means a language that is an additional language to learners". "In order for learners to be competent in English, it means that learners must in my class must have lots of opportunities to listen, speak, read and write in English".* **2. In your opinion do you believe that EFAL learners' literacy skills can be enhanced?** *"I think literacy skills can be enhanced through shared reading, group reading, reading aloud, and teaching vocabulary teaching". "Word recognition, word identification, language structure and language use during reading can enhance learners' literacy skills". "Teaching phonics through play, using toys, play shopping, singing songs,*	

rhymes and role playing story read can enhance literacy skills". I believe that acting out a story, retelling, dramatize and use stories based on posters.

3. What approaches do you use when teaching literacy skills to EFAL Grade 3 learners?

"Shared reading is an approach that I use to teach literacy skills, I model good reading, speaking to my Grade 3 learners accompanied by gestures and pictures to clearly explain difficult words". For me reading aloud a story gives learners guidance, because with reading aloud learners get exposure to interesting books and they get the chance to engage in a discussion, arguing about what they think is the correct answer". "My learners are from different language background and cultures. As a result, learners bring different intellectual abilities. I use alphabets, word wall, learners play mind games allowing them to actively interact with each other, with me as well as with the story read".

4. How do you view the teaching of literacy skills to Grade 3 learners in English as FAL?

"Teaching listening, speaking, reading and writing is good because, in the CAPS policy it is mentioned that learners must know how to interpret spoken English". "For me, literacy teaching in English as FAL is challenging for some teachers and learners because , these days in our classes learners are from different language background and some of the learners were not exposed to English at all during Grade R-2, it becomes difficult to teach such learners". Teaching in English as FAL a problem for me and for the learners because I cannot speak proper English, as a result I avoid teaching things like phonics because the manner in which I sound letters in my mother tongue differs from English sounds". "in my opinion teaching literacy in English as FAL needs too many resources especially if English is not a mother tongue for learners and teachers". Eish, Ya . . . teaching in another language challenges me and the learners – I turned to code – switch using the learners language to make them understand, but this does not work effectively all the time as some learners speak languages which I cannot speak myself, so those learners are at risk – and are disadvantaged if teaching literacy skills will only happen in English".

a. What does integration of literacy skills mean in a reading lesson?

"Before reading the story to or introducing a new topic I activate learners' prior knowledge, ask them questions about what they know what they remember and what they think they know about the topic. When I do that I want to make certain how much they know about the topic, concept or the title of the story". Listening and speaking automatically is there". "During the story reading or in the middle of the story or the new concept, I allow discussions amongst peers, and between the learner and the teacher" "There is no were where I can teach anything without writing on a chalkboard for learners to read

and talk about". "Through daily activities I provide my learners with the opportunity to develop each skill almost daily. Listening, learners listen to me as I present the lesson, they listen to instructions given, to songs and to one another in pair or group activities. Listening is done every day. Speaking (pronunciation is practiced during English literacy lessons, retelling stories, greetings and dialogue. Reading (written grammar skills, flash cards instructions and written texts. "Writing (fill in the blank spaces, sentences, sight or experiences).

"I teach all the skills, concepts to develop comprehension, writing and communication skills that will help them to be successful citizens who are literate". "Teaching literacy skills in EFAL takes place from the known to the unknown for example I use street names when I teach about direction because I believe learners see the street names every day" "For me I believe teaching literacy skills in EFAL becomes easier when I use themes , as learners can relate and refer to previous knowledge".

b. Were learners in your class born with the ability to listen, speak, read and write or should the skills be taught to them?

" I think learners imitate the adults, they listen to the manner in which adults speak, and do their own talking" Yes learners have the ability to listen , speak but reading and writing is something that needs to be taught to them". "There is no way that learners can be born with the ability to read and write , yes speaking and listening I agree, otherwise there is no need for schools". The ability to listen, speak, yes, learners are born with those but reading and writing and understanding spoken language I think must be taught to them using resources to help in teaching the skills".

5. **Which factors influence the teaching of literacy skills to Grade 3 3 EFAL learners?**

   a. **Factors at school?**

"My concern is the syllabus completion, I think it contributes to the failure rate, and it appears as if policy makers do not see that as a challenge, and a disadvantage for learners who are struggling"

"Learners bring to school different experiences, knowledge and skills which I need to consider when planning lessons". Factors at school involve the language of learning and teaching - influence the teaching of literacy skills to EFAL Grade 3 learners because the learners are not speakers of English, were not exposed to English in Grade R – 2, they just came to Grade 3 and be taught in English". "I would say the teaching resources, are written in English, then I must teach them to read in a language that is not their mother tongue". In my school the availability of resources influence the teaching of literacy skills to Grade 3 EFAL learners – because as you can remember that, learning in a language that is not your mother tongue requires lots of variety of resources".

"Because the school cannot have all the resources needed, I bring old toys, magazines and newspapers as well as empty packets and containers of food to create a literacy corner in my class and to expand the learners' vocabulary" "I think we as teachers do not receive adequate support from stakeholders, for example parents, school management teams as well as the district. –teaching literacy skills to EFAL learners is challenging, therefore needs adequate support of books, coaching, collaboration and in-service as well as internal staff development on how to manage EFAL challenges in the classroom`, but unfortunately we get less support".

"Teaching all EFAL literacy skills in one lesson, it is time consuming because I must do a lot of code-switching, most of the learners don't speak the English language at their homes and they take time to grasp concepts". "Most learners understand the spoken English better than the writing in English, because during EFAL written activity, learners write answers in their home languages".

   b. **Factors at home?**

"In so many homes the challenge is poverty, neglect and parents illiteracy level. Though some parents may be illiterate, but they are eager to get involved, the challenge is the long hours they spent at work, because they leave learners unattended very early in the morning and come back from work at night when learners are asleep". "I think some learners are disadvantaged because either parents are sick or have passed away, as a result in many households learners are being taken care of either by the older sibling or the granny who is weak to can do anything". The challenges at home are too many and some of them teachers cannot overcome, because some parents, point blank do not want to get involved in the child's education, while others might have reasons of working far away or long hours". "For me I find it difficult to teach English literacy skills

to Grade 3 EFAL Learners without the support from parents".

c. Socio-economic background?

"Well teaching literacy skills to Grade 3 EFAL learners requires lots of available and relevant resources to support teachers and learners- things like a community library where learners can go to outside of school hours to get information and do their homework effectively". "The limited resources that the government and the department of education have provided are sometimes being burned when there are service delivery strikes in the community, which makes the very learners to suffer". The crime and too many taverns in the communities – disturb learners from doing homework".

d. Learner cognitive development?

Developing the child's cognitive skills does not only depend on teachers – parents also have a role to play, because working alone with the child is a burden because even at home what I do in class such as reading aloud , must also be done at home. Learners need parents to talk to them, to listen to stories told and to be read to". Listening to stories for enjoyment encourage and motivate learners to what to hear more, to talk about what was read and t want to read for themselves. Exciting and interesting stories develop learners' cognitive skills because they can predict, ask for clarity, summarise and question things". Exposing learners to books develop their cognitive skills, they will have adequate vocabulary which helps in reading and writing complex sentences independently". "Learners must be taught real English and practice speaking correct language because nowadays, most learners slang, they struggle to write full sentences without using slang language".

6. How do teachers influence literacy skills teaching to Grade 3 EFAL learners?

"I think teachers are the key role players to teach literacy skills through their competence, knowledge and experience". "Teaching literacy skills to EFAL learners needs a teachers to know the learners' learning styles, apply different teaching methods and strategies using a variety of teaching aids". Learners are unique and different, therefore one method of teaching is not going to address challenges and needs of all learners in my class". I use internet most of the time to get ideas on what to teach, to learn how other teachers in some countries deal with challenging situation like mine". Teaching literacy skills to EFAL Grade 3 learners is different from teaching in your mother tongue, because as a teacher I must be a lifelong learner myself so that I can impact positively on the learner' literacy skills learning myself so that I can impact positively on the learner' literacy skills learning". "During my university years, I never did English as First Additional language, I was taught English as Home language and how to teach it as home language so I would not comment that much about it, but I learned about the importance of learning languages in the early years.
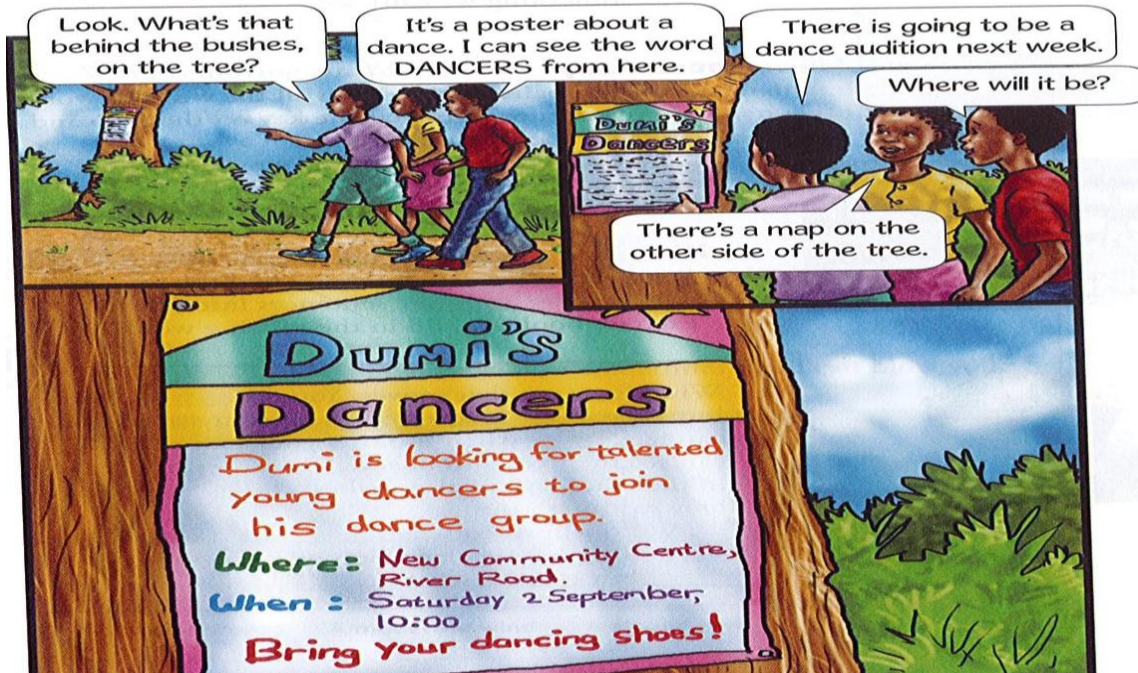
APPENDIX H: EXAMPLE OF RESOURCES USED
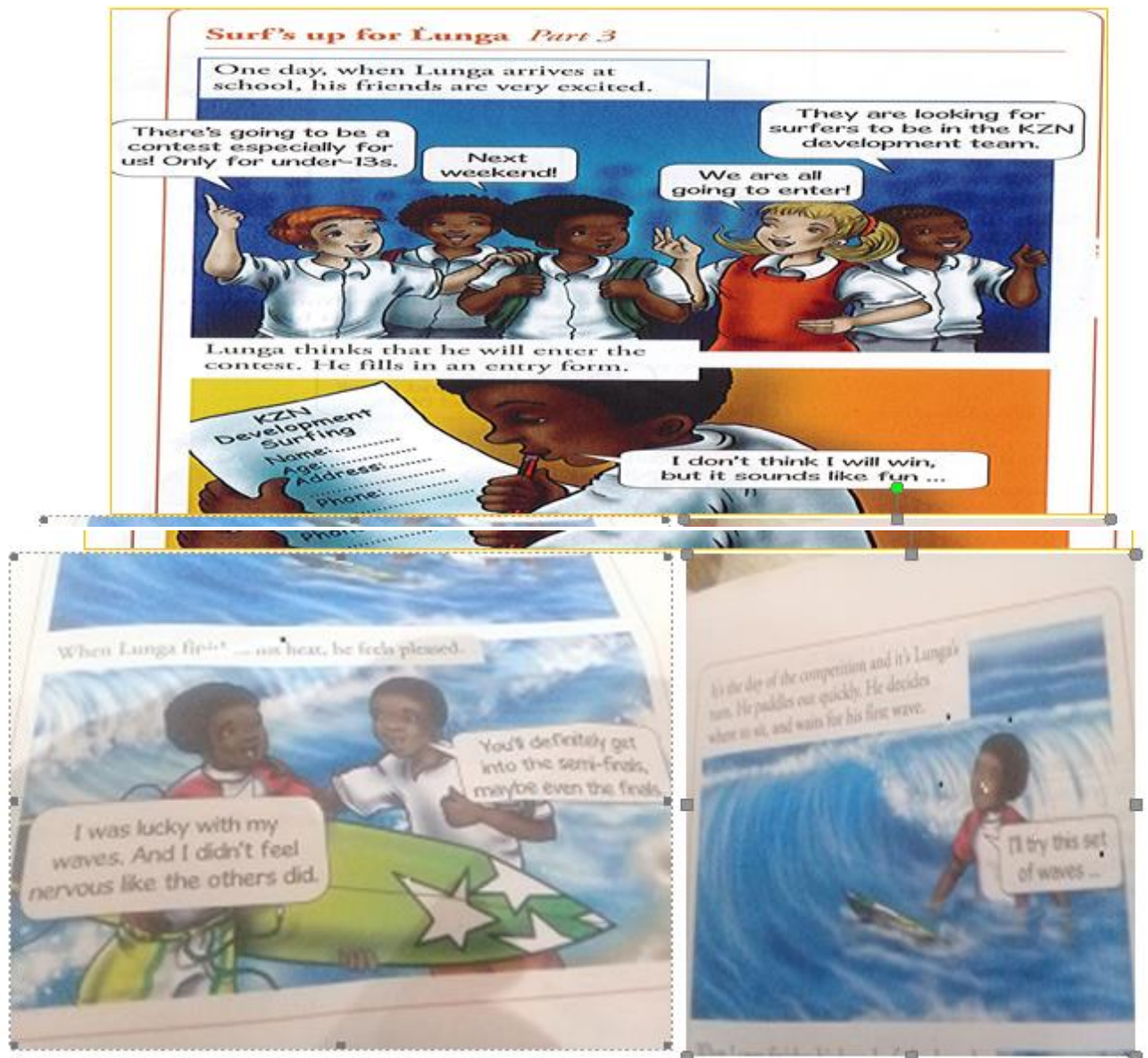
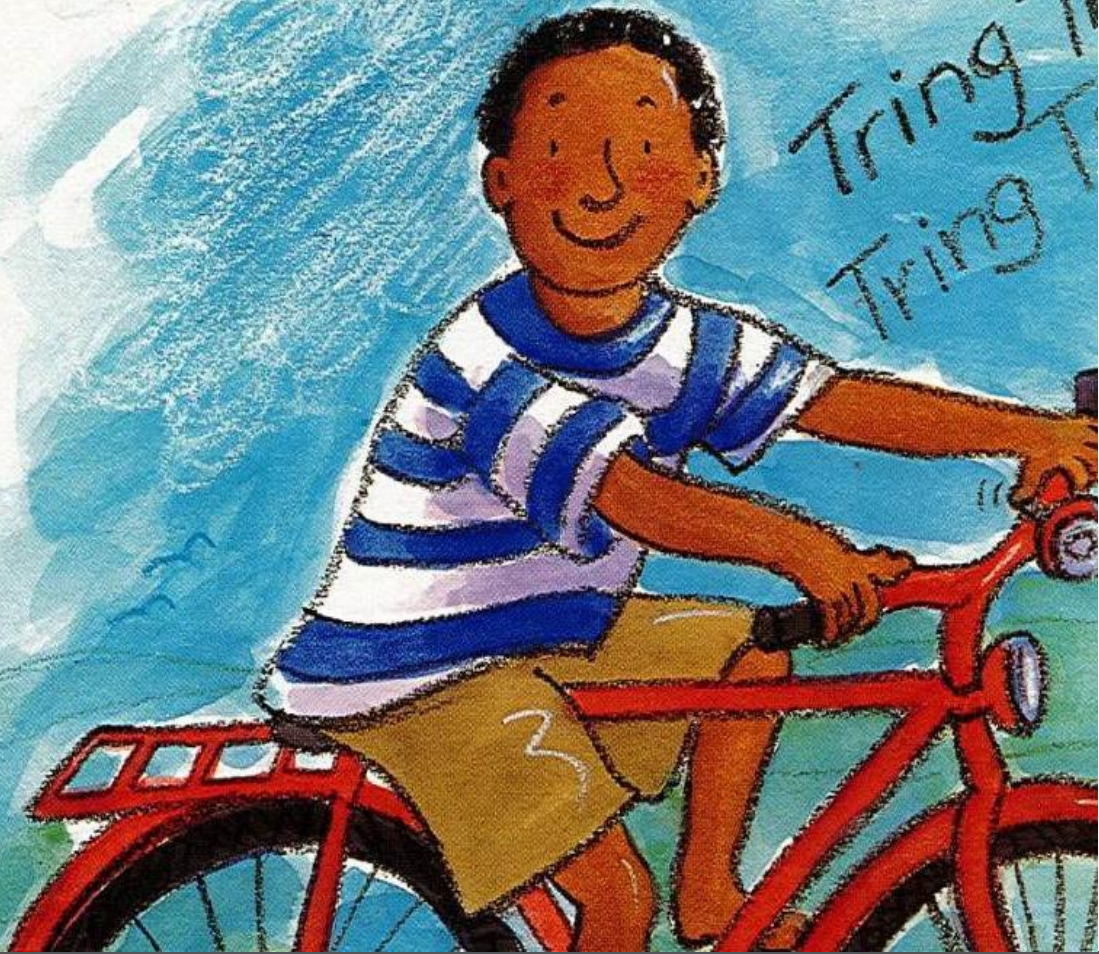An illustration representing directed activities related to text

A representation of classroom talk in reciprocal teaching

I Am Mangi

Now I pretend my bike is a train.
I am the train driver.

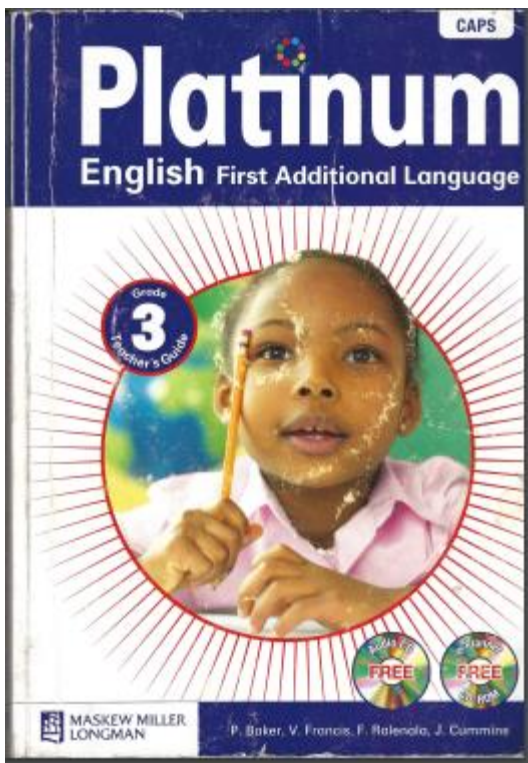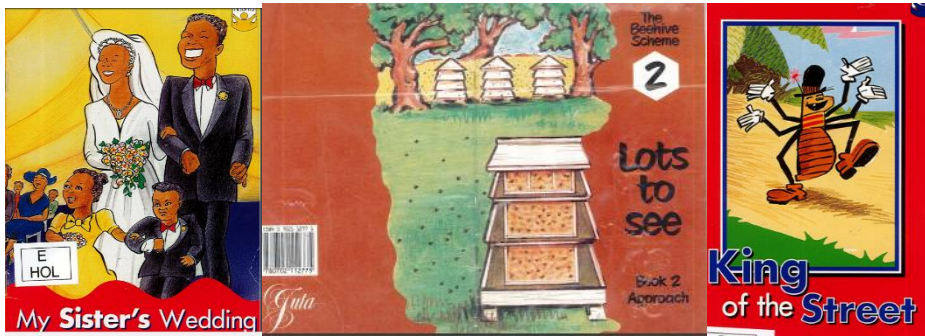I am driving my passenger to town.
I am driving very fast.

Now I pretend my bike is an ambulance.
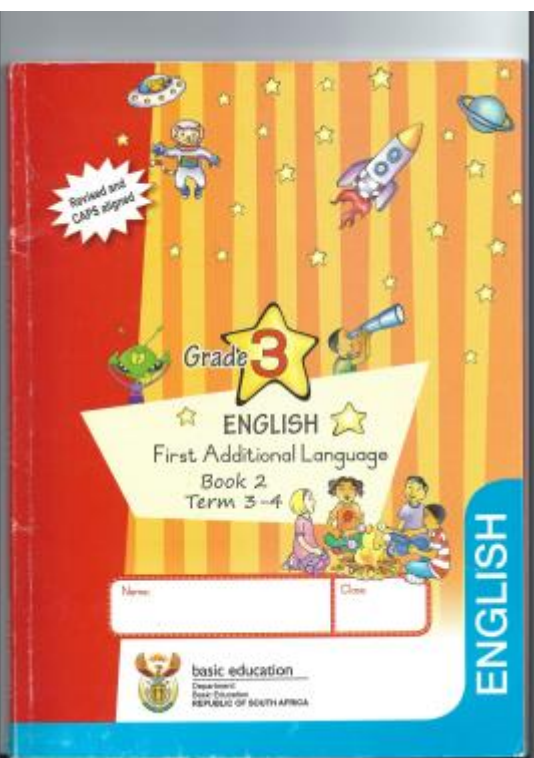I am the ambulance driver.

I am driving my patient to hospital.
I am driving even faster!

These are some of the examples of Graded readers participants used to scaffold literacy skills teaching.

Teacher's Guide   Department of Basic Education Workbook

II

Term 3 – Week 6 – 10

We go camping

Paste the stickers in the correct spaces.

Let's talk — Look at the picture and talk about what you see.

Let's read

Have you ever been camping? We are at a school camp in a game park and we are having a good time. We cook our food on a fire and we sleep in a tent. Tonight it is very, very dark and so we have to use our torches for light.

We hear the animal noises all the time. The owls hoot and the frogs and toads croak.

Ken and Nomsa want to follow the animal footprints to see if they can find a lion or an elephant. I hope that they don't find any lions near our tent.

Because it is a dark night we can see millions of stars shining through the trees.

We all sing "Twinkle, twinkle little star".

22

Let's write — Read the story and then answer the questions.

Where are the children?

How do they cook their food?

What do Ken and Nomsa want to do? Why?

Would you like to find a lion near your tent? Why?

What noises do they hear?

Circle the words in the word box that match the pictures.

Word work — Read the words and listen to the sounds. The sounds of the words in the blue boxes are different from the sounds of the words in the pink boxes.

bad	bed	ship	chip
fad	fed	shop	chop
lad	led	shin	chin
tan	ten	shun	chum

Let's do — Break up these words into their sounds. Then clap the sounds.

| different | elephant | shining |
| dif | fe | rent | | |

| animal | tonight | camping |

Let's write — Now write the words in alphabetical order.

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

1		4	
2		5	
3		6	

142