

Parent and teacher perceptions of communication and language development of toddlers

by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

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Faculty of Education

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SUPERVISOR:

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DECLARATION

I, Shezeen Suleman, hereby declares that this dissertation, "*Parent and teacher perceptions of communication and language development of toddlers*", is submitted in accordance with the requirements for the M. Ed Early Childhood Education degree at University of Pretoria. It is my own original work and has not previously been submitted to any other institution of higher learning. All sources cited or quoted in this research paper are indicated and acknowledged with a comprehensive list of references.



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August 2019



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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research study to my parents who always believed in me and made all of this possible. Thank you for your unwavering support and encouragement and for helping me to believe in myself when my spirits were low. I can hardly describe how blessed I am to have you both as my parents. My love and respect for you are never-ending and I am infinitely grateful for all that you do for me. To me, you are both perfect.

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“We’ve always defined ourselves by the ability to overcome the impossible.”

DECLARATION BY EDITOR

This is to testify that I, JS Wium (B.A. Hons Linguistics, UP, and Certificate: Editing Practices), edited the following dissertation paying close attention to all linguistic components of the original text. No edits were made to change the meaning of any sentences or passages written by the author.

PARENT AND TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT OF TODDLERS

by Shezeen Suleman

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

Magister Educationis

at the Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria.

Please note:

- i) Where referring to age or years, numbers below 10 were kept in number format;
- ii) To preserve the integrity of the raw data, transcribed quotations in Chapter 4 received minimal editing.

Signed



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Date

26 August 2019

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ABSTRACT

Early childhood development is a crucial factor in determining the later successes in a toddler's life. The active involvement of parents and teachers provide toddlers with the support and confidence to use language effectively early in their lives, which strengthens future development and communicative skills. In reality, parents and teachers often neglect opportunities to provide the support that toddlers rely on for their cognitive growth. Toddlers exposed to risk conditions – such as a lack of adult knowledge, education and stimulation – are likely to experience a language delay. Other influential factors include the levels of adults' education and families' socio-economic statuses. Six cases (toddlers) comprised the study's focal centre and were observed in their learning environments by the researcher. The parents and teachers of these toddlers captured photographs and agreed to be interviewed to share their perceptions of toddlers' developmental prowess. Thematic analysis of the obtained data enabled the formulation of themes and subthemes that were instrumental to the research questions and subsequent findings. Conclusions were based on similarities and differences with existing literature and data. The study participants – six parents of the toddlers (study cases) and three teachers at ECD centres – were aware that they are the toddlers' primary guides of communication and language development, and that they need to continually support and stimulate their toddlers to ensure progress. Although some participants' teaching styles and views differed from others, each displayed abilities to nurture their children's innate yearning to learn about languages and communication. The study finds that toddlers benefit most when they are in the company of responsive adults who encourage them to learn new words and sentences in a variety of stimulating and joyful ways. It is vital too that parents and teachers have access to information that relates to effective ways of supporting children in their quest to become capable communicators.

Key Terms: *Communication, Early childhood, Language development, Toddler.*

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CDS	Child-Directed Speech
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoH	Department of Health
DSD	Department of Social Development
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
MRQECCE	Policy of Minimum Requirements for Programme Leading to Qualifications in Higher Education for Early Childhood Development Educators
NCF	National Curriculum Framework
NDP	National Development Plan
NELDS	National Early Learning and Development Standards
NPC	The National Planning Commission
NPO	Non-Profit Organisations
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
ZPD	Zone of proximal development

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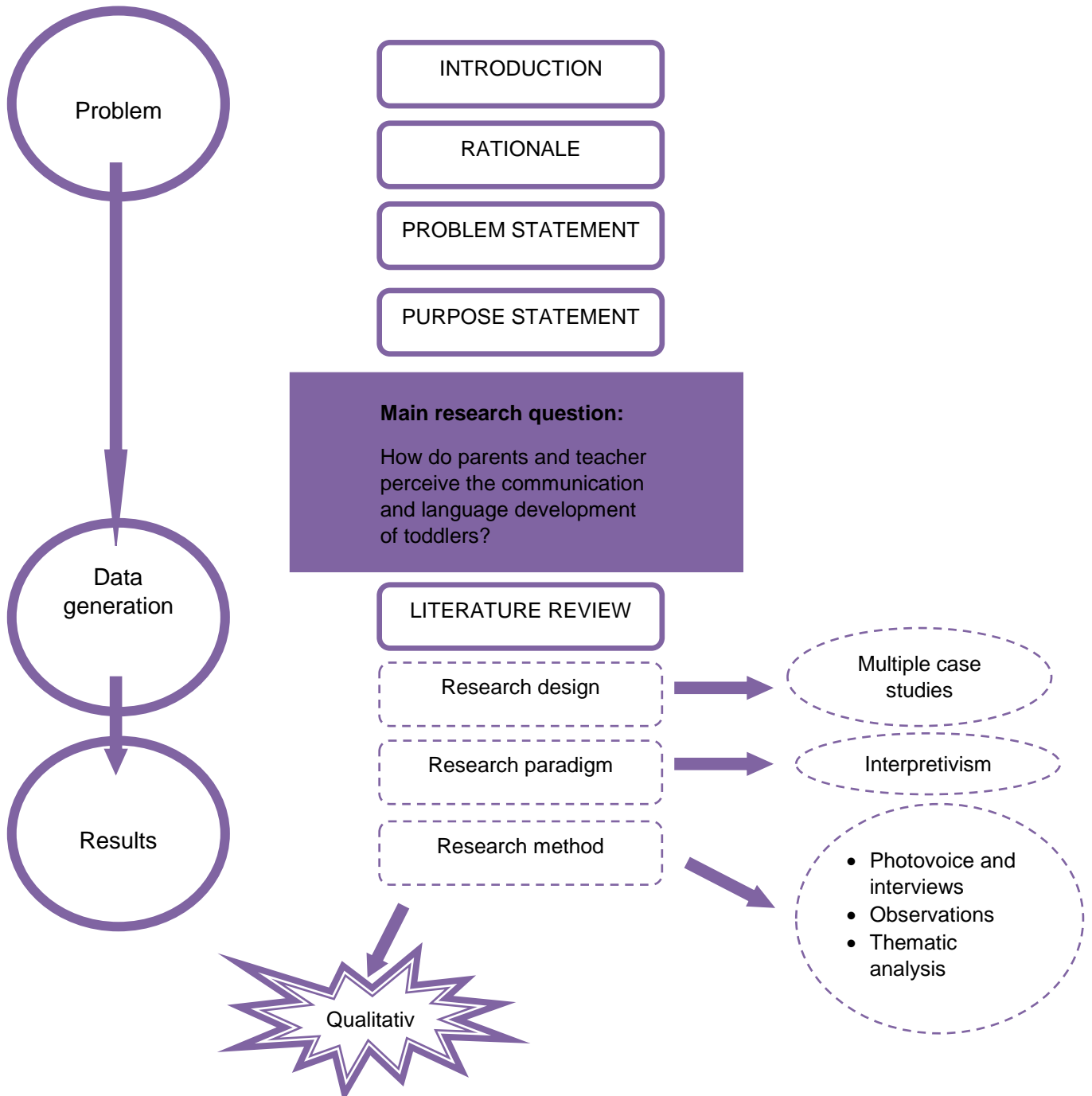
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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF STUDY

CHAPTER OVERVIEW



1.1 INTRODUCTION

The acquisition of language is one of the most astonishing achievements to occur during early childhood. Children master the sound system and grammatical aspects of their languages by the age of 5, acquiring a vocabulary that may comprise thousands of words in the process (Hoff, 2009). Toddlers are able to advance from hesitant single words to fluent sentences within a matter of months, and can increase their vocabulary rapidly by adding about six new words per day without any explicit instructions (Johnston, 2010). Early childhood years are crucial in a child's communication and language development. According to the National Curriculum Framework's guidelines for children from birth to 4 years old (DBE, 2015), adults need to make a special effort to *listen* to their children and to *interpret* what they say – and respond to it – if they want to guide toddlers to become good communicators. As children develop their communication skills largely through imitation, adults need to model such good communication habits for them.

With the introduction of the Policy of Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications in Higher Education for Early Childhood Development Educators (MRQECCE) (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2017), attention was given to the importance of training ECCE teachers for communication and language development of young children. Communication and language development of toddlers is, therefore, an exciting field for research.

The primary purpose of language is communication. Ideally, communication involves the learning all forms of languages and applying them in communication from the early stages onwards. Children progress in communication during the toddler phase through babbling, using keywords and expanding their vocabulary continuously. They are exposed to the written language from infancy by seeing McDonald's or Kentucky Fried Chicken signs and the writing on cereal boxes, for instance. Children's adeptness with written languages relates to the degree that their parents/practitioners/teachers expose them to printed texts and experiential learning through oral reading sessions (Johnston, 2010; Law, Charlton, Dockrell, Gascoigne, McKean & Theakston, 2017). As their vocabularies enlarge, toddlers can progress to forming complex sentences that uncover their literacy skills. Skilled guidance in the effective use of language from an early age will secure the level of communication

skills needed to thrive academically and socially in the future (O'Carroll & Hickman, 2012). This study seeks to understand the perspectives of parents and teachers in communication and language development of young children.

Language delay, characterised by late developmental milestone achievements, affects 5–8% of children, aged 4 to 5 (Ukoumunne, Wake, Carlin, Bavin, Lum, Skeat, Williams, Conway, Cini & Reilly, 2012). A study on language development, conducted with children between the ages of 8 months to 4 years, concluded that notably high levels of maternal education, vocabulary and socio-economic status influence children's language development. It further indicates that children from socially advantaged backgrounds are likely to have reached higher levels of language development in comparison to children from disadvantaged backgrounds (Law et al., 2010; Michael, 2013; Ukoumunne et al., 2012).

According to Michael (2013), early care and education professionals recognise that parental involvement in communication and language development strengthens a child's communicative prowess during the years before they enter school. Several households, however, lack an understanding of the types of experience they should provide. Their children, consequently, lose the opportunity to become sufficiently adept at using languages before entering school.

1.2 RATIONALE

Various research studies have been conducted regarding teachers' perspectives of language development; this element also lies at the core of this study. Some studies centred on the relationship between teachers' and parents' understanding of communication and language development and young children's language development. The results indicated that interaction between parents, teachers and toddlers directly enhanced children's communication and language development (Otto, 2014).

Early childhood teachers, therefore, play vital roles in providing opportunities for toddlers to develop their language competencies by establishing learning environments suited to language contexts. A toddler's language development, for instance, could be encouraged by a teacher's understanding of the importance of

verbal interaction. This situation illuminates the importance of parents as children's first teachers of language and communication methods.

Unfortunately, a lack of policies, research and examples for effective language development exists in many countries. English, generally, is valued in non-English speaking countries. Such countries may perceive English as a route to advanced living (Henning, 2012; Li & Rao, 2005). In South Africa, with its diverse population and multilingual society, policies regarding the languages of learning and teaching are still being contested (Atmore, Van Niekerk & Ashley-Cooper, 2012).

Considering my interactions with relatives who have young children, I concur with Rvachew (2010) who states that limited education, parental knowledge and stimulation can negatively affect a toddler's acquisition of communicative skills, resulting in academic delays. Awareness of language development thus ought to be nurtured in the public's consciousness. A parent's knowledge, teaching methods and financial resources concerning their toddler's development may differ from those close to them, depending on the respective ways their parents raised them.

The title of this study, *Parent and teacher perceptions of communication and language development of toddlers*, signifies the insight of parents' and teachers' views of exposure to various instruments, activities and experiences that may enhance a toddler's communication and language development (amongst other factors). By instigating the initial processes of acquiring knowledge that may assist parents and teachers in the future, this study ultimately aims to bolster knowledge and awareness levels relating to the major communicative elements involved in a toddler's language development. The intention is to strengthen the processes that begin in a child's early childhood years.

More research will assist in providing teachers and parents with the necessary insight and capabilities to strengthen a toddler's communication and language development. A toddler's family provides learning experiences and support towards their development and education, and an informed approach by parents will improve the odds of their children having sufficient communication skills before entering school (Michael, 2013).

A toddler's brain undergoes dramatic development during the first 3 years after birth. This allows them to gain the ability to think, speak and reason (Wittmer & Petersen, 2014). If parents do not nurture this early development, the architecture of the toddler's brain will be affected, impeding the child's development. Behavioural aspects of parental involvement, including frequent participation in learning activities, environments and materials that favour a toddler's language development, are explored. The quality of interaction between the caregiver and toddler are investigated in respect of the caregiver's vital role in supportive communicative interactions. Language learning occurs within the context of these communicative interactions. The quality of these interactions predicts subsequent language abilities (Levine, Strother-Garcia, Golinkoff & Hirsh-Pasek, 2016). These interactions begin at birth and continue throughout early childhood, influencing language and literacy development (Otto, 2014). Teachers, practitioners and parents are the main participants within this study.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to Howie et al. (2017), the National Development Plan (NDP), as stated in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), recognises that early childhood development is crucial for stimulation and success in a toddler's future life. Universal access should be provided towards early childhood development in the form of training for parents and guardians, and via information through various printed or online media outlets. Adults subconsciously speak to toddlers when they are amongst other adults, thereby commencing the toddlers' process of acquiring their linguistic competence in a unique way. This talk is commonly termed "baby talk" or child-directed speech (CDS), which is a universal phenomenon (Whyatt, 1995). Researchers have debated whether CDS constitutes a conscious manner of language teaching, or whether it is an adult's intuitive response to the effort of communicating with their toddlers at the commencement stage of language instruction (Otto, 2014).

Children progress in communication throughout the toddler years with babbling, saying keywords, whilst continuously expanding their vocabulary (Johnston, 2010). This originates through a mimicking of the vocalisation done by their parents. Babbling occurs at the age of 4 to 6 months and comprises duplicated sounds, such

as *ba-ba-ba-ba*, and involves fewer varied sounds with higher frequencies (Reich, 1986). A child's babbling develops an echoing quality at 8 to 10 months old. It is otherwise termed *echolalic babbling*. This babbling appears to echo the phonation and rhythm of an adult's speech, as if the child is entertaining a conversation (De Boysson-Bardies, 1999).

According to Rvachew (2010), learning to speak is among the most notable and important achievements during early childhood. Toddlers learn to talk through attempts at conversing with their parents and teachers. Subjectively, the quality of such 'conversations' becomes crucial during the process of language development (Whyatt, 1995). New learning instruments and experiences during the initial stages of language development can create new opportunities for social understanding, global knowledge and sharing of experiences, pleasures and needs. Young children who do not develop strong language and communication skills are less likely to become academically proficient at school (Gardner-Neblett & Gallagher, 2013). Toddlers' interactions with adults influence how they develop and learn. Parents and teachers who provide toddlers with sufficient language stimulation during their first years of life bestow improved language and communication skills on them. An improved literate environment stimulates children's tendency to read, which strengthens future language development (Garbe et al., 2016).

When toddlers are exposed to risk conditions – such as negative stimuli or lack of parental knowledge and feedback – then they will likely experience developmental and communication acquisition delays or disorders (Rvachew, 2010). When delays in communicative learning remain undetected, their social-emotional, educational, academic and interactive abilities with their environment are likely to be reduced, prompting long-term negative implications in psychological, financial and other terms (Van der Linde et al., 2015). Roberts, Burchinal and Durham's study (1999), involving 18–30 months old toddlers from low-income families, finds that children who grew up in more stimulating environments and responsive households have larger vocabularies, use more nouns and verbs and can, resultantly, utter longer sentences and phrases. Toddlers from less responsive and stimulating home environments lack those learning opportunities, which results in their deficient language development.

According to O'Carroll and Hickman (2012), the national and provincial assessment indicates a high percentage of children in South Africa who are unable to acquire basic literacy skills during their first 3 years at school. This is largely due to a lack or neglect of communications and language development processes. The cause of this circumstance is not confined to classrooms; it instead commences at birth. Most children in the country have access to formal schooling, but the problem remains that underprivileged children will be less successful in learning how to read and write.

When underprivileged children fail to reach their developmental potential, they have to suffer negative consequences concerning their growth, socio-emotional competence and cognitive skills (Vally et al., 2015). To provide the country's underprivileged children with a fair chance to read and write, assistance by foundations needs to be harnessed before they enter school (O'Carroll & Hickman, 2012). An innovative approach is required to negate many parents' assumption that all forms of acquisition and development commence in school. Parents need to be informed that early language development leads to later developmental successes (Dodici, 2002; O'Carroll & Hickman, 2012).

Conversely, in several South African communities, young children are enrolled in English preschools without them possessing prior knowledge of English (Du Plessis & Louw, 2008). In rural areas, teachers often 'smuggle' English into their teachings in the foundation phase. They perceive it as providing opportunities towards improved lives for the children, although it creates a challenging environment for the children (Henning, 2012). Parents from disadvantaged communities likely lack the knowledge, skills and resources to allow them to be contributors to the communication and language development of their child. In this study, I included toddlers from high, medium and low socio-economic societies.

1.4 PURPOSE STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVES

Language development and communication during a child's early years lead to improved levels of understanding, communication and academic wellness, which relate to future growth and success (Dodici, 2002; Howie et al., 2017; O'Carroll & Hickman, 2012). The purpose of this research was to understand the perceptions of parents and teachers relating to toddler's communication and language

development. It aimed to determine the factors that influence communication and language development of toddlers, and to explore what is known globally and nationally in those aspects. The research uncovered parents' and teachers' perceptions and knowledge about toddler's development, as well as the factors that influence communication and language development of toddlers.

The significance of this study is found in the promotion of early communication methods and language development skills. To achieve that, the research had to examine the skills and knowledge that toddlers acquired during the early childhood years. The study included a focus on the contributions made by parents and teachers in relation to their home and classroom settings, their understanding of their surroundings through social structures and roles, and how they perceived each other's roles concerning their toddler's communication and language development.

The study aimed to raise parents' awareness of the importance of their communicating efforts with their toddlers, and of methods to strengthen their language development. The research, therefore, needed to find answers to relevant questions that relate to toddler communication and language development. The study hence included elements of support strategies, the potential of parents and teachers to improve responsive parenting and teaching techniques, storytelling, shared book reading and responsiveness. All of those aspects can be utilised to benefit a toddler's language development and socio-emotional wellbeing (O'Carroll & Hickman, 2012). The research also examined strategies to train parents and teachers to engage in social interactions with toddlers, and to encourage them to vocalise frequently and produce sophisticated vocalisations in the presence of their children (Law et al., 2017).

I formulated the following guiding primary and secondary research questions:

1.4.1 Main research question

How do parents and teachers perceive the communication and language development of toddlers?

1.4.2 Secondary research questions

To comprehensively answer the main research question, I formulated the following secondary questions:

- How do parents perceive the communication and language development of their toddlers?
- How do teachers perceive the communication and language development of their toddlers?
- Which factors influence communication and language development of toddlers?

The objectives of the research were to:

- Explore how parents and teachers perceive the communication and language development of their toddlers;
- Enhance the field of research by establishing the factors that influence the communication and language development of toddlers;
- Raise awareness among parents and teachers regarding the importance of strengthening the communication and language development of their toddlers.

1.5 CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

Communication: This is the process of transmitting information through speech, signs, cues or gestures as discussed throughout the study. It also refers to the understanding between two individuals (Lunenburg, 2010; Wittmer & Petersen, 2014). In this study, it involves respective understanding between toddler and their parent and teacher respectively.

Language development: This is the process of young children progressing in understanding and communicating language throughout their early childhood years (Rvachew, 2010), as assisted by parents and teachers who continuously converse with them.

Toddler: A toddler is a child between 12 and 36 months old (Colson & Dworkin, 1997; DBE, 2009). During this stage, a toddler characteristically strives to become independent while their understanding and use of words increase rapidly. Toddlers

are also referred to as children in this study. The sample population consist of toddlers from 18 to 36 months old.

Early childhood: Early childhood comprises the beginning stages in human development and mainly includes toddlerhood, the following preschool stage and the first 3 years at primary school – from birth to 8 years of age (UNICEF, 2001).

1.6 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

This section introduces published views on parent-toddler and teacher-toddler interactions as well as relevant national and global strategies to support toddlers' development. These elements will be extensively discussed in Chapter 2.

1.6.1 Parent and toddler interaction and communication

Language is acquired through interaction within the environment (Otto, 2014). The home learning environment is vital during a child's first 3 years, according to the European Union High Level Group of Experts on Literacy (2012). The quality and quantity of stimuli and interactions in their environments significantly influence their language development. The interaction between a toddler and the primary caregiver – the most influential agent of language development – allows the toddler to express his feelings about his daily experiences, which illustrates the importance of parents' and guardians' involvement in the exchange of information via spoken language. 'Experience-dependent creation synopses' reaches its highest level during the first 3 years of a child's life. The more words introduced to a toddler, the more they learn. The quality of parent-toddler interaction influences the ability of toddlers to learn by affecting their self-esteem, motivation and general knowledge. Otto (2014) and Law et al. (2017) confirm that an adult's responsiveness to a toddler's behaviour (verbal and non-verbal) fulfils an important function in a toddler's early social development. Parents should be the initial teachers of toddlers and supporters of their development by being responsive, thus enhancing their children's language and communication abilities. Garbe et al. (2016) agree that parents represent an important commencement factor in communication and language learning. This is more extensively discussed in Chapter 2.

1.6.2 Teacher and toddler communication and interaction

South African teachers are perceived as crucial participants in children's acquisition of English, widely used as the language of teaching and learning (Du Plessis & Louw, 2008). This is a consequence of children spending several of their waking hours with English-speaking teachers, who guide the children's experiences and help to shape their social, cognitive and language development (Henning, 2012). Environmental factors influence the brain and its structures. Some negative factors include stress, disease, under-stimulation and malnutrition. Children with disadvantaged backgrounds are the most vulnerable to risk conditions, such as psychosocial (violence, trauma, stress) and biological (HIV/AIDS, poor nutrition, childhood growth stunting) conditions. In many cases, teachers are considered as second parents, which mean that their interaction with toddlers is also very important.

1.6.3 Communication and language development globally

Published research emphasises the importance of developing communicative skills in a child before they enter school and throughout their early years. English is often prized as a valuable asset in non-English speaking countries (Li & Rao, 2005). For many, it denotes a route to an advanced style of living. In some countries, curricula are designed to promote cognitive and social development among learners and may include strategies like learning through participation. For instance, Italian and Finnish specialists have developed teaching policies promoting early language and communication. This steered new professional development campaigns in Italy. Communication and language development of various countries are discussed in greater depth in Chapter 2.

1.6.4 Communication and language development nationally

A lack of clear policy, research and examples of language development techniques exists in South Africa. Many South African parents enrol their children in urban schools where English is the only language of learning and teaching (LoLT) (Du Plessis & Louw, 2008; O'Connor & Geiger, 2009). English is generally perceived in non-English speaking countries to denote a higher standard of living (Li & Rao,

2005). According to the MRQECCE (2017), qualified ECD practitioners should be capable of using at least one South African official language as the LoLT and able to have a basic conversation in one other South African official language. The South African context is further discussed in Chapter 2.

1.7 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study will incorporate the variables in a child's environment that determine and control verbal behaviour. For this purpose, Vygotsky's theories appear to be the most applicable. The conceptual framework will hence revolve around Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD).

Vygotsky (1986) emphasises the importance of the social environment, allowing a social and cultural driven process for language development. The family is an important element in the language-learning environment (Vygotsky, 1978). Several theories and arguments over the years relate to the language development of children and the contributions of various external stimuli (Vygotsky, 1978). The association between language acquisition and human behaviour became the source of various disputes (Chomsky, 1981; Piaget, 1926; Skinner, 1957; Vygotsky, 1980).

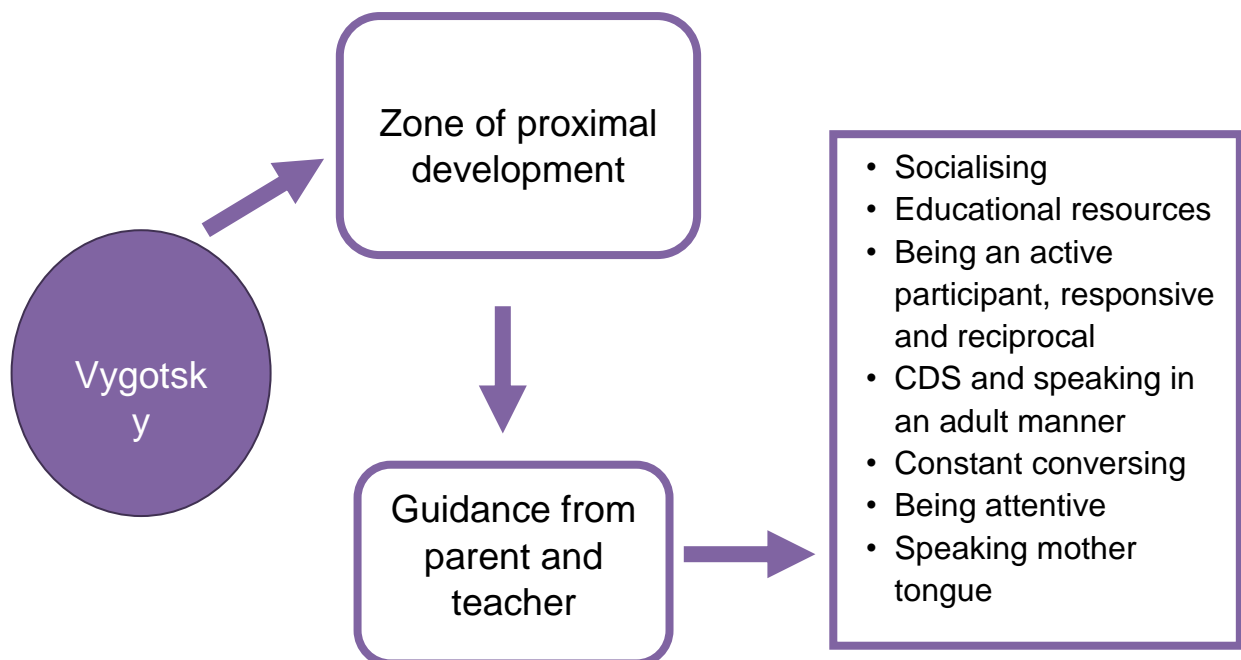


Figure 1.1: Development theories

Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development centres on a child's interaction with adults (Vygotsky, 1978). As shown in Figure 1.1, it embraces all the stages from children's actual developmental levels and what they know to the levels of potential development as determined by problem-solving skills and learning from adult guidance. Vygotsky argues that children's language development occurs during social interactions.

1.8 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research design, research paradigm and research method is introduced in this section and further explained in Chapter 3.

1.8.1 Research design

A research design is a plan that moves from its philosophical assumptions to strategies that include participant selections, data generation and data analysis (Maree, 2016). While selecting a research design, the researcher must be mindful that their ontology, epistemological perspectives, research skills and practices all influence the data generation methods. The research design serves as a guide and framework for planning and implementing the study, which includes analytical strategies for obtaining valid answers to the research questions.

I used a non-experimental method as part of the qualitative approach towards an in-depth understanding of cases (toddlers) in their real-world contexts (within ECD centres). As a qualitative researcher, I ventured into the toddlers' natural environment. This made an understanding of the research subject possible, which resulted in insights into innovative education techniques relating to toddlers' real-world behaviour, and how it all relates to their communication and language development. This approach was well suited for this study in which I spent time observing the sample population. This kind of research favours data generation within a natural setting, which allowed me as the researcher to improve my insight into the behaviour of the toddlers and learning how parents and teachers control their communication and language development skills.

The proposed research design was suitable to the multiple case studies as required by this study, since its method is by nature qualitative and involves interviews. Yin

(2009) defines a case study as an inquiry into a phenomenon in its real-world context using observational methods to establish a set of valid data. Multiple case studies are bounded systems that allow multiple sites to be investigated while preventing the researcher from extensive involvement and straying from the research focus (Maree, 2016). I employed multiple case study methods that were suited to a qualitative research design. This allowed me to obtain an understanding of the toddlers' ways of communicating and related strategies to support their language development. This research design enables participants to share their experiences and stories, necessitating a close collaboration between researcher and participants (Maree, 2016). It allows the researcher to capture data within real-world situations, which would then be analysed to explain the complexity of these real-world situations. Experimental research designs may not be suited to projects of this nature.

I applied a variety of sources and techniques during the study. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2013), multiple case studies can reveal educational elements of the research, widening the existing knowledge base. By observing the toddlers in their environments, I was able to discover new aspects of their communicative abilities and processes of language development.

1.8.2 Research paradigm

A paradigm comprises a set of beliefs or assumptions related to reality and functions to establish global views on a topic. It represents related thoughts and actions as well as the links between knower and known (Maree, 2016). It is employed in research to provide frameworks of understanding, knowledge, values, truths and the nature of being. It allows storytelling via the researcher's observations of a meaningful and functional domain that may be culturally subjective, such as the perceptions of parents and teachers.

I employed paradigm in this study as the research device to apply order to the principles used in the interpretations of reality, and used interpretivism as the epistemological lens through which the study could be interpreted. This technique enabled me to gain insight into the views, understandings and experiences of the participants (Athanasou & Maree, 2012). It also links to multiple case studies and qualitative research methods (Maree, 2016).

I further employed an inductive method of studying different cases, helping me to identify the various qualities of the studied phenomenon. The interpretive paradigm enables the understanding of human experiences from within (Maree, 2016). As an interpretive researcher, I endeavoured to understand the parents' and teachers' respective interpretations of their worlds. I adopted interpretivism as a means of investigating case realities and participants' views, opinions and beliefs (Sefotho, 2015).

This interpretivist paradigmatic approach enables enhanced understanding of situations, allowing the researcher to gain knowledge on a studied phenomenon. Furthermore, it fosters an understanding of the meanings and connectedness of elements in the same environment. The method of studying individuals in their social and natural environments presents the researcher with a clearer understanding of the various perceptions of their own activities among the sample population. That was made possible in this study by the opportunity to observe parents and teachers in their real-life natural environments, in which they were allowed to freely express their thoughts about their toddlers' communicative prowess and language development. This situation allowed me, as the researcher, to compare these cases and understand individual thoughts and perceptions of communication and language development.

Interpretivists state that they cannot understand individuals' actions without grasping the true nature of their perceptions, attitudes and interpretations of their worlds (Hammersley, 2012). I hence needed to identify the reasons why individual participants performed certain actions and to understand how they perceive those activities in relation to their toddler's communication and language development. I used interpretivism as the lens through which I could describe the situations that are influential in a toddler's communication and language development, and to explain their meaningfulness in the social context. Interpretivism allows the reality that several truths may be uncovered in pursuit of the understandable.

1.8.3 Research method

The study harnessed the qualitative approach, focusing on a linguistic form rather than numerical values, which prompted a meaning-based data analysis (Maree,

2016). I addressed concerns about the quality of this research by dealing with the issues relating to validity, effectiveness and practicality. The research sought to provide answers to questions through an investigation of several social settings and the participants within those settings (teachers, parents and toddlers). An advantage of this approach is the depth and richness made possible by the explorations and analytical possibilities. According to Maree (2016), the research process of extracting meaning from data lies at the heart of qualitative research. Conclusions were linked to the meanings of individuals' situations and their social experiences as well as the meanings of toddlers' observed behaviour. This qualitative methodology provided me, as the researcher, with the relevant instruments to study these toddlers in their developmental contexts through observation.

1.8.3.1 Selection of research site and participants

I selected the research sites first, which comprised three ECD centres from high, medium and low socio-economic statuses within the Pretoria region. These centres contained toddlers, parents and teachers with diverse backgrounds in terms of language abilities, race and gender. The selection of participants involved three teachers, six toddlers and six parents.

1.8.3.2 Data generation

Figure 1.2 illustrates the data generation strategy used in this research. Six cases (toddlers) were selected for research observations, while photovoice methodology was also employed during the data analysis processes.

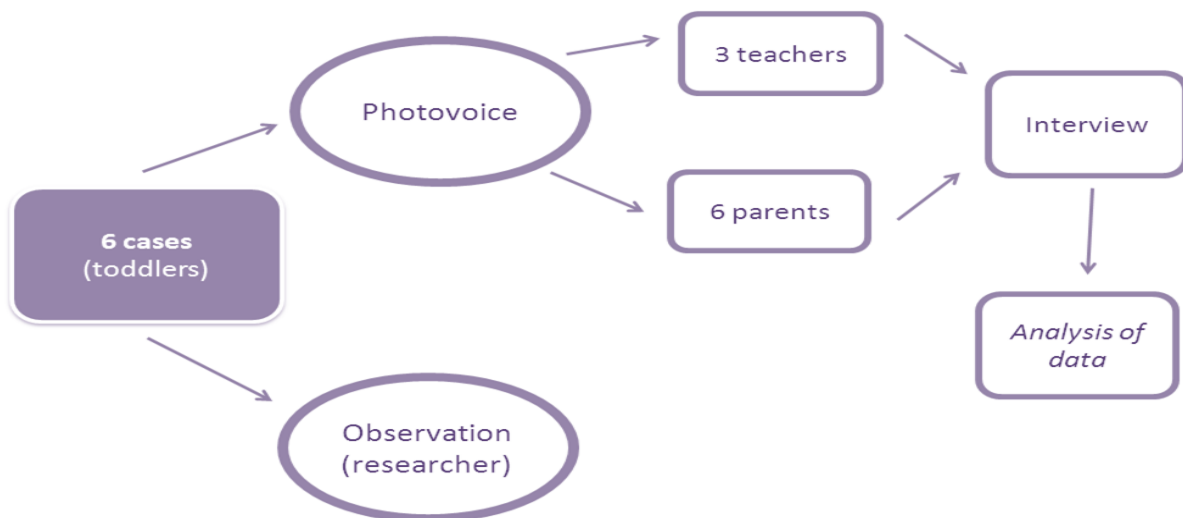


Figure 1.2: Data generation strategy

Researchers frequently use visuals as research possibilities. I adopted photovoice for this study to incorporate with the interviewing phase. Photovoice is a qualitative process that combines pictures and words while capturing situations (Palibroda et al., 2009). The purpose of photovoice was to clarify observations and actions performed by parents and teachers. The teachers and parents were requested to capture their toddler's responsive behavioural expressions that later served as instruments for interviews with the relevant participants. The parents and teachers provided their permissions before capturing any photos on behalf of the study. Photos included interactive and non-interactive moments that were randomly performed and reflected instances of communication. By using this research device I managed to gain a deeper understanding of the toddler's communicated responses. It contributed other data for wider analysis.

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2013), observations through case studies are less reactive compared to other methods of data generation. Observation involves the recording of behavioural patterns of participants without any interaction, communication or disturbances in the conversation (Maree, 2016). It allows deeper insight and understanding into a phenomenon observed. Six children from three different ECD centres were selected for observation by using the child tracking observation sheet (presented in Addendum 3). Observations included me taking notes of a toddler's communication and language development during various times of the day within school hours. Observations included toddlers' communications with

their parents who brought them to school and collected them afterwards. The researcher conducted observations for one week using the tracking observation sheet.

1.8.3.3 Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis endeavours to establish methods that participants use to signify a certain phenomenon by analysing their attitudes, perceptions, knowledge, feelings, values and experience to gain a rough understanding of their construction of the phenomenon (Maree, 2016). It is a continuous process ensuring that data generation, processing, analysis and reporting are meaningfully linked and that they are not merely successive steps. It comprises three essential interlinked and cyclical elements: observing, collecting and reflecting. The goal during data generation was to summarise what was seen or heard concerning communal words, phrases, patterns and themes. This was necessary to enhance the understanding and interpretative processes during data analysis.

The proposed data analysis method favoured a thematic analysis. It is a type of qualitative analysis used to analyse themes or patterns, including classifications related to the data. This allows associated analyses of the frequency of themes within data sets (Alhojailan, 2012). This approach mainly involves analysis of research aspects, text and interpretations to ensuring meaning. Poorly conducted analyses or inappropriate research questions can inhibit the appropriateness of the research. The flexibility of this method may lead to broad data sets that may have limited interpretative power if they are not used within existing conceptual frameworks that anchor the analytical claims. Alhojailan (2012) believes that, apart from certain limitations, this association signifies accuracy and intricacy, which enhances the value of the research.

A thematic analysis, interlinked with qualitative research, provides an opportunity to understand the potential of an issue in broader terms. It promotes an understanding of the diverse aspects of the collected data. A thematic analysis was used in this research to illustrate the data in fine detail while dealing with diverse subjects through interpretations. It focused on the identification and descriptions of implicit and explicit ideas. Codes that were developed for ideas, themes and patterns were

linked to raw data for further analysis. It was used to determine the relationships between concepts and to compare them with collected data elements. The study's thematic analysis linked the various concepts, opinions and perceptions of participants as recorded in a variety of situations, including the responses noted during the interviews, as well as additional data from other relevant sources.

1.8.3.4 Role of the researcher

As the researcher, I established a partnership with the selected respondents. I then collected and analysed the data to foster a progressive understanding of the studied phenomenon. The collected data related to the communication and language development of toddlers. Interview questions (presented in Addendum 1) – and the information collected from these – were used to provide answers to certain secondary research questions. My duties hence included the compilation of interview questions: the preparation, structuring and conducting of interviews, data generation and analysis and the crystallisation of the research results.

1.8.3.5 Ethical considerations

Maree (2016) emphasises the necessity to adhere to ethical principles throughout any study. This research followed these considerations:

- Protection of all participants' identities: Information collected from participants during the study and interviews remained confidential at all times. Participants were assured that no information provided by them would be disclosed to third parties. The transcribed audio recordings and data sets were filed at the University of Pretoria for safekeeping. The researcher familiarised herself with the Ethics and Research Statement provided by the University of Pretoria's Faculty of Education, and conducted the research accordingly.
- Letters of consent and permission: Permission was obtained from participants before they were interviewed. The consent forms (presented in Addendum 2) were read and explained to each participant. Participants were allowed to direct questions if further clarity was needed. Permission was obtained from the toddlers' parents, teachers and the principals of the ECD centres to take photos of the toddlers. Thereafter, all willing participants were requested to complete

and sign the consent form. Participants were informed that they may withdraw from the study at any point. Interview dates were discussed at the convenience of participants.

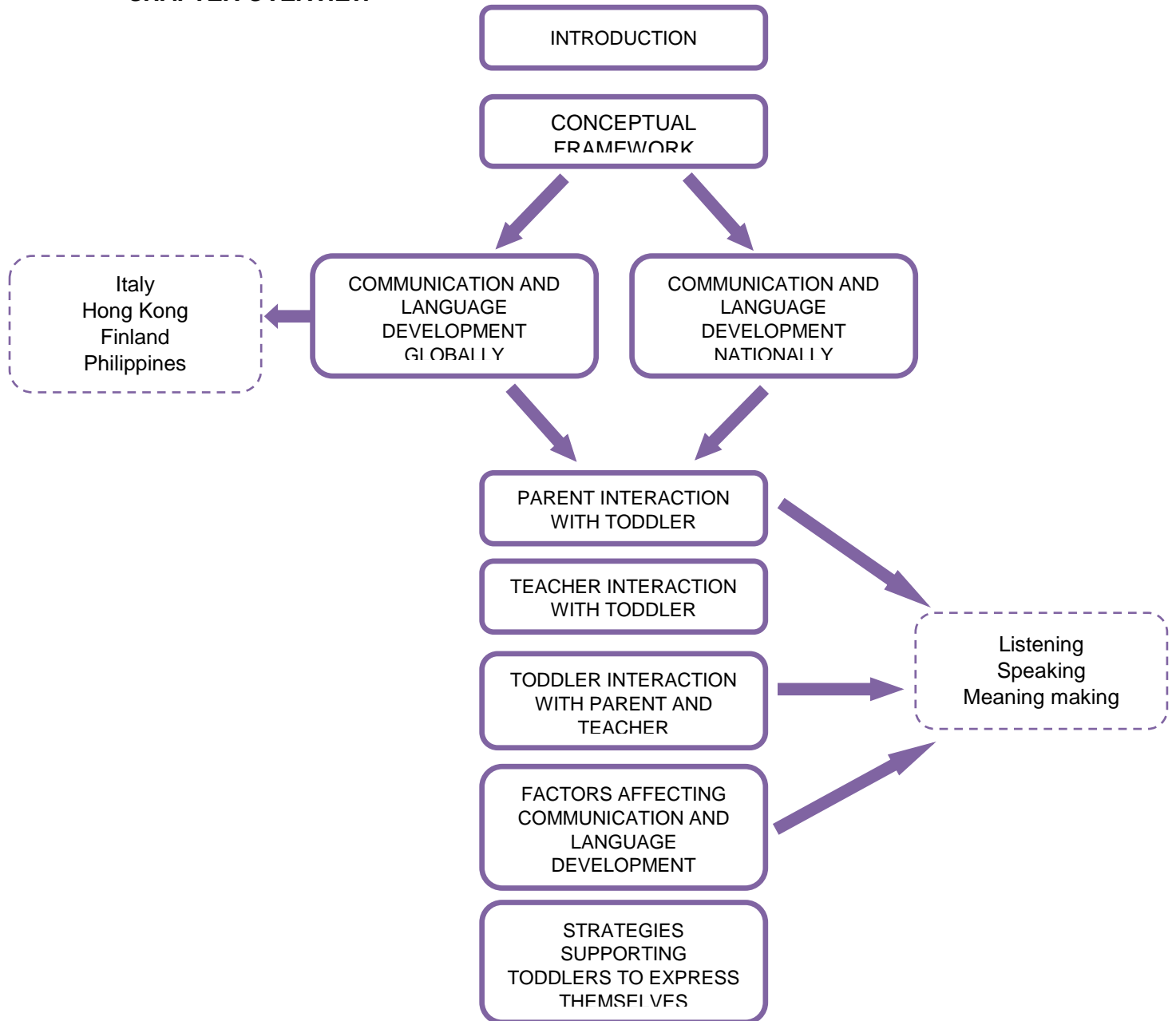
- Further protection: The researcher endeavoured to be sympathetic, respectful and honest to all participants throughout the study, thereby avoiding possibilities of physical, emotional and psychological harm.

1.9 SUMMARY

Relevant research sources indicate that toddlers who were afforded opportunities to engage in language and communication endeavours tended to be better prepared for school and academic success. The chapter provided an overview of the study aims. The research design and research paradigm were explained in relation to this study. South African studies that focus on parent and teacher perceptions of the communication and language development of toddlers are sparse at present, and, therefore, this study may add value to the field of ECCE research. Chapter 2 contains the literature review and discusses the conceptual framework.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

CHAPTER OVERVIEW



2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 introduced the study's topic by explaining the background, problem statement and research questions, followed by an overview of the conceptual framework, research design and methodological approaches employed in this study. It also provided an overview of how data were generated, documented and analysed. This chapter contains a literature review with extracts from empirical studies as well as an overview of publications relevant to *Parent and teacher perceptions of communication and language development of toddlers*. A literature review, according to Maree (2016), shares with the reader the results of former studies that are closely related to the one being conducted. It establishes the importance of the study and serves as a benchmark in the comparison of respective research results.

Research suggests that a child is born into an environment of various writings and images and where it is surrounded by a complex network of sounds and symbols (Reunamo & Nurmilaakso, 2004). Children learn to imitate the sounds spoken to them throughout their first 3 years (Wittmer & Petersen, 2014). They learn how to combine sounds into words and later words into sentences. This means that they subconsciously learn about the syntax, prosody and pragmatics of language. They grasp the meanings of numerous words and learn how to communicate in a variety of ways. As children become more proficient in English (as an example), they learn how to add morphemes to words to indicate plurality and tenses. They manage to form sentences never heard before and use words and sentences for various purposes, such as requesting food, demanding attention, learning to say "no" to adults, expressing feeling and informing others of their needs. Toddlers that grow up in environments where adults engage in meaningful conversations with them quickly develop knowledge of how language works (Dixon, 2006). Research shows that mother-child interactions prompt linguistic responsiveness in toddlers, thereby assisting their language development. Communicating is toddlers' primary means of learning how to socialise during the phase of childhood when they most desire human connection (Wittmer & Petersen, 2014). During periods of social interaction, the toddlers, using their biological linguistic capacities, begin to understand that sounds combine to form words, words combine to form sentences, and gestures and

words communicate meaning. Toddlers are not only affected by their immediate social environment but also through the emotional and physical support available.

The following section documents and discusses the emergent conceptual framework, communication and language development globally and nationally, factors that affect communication and language development, parent interaction with toddler, teacher interaction with toddler and toddler interaction with parent and teacher.

2.2 EMERGENT CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Vygotsky's comprehensive insights into research (Close, 2010) oblige a potential core investigation to validate and uncover the complex processes of communication and language development. The focus of the study embraces Vygotsky's zone of proximal development concept.

2.2.1 Vygotsky's theory bordering communication and language development

Vygotsky observed language development as resulting from complex interactions between children and their environments and influenced by social and communicative development (Close, 2010). He argues that children develop linguistic abilities throughout their developing stages. Initially, they develop a symbol system that helps them to understand the world.

Vocal expressions initiate the first stage in a child's development of reasoning skills. Vygotsky's theory stresses that opportunities for toddlers to communicate with others are a vital element in the stimulation of their reasoning (thinking) and communicative potential. Language develops through social constructions and instructions (Hulit, Howard & Fahey, 2011). Vygotsky believed that children are active in their quest for knowledge and that adults' participation in this pursuit has an important effect on their language development. Vygotsky hence theorised in 1986 that social interactions are fundamental elements of cognitive development. He further proposed that toddlers' development is guided by their interaction with the adults who are involved in their lives.

2.2.2 The zone of proximal development

Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development centres on a child's interaction with adults. Vygotsky (1978, p. 86) describes it as "the distance between the actual developmental 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". This zone of proximal development and scaffolding is seen when parents and teachers teach a child new skills (Vygotsky, 1986).

Children learn how to do things and process their thoughts by interacting with the adults around them who are already familiar with those aspects (Hulit, Howard & Fahey, 2011). Children often handle tasks independently without direct assistance. However, various other tasks exist that children cannot manage on their own. Assistance is then required from adults who have already acquired more knowledge, experience and skills than they possess. Those tasks belong to the ZPD, and assistance is usually provided in the form of language. When a child wants to learn a skill, the child will usually communicate with an adult. The child will then retain language elements used in such exchanges and incorporate them in his future speech. During a later stage, the child will use this enhanced speech to solve problems by himself. The social interactions that support children's language development may include other activities where children are reliant on adult knowledge (Vally et al., 2015). Parents may use books to initiate and encourage children's acquisition of new words, thereby scaffolding the children's mastery of language. Adults can achieve this by engaging in the labelling of objects or commenting on pictures in books.

Vygotsky was convinced that children's development is reliant on their environment from the first stages of knowledge acquisition (Hulit, Howard & Fahey, 2011). The ZPD allows parents and teachers to provide children with the help they need to progress in their development. While a child develops language skills, their social and communicative skills will increase, which allows for more mature and sophisticated interactions. The higher level of interactions prompts more complex language usage from the adults; this cycle continues until a child's language levels and social skills reach that of adults.

To illustrate this process: A baby boy, wanting a piece of chocolate, may make “uh uh uh” sounds while reaching for it and making eye contact with the parent. Recognising the communicative intent, the parent says, “Do you want chocolate? Say ‘chocolate... chocolate’.” When the child is 2 years old, he may then be able to issue a request for chocolate by saying “Mummy, want chocolate”. This utterance is then met with a piece of chocolate and an expanded language form from the parent saying, “Say, ‘Mummy I want chocolate’.” A few years later the child may politely ask for chocolate without the parent having to guide his speech along. This illustrates that young toddlers, before knowing how to speak, are able to interact with others and make requests. As child acquire language skills while growing up, their interactive and communicative abilities improve and they become able to make their requests known in more social, adult-like ways.

2.3 COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

The communication and language development of toddlers were determined on national levels to explore the variety of insights and strategies that are deployed in countries abroad. This section describes educational policies as practised in Italy, Hong Kong and the Philippines to illustrate a variety of existing perceptions globally.

2.3.1 Communication and language development globally

2.3.1.1 Italy

"Reggio Emilia" denotes a preschool approach to education and contains a philosophy that focuses on the children. Although it emerged in Italy, the approach is utilised worldwide (Arseven, 2014). The Italian Ministry of Education adopted and integrated it into their early childhood curriculum. The Reggio Emilia approach is based on Vygotsky's socio-constructivist theory stating that children create knowledge from the relationships they establish with other people and the environment around them (Valentine, 1999). It allows a learning relationship to form between teacher and child and demonstrates a strong bond between a school and the community by providing professional development programmes. Every child's social, intellectual and emotional potentials are guided while the teachings are executed in healthy and accommodating settings (Edwards, Gandini & Forman,

1998). Children are encouraged to discover the environment they are in and to express themselves using words, play or music.

This approach emerged after the Second World War because of Italian citizens' desire to create a better society for their children to live in (Valentine, 1999). A teacher from the first ECD centre to have adopted the Reggio Emilia approach remarked that "even the youngest children are social beings", having had 20 years of experience working with toddlers (Edwards, Gandini & Forman, 1998, p. 40). She added that the children at the centre were open to the idea of bonding with other caretakers – apart from their parents – who ought not to neglect their educational responsibilities. She then declared that relationships correspond with the processes of education, that interactive play with toddlers enhances their experiential learning, and that the quality of the parent-toddler relationship is relatively more important than the quantity of time spent together. The children in her ECD centre manage to learn primarily through communicating and experiencing. She emphasised that the ways in which parents and teachers interact with toddlers influence their motivations and, ultimately, how much they learn.

Adult-child roles complement each other through asking questions, listening and giving answers. An interviewed parent of a toddler at an ECD centre that utilised the Reggio Emilia approach expressed her pleasant surprise when she saw how her child played in a pool with others, which contrasted with how she behaved in a bath at home. She found it "beautiful" that her toddler, encouraged by the social interactions, did things he would not usually do (Edwards, Gandini & Forman, 1998). It is prudent to note, however, that the children in Italy all speak one native language, which enables natural interactions – without any cultural barriers – amongst them.

Today, those ECD centres implement progressive policies that allow educational projects to revolve around the children. Teachers at the ECD centres are instructed how to listen to the children and to guide them in productive ways (Edwards, Gandini & Forman, 1998). The Reggio Emilia-based policies place *listening* at the heart of a teacher's function. This also means being fully attentive to children entering the active learning that occurs by using dialogue with them and joining their curiosity and excitement. Teachers should have 3 years of training to receive their diploma. The creation of an exhibition called The Hundred Languages of Children was developed

to make parents and teachers well aware of the advantageous of education for younger children. “The Centre for the Promotion and Defence of the Rights of Children” aims at sharing nationally and globally their expertise promoting research within the field (Valentine, 1999). It also aimed at creating programmes throughout the country for professional development.

2.3.1.2 Hong Kong

The Hong Kong Government published the Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum in 1996, promoting a child-centred approach, focussing on a child’s total development (Li & Rao, 2005). Early childhood education enters a positive era within the country, progressing concern improving the quality of early childhood education. It supports the view of effective early teaching and learning, personal facilitation, communicative and language development. The curriculum includes communicative, language development and social aspects of development through comprehensive developmental, child-centred and mother tongue language instruction activities. Parents in Hong Kong perceive ECE as a programme that prepares children for primary school (Wong & Rao, 2015). Child centeredness is the core value of ECE in Hong Kong acknowledging early language and development rates where teachers assist children in assembling their own experiences in active learning tasks rather than transmitting knowledge on them (Rao & Li, 2009). Teachers enrich the social experiences of children strengthening their interpersonal and communicative skills during ECE (Curriculum Development Council, 2017). Consequently, young children in Hong Kong are attached to electronic products affecting their social and communicative abilities. Hong Kong parents perceive education as providing their children with as much knowledge and developmental approaches as possible during that time. Yuen and Grieshaber (2009, p. 270) state that these Hong Kong parents believe “spoon-feeding is only a matter of time” and that “sooner is better than later”.

The majority of the population in Hong Kong speaks Cantonese as their first language (Li & Rao, 2005; Wong & Rao, 2015). Parents and teachers also encourage them to learn English from an early age since they perceive English as a route to advancement in education and society. Certain schools in Hong Kong teach in English. However, non-Chinese speaking children who are new to the lifestyles in Hong Kong may meet challenges in communication and learning (Curriculum

Development Council, 2017). According to Li and Rao (2005), Cantonese and English are regularly combined during communicating and learning, resulting in a poor standard of both languages. The policy in Hong Kong is not to request children between the ages of 3 and 4 to write or perform mechanical copying exercises, and they are not taught in a one-way lecturing format (Education Department, 1999). Instead, Hong Kong's policymakers promote the principle of learning-through-play as a core curriculum element. Some institutions, though, keep stressing the intellectual aspects rather than children's developmental abilities, needs and interests (Wong, Wang & Cheng, 2011). In relation to this study, the MRQECCE (DHET, 2017, p. 18) highlights that ECCE teachers should have the "ability to use appropriate play-based pedagogies to support the development of early learning such as oral and written stories; play; rhyme; fantasy; exploration; music; arts and crafts and movement".

2.3.1.3 Finland

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2000), the objective of preschool education in Finland is to improve a child's learning conditions. It also advances a child's opportunities to participate in education and to develop their selves throughout their lives. A central tenet in the Finnish curriculum involves language and communication skills (Reunamo & Nurmilaakso, 2004). Its main objectives are to develop children's interactive skills, awaken their motivation for early literacy and literature, enrich their vocabulary and promote their usage of various media.

Pre-primary education involves activities to facilitate learning, growth and development. It allows a child the opportunity to interact with classmates in diverse ways. Reunamo and Nurmilaakso (2004) found that Finnish teachers perceive language and interaction as cognitive forms and not mere features of everyday life. A child's language development is important in understanding their views and development. It involves understanding how a child's subjectivity of self-perception takes shape. A supportive developmental environment exists in homes in Finland, which encourages children's language and communicative development (Reunamo & Nurmilaakso, 2004).

According to Garbe et al. (2016), Finnish parents generally harbour positive attitudes about the task of reading to their preschool children, and they usually have reading material and other educational resources available at their homes. They add, however, that the parents need to be aware of the function of the household in a child's development. Parents should continue to read to their children after school, because it encourages children to engage in various other language developmental practices such as games that involve words and shapes and verbal interaction with others.

The European Union High Level Group of Experts on Literacy (2012) states that an investment in high-quality ECCE – in terms of future human capital – requires highly qualified staff using a curriculum that focuses on learning through participation and language development to nurture children's social development and other emerging developmental skills. The new Finnish national curriculum highlights the introduction of Information and Communications Technology (ICT). This signifies an updated approach to digital learning that will assist children in various contexts and situations with text and language development activities (Finnish National Board of Education, 2014). However, critics take into account the fact that Finland has a homogenous society with one predominant language, which means their models cannot be applied everywhere else.

2.3.1.4 Philippines

Early years schooling in the Philippines is play-based and activity-oriented, which prompts children to actively explore their worlds (UNESCO, 2006). The learner-centred curriculum encourages interaction and nurtures the toddler's social, linguistic and cognitive experiences. Cognitive development includes the fostering of communicative competencies such as the ability to express ideas in both Filipino and English. The childhood learning experience in the Philippines, therefore, offers various opportunities to engage in communication through sessions that include group play, storytelling, and arts and craft. Their Department of Education's kindergarten curriculum mainly focuses on the children's school readiness.

2.3.2 Communication and language development nationally

The National Development Plan recognises the importance of investing in early childhood development (ECD). The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) stresses the child's voice: "I need to experience an environment where I can learn to listen attentively, speak openly, learn to love books, stories and reading, record and to write, and get ready for formal reading and writing as I grow and develop" (DBE, 2015, p. 41). The NCF also states that most children are born with the ability to communicate. However, as most ECD practitioners in SA are underqualified, public trust that the toddlers are feeling at home and being adequately prepared for school is not at the level it should be.

An additional challenge in South Africa is that an estimate of 333 000 children are infected with HIV, which is linked to an increased rate of delayed language acquisition (Henning, 2012). This circumstance is associated with impaired cognitive development and low school achievement. Large numbers of South African children grow up in low socio-economic contexts and broken homes, face social-emotional difficulties and experience violence. Many children are raised by single parents who have to work all day long, which means those parents have little time available for interaction with their toddlers.

In this context, ECD centres became a prized environment for the nurturing of children's early learning. According to the National Planning Commission's (NPC) report, the quality of ECD and care in poor communities is generally inadequate (NPC, 2011). The government underfunds ECD and donors usually provide the necessary financial support. This situation indicates poor government policies and research, causing a lack of examples for effective implementation of language and literacy development programmes.

Toddlers' social-emotional wellbeing allows them to learn, be curious, concentrate and form an awareness of their environment. These are critical stages of early learning. The NCF (DBE, 2015) calls for diversity and the inclusion of indigenous African experiences in toddlers' lives. Lifelong learning, reflective practitioners, family inclusion and the levels of transitions, such as activity-to-activity, are considered as elements of South African toddlers' learning and development experiences. The

NCF's section on early learning focuses on communication for various reasons that include the strengthening of a toddler's voice.

2.3.2.1 Home language

Many parents in South Africa enrol their children in urban schools where English is the only Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) (Du Plessis & Louw, 2008; O'Connor & Geiger, 2009). These children attend crèches where a language other than their first language is spoken (O'Connor & Geiger, 2009). In many communities, young children are enrolled in English crèches without any prior knowledge of the language (Du Plessis & Louw, 2008). Teachers at such schools are then expected to prepare those children for formal preschool in English and are pressurised by parents who demand that their children become fluent in English by the time they enter preschool. This abrupt change from mother tongue to English instruction, however, creates a challenging environment for both child and teacher.

South Africa has 11 official languages, which creates logistical difficulties in education. Because of the general desire for education in English due to increased future employment opportunities, the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) language policy is only partially implemented (O'Connor & Geiger, 2009). This policy adopts a multi- and bilingual approach wherein the first language is used as a basis to learn a second language. The NCF (DBE, 2015) states that children who receive education in their mother tongue learn new words and ideas faster, while the use of their mother tongue also fosters a sense of identity.

2.4 PARENT INTERACTION WITH TODDLER

Typically, the first place a toddler is exposed to language is their home (Scribner, 2013). It is the environment where they are first introduced to interactions, activities, communication and involvement, so the home environment should naturally include several positive opportunities.

2.4.1 Toddlers' acquisition of listening as a basic literacy skill

Parents who allow a child to *lead* provide their children with opportunities to express their feelings, needs and interests (Manolson, 1992). An ineffective way to guide a

child to talk and communicate is for the adult to do everything for the child, as opposed to letting the child do things by himself. This can happen when the parent is constantly focused on teaching the child new skills. The parent may mean to be helpful by completing a task on behalf of the toddler, but it deprives the child of the chance to express his curiosity, feelings and needs, and it denies him the opportunity to learn by trying and saying things for himself.

A responsive adult, conversely, provides limitless opportunities for interactions with their toddlers and to guide them towards learning about their worlds. Toddlers learn best by doing rather than being told what to do or to merely observe. They earn fewer opportunities to learn when an adult performs most of the communicating and doing. By *allowing* toddlers to lead and *adapting* behaviour to share the moment, the parents will encourage their toddlers to connect, communicate, feel recognised, and to add languages and experiences to their minds. Adults' undivided attention and welcoming responsiveness to toddlers' attempts at communication bolster their feelings of self-confidence, power and satisfaction. Adults who invest time to share experiences with toddlers provide them with the skills to form the human connections necessary for learning prowess (Manolson, 1992).

2.4.2 Toddlers' acquisition of speaking as a basic literacy skill

Toddlers bring a strong biological drive in developing language to the acquisition process but will not acquire language unless they are exposed to language models (Hulit, Howard & Fahey, 2011). Simply hearing language is not enough. The communicative interactions with adults facilitate the acquisition of vocabulary and language development. When parents respond to their toddlers' utterances, for instance, they expand those facets. It appears that when adults sense a toddler is old enough to develop speech patterns, they pay greater attention to the lengths and complexities of conversations to give the toddler clear and attainable language targets. Parents who frequently read to their toddlers, or take them to puppet shows, stimulate their abilities to learn about letters and to read, thereby guiding them to the zone of proximal development (discussed later in this chapter). Scribner (2013) noted how a toddler that achieved a high score on the language development scale was able to tell coherent stories while using a textless picture book. This illustrates how parents who provide adequate reading material and are proficient reading role

models can influence their children's attitudes to reading and learning. When toddlers receive all the essentials at home that prepare them for preschool, they will also be better prepared to be successful during formal schooling. Therefore, parent-toddler interaction and conversation are considered as effective strategies to promote early language skills.

The sharing of songs between a parent and toddler allows several aspects of human development to occur (Hulit, Howard & Fahey, 2011). Parents convey emotional information to their toddler through CDS-type singing that prompt the toddler to either focus on them or shift attention. Singing allows parents and toddlers to synchronise their emotional states in a form of social regulation. Songs contribute to language acquisition by means of the arousal of their attention (through emotional aspects) and the enhancing of phonological discrimination via pitch contours (since a syllable change accompanies a change in pitch). The constant mapping of linguistic and musical structures optimises toddlers' learning mechanisms. Parents utilise certain acoustical properties such as higher pitches, sustained vowels, slower tempos and glides between pitch levels – akin to song structures – as well as emotional expressions in speech directed at toddlers. Parents employ those musical characteristics to match their toddler's state. A cycle interaction occurs from the toddler's behavioural response to their parents. Those toddlers show preference to their parents' voices and reveal higher levels of attention to CDS-singing than to CDS itself. When toddlers listen to music they engage their auditory channels, paying simultaneous attention to the music and the words that are repeated within the songs. Songs are, therefore, particularly beneficial to learning on account of their emotional and linguistic functions.

2.4.3 Toddlers' acquisition of meaning making as a basic literacy skill

According to a socio-cultural perspective of toddler development, toddlers acquire their skills largely through adult-toddler interaction and communication (Dodici, 2002). The development of skills requires an apprenticeship-type relationship that involves two parties: the teacher (parent) and a learner (toddler). High levels of maternal responsiveness result in toddler's eventual comprehension of speech and receptiveness to language communication (Garbe et al., 2016; Levine et al., 2016).

Toddlers form part of a social environment from birth. This social environment supports language development and growth. Parents are essential to their toddler's developmental stages. Meaningful communication is vital from birth. Parents' verbal and non-verbal responses towards a toddler's behaviour provide important initial stages in the construction of a communication foundation. Parents' responses shape their toddlers' language and communicative abilities, which means they are effectively their first teachers. Toddlers who have had stimulating communicative interactions with their parents are in advantageous positions at school in comparison to toddlers who have had limited access to meaningful conversations (Dixon, 2006).

2.5 REQUIRED TRAINING FOR TEACHERS' ABILITY TO INTERACT WITH TODDLERS

Toddlers spend many of their waking hours with teachers while their parents are working. As a result, teachers need to substitute the roles of parents when toddlers are in their care. This involves teachers assuming all the relevant and necessary responsibilities needed to support the toddlers in their academic and developmental processes. Therefore, toddlers' experiences under the guidance of their teachers influence their social, emotional and development prowess (Du Plessis & Louw, 2008). Teachers spend a lot of time with toddlers and engaging in activities and diverse social interactions with them.

According to the National Early Learning and Development Standards (NELDS) for Children Birth to Four Years, Section 3 (DBE, 2009), teachers should sing, speak, read and listen to their toddlers in order to support them at a time when they learn how to speak and listen. Toddlers listen and respond while teachers communicate with them. Teachers who communicate well through regular use of a simplified language and language games expose toddlers to a wide array of words, such as nouns, verbs and pronouns. Under the tuition of a good teacher, a toddler may increase his vocabulary with up to 50 words daily and learn how to connect two to three words in conveying meaning. It is imperative for teachers to pay attention to toddlers whenever they speak. Toddlers react to songs and stories read to them; therefore, teachers should be encouraged to join in on singing sessions, read to their toddlers frequently and encourage reading to prompt toddlers to discover new books that could help them to learn new words.

Teachers need to be trained to provide relevant services and quality learning programmes for young children (Govindasamy, 2010). Vitaly, professional practitioners need to acquire specialised knowledge in ECD including theories of child development, knowledge and skills as incorporated in ECD programmes (Govindasamy, 2010; Human Sciences Research Council, 2009). These qualifications for ECD are attainable through full or intensive programmes established by the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) of the South African Qualification Authority (Atmore, 2013; Meier, Lemmer & Niron, 2015). Non-Profit Organisations (NPO's) as well as Further Education and Training colleges present the relevant courses. The minimum acceptable qualification needed for ECD teaching is NQF Level 4 (a Further Education and Training certificate) as determined by the Department of Social Development (DSD) in collaboration with the Economic Policy Research Institute (DSD, 2014). Teachers should be qualified and trained at this level to ensure they possess the necessary skills to implement effective teaching methods and support the development of toddlers (Atmore, 2013). A lack of qualified ECD practitioners exists in South Africa, especially in rural areas (DSD, 2014). Toddlers enrolled in these centres are entitled to quality education and care. The denying of this service to children constitutes a disservice to the South African community (Meier, Lemmer & Niron, 2015).

To ensure the continual development of new skills and language growth, teachers need to keep participating in professional development and training programmes, thereby gaining updated knowledge on toddlers' needs throughout the ECD period. This is critically important in keeping South Africa's ECD centres on par with recurring developments in the ECD field. The new policy of minimum requirements for qualifications of early childhood and care educators (MRQECCE) is relevant to this issue (DHET, 2017). This MRQECCE policy puts into place relevant qualifications for ECD educators who wish to deliver ECD programmes, including the NCF.

ECD teachers play the primary role in presenting a standard of early learning to toddlers high enough to meet their required needs for development (DSD, 2014). A planned outlay of every week's activities is a key requirement in ensuring a structured and smooth learning programme and securing the availability of

resources. Planning also ensures the efficiency and coherency of the learning programme.

2.6 TODDLER INTERACTION WITH PARENTS AND TEACHERS

Toddlers use various strategies to become conversational partners with the people around them (Wittmer & Petersen, 2014). These include recognising the voices of people important to them, predicting when one word ends and another begins and focusing on words with specific meanings. Similar to adults, toddlers employ non-verbal gestures and facial expressions to communicate their thoughts and feelings.

2.6.1 Listening as a skill to be nurtured by parents and teachers

Learning a language takes time. Toddlers need time to absorb information and become able to understand the words and sentences spoken to them (Manolson, 1992). Similarly, before toddlers are able to talk, they learn about connecting and communicating from the adults around them. The process of communication entails firstly experience, then understanding and finally language. Adults encourage experience when they talk about what is happening or what is about to happen. They stimulate toddlers to use language by constantly repeating certain words in familiar situations. At first, a toddler may not understand or say words used by their parents, but the more frequently the toddler hears words associated with particular objects, the sooner he can grasp what is being said. With more experience, the toddler can anticipate what comes next and begin to use those words.

2.6.2 Speaking as a skill to be nurtured by parents and teachers

Toddlers, near 18 months old, accomplish *fast mapping* by quickly attaching names to objects (Hulit, Howard & Fahey, 2011; Wittmer & Petersen, 2014). At that age, toddlers learn both gestures and words as object names, but at approximately 24 months old they interpret only words as names for objects. The process of using words and gestures as symbols for objects becomes refined as the toddler learns that words are more often used to name objects during social interactions. Impressively, most toddlers focus on learning words rather than gestures because they observe that the people around them mostly use words, instead of gestures, to communicate. As a result, toddlers start to participate more effectively in their social

groups. Toddlers want to share their stories, tell people what is bothering them, ask them where to look, inform others what to feed them and tell them how to dress them. They wish to inform others of their discoveries and want adults to share those experiences with them. They need the parents to be emotionally and linguistically "in the moment" with them.

Toddlers demand, request, describe their world and inform as they develop autonomy. Their language is sometimes clear and sometimes foggy. They try to make sense of the language they are hearing, from saying sounds to saying words to putting these words together. At the age of 2 years, toddlers do not only imitate what they hear, but they also apply some rules that they have discovered by themselves while occasionally making linguistic mistakes. They may apply the word "dog" to all four-legged creatures. Toddlers simply listen to what people are saying and their minds *fast map* the words to an object, animal or person. Other than over-generalising, toddlers also under-generalise words when they, for instance, identify a cat only if it is a black cat. When the toddler notices a white cat, they think it is named differently. The minds of toddlers work extensively while they try to figure out the names of all objects, the characteristics that differentiate them and how to talk about them. Parents strengthen the learning process when they encourage their toddlers to talk about all the exciting things around them such as their new shoes, what they had eaten and how a puppy is different from a kitten, as well as their emotions.

Many adults, unfortunately, place their toddlers in front of television sets to coax them to hear and start grasping a language in that way. This does not work for language development, as the toddler is not receiving the necessary auditory and visual feedback required to learn a language (Wittmer & Petersen, 2014). Toddlers progress from saying mostly one-word and two-word sentences at 18 months old to multiword sentences at 36 months. Toddlers often use *telegraphic speech*, leaving out words – similar to telegram messages – to use only the essential parts of speech to communicate meaning such as "Kitty eat food". Toddlers can say wonderfully creative and full sentences at the age of 3 years.

2.6.3 Meaning making as a skill to be nurtured by parents and teachers

Toddlers demonstrate a rudimentary language sophistication when they respond to different facets of language, such as when an adult uses an adjective instead of a noun (Wittmer & Petersen, 2014). They can correctly point to any body part and follow simple directions. Their gestures, such as pointing or shaking their heads, are important precursors to subsequent language and speech development (Law et al., 2017). In Wittmer & Petersen's study (2014), toddlers between the ages of 13 and 18 months heard a word nine times in five minutes and were then able to demonstrate their understanding of the word even after a 24-hour delay. Toddlers can comprehend the meaning of new words rapidly during this age period.

From 12 months of age, toddlers begin to intentionally point to objects and people in their attempts to obtain attention. They may add a squeal to direct another person's attention towards the object they are pointing to. The habit of pointing towards objects illustrates their awareness of objects being separate from themselves, and their understanding – in terms of communication – that they can direct adults' attention towards that object in that way. They have become able to share their experiences with others to some extent, as they have *tuned in to* others and allowed others to tune in with them. This attunement relates to Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (as explained later in this chapter). Toddlers also point their fingers to gain information (Begus & Southgate, 2012). When adults *tune in* and respond to the toddlers' pointing, the toddlers will enthusiastically continue to point and gain communicative satisfaction. Over time the toddlers will begin to use sounds and words in conjunction with pointing to direct attention to a person or object (Wittmer & Petersen, 2014).

Toddlers between 15 and 18 months old will protest or shake their heads to indicate "no", request objects to be handed to them with either open or closed hands, request actions through pointing, take an adults hand, give an object, comment through pointing and use other gestures to signify emotions such as hugging and clapping (Wittmer & Petersen, 2014). The speed of a toddler's vocabulary growth is near miraculous during this time. The rapid learning of words, generally between the ages of 12 and 15 months, is called a *language explosion* and denotes a surprising increase in language development. It also demonstrates toddlers' desire to learn how

to label people, places and things in social contexts (Woodward, Markman & Fitzsimmons, 1994). Toddlers learn during sessions of joint attention and conversation that every object and action has a name and that they can make use of this wonderful array of words to explore their worlds (Wittmer & Petersen, 2014). When adults respond to toddlers' pointing, they coax them towards a language explosion. Parents are often surprised when new words suddenly appear in their toddlers' vocabulary; we know today that responsive parents are enablers of that process because of frequent interactions with their toddlers. Toddlers at 18 months old learn as many as nine new words a day and use phrases with two or more words such as "more milk" and "Mama, bush (brush) teeth".

Gestures are effective and overlooked ways of helping toddlers to understand language (Manolson, 1992). Gestures appear naturally in the forms of a smile, shiver or shrug. They capture toddlers' interest, focus their attention, reveal emotion, convey attitude and provide information to them (such as shaking a head to indicate "no"). Gestures stimulate a toddler's imagination and creativity, which is important for language development. Importantly, they provide toddlers with the means to express themselves before they are able to talk.

2.7 FACTORS THAT AFFECT COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

This section discusses how the enhanced use of language, technology and guided participation by responsive adults can support the communication and language development of toddlers. It also explains the factors that influence toddlers' communication and language development through listening, speaking and meaning making.

2.7.1 Enhancement of language through responsive adults

The language learning process in the first 3 years of a child's life is remarkable. An infant's auditory map is established at 1 year old resulting from the responsive language experiences with adults during their first year (Wittmer & Petersen, 2014). The capacity for toddlers to learn languages forms part of their biological makeup. As an adult name an object, describe what he/she is doing, sing a song or talk about what they are doing, an axon on a neuron in the toddler's brain sends an electrical

signal and connects that neuron's dendrite to another neuron's dendrite to form a synapse. These synapses connect with more neurons to enhance their language use and other cerebral functions during the course of a life, such as thinking while speaking. Toddlers, however, need responsive adults around to properly master a language.

Early experiences with language fulfil an essential function in toddlers' development and strengthen their abilities to share information, categorise knowledge and play with words and ideas verbally. Toddlers need to hear adults speaking directly to them and being allowed to respond. This process assists the development of the neurons and synapses in the brain related to language. For illustration, a toddler says "tttt" while playing with a toy truck. His parent replies, "Yes, that is a truck", whereupon the toddler imitates the sound by saying "tuk" (Wittmer & Petersen, 2014).

2.7.2 Technology, communication and language development

With ever-advancing technology, toddlers aged one year – before being able to talk - can master smartphones, electronic games, tablets and iPads (Birken, 2017). A toddler's 'on-screen time' relates to their parents' busy schedules and lack of one-on-one interactions. Birken (2017) finds that daily screen-time spent on non-educational applications may have negative consequences for toddlers' development. Her study involved toddlers between the ages of 6 months and 2 years and found that children who spend large amounts of time using handheld devices are more likely to suffer delays in expressive speech. Birken's findings indicate a difficulty for toddlers to connect the two-dimensional world of an electronic screen with the 'real world' they are exposed to during the rest of their time. Every 30 minutes of screen time contributes a 94% increase risk of expressive speech delay. Birken states that smartphones and other technological devices have already become fixed entities in the communal lives of babies and toddlers. Paediatric guidelines, though, recommend less screen time for young children.

Nowadays, fast-paced stories constitute a large percentage of the material that children see on television. Even children's programmes jump quickly from one topic to the next, while the graphics, voices and actions are delivered in fast manners

(Manolson, 1992). This assault of information overwhelms a child and causes them to *tune out*. Radio broadcasts, which are seldom toddler oriented, also prompt toddlers to *tune out*. Toddlers need sounds and images they can comfortably absorb and assimilate, which will help them to make sense of the world they inhabit. Hulit, Howard and Fahey (2011) found that 1-year-olds spend an average of 80 minutes per day watching television and 2-year-olds spend 2 hours per day. Their findings reveal that children aged 2 months to 4 years significantly decrease their vocalisations when in the presence of television. The authors conclude that the resultant reduction in speech and conversation exercises is potentially harmful to toddlers' language acquisition and development skills. Therefore, adult attention benefits learning prowess more than television programmes and other forms of screen time.

In terms of language learning, toddlers do not relate well to non-human characters, because their lip movements do not precisely match the word formations, thus masking phonological information about new words. Mere exposure to language, therefore, does not simply trigger an improved understanding of a language. Toddlers need active engagement with their parents and teachers who can guide their focuses and maintain their attention spans. However, once a child has established a foundational vocabulary and can focus uninterruptedly on television programmes – generally after 22 months – then the acquisition of new language information via educational media is possible (Hulit, Howard & Fahey, 2011).

2.7.3 Guided participation focusing on communication and language development

Rogoff (1990) introduced the idea of guided participation – in terms of adult-toddler interactions – during every-day experiences and activities, as opposed to structured learning regimes. According to The National Institute of Toddler Health and Human Development (1999), supportive and engaging adult-toddler interactions promote toddlers' competencies in their social domains. Dodici (2002) finds that toddlers who grow up in low-income households hear prohibition statements by their parents twice as many times as toddlers who live in medium- or upper-income households. These prohibition statements have lasting negative effects on the toddlers' language and cognitive abilities. Similarly, toddlers from low-income households are exposed to

fewer words than toddlers from higher-income families. The number of words said to a toddler per hour by an adult relates to their language abilities. Among the main elements of parent-toddler engagement are joint attention opportunities as well as the amount of time that parents and toddlers focus on the same topics. These aspects play significant roles in communication and language development.

2.7.4 Factors effecting communication and language development through listening, speaking and meaning making

2.7.4.1 Listening as a factor in communication and language development

According to the NCF (DBE, 2015), toddlers learn to communicate by listening to the sounds around them, and especially the sounds made by others such as adults. Toddlers listen to the volumes and pitches of the sounds they hear and make meaning of those sounds. They are attentive when spoken to and can understand some of what they hear during conversations. They enjoy listening to stories read to them and imitate sounds heard in their environment. They follow verbal instructions and like hearing answers to their questions. Toddlers thrive in their learning when the other persons listen to them intently and engage their own attention – they learn with their ears as well as their eyes (Wittmer & Petersen, 2014). They learn that a conversation entails persons taking turns to talk and listen, so they will intently look at adults and wait patiently for them to finish talking before responding.

Manolson (1992) describes how many parents' react when their children appear disinterested; it involves them taking over, retaliating or withdrawing, and asserting their own positions during the situation. Adults usually increase a toddler's resistance when they try to break it down. When toddlers do not respond easily, adults often respond on their behalves, thinking that they are making things easier. An adult's undivided attention, however, provides the toddler with the security and encouragement to make any effort worthwhile. Toddlers need time to collect their thoughts and decide how they want to respond. When a parent gives a child adequate time to respond, the parent signals to them that they have an opportunity to say something. The act of *listening* to children allows parents to understand children and respond sensitively. Parents who take the time to observe, who recognise their children's feelings, who wait and give their children opportunities to

express themselves in their own ways and who *listen* all encourage children to advance their communicative abilities.

Books, according to Manolson (1992), are powerful sources of communicative development. When toddlers listen to stories read out loud to them, their concentration span strengthens. This confirms that an adult's involvement encourages a toddler to learn a language. By reading and rereading a familiar story to a child, a parent reinforces the meaning of newly learned words. Imitating, expanding, labelling and taking turns occur naturally when parents share reading experiences with toddlers. Toddlers' interactive skills can be enhanced when they are encouraged to find or name objects in a book. This interaction can be established by the serve and return principle, explained below (Reynolds & Burton, 2017).

John Bowlby (Reynolds & Burton, 2017) founded the *serve and return* concept that encourages back-and-forth responsive and attentive interactions between adults and children, thereby building foundations for later development and learning. A serve occurs when a child points at something, moves a body part, makes a facial expression or utters a sound. The returning of the serve involves five steps: noticing the serve and diverting own attention to the child, engaging the child by showing interest, naming something, keeping the conversation going by taking turns to communicate, and finally acknowledging endings of the interactive sessions, such as when the child appears ready to move onto some other activity. It is at all times important to let toddlers know they are being listened to.

2.7.4.2 Speaking as a factor in communication and language development

According to the NCF (DBE, 2015), toddlers speak through making meaningful sounds to the people around them by trying out new words and saying sentences. Toddlers hear words and sentences and copy the sounds. They have fun playing games with sound, like when they can sing and participate in an activity. Oftentimes toddlers speak by singing. They talk to others and themselves about their experiences, and they call their scribbles "writing" that they can "read". Toddlers can keep simple conversations going and are able to use various single words when they are 18 months old. They can use two- to three- word phrases by the age of 2 years.

Play is one of the best ways for toddlers to learn how to communicate since they prefer to learn by doing (Manolson, 1992). Play teaches toddlers how to take turns, which is important since taking turns with actions and words is an element of communication. Toddlers learn and remember objects and words when they see, hear, feel, smell and taste during the experiences. Learning is strengthened when various senses send the same message to the brain.

Parents can harness their toddlers' playing hours to the benefit of their language learning. While they play, the parents can think of realistic communication goals and plan their communicative activities. They can participate in a playing session with a toddler to help the learning process along. Early social games help toddlers to learn because they use limited actions, sounds and words. The games are repetitive and hence predictable, which allow toddlers to understand the basics of communication: Who does what, what happens and when to take turns (Manolson, 1992). When language elements combine with experience, toddlers can learn fast and start to take the lead in conversations. When they have mastered the art of focusing their attention, imitating actions and sounds, taking turns and anticipating what comes next, they are ready to absorb new words. Toddlers can further their pre-language communicative skills through music activities such as singing to nursery rhymes and humming lullabies. Musical structures help them to anticipate what comes next and to concentrate on that, which is among the foundations of learning to communicate. Musical activities encourage physical contact, repetition, taking turns, non-verbal responses, vocal play, action, speech and timing of words.

Adults and older children talk, interact and communicate with toddlers. Toddlers learn that their vocalisations influence the social behaviour of those they interact with (Levine et al., 2016). Otto (2014) distinguishes between the two key interaction patterns of communication loops and shared references. A communication loop comprises a cyclical exchange of the participation of speaker and listener. These include speaking, listening and responding. A shared reference denotes the communication between two individuals about a certain event. When parents respond to toddlers' non-verbal behaviour and maintain their attention, they create a situation where linguistic exchange can occur.

Manolson (1992) explains that parents who expand on their toddlers' messages help them to understand more about their experiences and to learn to say new words. For instance, when a toddler says, "Mummy work", the parent can respond with "Yes, Mummy went to work" (Manolson, 1992). Such exchanges expose toddlers to new ideas about how they can connect language to whatever interests them. They begin to understand how events and objects are associated, and learn to use language to express more complete ideas. Therefore, by expanding toddlers' sentences, parents assist their acquisition of language by guiding them to understand the grammatical functions and rules by which words are combined. Just by adding a word or action to something a toddler just said reveals linguistic information to the toddler at a stage when they are interested in learning.

The greatest gift that adults can give to toddlers is by assisting them in learning to communicate and connecting with their worlds. *It takes two to talk*. At times, an adult may become frustrated with a toddler who is unable, uninterested or impossible to understand, causing fewer opportunities for encouraging the toddler to improve his/her ability to communicate. Toddlers often fail to communicate, not because they are uninterested, but because they are unsure of how to respond (Manolson, 1992). At times, while the toddlers may know how they want to respond, they fear the adults would not understand what they are communicating and then withdraw from communicating. To the parents, it may appear as if the toddlers are being unreasonable, but the toddlers do not yet know of other measures of communicating and are simply using the skills they currently have.

When adults communicate face-to-face with toddlers, they guide them to learn more about them, their facial expressions and state of alertness (Manolson, 1992). The toddlers focus then on the way the adults' mouths move to form the words they hear. They also experience adults' acceptance of their attempts to communicate. An adult who talks *to* a toddler – and not *at* a toddler – teaches the toddler about the give-and-take processes of communication. In this way, toddlers learn when to lead and follow in conversations.

By visibly interpreting their attempts at communication, adults assure toddlers that their messages have been received; this scenario provides toddlers with a language model to learn from (Reynolds & Burton, 2017). When adults interpret for toddlers,

they say a word as the toddlers would if they could, which allows them to hear the correct word for what they are trying to say. Waiting with anticipation for a toddler to respond allows the toddler to take an active part in the conversation (Law et al., 2017; Levine et al., 2016; Manolson, 1992). Commenting on a toddler's message also encourages them to share information on everyday activities, as they become aware that others have an interest in their messages. The further toddlers progress in their communicative endeavours the more conversations they will want to have, and the more turns they take the more opportunities they have to learn (Manolson, 1992).

Toddlers communicate daily through gestures, words and phrases, and they may construct simple sentences to convey messages that could sometimes be difficult to understand (Wittmer & Petersen, 2014). Toddlers may develop a unique jargon and, for instance, utter a sequence of sounds such as "ba bad a da to le?" with their own intonations to communicate what seems to be a very important piece of information to them. They may place repeated emphasis on different sounds, yet their utterances may be difficult for adults to understand. Toddlers can then get highly frustrated in those instances, though adults can defuse such situations calmly by encouraging the toddler to take their hand and show them what they want, for example.

Lots of recent speculation in various media sources centred on the advice to parents to refrain from speaking to their toddlers in 'baby talk', but parents and teachers still, subconsciously, use a special language when interacting with children. Toddlers also appear more attentive when it is used (Wittmer & Petersen, 2014). Most adults use this form and in doing so they signal to the toddlers that they are partners in communication partners. They also establish language models for their toddlers and, in many cases, child-directed speech (CDS) builds affectionate relationships between adults and children.

Adults can use questions to either start a conversation, take a conversational turn or gain information from toddlers (Wittmer & Petersen, 2014). True questions are asked when the adult does not know the answer. Closed questions are asked to test the toddler and have only one correct answer ("What is that?"). Open-ended questions have more than one acceptable answer ("What song would you like to hear next?"). Choice questions ("Do you want juice or milk?") are excellent questions for toddlers

who are learning to exercise some independence from adults. Toddlers benefit and enjoy interactions with parents and teachers who use conversation-eliciting styles of communication. Such styles promote conversational turns, maintain mutual interests in topics and cancel the use of directives. In contrast, directive styles are characterised by infrequent questions, frequent directives, monologues, rapidly changing topics and low degrees of maintaining a conversational topic. The issuing of frequent prohibitions for behaviour – such as “Stop that!” or “Don’t!” – results in less favourable learning outcomes for toddlers in comparison to active listening strategies that involve repeating, paraphrasing and extending of toddlers’ statements.

2.7.4.3 Meaning making as a factor in communication and language development

Babies between 10 and 11 months old can follow an adult’s gaze. The duration of that gaze predicts language scores at the age of 2 (Levine et al., 2016). Similarly, a toddler’s ability to point and vocalise in redirecting parental attention at the age of 10 to 13 months predicts language comprehension at 15 months (Law et al., 2017; Levine et al., 2016). Another critical aspect of communication is the process of turn-taking or interactive dialogue. Toddlers become partners in communicative dialogues whilst participating in turn-taking (non-verbal or involving speech) (Otto, 2014). Bruner (1990) asserts that language is acquired through active participation in language use, which is a method preferred to being a spectator. Exposure to the flow of language through an outside source is helpful but not as important as doing (talking). A toddler’s continuous participation in communication loops is critical to language development and social interaction (Otto, 2014). The frequency of speech directed to toddlers, the range of words used and the way new words are presented to them influence toddlers’ development of their word-learning attributes.

Taking turns with a toddler during conversations encourages longer conversations and hence allows more opportunities for meaning making (Manolson, 1992; Otto, 2014; Wittmer & Petersen, 2014). A turn can be an expression, sound or gesture. As a toddler matures, their turns during conversations progress to words, phrases and sentences (Manolson, 1992). Daily life provides ample opportunities to share experiences, take turns, exchange ideas and maintain conversations with toddlers. These conversations allow toddlers to express their thoughts and to discover that it

can be a useful device in obtaining new information about their worlds. Adults need to keep those conversations going for as long as possible. They can extend conversations by asking questions to show interest and create anticipation. Questions serve to extend toddlers' thinking, guides them in learning how to make decisions and stir their curiosity levels. It is best to avoid questions that stop conversations such as "What is this?" that could confuse a toddler and elicit no response. It is better to prompt their responses with "What is next?", "What is happening" or "What if ...?" types of questions. Toddlers naturally differ in their respective interests and abilities to communicate. By being sensitive to their changing moods, behaviours and agendas, parents and teachers can adapt their own behaviour to share experiences with toddlers effectively. Adult sensitivity to toddlers' behaviour creates shared moments that are critical to toddlers' feelings of security and confidence.

Newman and Hussain (2006) suggest that 13-month-old toddlers need more than just child-directed speech. They need adults to responsively talk about past and present events, feelings and their reasons for actions. They also require adults to use sentence structures that are slightly above the toddler's level of language. In summary, adults should adopt as many as possible of the following strategies:

- Use responsive talk
- Use decreased vocabulary and shorter sentences
- Direct communication towards the toddler
- Elongate the vowels in words ("Ooooh, whaaat is that?")
- Talk about what is immediately present
- Exaggerate voice pitch and intonation
- Label words, nouns and actions
- Use questions to elicit speech
- Paraphrase previous utterances (toddler says "We go", then adult rephrases with "Yes, we are going")
- Repeat words and phrases frequently
- Use longer pauses between words and utterances
- Repeat words in sentences ("The bird is a blue bird").

2.8 STRATEGIES FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS TO SUPPORT TODDLERS IN EXPRESSING THEMSELVES

Wittmer and Petersen (2014) identify the following strategies for parents and teachers to support toddlers in their efforts to learn how to express themselves and become competent communicators:

2.8.1 Building relationships

When people care about others, they usually want to communicate with that person. Toddlers communicate when they feel that it is pleasant to do so, when they are in loving and warm environments and when they know that others will respond to their communicative efforts. They will want to communicate when they feel safe and cared for. Adults need to be empathetic language partners (Wittmer & Petersen, 2014).

MRQECCE (DHET, 2017, paragraph 15) suggests that ECD educators should embrace “transformative pedagogy which respects the contributions of families and culture in the lives of babies, toddlers and young children; which views children, educators and families as learners, which considers learning as occurring through a co-constructed, collaborative and interactive process and which views the child as competent in communication”. When adults allow the voice of a child to be heard, they ensure that literacy opportunities would occur through a “co-constructed, collaborative and interactive process”.

2.8.2 Responding and taking turns with toddlers

By interacting with toddlers, adults assist children in learning how to use language to communicate (Wittmer & Petersen, 2014). Toddlers learn that communication is an effective way of meeting their needs when they receive responses to their gestures and utterances. When toddlers use words, adults need to respond and, in turn, wait for them to respond again. This conversational dance of talking in turns helps toddlers to grasp the pragmatics of conversation in social contexts. Such conversations build toddlers’ vocabularies and enhance their abilities to become proficient communicators and conversational partners.

Adults should be mindful not to dominate conversations with toddlers or to flood their minds with too much language information. They ought to be interactive language partners who focus simply on responsive interactions and equal give-and-take style conversations. According to NELDS (DBE, 2009), among a toddler's competencies is the uttering of simple sentences, which is enabled when adults respond to them. Adults should also invite conversation, according to the NCF, as toddlers pay attention to and can comprehend much of what is said during conversations (DBE, 2015).

2.8.3 Responding to non-verbal communication

Toddlers often use actions to convey messages (Begus & Southgate, 2012; Wittmer & Petersen, 2014; Law et al., 2017). When toddlers run towards adults, it could mean they wish to connect with the adults. When toddlers kick their feet, it could mean they are uncomfortable. When adults understand and respond to toddlers' non-verbal communication, they assure them that they are communication partners.

2.8.4 Using self-talk and parallel talk

Self-talk, in terms of communication with toddlers, is the talking that an adult does in the presence of a toddler that describes what the adult is doing. Parallel talk is the talking that an adult does to describe to the toddler what the toddler is doing at that moment in time (Hart & Risley, 1999; Wittmer & Petersen, 2014). This strategy ties language to objects and acts, allowing words to come alive and contain meaning for a toddler.

2.8.5 Talking often while using a rich and varied vocabulary

Prior research studies have revealed that the quality and number of conversations between adults and toddlers directly affect how toddlers learn to talk (Whyatt, 1995; Hart & Risley, 1999; Honig, 1996; Shonkoff & Meisels, 2000; Wittmer & Petersen, 2014; Levine et al., 2016). The daily number of different words used by adults in the presence of toddlers, the number of conversations and positive affirmations all relate to toddlers' language development (Hart & Risley, 1999).

Researchers have found differences in the ways that parents talk to their toddlers; some parents expose them to more words than others. Toddlers with talkative parents at the age of 3 tend to talk more and have a richer vocabulary, averaging three times the amount of statements and twice as many words used per hour in comparison to toddlers with less talkative parents. Hart and Risley (1999) confirm that parents who spend more time talking, using language-rich routines and interacting with their toddlers enable the rapid expansion of toddlers' vocabularies. A parent who talks to a toddler while changing a diaper, or who shows a toddler his ears, nose, knees and toes at opportune moments, further the toddler's knowledge of different words.

2.8.6 Using joint attention strategies

A toddler learns best when an adult talks about an object while the toddler's attention is fixed on that object (Wittmer & Petersen, 2014). Joint attention occurs when the adult and toddler simultaneously focus on the same object. Adults who name the objects when toddlers look at or point at those objects help the toddlers to attach the correct language labels to various objects (Law et al., 2017; Levine et al., 2016; Manolson, 1992; Wittmer & Petersen, 2014). These sessions of shared attention enhance toddlers' language development.

2.8.7 Using the 4 E's approach

This approach comprises the following four elements: First, for adults to *encourage* toddlers by listening and responding to them, and by refraining from correcting their use of grammar (Wittmer & Petersen, 2014). Adults can *expand* the syntactic and semantic elements of the toddlers' conversational turns, and then *elaborate* and *extend* the words, sounds and sentences used.

Imitation of the sounds of words and the expansion of their language models constitute the next step in toddlers' development. When toddlers hear expanded word forms, they are then more likely to adopt those forms into their language models (Manolson, 1992; Wittmer & Petersen, 2014). The benefit of this process is that toddlers then feel like they have become the language equals of adults. This is

an effective method of promoting toddlers' further use and development of their language skills.

2.8.8 Using semantically responsive talk

The habit of taking speaking turns (Manolson, 1992; Reynolds & Burton, 2017) and staying on topic translates to toddlers being more likely to continue conversations than the occasions when adults respond but by changing the topic (Otto, 2014; Wittmer & Petersen, 2014). An adult's semantic elaboration, while staying on topic, supports toddlers' tendencies to stay on topic as well. For instance, when a toddler talks about an aeroplane and the adult responds with other relevant information about the colour or shape of the aeroplane, then the toddler is more likely to stay on topic and continue the conversation.

2.8.9 Using child-directed speech

As mentioned in Chapter 1, baby talk or child-directed speech (CDS) is a special language – used by adults and older children – used in the presence of toddlers, and is signified by shorter sentences and decreased vocabularies. Parents and teachers use significantly different speech patterns when conversing with toddlers in comparison with their speech in the company of other adults. The adults simplify their language to maintain the toddlers' attention and hence facilitate their acquisition of language models. When the baby talk is continued for too long while the toddlers grow up, it can limit their development (Hulit, Howard & Fahey, 2011; Manolson, 1992; Wittmer & Petersen, 2014). Adults using CDS direct toddlers' attention to themselves, or they can direct their attention to other objects by pointing to it.

Although prior research has focused on ways that baby talk may slow toddlers' language development down, other studies indicate that adults who use baby talk are modelling bite-size pieces of language that toddlers can digest and practice, while they are at the commencement stage of communication (Whyatt, 1995; Otto, 2014; Wittmer & Petersen, 2014). Toddlers *tune in* to pitch variations, speech sounds, stresses on syllables, words, gestures, expressions and the rhythms of adults' utterances, especially when they engage in face-to-face interactions with adults (Hulit, Howard & Fahey, 2011). When speaking to toddlers, adults place more

emphasis on their pitch, loudness, stress, rhythm and intonation than on the words themselves. CDP is produced with higher than normal pitch levels, with intonational patterns involving greater extremes of low and high pitches than are typically used in adult-to-adult conversations.

Hulit, Howard and Fahey's study (2011) examined toddlers' responses to two speech conditions. They were first exposed to high-pitched speech and the exaggerated prosodic elements usually associated with CDS, but without a sense of happiness or joy in the voices. The toddlers then listened to speech delivered in an adult-to-adult style, but expressed joyfully. The study results indicated that children prefer joyful or happy speech, even if it lacks the high pitches and prosodic elements characterised by CDS.

2.8.10 Reading, singing, using finger plays and social games

Playful activities, such as peek-a-boo, are useful to ensure enjoyable language experiences for toddlers (Wittmer & Petersen, 2014). NELDS (DBE, 2009) lists other ways to pleasantly stimulate toddlers' learning processes, such as using language games, employing various volumes and tones while telling stories, creating relaxing and fun conditions while reading from children's books and by creating new stories together.

2.9 SUMMARY

The reviewed literature indicates that parents participate in their children's literacy development by helping to mould their language and communication abilities, which renders parents as the initial teachers. Parents represent an important commencement factor in communicative growth and language learning (Garbe et al., 2016).

Globally, specialists have developed teaching policies to accommodate early learning and communicative development. This prompted a campaign to develop updated teaching programmes to improve the skills of ECD practitioners as well as families. A lack of coherent policies and research examples exists in South Africa. This circumstance causes a gap in the local knowledge base that affects the quality of training of both parents and ECCE teachers in relation to toddlers' communication

and language development. The competent use of language allows a young person to develop a sense of personal identity as an individual in society. Language competency is, therefore, vitally important in ensuring a learner's future successes in classrooms and beyond (Scribner, 2013).

Toddlers who are frequently engaged in conversation by their parents and teachers are further advanced in language learning than toddlers who receive fewer opportunities to hone their communication skills. Literature revealed that parents and teachers should utilise all forms of language – via songs, rhymes and stories – to strengthen toddlers' social interaction prowess and to provide the necessary access to language sources that could further assist toddlers in their learning endeavours. Chapter 3 below explains the research methodology.

Chapter 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Qualitative methodological approach

Gathering data from parents, teachers and toddlers, prioritising the situations and existing world views naturally



Interpretivist paradigm

Understanding how participants make sense of the world around them



Multiple case study research design

Observing participants over time and activity through multiple collection procedures to gather detailed data and information over a set period



Photovoice
Interviews
Observations
Field notes

Research questions



Selection and design of cases and participants



Data generation instruments and process



Generation of data, analysis and interpretation

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 contains reviews of relevant literature sources relating to the communication and language development of toddlers and the roles that parents and teachers play in those processes. Chapter 3 details the research design and the interpretive method used to complete the multiple case studies included in the research plan. This chapter further outlines the techniques involved in utilising the methods, instruments, and data generation and analysis processes (Rule & John, 2011). Multiple data generation techniques were used, as explained in this chapter.

This qualitative study's objective was to gain an understanding of parent and teacher perceptions regarding the communication and language development of toddlers in their natural setting. I afforded due weight to participants' experiences and views to obtain rich explanations of their understanding of the topic. To allow the views of the sampled parents and teachers to rise to the surface, I conducted my investigations in their natural environments and by employing visual media.

The study addressed the following research questions:

Main research question

- How do parents and teachers perceive the communication and language development of toddlers?

Secondary research questions

These questions assist in producing a comprehensive answer to the main research question:

1. How do parents perceive the communication and language development of their toddlers?
2. How do teachers perceive the communication and language development of their toddlers?
3. Which factors influence the communication and language development of toddlers?

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The study's research design included multiple case studies that were investigated within the parameters of a qualitative approach. The characteristics of this design include being naturalistic, descriptive, interpretive and rational (Maree, 2016).

3.2.1 Multiple case study methodology

A multiple case study, as defined by Rule and John (2011), is a systematic and in-depth investigation of certain instances, in their contexts, for knowledge production. It offers rich insight into situations, events and people. By using this method, I developed an in-depth analysis of multiple cases that included toddlers, parents and teachers (all being the primary participants). These multiple cases entailed the observation of research participants over time in terms of their perceptions and activities, while various methods of data generation produced detailed information for analysis. Furthermore, multiple case studies involve the exhibition and systematic categorisation of related but unstructured information as obtained from various participating sources.

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) list the features of multiple case studies as follows:

- They contain detailed descriptions of events relevant to the involved individuals
- They illuminate and offer narratives of events relevant to the case
- They offer combined descriptions and analysis of events
- They formulate individual perceptions of events
- The researchers collect and assemble all the essential pieces of the case
- They explore current situations
- They focus on one setting where interrelated issues are present
- They use large quantities of the case data.

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2013), multiple case studies enable researchers to grasp the nature of experiences in specific circumstances more clearly than through the sole application of theories and principles, which make it an important foundation of research data. Multiple case studies depict the how and why, the cause and effect. They promote intense probing and analysis of phenomena that allows valid generalisations and conclusions relating to sample populations. They

provide a multi-perspective analysis since they consider views from various performers instead of limiting perspectives to a single voice within a situation (Maree, 2016). Multiple case studies comprise extraordinary samples of real people (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013), which is an important facet in this study where real parents and teachers expressed their views with sincerity, thereby allowing me to obtain an in-depth understanding of the research topic.

The power of multiple case studies lies in witnessing and recording the effects of events, *as they are*, and in actual circumstances (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013). They identify circumstances as both cause and effect. It is hence essential for researchers to develop a thorough understanding of the studied phenomenon to do justice to a multiple case study format. Multiple case studies promote the development of peoples' powers of comprehension (Maree, 2016). Researchers, however, should avoid any internal biases to influence the research findings and conclusions, and guard against the forming of unjustified generalisations. For this reason, I employed multiple data generation methods to gather a variety of perspectives.

3.2.2 Selection of sites

I formulated a criterion to identify six study cases from three ECD centres. These cases involved observations of six toddlers (three girls and three boys) at three different ECD centres in Centurion, Midstream and Mamelodi, within the Tshwane municipal region. I selected the specific ECD centres because they contained diverse toddlers from various cultures such as different religions, socio-economic backgrounds and race. The range of socio-economic backgrounds included higher-income, medium-income and poor areas. The selected ECD centres also reflected this distribution. The availability to time, finances and resources dictated the size of the sample population.

The toddlers' parents agreed to capture information and report on language and communication interactions within their households. A single teacher from each school was selected, on condition that the selected toddlers attend their classroom sessions. These toddlers were observed and their interactions recorded on tracking observation sheets.

3.2.3 Selection of participants

I used criterion sampling to select the ECD centres where the study was conducted. This form of sampling involves the selection of cases that meet a criterion of importance and was used when specific criteria are stated for the selection of cases involved in the study (Creswell, 2013). Various required characteristics were formulated before deciding which cases to include in the study. According to Bertram and Christiansen (2014), all cases should meet the required criteria set for the study. The selected participants, therefore, needed to have the relevant experiences necessary to answer the research questions.

Similarly, the sites chosen for interviews and observations should not overwhelm the researcher with political or ethical issues. As researcher, I needed to first consider the economic status of each ECD centre before identifying the sample population members within this larger population. The teachers, who knew the toddlers well, selected the most appropriate and available children for each case study. I obtained consent from the parents as well as assent by the toddlers themselves, either indirectly or directly (when communication was possible). Each teacher needed to have had at least two years' experience with 18 to 30 months old toddlers at their respective ECD centres. This study primarily harnessed the parents' and teachers' responses and contributions.

3.3 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHOD

Qualitative research is a collection of research built up over time (Maree, 2016). The strength of this approach is that it yields depth and richness of descriptions and explorations. The qualitative method was suitable for the study as it led me to understand participants' meanings in relation to specific contexts of their lives. This approach relates to non-experimental methods and procedures, as illustrated by the strategy to collect data from the parents, teachers and toddlers in their natural environments and by prioritising their natural ways (Maree et al., 2012). The data generation was given meaning through interpretation. The data – collected by means of pictures, symbols, words, non-numerical forms, artefacts and materials – were qualitatively harnessed to enable understanding, interpretations and analyses. This process of qualitative research is inductive, non-positivist and theory-gathering

(McNabb, 2015). The toddlers were observed in their natural learning surroundings (by their parents at their homes) while the parents and teachers were interviewed at the toddler's ECD centres. This means that the parents' and teachers' views were similarly heard and interpreted.

I, as the researcher, assigned meaning to the collected data through interpretation thereof (Creswell, 2013) and used interpretivism as the epistemological lens through which I interpreted information and obtained insights into participants' understanding, views and experiences (Athanasou & Maree, 2012). The utilisation of an inductive method assisted my investigation of cases; I could focus on identifying the characteristics of phenomena to provide me with in-depth understanding and valid interpretation of data. I strived to enrich the study's identified theory with an accurate analysis of the data with its phenomenology qualities that needed to be recognised (Rule & John, 2011). For these reasons, a qualitative approach was best suited to gain a thorough understanding of the studied phenomenon. The research findings represent the participants' voices, views, interpretations and perspectives of relevant phenomena (Creswell, 2013). The participants expressed their opinions and perspectives in interviews conducted by myself.

Table 3.1: Applied characteristics and relevance of qualitative research (adapted from Creswell, 2013)

Characteristic	Relevance to this study
Data collected in a natural setting	Data was collected at the centres where teachers worked and parents delivered and fetched their toddlers.
Researcher as primary research instrument	Data was collected through interviews and photovoice with parents and teachers using open-ended questions. The researcher conducted all interviews.
Reasoning through inductive logic	The purpose of the data analysis was to gain deeper understanding of parent and teacher perceptions of the communication and language development of toddlers. I also observed toddlers for trustworthiness purposes.
Reflection of participants' perspectives	All research findings represented the participants' perceptions.
Sensitivity to researcher bias (reflexivity)	I, as researcher, was aware that the research findings needed to reflect the participants' true perceptions of toddlers' communication and language development, and that the researcher needed to constantly reflect objectivity.

Research presented holistically	The aim was to present research findings that reveal an in-depth understanding of the investigated phenomenon (participants' perceptions on the topic).
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3.4 RESEARCH PARADIGM

Reality is perceived from an interpretive paradigm concerning the individual during this study. The interpretive paradigm mainly revolves around how participants make sense of the world around them (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Interpretivist researchers study phenomena through the eyes of the participants in their natural context. The purpose of this paradigm is to understand the world of human experience and to retain the phenomena's integrity while being investigated (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013). It involves the researcher entering (going inside) the participant's world and comprehending the studied phenomenon from within.

Researchers need to be direct in understanding and valuing the research topic to construct the research theory. Participants are the main source of data, which is generated by their purposeful and meaningful contributions. According to Maree (2016), interpretive researchers attempt to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to the phenomena. He adds that the human mind is understood in different ways, such as from within or from an external (but not independent) social context (Maree, 2016). A crucial aim is to analyse an investigated situation to obtain a clear understanding of the ways that people create meaning in relation to certain phenomena.

As researcher, I employed an interpretive lens to investigate how various interactions (in a determined context) influence the participants' perceptions of reality. Reality is defined by the construction of meaning or through the interpretations of perspectives. Theory follows research, which was generated throughout the study and used as a lens to obtain an understanding of the phenomenon (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013; Creswell, 2013). I attempted to set aside any existing assumptions and followed the principles of phenomenology by inspecting the studied phenomenon as experienced and described by the research participants. My purpose was to obtain additional insight and new interpretations of known knowledge about toddlers' communication and language development (Rule & John, 2011).

3.5 DATA GENERATION INSTRUMENTS AND PROCESS

The following figure represents the strategy of data generation as used in this study.

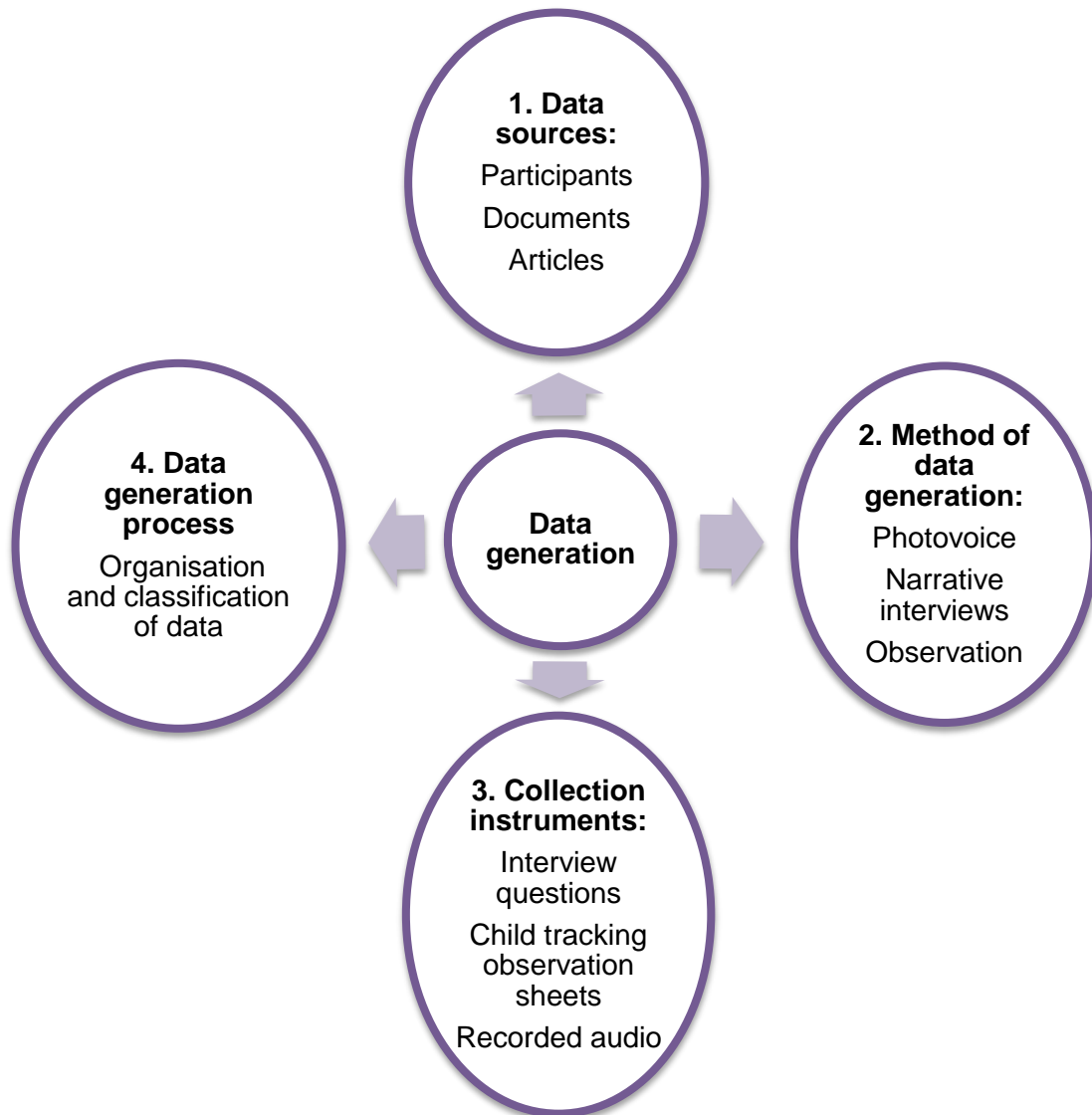


Figure 3.1: Elements of data generation

Figure 3.1 represents the activities of the researcher and research participants. Firstly, the parents and teachers, as participants, displayed their understanding of toddlers' communication and language development by capturing photos of the selected toddlers in their natural environments during moments of communication or signs of language use. Secondly, they attributed meaning to these photographs by narrating the events. Thirdly, they expressed their views and opinions on these events and answered other applicable questions during the interview. Fourthly, the researcher gained a thorough understanding of the lives and views of these

participants through these activities. The following are methods that were used when generating data:

3.5.1 Visual method

The visual methodologies had a key function in the collection and analysis of data. These are collections of methods used to interpret and understand images, prompting a sense of patterns to emerge out of participants' visual works and producing a narrative outcome that contributes to the researcher's insight and knowledge base (Pink, 2012). Visual methodology was used to strengthen the understanding of the phenomena in this study. This was achieved by using photographs to illustrate what participants know and understand and to capture participants' truths and reality. Visual methodology, therefore, constituted a rich source of data for this study.

This method was successfully utilised as a discrete means of collecting data while the participants were comfortable in their environments. Participants were afforded the opportunities, by means of the visual imagery, to directly express their truthful perspectives and understanding. This method is creative since it captures an onlooker's attention visually (Creswell, 2013). This study harnessed the participants' knowledge of the researched phenomenon to add depth to existing insights and knowledge. This method further allowed the participants to view their own opinions of the phenomenon, making them even more aware of what goes on around them concerning their toddlers' communication and language development.

Participants captured the visual research data during their contact sessions with the toddlers. The capture and examination of the variety of images served to be vital in finding answers to the secondary research questions. I conducted the field research processes in my individual capacity by enabling the generation of research data through photography, making transcriptions of voice recordings and analysing the visual and textual evidence. It is beneficial to a study when the researcher is familiar with every element of the collected material (Mohangi, 2008), as was the case in this study.

Visual media data can easily be interpreted incorrectly (Creswell, 2013). This potential problem was avoided by interviewing the participants and recording their narratives and views concerning the images. This process made it easier to obtain a clear understanding of the collected data.

Triangulation can improve the interpretations of qualitative research data by utilising multiple methods or data sources to develop an understanding of the phenomenon (Carter et al., 2014). I utilised various sources of information for this purpose – as suggested by Athanasou and Maree (2012) – in terms of participants, time and settings. Researchers should consider asking several questions when they use visual imagery and attempt to perceive the information in multiple ways (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013). Even though this may be considered a limitation, the use of a variety of visual captures provided me with a wider and more open way of conducting the research. Certain criteria need to be met, however, when employing visual methodology, such as treating the images with serious respect and refraining from reducing them to a single context (Rose, 2012). Moreover, other tools for gathering data were incorporated, which helped to clarify participants' true meanings and ascertain exactly what they wished to reveal.

The parents and teachers of toddlers were asked to (and agreed to) capture the moments during their daily lives that relate to their toddlers' communicative learning efforts. The participants brought their photographs to the interview sessions during which they narrated the captured moments and shared their views on those events and situations.

3.5.1.1 Photovoice as a visual method

Photographs are used in educational research because of the way they realistically present moments and events and serve as captured evidence or data. This form of visual methodology was harnessed for this study as a particularly strong medium of data generation.

Photovoice is a qualitative process of combining pictures and words as well as capturing situations (Palibroda et al., 2009). Wang (1999), while conducting community-based research, developed this process to empower community

members to collaborate and enhance their communities through photographic techniques. It creates photographic evidence and symbolic representations of a community to indicate how they observe the world. Photographs convey real-life visuals, depicting meaning. They provide accurate data, considerations, significances and surface evidence. Photographs can convey the 'mood' of real life since they can capture diverse places, atmospheres, drama and sentiments. They have documentary and interpretive value and meaning, serving as sources of data as well as supportive evidence of different texts and data sets. They add value to the endeavours of both researchers and participants. A single picture can convey what a thousand words do in text (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013).

Participants were requested to use their mobile phones to capture the selected toddlers' activities and communicative efforts. The pictures were first e-mailed to me for initial evaluations and later used during interviews when the participants could narrate and explain those captured moments. The parents and teachers were briefed a week before the observations were due to commence on how to capture photos relevant to the toddlers' communication and language development. While I observed and got the toddlers used to my presence to avoid their treating me as an intruder, I explained to the parents and teachers what I required for the photos and what I expected from the interviews.

The parents and teachers were informed about seven parameters, listed below, to validate pictures as useful research data. The eighth point is a question I posed to the participants. When I met with participants during the research periods, they could narrate the captured events and answer some of these printed questions.

The photos taken by parents and teachers needed to address or illustrate the majority of the following questions:

1. How does the toddler communicate that they want food?
2. How does the toddler communicate that they need to go to the toilet or need a diaper change?
3. How does the toddler ask for their choice of clothing to wear in the morning?
4. How does the toddler communicate their choice of toys to play with?
5. How does the toddler communicate to have stories read to them?

6. How does the toddler respond to games and songs?
7. How does the toddler communicate their happiness or sadness?
8. Look at these three pictures. Of the three images, which one do you think portrays the most communication? Which one do you perceive to be more advantageous for your toddler's development, and why do you say so?

3.5.2 Individual interviews as a data generation method

Researchers conduct face-to-face interviews with participants during qualitative research. The interviews involve asking limited open-ended and unstructured questions anticipated to reflect the understanding and perceptions of the interviewed participants (Creswell, 2013). Interviews are followed by the making of transcriptions (text versions) for data analysis and archiving purposes (Maree, 2016).

Participants who are not comfortable expressing opinions in groups have the opportunity to present their individual views during one-on-one interviews. A controlled line of questioning assisted me in this study to probe and search for information related to the studied phenomenon. Each interview was conducted on an individual face-to-face basis within the perimeters of each ECD centre. This personal approach encourages participants to openly discuss a variety of topics, which solves the potential problem of shyness or reserved behaviour among participants (Creswell, 2013). Participants could construct their own meaning of the subject matter since the interview questions were broad, open-ended and general in nature, which helped to establish a friendly and spontaneous atmosphere for the interviews.

Each open-ended interview was recorded on audiotape and later converted to transcripts for analysis. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2013) mention that meaningful elements of interviews can get lost if the research relies only on transcribed versions of verbal data. Therefore, to enhance the value of the fieldwork and capture rich data, I noted additional feelings and gestures exhibited by the participants as well as any significant environmental factors like the atmosphere and detail about the settings.

Interviews are social encounters. However, I needed to obtain permission from the participants before I could make recordings of the interviews. The audio recordings

were used to capture any responses that may have been overlooked during an interview. The recordings were also used to review participants' answers and to compile additional questions in the case of follow-up interviews. The use of a voice recorder to transcribe interviews transformed these interviews into rich data. My corresponding notes concerning participants' gestures and the environment were added to the text transcriptions.

Although interviews are valuable sources of information, they may be time consuming, costly, biased, occasionally interrupted, and participants' attention spans may vary due to environmental conditions. In this study, I needed to be mindful that interruptions were likely to happen since the participants were in an environment where toddlers were present. Participants can also provide indirect information if they, perhaps subconsciously, adopt the view of the researcher and provide answers they think are expected of them. To prevent this situation, I made sure that the participants remained unaware of my views and that I do not formulate questions to nudge the participants' responses in a certain direction.

When researchers analyse, categorise, interpret and report data, they come across various decisions and issues (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013). Keeping the above in mind and by using different sources of data, I managed to keep any internal biases in check. I also called upon another researcher to evaluate the gathered information and to identify any possible pre-dispositions.

I asked the following questions at the end of the interview sessions to gauge the frequencies that the toddlers were exposed to communication and language development activities at their homes and the ECD centres:

1. How often do you read to your toddler?
2. How often do you listen to your toddler?
3. How responsive are you to your toddler?
4. How often do you expose your toddler to books?
5. If English is not the toddler's home language, do you speak English more often to your toddler than their home language?

3.5.3 Observations as a data generation method

Observations, in research terms, entail the process of recording participants' behaviour and activities, including related events and objects within the study settings, without being in continual contact with them (Maree, 2016). Observations are conducted over time during which researchers employ their senses and intuitive skills to gather qualified data. This strategy is useful when the research topic may be sensitive or too complicated to discuss (Creswell, 2013). Observations are powerful tools for gaining insight into situations.

On-site and first-hand experiences with the various cases (toddlers) were recorded through various means, with the information made readily available to the researcher. The mode of 'complete observer', meaning the researcher is a non-participant observing from a distance, was used in this study (Maree, 2016). The researcher identifies behavioural patterns, within a specific community, to understand participants' values, assumptions and beliefs while being mindful of the social dynamics and participants' backgrounds. Maree (2016) adds that the observer should adopt a passive role and that data should not be aggressively searched and harvested (to avoid a lack of focus). In this study, all the research-related events were observed in the toddlers' natural environment within the ECD centres. Observations were recorded on child tracking observation sheets.

Entwistle (2013) points out that it is a weak strategy to merely rely on experiences to gain an understanding of educational developments. Because events are not fixed and always predictable, understanding them mainly relies on intuition and experiences that are subjective by nature. Other factors that potentially could affect studies of this nature include situations where participants regard researchers as intruders in their domains, researchers not having adequate powers of observation and the injudicious handling of private and sensitive information. Furthermore, a participating toddler may want the researcher's attention while the researcher should remain uninvolved, thereby diverting natural occurrences during an observational research period.

3.5.4 The use of field notes

Field notes contain incidental observations that are recorded in lesser-structured ways. Field notes can contribute narrative explanations about observations and hence create new insights (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013). Such notes assisted me during interviews and observational sessions to saturate and support other data elements. For instance, at times I made note of special words, remarks, impressions, emotions or any other displays by participants that struck me as potentially useful and relevant information to the research aims.

3.6 DATA-ANALYSING TECHNIQUES

Data analysis involves discovering meaning from text and image data (Creswell, 2013). The process involves taking apart and segmenting the data as though “peeling back the layers of an onion” (Creswell, 2013, p. 195). This means that qualitative analysis of the data is not independent of any other phase of a research project. Some already-gathered data elements can be analysed while other data segments are being collected for memos to be included in the final report. Even though image and textual data are rich, they often cannot all be included for analysis. As a result, I evaluated the collected data and extracted only the information relevant to the research questions. I discarded the extraneous data mainly because they did not contribute to achieving the research aims or influenced situational aspects under review. This may be regarded as a limitation to this study; the discarded data, however, can still be used in future related studies.

I collected data at the three ECD centres for one week each and interviewed parents and teachers in-between. All interviews took place within the ECD centres. Tables 3.2 and 3.3 below summarises the data generation processes and instruments employed during the fieldwork phase of research.

Table 3.2: Summative table of data gathering instruments

	School 1		School 2		School 3	
	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3	Case 4	Case 5	Case 6
Duration:	08:00–16:00	08:00–16:45	07:45–15:00	07:50–15:10	08:11–15:00	08:00–16:00

Observation 1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observation 2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observation 3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observation 4	✓	✓		✓		
Observation 5		✓				
	Parent 1	Parent 2.1 & 2.2	Parent 3	Parent 4	Parent 5	Parent 6
Duration:	15 minutes	20 minutes	5 minutes	10 minutes	10 minutes	10 minutes
Interview	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Photovoice	✓	✓			✓	✓
	Teacher 1		Teacher 2		Teacher 3	
Duration:	15 minutes		8 minutes		15 minutes	
Interview	✓		✓		✓	
Photovoice	✓		✓			

Table 3.3: The data analysis process (adapted from Creswell, 2013)

Procedure	Explanation
Organising the data	Interviews were recorded, then transcribed into digital documents and saved for later use.
Reading and memo-ing	After evaluating the data, I identified emerging patterns and themes and their connections.
Interpreting data by organising and categorising	I coded the data, organised the elements into categories and assigned a name to each. These themes were used to answer the research questions.
Interpreting the findings	Deeper meaning was explored by studying the emerging themes in the data set. Similarities, differences and relationships between themes were important to determine the findings that explain the studied phenomenon.

Representing the findings	Findings were presented and compared with findings from other research sources to establish similarities and differences.
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3.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS

This aspect of the study became more crucial as the fieldwork progressed. Trustworthiness was attained by gathering descriptions, observing the toddlers, conducting interviews with participants to substantiate their views and asking critical peers to review the study. Multiple cases, methods and sources supported the study's findings that, in turn, strengthened the study's trustworthiness. The incorporation of additional methods and data gathering techniques into the study helped to prevent issues with validity and reliability. The strategies also allowed for triangulation of data.

Gunawan (2015) believes that trustworthiness is indicated by high-quality data and research strategies, and that it is strengthened by findings that are worth reading. This description relates to the ways that individual researchers can convince their audience of the legitimacy of their research. The researcher needs to gain the trust of participants, which indicates that a degree of persuasive skills is necessary. This study accomplished its targets of accuracy and truthfulness by following the strategies below:

- **Triangulation:** Triangulation, according to Carter et al. (2014), refers to multiple methods or data sources utilised in developing a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being studied. A qualitative research strategy tests the study's own validity by converging information through various sources. During this study, the researcher achieved triangulation by employing multiple data generation methods and analytical strategies through observations (photovoice) and interviews, thereby enhancing the study's trustworthiness. Triangulation helps to secure a high quality, reputable and rigorous research regime. The following diagram represents the triangulation cycle of multiple case study research:

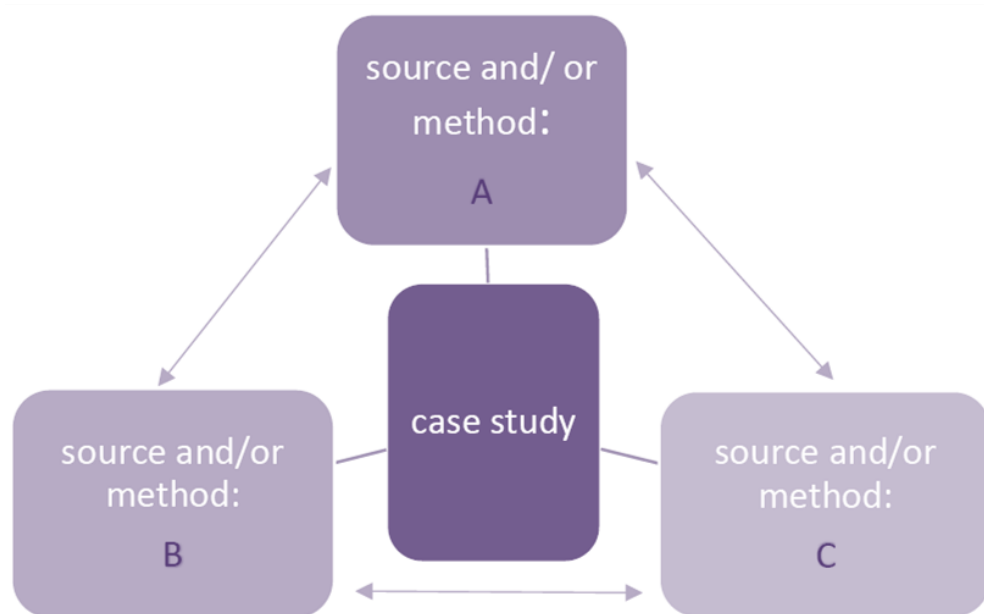


Figure 3.2: Multiple case study research triangulation (Rule & John, 2011)

- **Mechanically recorded data:** Each semi-structured interview was recorded on an audiotape with the permission of the participants. The recordings were transcribed and analysed to provide accurate and complete records (Maree, 2016).
- **Fieldwork:** Observations were combined with semi-structured interviews to match findings and gain detailed insights into the reality of the participants (Maree, 2016).
- **Member checking:** Participants were provided transcripts of the interviews to verify their accuracy and truthfulness.

3.7.1 Research quality

The transferability of this research confirms the study's integrity. I continually endeavoured to detect possible biases throughout the course of this study, staying mindful of the many explanations of truth (Thomas, 2010). The use of multiple case studies generated my detailed and interconnected recognition of the situation. The interviews and multiple case study method allowing me, as the researcher, to discover meaning and build descriptions to be explored for analytical purposes. Transferability is a substitute for generalisation and need to be well developed in qualitative research (Rule & John, 2011). Clear descriptions of each stage of the

research process and detailed specifications of the research methods and investigative contexts enhance the study's degree of transferability (Thomas, 2010).

3.8 ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

Qualitative researchers collect data themselves and are, therefore, the key instruments in their own studies. Researchers collect data by observing behaviour, examining documents and interviewing participants (Creswell, 2013). All of those strategies were utilised to gather data by employing data generation instruments such as observations, interviews and visual media (wherein data was captured in the form of audio voice notes).

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), an involved researcher invests in experiences that require direct interactions with participants, interpretive skills and cooperative relationships to obtain participants' views on the investigated phenomenon. This introduces personal and ethical issues to the research. Researchers should ensure that their own values, backgrounds, cultures, genders, socio-economic statuses and biases – everything that shapes their perceptions of the world – do not influence participants or affect the research in any way.

The researcher's function is to gain admission to the research sites while paying heed to the relevant ethical issues that arise as the study progresses (Creswell, 2013). As the researcher, my ethical duty was to investigate the multiple case studies, interviews and observations that I conducted to gain insight into the views of parents and teachers and to determine how much they know about their toddlers' communication and language development.

A qualitative researcher's commitment to accurately reflect a real-world situation is important, considering that the researcher records the highs and lows in real-life contexts (Maree, 2016). My role as the researcher was to listen to the views of parents and teachers without influencing any personal viewpoints of the participants.

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

At the University of Pretoria, the Faculty of Education's Ethics Committee stated in the 2007 policy guidelines that researchers should abide by certain prescribed

principles while conducting their research. Some principles relate to the participation of sample population members whose identities and rights to privacy should be safeguarded. Their participation hinges on the principles of consent and trust (Human-Vogel, 2007). In relation to the matter of informed approval, the policy is that a parent or caregiver should accompany children under the age of 18 months during all stages of research studies. These policy guidelines were strictly followed and applied during this study. The Ethics Committee at the University of Pretoria approved my application for ethical clearance to perform data generation involving toddlers.

Typically, research ethics committees at higher education institutions give researchers clearance to allow them to collect data through observations and interviews (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013). The Ethics Committee at the University of Pretoria permitted me on 20 February 2019 to conduct this study; the clearance certificate is placed near the beginning of this document. Furthermore, data generation can only commence after sample population members had given informed consent to participate in the study, having been informed first that they may withdraw from the study at any time if they choose to do so. Overt research was conducted throughout the study, which means that the participants were, at all times, aware when data was being collected. Letters of consent were drafted to request parental consent for observations of their toddlers in their natural environments. These letters were signed by all the involved parents during March 2019, before any observations were done on the toddlers selected as participants.

Observational procedures run the risk of causing disturbances in the selected research sites, which should be avoided by adherence to ethical guidelines (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013). During this study, I, as the researcher, followed the code of ethical practices and took special care to avoid disturbing the toddlers or teachers as they went about their daily activities in the ECD centres. This involved the responsibility not to disclose any of the participants' identities or any personal information of any description, and to explain the study's purposes and procedures to participants before commencing with the fieldwork. Any recognisable faces were blanked out in the photographs appearing in this document to prevent recognition of any participants or children.

Since this research focused on the perceptions of parents and teachers, which could potentially include controversial elements, I endeavoured to conduct the research as neutrally as possible. Hence, the participants' privacies were respected and they were aware of their rights to decline any further participation at any time. If any ethical dilemmas arose, the involved parties could approach the university's ethics committee to help resolve the dilemma.

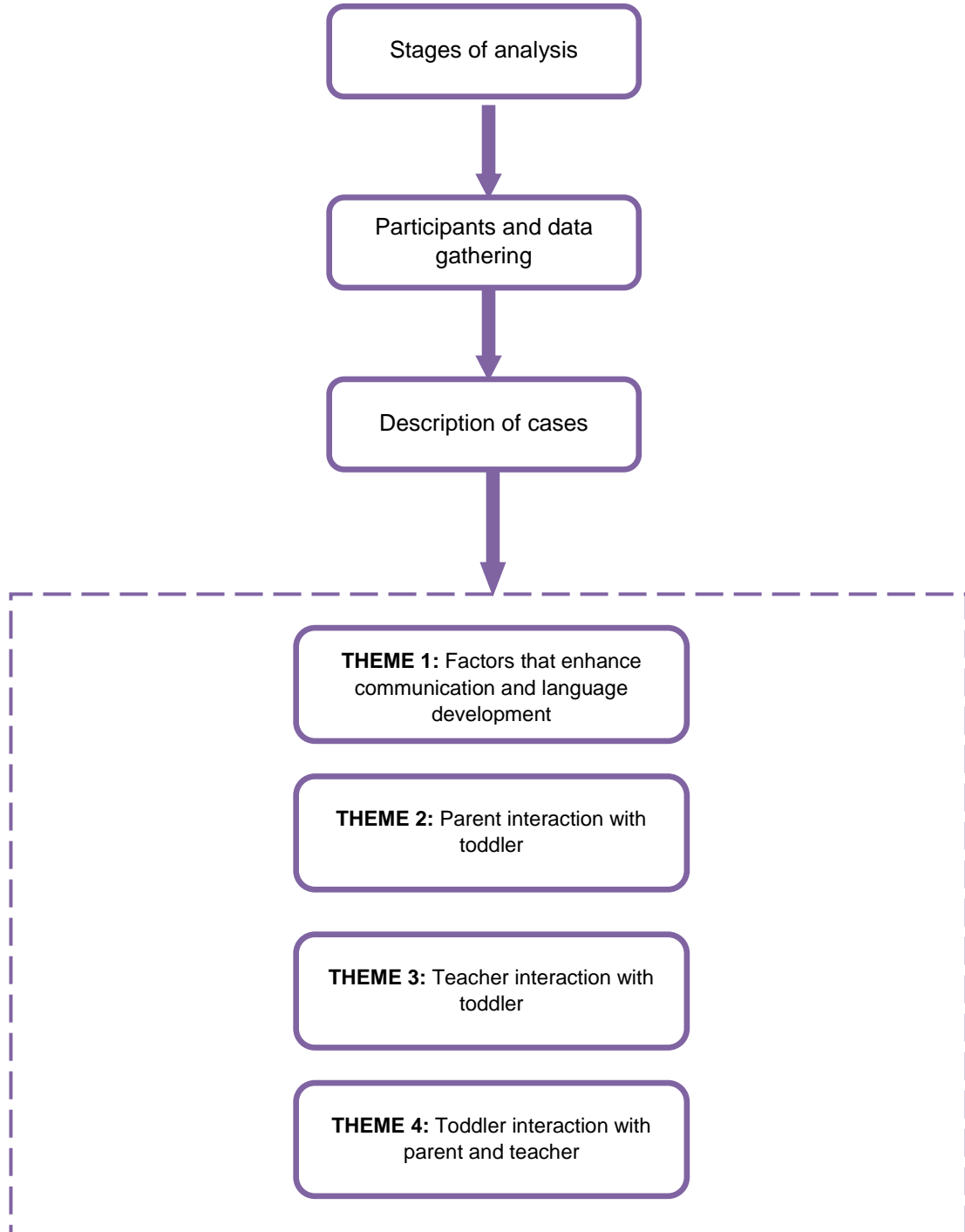
The ethical codes of conduct prompted me, as the researcher, to be disciplined in the execution of my research activities (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013). Those guidelines benefit research as it identifies the researcher as a member of an open community with responsibilities to uphold ethical values in terms of communal rights. Therefore, since tasks could be performed to obtain legitimate data while being mindful of ethical and moral standards, the door remains open in communities for future researchers to continue research in this field.

3.10 SUMMARY

Chapter 3 explained the study's qualitative approach through the utilisation of an interpretive research paradigm. The research design entailed multiple case studies while the collection of data involved visual media, observation and interviews. The data was interpreted by means of content and thematic analyses. Relevant ethical considerations were addressed and the researcher's role was explained to participants during the research processes. The researcher endeavoured to minimise any internal biases. Chapter 4 will describe the execution of data generation and analytical procedures.

Chapter 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

CHAPTER OVERVIEW





4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 3 explained the research methodology of my study. Three ECD centres within Pretoria, with high-, medium- and low socio-economic statuses respectively, were selected through criterion sampling. Participants (6 parents and 3 teachers) answered questions during interview sessions while the six toddlers (the cases) were observed to monitor their communicative development. The purpose of the interviews was to collect sufficient data on parents' and teachers' real-life experiences and views on their toddlers' communication and language development. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. The multiple case studies, together with the data obtained through the interviews, created a large data set, which necessitated the formulation of strategies to sensibly manage and organise the data (Rule & John, 2011). The data analysis process comprised the following steps:

- The recorded interviews were transcribed from the audiotapes. The tapes were replayed until I was sure the participants' answers were correctly transcribed.
- Transcriptions were handwritten and filed.
- Observations were handwritten and filed.
- The transcribed data and observations were later analysed, dissected and coded to identify emerging themes.
- Themes from observations and interviews were interlinked to reveal relationships.

Chapter 4 presents the strategies used to transcribe and sort the collected data, and to identify the themes and subthemes. The chapter includes general descriptions of all the stages of active research. I use the term *playroom* in this chapter rather than 'ECD centre' or 'classroom', in accordance with MRQEECE (DHET, 2017) terminology, since the pedagogy of play – rather than formal education – is continuously highlighted throughout in terms of the subject matter. This chapter further describes the nine participating adults' perceptions, experiences and understanding of their toddlers' communication and language development, and links those descriptions to the observations of the six toddlers (study cases). The chapter concludes by interpreting the main findings. Table 4.1 below lists the keys used in Chapter 4.

Table 4.1: Keys used in the analysis

Key	Description
	Observation
	Field notes made during data generation procedures
HIP-P1	High-income playroom – Parent 1
MIP -T1	Medium-income playroom – Teacher 1
LIP-C1-B	Low-income playroom – Case 1 – boy

4.2 MOVING FROM CONTENT TO THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Figure 4.1 displays the six stages of content analysis (Flick, 2009).

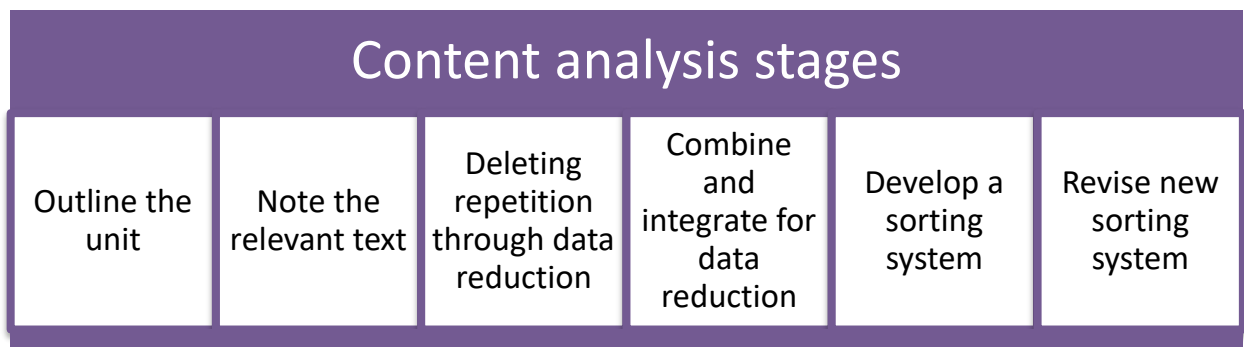


Figure 4.1: Stages of content analysis

This process involves the summarising and textual reporting of data analysis according to main study topics. Text is any communicative material meant to be read, interpreted and understood. A content analysis comprises the units of analysis, textual summaries, paraphrasing of textual elements, data reduction through the discarding of replicated information, data reduction through combining paraphrases, placement of new text into classification systems and the reviewing of new classifications relative to the original data (Flick, 2009). Content analysis denotes an interactive process where relationships and contrasts within data sets can demerit or confirm a scientific theory. I applied this process to my research.

Measures of findings provide themes (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013). Themes involve comparative data analysis after multiple case studies are done (Flick, 2009). A short description of every case should follow the analysis that utilises the themes. This description allows the researcher to recheck and modify any data interpretations. The researcher groups the themes together by studying the transcribed data and sorting related elements into manageable units. Data fragments are grouped and labelled with symbols, descriptive words or unique names.

I used gathering and sorting points during thematic categorisation for prominent data recognition. These themes functioned as indicators that directed me towards the development of my understanding of the studied phenomenon, hence enabling me to make deeper discoveries about realities reflected by the data.

4.3 THEMATIC STAGES OF ANALYSIS

Data analysis, according to Rule and John (2011), is an intellectual and creative process through which meaning is derived from data sources. This study allowed me to consciously distinguish between the data's invisible layers, which guided me to make connections between data points during analysis (Joubert, Hartell & Lombard, 2016). I continually interpreted available data during the data generation processes – this process did not commence only after all the data was collected. I utilised an inductive methodology while investigating the cases and interviews to identify emerging characteristics within the data set and to gain deeper insights into the studied phenomenon. This process allowed me to enrich the study's identified theory that involved Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development (Joubert, Hartell & Lombard, 2016).

Content is ideally analysed by first organising and separating the data elements in manageable and interconnected sections. The researcher can then recognise patterns and themes, and code them with suitable descriptions. The researcher should also discard any extraneous data bits to maintain a clear focus (Rule & John, 2011). Importantly, the researcher needs to be mindful of the main and secondary research questions during this whole process (Joubert, Hartell & Lombard, 2016).

I first sorted my research data according to the six cases of this multiple case study, with subsections to distinguish between bits of information gained from the respective parents and teachers of each case. I investigated the data by means of the research tools, which were the child tracking observation sheets (Addendum 3), transcriptions of the recorded views and thoughts of interviewed parents (Addendum 4) and teachers (Addendum 5) and field notes. While I analysed each case, I summarised my evaluations of each case and connected significant data elements obtained during the interviews with the observed behaviours and activities of the toddlers (Addendum 6). I then comprehensively analysed the transcribed interviews with parents (Addendum 7) and teachers (Addendum 8).

At first, I rudimentarily grouped the main ideas that emerged from the raw data, then dividing them into themes. Every recorded remark by participants was scrutinised to find valid ways of linking it to remarks made by other participants in the effort to establish significant themes based on interconnected features of the data elements. I then matched the themes to the respective cases to develop a multilevel understanding of the toddler's individual and communal behaviour. I used the more prominent and established themes to validate other emerging themes during this cyclical process, which helped me to recognise and discard redundant data. I finally constructed a thematic hierarchy based on the prominence of each identified theme. I repeatedly studied the data categorisations and evaluated my analysis to refine my understanding of the inherent meaning of the analysed research data.

Figure 4.2 illustrates the hierarchy and interconnectedness of the most prominent themes.

Thematic analysis is an interactive process that considers the similarities, differences and relationships contained in a data set, which can be related to the study's theory. This process is vital in obtaining a clear and coherent understanding of the studied phenomena (Grbich, 2012). Content analysis benefits qualitative research since it simplifies data by sorting the whole into manageable sections. It allows the researcher to accurately gauge participants' attitudes, emotions and perceptions.

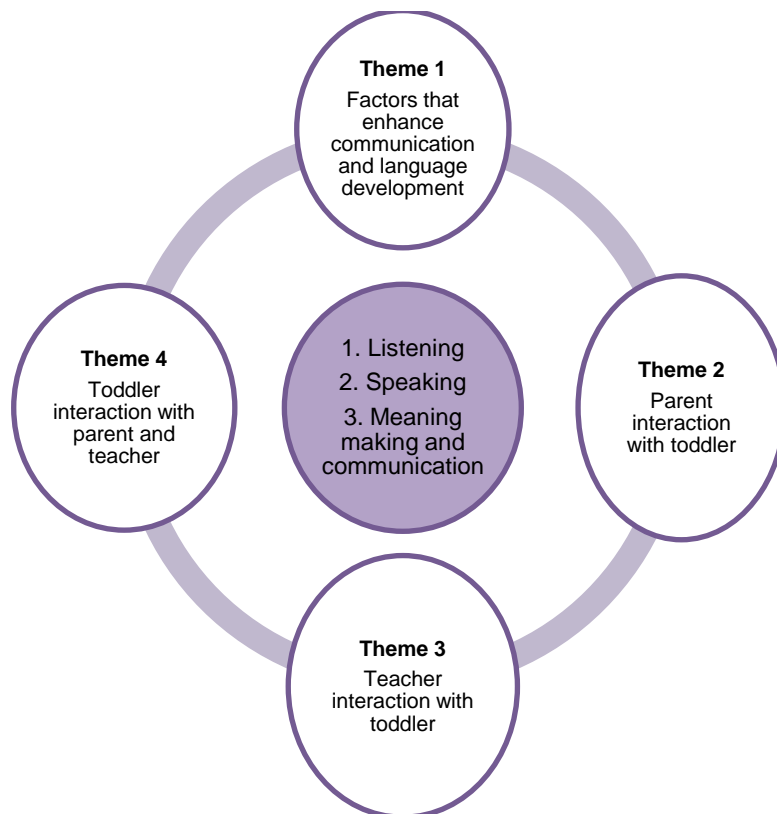


Figure 4.2: Prominent themes that emerged during data analysis

I employed the content analysis strategies – as an analysis unit (Joubert, Hartell & Lombard, 2016) – to identify and sort thematic data elements. Using a thematic analysis allowed internal validation of the data as well as a comparative analysis of data obtained from interviews and observations respectively (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013). I stayed mindful of the research questions, conceptual framework, study methodology and the knowledge gained from my literature review during the analytical processes, which guided my decisions taken while mapping the data. Each step along the way contributed to the study's value (Grbich, 2012).

Data mapping not only enabled me to clarify, explain and understand the studied phenomenon, but it also opened doors to further discoveries concerning deeper realities embedded in the data (Maree, 2007; Rule & John, 2011). The cyclical processes undertaken during data analysis coaxed me to continually revisit aspects of data, theories, concepts, literature and analysis. This process was a driving force in the maintenance of my focus during the phases of content analysis and thematic interpretation (Joubert, Hartell & Lombard, 2016).

4.4 PARTICIPANTS AND DATA GATHERING

The research participants comprised six parents and three teachers of the six toddlers (6 case studies). The following four tables display the profiles of each participant and information of the toddlers as respective focal points. Pseudonyms (coded here) were used during the sampling and analytical procedures to protect the identities of each member of the sample population.

Table 4.2: Research participants and cases

Participants		Cases
Parents	Teachers	Toddlers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 parents of the 6 cases observed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 teachers of the 6 cases observed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 male toddlers • 3 female toddlers

Table 4.3: Profiles of the three teacher participants

	Teacher code	Gender	Qualifications
ECD centre 1	HIP-T1	Female	At time of research, she studied to earn her degree in Education. She has already obtained a degree in Psychology, a diploma in the Ministry of Education for kids and various certificates for education courses. She studied Mandarin and taught primary and high school students in China for one year. She wants to further her studies in the medical field as well. She began teaching at this centre at the start of this year (2019).
ECD centre 2	MIP-T2	Female	She had completed a course in Early Childhood and Adolescent Development She is in her second year of teaching at this centre.
ECD centre 3	LIP-T3	Female	She obtained a HRE–N6 certificate in Human Resource Management and has prior experience in office administration. She began teaching at this centre during November 2018, and is therefore still in her first year of teaching.

Table 4.4: Profiles of the six cases

	Toddler code	Toddler name	Age in months	Gender	Race	Position in family
ECD centre 1	HIP-C1-B	Ethan	28	M	Caucasian	Only child
	HIP-C2-G	Liyah	26	F	Indian	Only child
ECD centre 2	MIP-C3-B	Nolan	19	M	Caucasian	2 nd of 2 children
	MIP-C4-G	Zoe	18	F	Caucasian	2 nd of 2 children
ECD centre 3	LIP-C5-B	Mulalo	18	M	African	Only child
	LIP-C6-G	Vinolia	24	F	African	2 nd of 2 children

Table 4.5: Profiles of the three parent participants

	Parent code	Toddler name	Religion	Parent interviewed	Socio-economic status	Parents occupation and education	
						Mother	Father
ECD centre 1	HIP-P1	Ethan	Christian	Mother	High	Lawyer	Salesman
	HIP-P2	Liyah	Hindu	Both	High	ETA connection	ETA connection
ECD centre 2	MIP-P3	Nolan	Christian	Mother	Medium	IT learning specialist	Data and business development specialist
	MIP-P4	Zoe	Christian	Mother	Medium	Housewife	Pharmacist
ECD centre 3	LIP-P5	Mulalo	Christian	Mother	Low	Accountant	Media
	LIP-P6	Vinolia	Christian	Mother	Low	Unemployed	-

According to NELDS (2009) and the NCF (2015), a toddler ranges between the ages of 18 and 36 months. However, for the purpose of this study and its relevance, I included toddlers between the ages of 18 and 30 months old, and who attended an ECD centre. The ages of parents and teachers were irrelevant to this study. This study revolved around the participants' perceptions of their toddler's communication

and language development. Criterion sampling was used to select appropriate ECD centres as research sites. Criterion sampling was useful for this type of study since the research sites, participants and cases needed to meet certain criteria in terms of regions, socio-economic statuses, families, ages, and teaching experience.

Participants' exact words uttered during interviews (and recorded on audiotape) were captured to maintain the authenticity of their thoughts, which enhances the study's trustworthiness. The abovementioned names are not the actual names of the observed toddlers; they are pseudonyms used to protect their identities. This chapter contains only those pseudonyms.

4.4.1 Description of cases

Codes replace the names of the parents and teachers who participated in this study to protect their identities. Similarly, the six cases here are indicated by pseudonyms.

4.4.1.1 Ethan (28 months)

According to HIP-P1, Ethan demands attention and receives exposure to two languages (English and Afrikaans) daily. He has the freedom to choose his own clothing and fetches it himself. He enjoys playing the guitar by watching a video and imitating what he sees and hears – a playful habit since he was 1 year old. His parents share his responsive fun activities from the Wacky Box every weekend. Ethan has the ability to specify what he wants and can request certain things from his parents by name, such as the name of a book he wants them to read. His parents read books to him ever since he was 3 months old. Books serve as a developmentally stimulating resource for the education of Ethan. Ethan is able to recognise when he is naughty and can inform his parents about this. During my observation sessions, I noticed that Ethan was very responsive to toddlers around him, interacting and playing with them. He is willing to share his toys with others, such as on the occasion when HIP-T1 asked him to help soothe a crying toddler in the playroom. Ethan is a loving, happy toddler who enjoys playing by himself though he loves the company of other toddlers during playtimes. He has also been observed to break up fights among others. Occasionally, Ethan's attention wanders when HIP-T1 talks to all the toddlers together; he then plays with either his legs or the toddler

next to him, for instance. He is good at singing along or mouthing every word HIP-T1 sings or songs he hears on a compact disc (CD). Ethan knows the names of every toddler in the playroom and calls them by name if he wants someone to play with him.

4.4.1.2 Liyah (26 months)

HIP-P2 listens to Liyah and states that she does not have a choice in this matter. Liyah speaks English and can speak a few words in Afrikaans. According to HIP-P2, Liyah demands frequent attention and they sometimes need to listen very carefully to what she is saying to try to understand her. Liyah has a variety of resources readily available to her at home and chooses her own stories to read before bedtime. Liyah knows exactly what she wants and specifies her needs in detail, such as when requests a type of food she wants to eat, or the exact toy she wants to play with. Liyah enjoys scribbling and is able to say complete sentences, making it very clear exactly what she wants. She uses the technique of repetition to understand things from books. She can explain pictures and retell stories. She is able to make meaning through technology and can use a technological device to find pictures she wants to see. She enjoys listening to music and loves to sing, especially songs from Disney movies. She repeats songs sung by HIP-T1 in the playrooms, such as a cleaning-up song and other songs while I observed her. She does this on her own without anyone else requesting her to sing. I noticed that Liyah is regarded as the mini-“mummy” of the playroom since she likes to care for her fellow toddlers, like dusting sand off them, kissing their “eina” and instructing them what to do after HIP-T1 initiates an activity. Liyah likes to pick her own spot to sit, even if another toddler is already sitting there. She constantly calls HIP-T1 for attention or requests. She enjoys talking to herself and has one good friend that she calls by name throughout the day, though she knows the names of the other toddlers as well.

4.4.1.3 Nolan (19 months)

Nolan has an older brother with who he shares activities with such as reading, according to MIP-P3. Nolan and his brother share a room and they like to page through the books they have on their shelves. Nolan is exposed to only Afrikaans at home but occasionally, visiting friends of his parents may speak to him in English.

MIP-P3 taught him sign language to ease communication processes and less frustrating. Nolan is a quiet toddler – he listens more than he talks – though he does not mind being around other toddlers. He can show that he needs a diaper change by pulling on his diaper and saying “doek doek”. He takes the initiative in choosing his toys at playtime and he is independent enough to fetch his toys by himself. Nolan generally points to what he wants. According to MIP-P3, Nolan enjoys music and expresses his emotions well. During my observations, I noticed that Nolan plays and smiles to himself. He did not seem to mind that other toddlers play around him, although he gets distracted easily.

4.4.1.4 Zoe (18 months)

According to MIP-P4, Zoe occasionally cries when she wants something but at other times she simply picks the object up or points to it to indicate what she wants. Zoe only hears her mother tongue at home. She pats her diaper when she wants it to be changed and can imitate animal sounds when looking at their pictures. She enjoys dancing to music and can express her emotions well. During my observations, Zoe would frequently wave at anyone and she likes to smile. Some days she was very quiet, mostly playing by herself, but on other days she would sing and repeat words to herself. She has a caring disposition and would walk over to other toddlers when they cried. She liked watching other toddlers play. Sometimes she would shake her head to indicate 'no' or she would say no when she meant 'yes' instead. She seemed confused about 'yes' versus 'no'.

4.4.1.5 Mulalo (18 months)

LIP-P5 said that Mulalo speaks in full sentences and always has her attention. At home he is exposed to his mother tongue 80% of the time and to English during the other 20%. He is surrounded daily by relevant resources such as books and is easily prompted to converse when LIP-P5 asks him questions about a book's contents. He is able to refer back to the book when answering those questions. He is an independent toddler who fetches his toys to play with; he knows exactly which ones he wants and where they are. He enjoys playing games and loves music so much that he would even ask LIP-P5 to turn the volume up when he hears a song he enjoys on the television. I noticed that Mulalo would randomly start singing a song in

the playroom whereupon other toddlers would join him in song. I noticed, during my observation sessions, that Mulalo is a highly social and friendly toddler who speaks to and plays with everyone. Mulalo enjoyed my presence in the playroom, frequently talking and playing games with me, even though I was new to the environment. He is very creative and loves to sing into a block (toy) that he imagines is a microphone. He simply enjoys being active and singing with whoever is around him. Occasionally he would randomly start counting, utter all the vowel sounds or make shapes. Mulalo displays knowledge of music and TV programming by his ability to recall musicians' names, song lyrics and names of television shows. During an observation session, I saw him noticing a picture of a South African actor in a magazine whereupon he gave the actor's full name.

4.4.1.6 Vinolia (24 Months)

According to LIP-P6, Vinolia is an active toddler and would rather draw than listen to stories from books. She will, however, listen to a story when it is read to her older sister. She also prefers watching television to reading books. Vinolia is exposed to her mother tongue and English at home. She would ask her mother in baby talk to have her nappy changed, while she loves matching her clothing with her sisters' clothes. LIP-P6 said that Vinolia prefers playing on 'scooters' and with cars rather than dolls. She thrives on attention. Vinolia, according to LIP-P6, can become quite aggressive when she is upset and makes sure that everyone notices that she is angry. I noticed, during my observations, that Vinolia has her moments when she wants to share her toys with others, while at other times she prefers to play on her own. Her favourite 'toy' is a puzzle and she can sit for minutes just figuring out how to complete one part before moving on to another part. She follows her sister around and occasionally talks to her. Her sister seems to be her security or "other mum" in the playroom.

4.5 RESULTS OF THE THEMATIC ANALYSIS

During the data analysis, themes and subthemes emerged from the data collected from the transcribed interviews and observation sessions. While scrutinising the raw data for patterns, subthemes became evident and I could begin to classify and connect the recurring themes. The strongest subthemes were generated by the

transcribed interviews, some of which would then become prominent in the observational data as well. These processes are described and discussed in the following section.

Toddlers progress in communicative abilities through various means such as babbling, focusing on keywords and continuously expanding their vocabularies. Those endeavours are enabled when parents stimulate the toddlers' learning energies, like when, for instance, they read a children's story from a book out loud (Johnston, 2010; Law et al., 2017). As vocabularies expand, so do the toddlers' abilities to construct multi-word sentences. Parental encouragement strengthens a toddler's confidence to use language effectively, which can relate to quick success in communicative growth, setting the child up to thrive academically and socially in later life (Michael, 2013; O'Carroll & Hickman, 2012).

4.6 THEMES AND SUBTHEMES

The first main theme is “Factors that enhance communication and language development”. It reflects situations that can influence a toddler’s communication and language development. The second theme, “Parent interaction with toddler”, reflects the communication between parent and toddler. The third theme, “Teacher interaction with toddler”, reflects the teachers' communication with toddlers, while the fourth theme, “Toddler interaction with parent and teacher”, reflects toddlers' ways of communicating with their parents and teachers. Table 4.6 below summarises the four themes and subthemes.

Table 4.6: Summary of themes and subthemes

Theme 1	Subthemes	Categories
Factors that enhance communication and language development	1.1 Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socialising • Music and singing
	1.2 Meaning making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational resources • Being responsive, reciprocal, and an active participant during play • Parents understanding toddlers' social needs
Theme 2	Subthemes	
Parent interaction with	2.1 Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of attention given to toddler by parents

toddler	2.2 Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking in an adult manner rather than CDS • Keeping conversations going • Speaking home language
	2.3 Meaning making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing comprehension
Theme 3	Subthemes	
Teacher interaction with toddler	3.1 Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attentiveness
	3.2 Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constant conversing • CDS and speaking in an adult manner • Responsiveness • Home languages
	3.3 Meaning making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers' understanding of toddlers
Theme 4	Subthemes	
Toddler interaction with parent and teacher	4.1 Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to a parent's request
	4.2 Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDS and the use of words • Manipulation • Being specific • Seeking communication
	4.3 Meaning making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using words or gestures to communicate • Recalling information learned • Role models

Note that, for the reason explained in this chapter's introductory paragraphs, the term "ECD centre" is replaced by "playroom" in the rest of this chapter.


4.6.1 Theme 1: Factors that enhance communication and language development

While analysing the data, I found statements from parents and teachers respectively that triangulated with my observations of toddler behaviour in terms of any factors that may enhance the communication and language development of toddlers. These factors include televisions, periods of socialising, music and song, educational resources, responsiveness, and active participation through play. Data elements provide the evidence that supports the inclusion of each factor.


Televisions were available in Playrooms 1 and 3 where they were used as sources of entertainment. When the televisions were used, the teachers were less interactive, and only interacted with toddlers when approached by them.




Figure 4.3: Flat screen television in Playroom 3

 Playroom 1 had a flat screen TV and full board DSTV subscription. The toddlers observed were not interested in watching TV and would prefer talking or playing with the other children around them compared to Playrooms 2 and 3, where toddlers were less interactive. (20, 26 & 27 March 2019)

The following field notes contain supporting evidence of Mulalo and Vinolia's actions in Playroom 3, while the television was switched on.

 *Mulalo Observation 2 (11:32)* – Watches TV but looks around from time to time. Walked to a teacher; she lifted him up and put him on her lap.

 *Vinolia Observation 2 (11:37)* – She stopped watching TV, started looking at others and copied them.

LIP-P5 and LIP-P6 regularly expose their toddlers to television broadcasts, showing how Vinolia *“most of the time ... like to e-tunes ... ya, she concentrates a lot more than like to read to her – TV more”* (LIP-P6), and Mulalo *“specifically ask for songs and when it’s his favourite song he’ll ask for the volume to go louder”* (LIP-P5). According to LIP-P6, Vinolia *“likes to write a lot, she likes a pen and paper ... she likes to draw”*. She prefers to watch TV or draw, and is quite fascinated by graphic aspects such as audiovisual cues. Vinolia would rather learn through being active (drawing) than to passively sit and listen to a story being read to her by someone else. LIP-P6 understands this and therefore allows Vinolia to spend her time drawing and

watching TV on her own. LIP-P6 later acknowledges, however, that bonding – through interactivity – is an important aspect of development. We revisit those comments at the end of this chapter.

In narrative terms, the graphics, voices and actions of the TV shows they watched were fast-paced, meaning there were quick jumps from one scene to the next. This overwhelmed the toddlers, prompting them to tune out. The restless toddlers seemed to desire more social interactions. The influences existing in the toddlers' environments all contribute to (or delay) their communication and language development.




After the interview with HIP-P1, she mentioned that her toddler has “30 minutes of TV time and 15 minutes of cell phone time per day” and explained how she does this so that Ethan is exposed to screen time but just enough per day according to her. (8 March 2019)

Theme 1 Subtheme 1.1: Speaking	Categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socialising • Music and singing
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4.6.1.1 Speaking

4.6.1.1.1 Socialising

Ethan, Liyah, Nolan and Mulalo enjoyed socialising, speaking and interacting with others. Nolan, according to MIP-T2, was a “*social butterfly*”. The following observation illustrates how Ethan socialised and called others by name.


 *Ethan Observation 3 (10:04 & 15:08)* – Found a bug and went around the whole playground showing all the toddlers the bug. He called them by name and said “Look goggo”, “Show you goggo”. He tried scaring the toddlers playfully and laughed about it, saying, “Going bite you”.


4.6.1.1.2 Music and singing


Music, song and dance provide effective means of encouraging toddlers' development, as proven by each participant who used the singing of songs and nursery rhymes to stimulate their toddlers' development. HIP-T1 described how her toddlers *“love it (giggles), they dance all the time (smiles and laughs) and sings with, I think they get more excited, too excited sometimes (giggles)”*. HIP-P2 states that Liyah *“sings a lot ... the nursery rhymes or even to just hum them”*.



Figure 4.4 & 4.5: Toddlers singing and dancing (HIP-T1)


 *Ethan Observation 2 (08:13)* – Sung along with teacher in baby talk and did some of the actions. He tried to copy the teacher as much as he could.


 *Liyah Observation 3 (14:51)* – Songs were played on a cell phone; she listened to it and watched the video.


 *HIP-T1 was extremely enthusiastic, laughing and smiling, as she recalls memories of her toddlers dancing and singing. (7 March 2019)*

LIP-T3 exposed her toddlers to movement and words through singing and dancing, stating that *“sometimes I can just switch on my phone eh, switch on the phonic songs and we’ll just sing and dance”*. In Playroom 3, time was reserved every morning during assembly and just before eating time to sing *“songs that we’ve got on our wall”* (LIP-T3). Assembly time was used to *“sing before we pray”* (LIP-T3), sing nursery rhymes, hymns, Bible verses in English and Zulu and the national

anthem. The toddlers did not always need the teachers to start singing songs, as some would randomly start singing on their own the entire day. Teachers would then sing with them and encourage another song each time. LIP-P5 wondered how Mulalo could suddenly sing songs, adding that *“other songs he just randomly comes up with, I don’t know if he learns them from here (in the Playroom) or learns them from when he’s with my cousins or nephews ... but he just randomly [perform] songs”*. She was amazed at his great vocabulary or *language explosion*. It is important for toddlers as well as parents to be surrounded by others who inspire and encourage toddlers to learn. The situation described here allowed Mulalo to participate in rich language dialogues through constant interaction. Toddlers enjoy nursery rhymes because the rhymes allow them to be individuals who can enjoy the moments in their own ways. This note from an observation session illustrates Mulalo's enjoyment of music:

 *Mulalo Observation 2 (10:18)* – Started singing a song on his own and did the actions. The assistant heard him and started singing with him and the toddlers all joined in.

 *LIP-T3 was extremely active and passionate about singing to her toddlers. She showed me all the movements to a song that involved a lot of jumping and hand gestures. She laughed and enjoyed herself as she sang the song, mimicking her toddlers. (26 March 2019)*

 *LIP-P5 was very enthusiastic talking about Mulalo and his passion for music. LIP-P5 was astounded at the way her toddler behaves around music. Mulalo is inspired to learn songs by family members, teachers and peers in school. (20 March 2019)*

When talking about how toddlers respond to songs, the parents and teachers displayed an evident level of excitement and enthusiasm concerning their toddler's actions and ways of doing things. This was not the case in the discussion of other aspects when the participants simply answered the questions. The participants' energetic discussions of this activity reveal their own joy in the energy they invest to prompt their toddlers to learn through musical games and other song-related

activities. This is evidenced by transcribed responses such as, “They love it!” and “[...] like it”. Their excitement encourages their toddlers to learn and develop.


<p>Theme 1 Subtheme 1.2: Meaning making</p>	<p>Categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational resources • Being responsive, reciprocal, and an active participant during play • Parents understanding toddlers' social needs
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4.6.1.2 Meaning making

4.6.1.2.1 *Educational resources*

Toddlers learn through repetition, enabling them to remember basic but important concepts in their worlds, and as their memories improve, an ability develops to make meaning of the stories read to them. This last aspect is made possible through the availability of books and related educational resources.

HIP-T1 described how her toddlers analyse her stories. Some may ask *“questions like uhm ‘what is that?’ or they’ll need explanations of what I just read”* to understand the story. MIP-T2, however, said, *“usually at this age they just stare at you and enjoy what’s going on...so it’s more an interesting thing instead of actually listening to the story, so it’s more a staring competition”*. LIP-T3 added, *“because they are a bit younger ... you can see they are listening but not all of them ... as long as you are doing what you suppose to do I think for their age so that you can get them to focus on what you are doing, on what you are reading”*. These two teachers testify that toddlers are occasionally not adequately stimulated by the reading sessions and, as a result, they seem to stare or start doing their own thing while others in the group could still be listening. LIP-T3 had realised that her toddlers are unable to concentrate for long periods, and that they may be listening though not necessarily deriving any meaning from what they hear. MIP-P3, however, stated that Nolan (of the same playroom as MIP-T2) *“actually sits and listens and laughs”* at stories that he listens to.

 *Nolan Observation 2 (08:10)* – Listened to MIP-T2 read a story. MIP-T2 had to constantly tell him to sit still and not clap his hands. After a while got distracted and started playing with his toes and moving around.

 *Zoe Observation 1 (08:10)* – Listened to MIP-T2 read a story and answered her in baby talk when teacher asked questions.



Nolan during class time got distracted when MIP-T2 read to him but listened and laughed when listening to a story read by his mum MIP-P3. (30 March 2019)

HIP-P2 said that Liyah managed to understand the stories read to her by staying attentive throughout a reading session. Her mother continued, *“she’s naming things from the pictures that we’ve read in the story and if she’s heard the story we’ve read to her a few times, she sort of remembers what we’ve already read and then she can tell you word for word bits of what we read to her”*. LIP-P5 stated that the stories she reads to Mulalo at home *“are on his day to day activities ... even when he’s, like, playing he can sometimes refer back to the book”*.


The more a toddler hears words associated with objects, the easier they understand what is said. Five of the nine parents and teachers had exposed their toddlers to books regularly. Reading stories to them, therefore, guided these toddlers to the zone of proximal development. As seen in other observations, discussed later in this chapter, some toddlers mutter to themselves while they look at pictures in books. Even though resources were readily available to MIP-T2, LIP-P5 and LIP-P6, they chose to push regular reading to the toddlers aside. This means that some toddlers did not receive the same level of stimulation to read or hear stories as others.

Ethan, as observed by myself and confirmed during an interview, learnt quickly how to attach names to objects. Ethan *“has his own Ukulele since he’s been a year and a half”* (HIP-P1) and would ask HIP-P1, *“Mommy, I want to see the uncle with the guitar”* who would then *“put on YouTube and Joe Black and he’ll play guitar and sing”*. The availability of resources plays a significant role as a determinant in cognitive development. Ethan, who had been growing up in a high socio-economic area, was daily exposed to resources like the internet, television and even a musical instrument owned by him. The opportunities to observe guitarists making music prompted him to physically imitate what he sees and hear. This circumstance allows

regular intense stimulation of his cognitive faculties, as indicated by reviewed literature sources (Chapter 2).



Figure 4.6: Ethan playing guitar (HIP-P1)

 *HIP-P1 was over-excited to talk about Ethan's ability to play the guitar. She quickly opened the picture and started talking proudly about her son's ability and later on, after the interview, talking about how much it entertains them when he plays because of how much he enjoys it. Here HIP-P1 showed me a short video clip of Ethan playing his guitar and talking further about this experience when the interview had ended. (8 March 2019)*

4.6.1.2.2 Being responsive, reciprocal, and an active participant during play

As evidenced by the collected data, parents and teachers who actively share experiences with toddlers can – through meaning making – positively influence toddlers' communication and language development. Toddlers learn when they are having fun. Therefore, when parents and teachers are present as active contributors to the moments of fun, then they boost the toddlers' excitement levels and willingness to carry on with those activities, further stimulating them.

The following two pictures were taken by HIP-T1:




Figure 4.7: Social interaction between assistants and toddlers



Figure 4.8: Assistants talking to toddlers

These activities allowed toddlers to speak to one another about their experiences and what they were doing as they did it. HIP-T1 and her assistant teachers would interact with the toddlers, asking them about what they were doing, requesting them to make drawings or instructing them to make sandcastles. Every morning, near 08:30, HIP-T1 would sit all the toddlers against the wall and teach them a new word. They would then do a fun activity that is related to that word. In this way, a desire to acquire more words takes root. The following two observations illustrate this phenomenon:

 *Liyah Observation 1 (10:06)* – Told HIP-T1 she’s making a house with the sand.

 *Liyah Observation 2 (08:31)* – Listened to teacher teach about doctors and ambulance. Followed actions that the teacher made and tried making the sounds.

HIP-P1 takes her toddler’s development very seriously, stating that she has “*specific events with the Wacky Box*” that she completes with Ethan “[*every*] month with 16 activities for Saturdays and Sundays, 4 per weekend”. She enjoys the responsibility to ensure that her child receives the necessary attention and motivation needed to develop and grow. She preferred doing activities *with* Ethan as opposed to leaving him to his own devices in front of the television, like in the example contained in the field note of 8 March 2019 (included here at the beginning of this section). In the picture below, Ethan is busy learning the names of the different colours together with

some rudimentary mathematics (which can also be regarded as a form of language). We see thus how HIP-P1 incorporates play and the element of fun in her toddler's learning activities.



Figure 4.9: Toddler busy with a Wacky Box activity (HIP-P1)

Allowing toddlers the opportunity to explore the world through play prompts them to adopt different ways of learning and communicating with others. This style of responsive fun activity frequently allows new words to enter the toddlers' vocabularies – even complex words like "exfoliate" may stick in a toddler's memory banks. HIP-P1 describes how *“this other picture (shown below) shows him playing in the mud, its exfoliating (laughs)”*. Toddlers may also use playful means to indicate their needs. HIP-P1 mentioned the time when Ethan said, *“‘Mamma my apie is honger’ (laughs) then he will point to his tummy, his little monkey is hungry and wants to be fed (laughs)”* (HIP-P1).


 HIP-P1 really enjoyed answering this and was so proud of her toddler for being creative. She is a very proud mum. (8 March 2019)




Figure 4.10: Toddler playing in the mud (HIP-P1)


During my data generation and analysis procedures, I noticed that the parents and teachers associated with Playroom 1 eagerly answered questions about their toddlers' activities, whether they were shared or done by the toddlers on their own. They were enthusiastic, smiling and laughing when recounting memories of their toddlers, providing me with more usable data than what I had initially expected to obtain. Both parents of the two toddlers at this playroom showed me additional video footage of their toddlers, without me requesting it. Even after our interview sessions were completed, HIP-P1, HIP-P2 and MIP-P3 kept discussing their children and their shared adventures. These three parents and HIP-T1 and LIP-T3 seemed very happy to answer all my questions and to offer additional yet still relevant information. HIP-T1, HIP-P1 and MIP-P3 appeared to be well educated; those impressions were confirmed by their teaching and parenting philosophies, which were geared towards supporting their toddlers' developmental prowess. They could also always explain why they created and conducted any activity concerning their toddlers.

4.6.1.2.3 Parents understanding toddlers' social needs


LIP-P5 described Mulalo as someone who *“loves games (laughs), he loves games!”* The games he played improved Mulalo's ability to confidently speak and respond to others, as illustrated by his successful "pass" request to another toddler when he wanted a beanbag. He could listen to his teacher's instructions and follow them correctly. The following two observations represent only a fraction of all observations taken of Mulalo's joy when playing games with others.

 *Mulalo Observation 1 (09:23)* – Assistant threw a beanbag at him; he enjoyed throwing and catching it. When the assistant threw it to another toddler he asked the toddler to “pass” the beanbag.

 *Mulalo Observation 2 (12:12)* – Played peek-a-boo with other toddlers.

 *Mulalo would continuously play peek-a-boo throughout the week I observed him in Playroom 3. He loved playing this with others and occasionally with me. (19-27 March 2019)*

HIP-P2 realised the importance of allowing Liyah to be social with others and to let her play, explaining that *“she’s been spending a lot of time ... with her cousin ... they keep themselves entertained, so there’s a lot of play. They literally play until they drop, you know, general imagination and stuff”*. Her development during this playtime is enhanced by the fact that Liyah’s cousin is older, according to HIP-P2, which means that the cousin can teach her so much more while they play.

 *During my observations, all toddlers were overjoyed when doing these activities with their teacher, parents and friends, oftentimes not wanting to stop. (30 March 2019)*

4.6.2 Theme 2: Parent interaction with toddler

Theme 2 focuses on parent interactions with their toddlers as described by parent participants. The subthemes included in this theme focus on the categories of the types of attention given to toddlers by parents, speaking in an adult manner rather than CDS, keeping conversations going, speaking in home language and showing comprehension.

HIP-P1, HIP-P2, MIP-P3 and MIP-P4 declared that they read to their toddlers every night, while the other parents stated that they read to their toddlers once or twice a week. HIP-P2 said that *“we read to her every night, so every night before bed time she gets a story”*, whereas LIP-P5 read to Mulalo *“maybe once a week, sometimes yeah, once a week”*. LIP-P6 believed that Vinolia was *“still young, maybe if you read for her sister yes she listens”*. Parents from the high socio-economic areas understood the importance of reading and felt that their toddlers should be read to

from a young age. Parents from the low socio-economic areas, however, believed that their toddlers were still too young to be read stories to, though they appeared to listen when books were read to their siblings.

In summary, when parents feel their toddlers are old enough, they then provide more attention to conversations and the sharing of stories. Parents can scaffold toddlers' mastery of language through book sharing.


Theme 2 Subtheme 2.1: Listening	Categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of attention given to toddlers by parents
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4.6.2.1 Listening

4.6.2.1.1 *Types of attention given to toddler by parents*

HIP-P1 gave Ethan the necessary attention he needed by listening to him *“all day (laughs) ... so I listen the whole time (laughs) ... he has that need and it has to be satisfied”*, while LIP-P5 simply stated that *“he talks, I listen”*. Listening to Ethan helped HIP-P1 to understand him and to respond with sensitivity. HIP-P1 and LIP-P5 noted the importance of communication; they also understood the *“need”* for immediate parental attention to their toddlers' efforts to communicate. In those reassuring environments, toddlers would be comfortable to share experiences and ideas with their parents.

Other parents stated during the interviews that they respond at their convenience and that they *“don't have an option”* (HIP-P2) or *“don't have a choice”* (HIP-P2), and that they *“have to listen”* (HIP-P2) because *“otherwise he's going to be quite a bit of a tantrum (laughs)”* until they respond. HIP-P1 understood the importance of responding to her toddler and realised that toddlers should be encouraged to speak as much as they can. MIP-P3 used the experience gained with her previous child to strengthen her parenting skills with her second child, stating, *“you learn from the first one”*. Her experiences prompted her to respond whenever Nolan sought her attention.

 MIP-P3 found it quite funny learning things from her first child and using it as teaching experience for the next. We both had a laugh about this. (10 April 2019)


<p>Theme 2 Subtheme 2.2: Speaking</p>	<p>Categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking in an adult manner rather than CDS • Keeping conversations going • Speaking in home language
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4.6.2.2 Speaking

4.6.2.2.1 Speaking in an adult manner rather than CDS

HIP-P1, HIP-P2 and LIP-P5 appeared to speak to their toddlers in an adult manner as opposed to CDS. For instance, HIP-P1 would ask Ethan, *“Okay, do you want the potty or the toilet?”* in a full sentence format, though in-between she would also use simple phrases and terminology. HIP-P2 spoke to her toddler using full sentences such as *“Go to mummy’s phone and look for a picture of [cousin]”*. Liyah managed to make meaning through technology by finding the picture that her mother asked her to look for.

The toddlers in Playroom 1 could speak in full sentences and competently state what they wanted. This may be a result of their parents speaking in full sentences to them. Ethan and Liyah understood what their parents asked and could respond correctly.

 HIP-P2 proved to me how intelligent Liyah was with technology in which she succeeded. It was also fascinating to see that she could recognise her cousin [among many other] pictures in the gallery. (8 March 2019)


4.6.2.2.2 Keeping conversations going


It takes two to talk. Parents should be encouraged to constantly converse with toddlers to promote their language abilities and increase their vocabularies. Did participants indeed make an effort to keep conversations with their toddlers going? Two participants illustrate the results of their efforts:

HIP-P2 and LIP-P5 found it helpful to ask questions to keep conversations going, managing to have long conversations with their toddlers as a result. HIP-P2 did so by asking Liyah what *“she wants to eat and she first said where and then I said but what do you want to eat and she said pasta”*. LIP-P5 succeeded by asking questions such as *“do you know this, do you know that”* while reading a book to her child.

4.6.2.2.3 Speaking in home language

HIP-P1 and HIP-P2 recognised that English is a universal language, hence exposing Ethan and Liyah to two languages, English and Afrikaans. HIP-P1 said that their home language is *“Afrikaans, but we teach him English because I was brought up English so it’s quite important, it’s dual”*. LIP-P6 mixed *“the languages so that they can understand both, it’s like ‘hlala pansi – sit!’”*. LIP-P6 exposed her toddler to her home language (Zulu) and English, while the other three parents spoke to their toddlers in their respective home languages only. Even though he was taught English alongside his first language Afrikaans, Ethan predominantly conversed in Afrikaans (as shown in Theme 1’s discussion) and could express himself creatively, such as when he told HIP-P1, *“Mamma, my apie is honger”*. The father’s home language is dominant in their household, and Ethan prefers to speak Afrikaans in the playroom too, although I observed him occasionally using English to communicate with HIP-T1 and other toddlers.

 *Ethan Observation 1 (09:59)* – Went to a toddler and told her “eina” (ouch) putting out the finger where a bee stung him.

 *Ethan Observation 2 (09:10)* – Called another toddler by name and asked him to “come here, come up here” pointing at the jungle gym.

Mulalo could speak simple English words such as “sign” and “pass” as certain African words such as “thula” meaning keep quiet or “wena”, which commonly means ‘you’. MIP-P3 declared that they *“don’t speak English to them at all, just Afrikaans but he does understand it though because our friends are English and they speak to him”*. LIP-P5 stated that they *“speak to him mostly in his mother tongue, like 80% of his mother tongue and 20% in English because some words I don’t know myself. I wanted him to learn his mother tongue before any other language”*. These parents mostly speak to their toddlers in their home languages, but Nolan and Mulalo

are occasionally exposed to English. LIP-P5 said that she does not speak much English at home because she does not know many English words. She added that she would have done so had she been educated in English or exposed to it more often.

<p>Theme 2 Subtheme 2.3: Meaning making</p>	<p>Categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing comprehension
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4.6.2.3 Meaning making

4.6.2.3.1 *Showing comprehension*

Interestingly, MIP-P3 *“started teaching him sign language, so only the basics ... he has the please and the milk and getting food as sign language (signs all these as she speaks). It’s so useful especially with babies because they get so frustrated because you can’t understand communicate with them and that’s when we started ... just to communicate”*. MIP began teaching him sign language at approximately 7 or 8 months of age. She found she could communicate better with her toddler through sign language when he was still too small to use words and sentences, and to ease the frustrations usually associated with this phase of their lives.



MIP-P3 has her psychology degree and is educated in child psychology as well as taught in a school for a short time, proving useful in her developmental and educating styles for Nolan. (10 April 2019)

4.6.3 Theme 3: Teacher interaction with toddler

The third theme relates to teachers' interactions with their toddlers in the three playrooms. Categorised here are the aspects of attentiveness, continual conversations, CDS and adult ways of speaking, responsiveness, home languages and teachers' understanding of toddlers.

<p>4.6.3.1 Theme 3 Subtheme 3.1: Listening</p>	<p>Categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attentiveness
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4.6.3.1 Listening

4.6.3.1.1 Attentiveness

HIP-T1 and LIP-T3 were aware of the importance of being attentive and spoke to their toddlers daily, whereas MIP-T2 was barely present in the playroom. LIP-T3 listened to her toddlers *“every day, every second, every now and then. We work with kids every day so they are always talking ... no time for [...] keeping quiet”*. Toddlers in HIP-T1 and LIP-T3’s playrooms appeared open to communicating and did not hesitate to speak to their teacher whenever they wanted. They were comfortable with the various interactions while the toddlers in MIP-T2’s were quieter.



LIP-T3 is confident that toddlers speak a lot, knowing its importance and allowing these toddlers to speak as much as they want. (26 March 2019)

Theme 3 Subtheme 3.2: Speaking	Categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constant conversing CDS and speaking in an adult manner Responsiveness Home language
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4.6.3.2 Speaking

4.6.3.2.1 Constant conversing:

HIP-T1 *expands* and adds to the words that Liyah utters, thereby exposing her to new words and ideas connected to the topic of interest. The following observation is only a single example of HIP-T1’s continual conversations with her toddlers; focusing on colours in this instance.




Liyah Observation 1 (15:09) – Shows HIP-T1 the colours on the jungle gym and asks her “what colour?” while pointing to the colours. HIP-T1 extends the sentence by adding words to the colours such as “green like the grass, blue like the sky”.



Toddlers in this Playroom would absolutely love to talk to HIP-T1, especially to ask her the colours of the jungle gym. They would do this every day without fail and HIP-T1 would always reply to them. (7 July 2019)

4.6.3.2.2 **CDS and speaking in an adult manner:**


MIP-T2 spoke to her toddlers using child-directed speech. HIP-T1 would talk to her toddlers as though they were adults but use simple forms of words such as “pee-pee” or “juicy”. The example below illustrates HIP-T1 conversing with her toddlers in full sentences while incorporating simple terminology.

 *Ethan Observation 4 (09:44)* – HIP-T1 called him to “pee-pee” and he said “pee-pee later” and a few minutes after that he wet his pants.


When LIP-T3 spoke to her toddlers in an adult manner, she would always wait for the toddlers' responses to see if they understood. She explained that she will *“give them the ... magazine ... and then say ‘look at the picture that I’m looking for’ ... I’ll just say to them ‘can you see, you have your own magazine right?’ they’ll say ‘yes teacha’ (smiles). ‘Look for the eyes, for the mouth, look for the ears, I’m gonna come right next to you and cut it out for you so you can past it on the A4 paper’”*. LIP-T3 executes a look-listen-and-apply strategy – she explains in detail exactly what the toddlers need to do and what is going to happen. In so doing, she ensures the toddlers do not misunderstand her messages, hence avoiding any delays in their language development.

4.6.3.2.3 **Responsiveness**

MIP-T2 showed responsiveness and care when talking to her toddlers. She would *“try to look at them. If they want to speak to me I go down on my knees and I speak to them”*, adding that she would *“try to be 100%. If I have time, I’m there all the time”*. MIP-T2 would bend down to the toddler's level, using her body language to make them feel like her equals and creating a comforting communicative environment for them, which would be beneficial for their development.


 *The answers given by MIP-T2 contradicted the observations made during the week of fieldwork. She used time as an excuse. She would be there in presence but not mind and when present in the classroom, which was rarely, she would be completing other activities not related to the toddlers. I also observed that the day after MIP-T2 was interviewed she spent more time communicating with the toddlers.*
(13 March 2019)

The following observation illustrates MIP-T2's – and her assistant's – general lack of communicative endeavours with their toddlers.

 *Nolan Observation 3 (08:18)* – Got interested in something teacher was doing and walked to her, she did not respond to him. Ran to assistant and sat by her, she also did not do anything with him.

4.6.3.2.4 Home language:

The three teachers all considered the toddlers' home languages, being aware that toddlers need to clearly understand what is communicated to them. This would avoid frustrations that could delay their development. The school policy at Playroom 2 forced MIP-T2 to converse with toddlers in their home languages. She stated, *“With the school rules we attend to them with their own language but in this case we have two languages so they do hear both but I speak to them in their home language”*. MIP-T2 hence incorporates dual language teaching in her playroom, which exposes the toddlers to another language than their own first languages.

 *During my observations I noticed that she would use Afrikaans terminology (“bêre bêre” meaning put away) when asking the toddlers to clean. It seemed like Afrikaans was the dominant language of the classroom. (11 – 15 March 2019)*

<p>Theme 3 Subtheme 3.3: Meaning making</p>	<p>Categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers' understanding of toddlers
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4.6.3.3 Meaning making

4.6.3.3.1 Teachers' understanding of toddlers


MIP-T2 did not always understand when a toddler needed something. For instance, she remarked during the interview, *“uh ... she doesn't ask for more so I'm not sure how she asks for food”*. This comment contrasts with the responses of HIP-T1 and LIP-T3 who appeared to understand their toddlers' needs well. LIP-T3 declared that she will always *“respond... it depends on what's the issue, what is it that they are bringing up towards me and then if it's something like they just say ‘ah she's hitting me’ ...I respond immediately so it depends what is it they are telling me mmm”*. This


indicates that LIP-T3's responses to her toddlers depended on the circumstances and that she was prepared to deal with every situation on its own merits.

4.6.4 Theme 4: Toddler interaction with parent and teacher

This theme presents the toddlers' interactions with their parents and teachers. The related categories under the subthemes include the aspects of listening to parents' requests, CDS and the use of words, manipulation, being specific, seeking of communication, gestures, memory skills and role models. Each category is supplemented with extracts from interviews, observations and field notes.

Vinolia preferred to watch televised broadcasts, since she then seemed to concentrate *“a lot more than like to read to her”* (LIP-P6). Ethan, conversely, was always excited to get a magazine; he and Mulalo liked to talk to their teachers about pictures in the magazines. We can thus deduce that Vinolia preferred a graphic way of learning, generally using audio-visual means to obtain her information. The following observations illustrate how Ethan and Mulalo used the playroom's magazines to develop their own language abilities.

 *Ethan Observation 1 (16:25)* – Opened a magazine and asked the teacher to explain one of the pictures.

 *Mulalo Observation 1 (09:40)* – Turned pages in a magazine and said, “Mama”, to a picture of a woman. He showed LIP-T3 and she responded to him, amazed at what he said.

Some toddlers were more developed than others in the three playrooms selected as research sites. I observed that the toddlers from the high and low socio-economic playrooms spoke longer sentences and used a wider range of words compared to the medium socio-economic playroom whose toddlers generally used gestures to communicate and were often quiet, playing by themselves. This was interesting because Zoe, who attended the medium socio-economic playroom, and Mulalo, from the low socio-economic playroom, were of the same age, and yet, significant language development differences could be observed. Mulalo and Ethan, who was 9 months older, were observed to share a similar level of communicative prowess.

Theme 4 Subtheme 4.1: Listening	Categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to a parent's request
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4.6.4.1 Listening

4.6.4.1.1 *Listening to a parent's request*

Before taking the picture below of Vinolia and her sister, LIP-P6 *“told them to hug each other so you show you love each other”*. Vinolia then hugged her sister, as can be seen in Figure 4.11. Vinolia understood exactly what LIP-P6 wanted her to do and fulfilled the wish. This illustrates a communicative understanding between toddler and mother, and illuminates LIP-P6's perception of positive communicative interaction with toddlers, as portrayed during her interviews. This further illustrates that toddlers communicate via their bodies as well.




Figure 4.11: Vinolia and her sister hugging (LIP-P6)


Theme 4 Subtheme 4.2: Speaking	Categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDS and the use of words • Manipulation • Being specific • Seeking communication
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4.6.4.2 Speaking

4.6.4.2.1 CDS and the use of words

The toddlers of Playroom 1, who were largely spoken to in an adult fashion, tried to imitate adult speech when they talked to their teacher and assistants. Yet, while interacting with other toddlers, they then tended to talk in simple ways, as their partners would respond similarly. HIP-P2 stated, in her interview, that Liyah would use full sentences with her, such as *“I want to ride my bike”*. The following observations illustrate how Liyah used baby talk when speaking to her peers, then used short sentences in response to adults.


 *Liyah Observation 3 (09:32)* – She had a mini baby talk conversation with a few toddlers who replied in baby talk as well.

 *Liyah Observation 3 (10:34)* – Told teacher “look another one” and pointed to the ant on the floor.

4.6.4.2.2 Manipulation

When a toddler wanted to gain an adult's attention, the toddler would either communicate with the participant or manipulate them into getting what they want, as *“at this age they quite demanding”* (HIP-P2). For this reason, toddlers like to be heard, recognised or approved of. As explained in Chapter 2, the quality of the time spent together are functional in these aspects.

All nine participants mentioned that they adapt their behaviour while listening to their toddlers. Toddlers seek or, at other times, demand an adult's attention. They may do so by constantly calling the adult, knowing that the adult will eventually give them the attention they require. This was illustrated by HIP-P1 when she said that Ethan *“talks a lot and if you don't respond or even if you do respond he keeps on saying ‘mommy mommy mommy’ so I listen the whole time (laughs) ... if I can't, I'll tell him I'm not the only human being in the house so he can go and ask his dad”*. The following observations reveal more evidence of this behaviour.

 *Liyah Observation 4 (09:44)* – Called “teacher teacher teacher teacher” and HIP-T1 replied.



I noticed that HIP-P1 is the focal point and first person the toddler communicates with because her telling Ethan that he can also go ask his dad shows that Ethan regularly first seeks his mother's attention. (8 March 2019)

4.6.4.2.3 *Being specific*

Toddlers often differ in their interests and abilities to communicate. They may, occasionally, use *telegraphic speech*. Ethan and Liyah specified what they wanted to their parents, while Nolan, Zoe, Mulalo and Vinolia either fetched what they wanted or pointed to an object until they received it from their parents. HIP-T1 commented that her toddlers *“will say ‘ta’ or ‘more’” when they want something or will [...] say ‘blocks’ or ‘teddies’* to specify what they want. In the observation below, Liyah used *telegraphic speech* after an accident occurred, telling HIP-T1 that her “mummy [is] coming” and will change her when she comes. The toddlers also used single and one-word phrases to issue requests.





Liyah Observation 2 (10:06) – She wet her pants and did not tell the teacher. After teacher noticed, she said “mummy coming”.


HIP-P1 allowed Ethan to make his own decisions, allowing him the freedom to become an independent thinker. She explained that Ethan *“goes and fetches clothing himself ... and he’ll tell me he wants the one with the bird or the car, he’ll be quite specific with the colour as well”* (HIP-P1). Some toddlers knew specifically what they wanted, and could request or communicate their desires with their parents or teachers. Others, however, did not try to communicate what they wanted, but were content to have those decisions made on their behalves, such as Zoe who *“doesn’t really have a preference to whatever she wants to wear, she’s just happy”* (MIP-P4).


4.6.4.2.4 *Seeking communication*

Nolan and Zoe craved the attention of MIP-T2 and the assistants at their playroom. They would constantly try to talk to them or get their attention to play games, but they were frequently ignored. They experienced almost no responsiveness or care in terms of their communication needs. The following observations represent a fraction of the times Nolan and Zoe tried to communicate with MIP-T2 and the assistants.

 *Nolan Observation 3 (08:14)* – Walked to assistant and started talking, she smiled at him. He sat next to her and played by himself and later sat on top of her, she did not respond to his actions.

 *Zoe Observation 1 (09:28)* – Walked to assistant and pointed to her arm, something was bothering her. Assistant looked at her arm and just rubbed it. Later on she goes back to assistant to show her her arm.

 *Zoe Observation 1 (11:16)* – Tried getting teachers attention, she shouted “mamma mamma mamma” at her until MIP-T2 looked at her.

 *MIP-T2 was almost never present in the classroom and when she was she would simply do one activity with the toddlers and leave again or would carry on with something else and leave the assistants to take care of the toddlers. (11 – 15 March 2019)*

<p>Theme 4 Subtheme 4.3: Meaning making</p>	<p>Categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using words or gestures to communicate • Recalling information learned • Role models
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4.6.4.3 Meaning making

4.6.4.3.1 *Using words or gestures to communicate*

Toddlers have various ways of expressing themselves, using either words, gestures or actions to create meaning and communicate. MIP-T2 said that Nolan *“always points at everything. If he wants to show you something or speak to you about something, he shows to whatever he wants to speak about”*. MIP-P3 made a similar comment, saying that Nolan *“shows and points to it until he gets it (laughs) and then he’ll take it”*. The picture and observation below substantiate Nolan’s parent’s and teacher’s responses during interviews, showing him using only gestures to communicate. Here, Nolan realised that he can direct an adult’s attention towards an object, which allowed the teacher to *tune into* and share his experiences.



Figure 4.12: Nolan pointing (LIP-T3)

👁️ Nolan Observation 2 (08:59) – Teacher started blowing bubbles and he got excited and pointed at them. He looked at the assistant and pointed at the bubbles trying to show them to her.

Playrooms 1 and 3's toddlers were capable of relatively refined communication, which signified their understanding that words, rather than gestures, are used to name objects. Liyah, according to HIP-P2, wakes *“up in the morning and say ‘I want to put a dress’”*, and Vinolia *“can tell you ‘ma ma change, ma ma change... she tells you when she wants something ... ‘mama tsoga ke, milk’ (mama wake up, milk)’”* (LIP-P6). Vinolia here mixed her first language, Zulu, with English to communicate with LIP-P6. These toddlers used short sentences to communicate and create meaning, which is also apparent in the observations below. The situation was different in Playroom 2, where the toddlers used mainly gestures to communicate.

👁️ Ethan Observation 4 (15:45) – told toddlers that the “goggo gonna bite you”


👁️ Liyah Observation 1 (15:43) – one of the toddlers said “mummy” and she told them “mummy is coming”.

👁️ MIP-T2 would not ask her toddlers if they needed a diaper change and simply pick them up or smell if they need a diaper change. She would not communicate with the toddler to try to teach them to communicate if they needed a diaper change. (11-15 March 2019)

4.6.4.3.2 *Recalling information learned*

Toddlers learn from parents' and teachers' concepts. They later recall it and use the learned knowledge. Ethan is used to his parents telling him to sit in a corner when he is naughty so *“he’ll go sit in a corner and then you’ll ask him but why are you there and he’ll tell you it’s because I’m naughty (laughs)”* (HIP-P1). HIP-P1 here revealed that Ethan now automatically puts himself in a corner when he knows he has done something naughty.

LIP-T3 gave the toddlers frequent instructions so that they could learn something. For instance, she would *“give them the ... magazine ... ‘look for the eyes, for the mouth, look for the ears’”*. Because of being regularly exposed to this form of activity, Nolan and Mulalo could recall where their eyes, mouth and ears are. Also, because they were taught how to distinguish between their mothers and fathers, they could place other people in similar categories. This is clear evidence that these toddlers were responsive to their parents and teachers, and hence developed their communicative skills accordingly.

 *Nolan Observation 3 (08:39)* – pointed to pictures in a magazine and said “mamma dada” to a woman and a man.

 *Mulalo Observation 1 (10:18)* – he can point to his eyes, ears and nose when asked to.

4.6.4.3.3 *Role models:*

Role models are an important influence on growth and development. Parents and teachers are likely to become toddlers' role models, which mean that they can support the toddlers' development in fun and positive ways. HIP-P1 showed me a picture of Ethan and explained, *“This is him on a motorbike pretending to ride it”*. This allowed for pleasant interactions of talking and laughing between Ethan and his parents. HIP-P1 would tell Ethan to do more, whereupon Ethan would carry on pretending to ride the motorbike. Ethan thus correctly executed his mother's wish. Ethan also pointed to some parts on the bike and spoke to himself as if he was trying to name them. Even in the playground, as shown in the observation below, Ethan

copied his father's way of speaking and pretended to ride a motorbike – he already assumed an adult's role.



Figure 4.13: Ethan pretending to ride his father’s motorbike (HIP-P1)

👁️ *Ethan Observation 1, 2, 3 & 4 (09:00 – 10:30 and 15:00 – 16:00)* – He would always play on a motorbike around the playground every day. It would be the first thing he ran to.

👉 *The toddler copies his father by riding his motorbike and I noticed that his father is seen to be a role model in a number of things the toddler does including speaking Afrikaans at home. (8 March 2019)*

4.7 INTERPRETATION OF MAIN FINDINGS

The process of collecting and analysing data illuminated the participants’ true opinions, thoughts and perceptions of the communication and language development of their toddlers. Table 4.7 collates the findings of the analysed data.

Table 4.7: Summary of parents' and teachers' perceptions

	Toddlers' development	Parents' perceptions	Teachers' perceptions
Ethan	Ethan was a social, independent speaker who could form sentences with a relatively advanced vocabulary.	HIP-P1 had strong convictions about her toddler's brain stimulation. She enjoyed doing activities	HIP-T1 firmly believed in stimulating her toddlers, providing them with various activities, resources, playtime

		with Ethan, always responding to him and she made sure her toddler received the necessary attention and stimulation needed to develop and grow. HIP-P1 exposed her toddler to both English and Afrikaans.	and attention they needed to grow. She would constantly move amongst the toddlers and answer their questions. She felt that communicating in the toddlers' home languages would help them to better understand what she was trying to convey to them.
Liyah	Liyah was friendly and could form sentences with a relatively advanced vocabulary.	HIP-P2 always responded to Liyah, though she felt she did not have any other choice. She had seen the importance of socialising and how that initiated development in her toddler. She also stimulated her toddler by keeping the conversations going and reading to her every night. HIP-P2 exposed Liyah to English and Afrikaans.	
Nolan	Nolan was social but only used gestures to communicate.	MIP-P3 understood that Nolan needed to communicate. To ease the frustrations, she taught him sign language, successfully making the communication process easier. Only Afrikaans was spoken at their home.	MIP-T2 believed that her toddlers were not old enough for such stimulating activities as reading, but performed the activity anyway. She spoke to her toddlers in their home languages, though mainly because the school policies required her to.
Zoe	Zoe was quiet and only used gestures to communicate.	MIP-P4 responded to Zoe and constantly exposed her to books. She spoke to Zoe only in her home language.	
Mulalo	Mulalo enjoyed music, singing and playing games; he was social at times and used words to communicate.	LIP-P5 listened to her toddler and encouraged him to learn things in books that related to his daily activities. She allowed him to frequently watch TV - mostly the music channel and cartoons. She	LIP-T3 knew that her toddlers needed to absorb language, although they tended to speak continually. She therefore provided them with the necessary attention and stimulating activities to

		spoke to Mulalo in his home language but only occasionally used English words because she did not the language well enough.	encourage and strengthen their development. LIP-T3 spoke to her toddlers in their home languages.
Vinolia	Vinolia was quiet, but able to use words to communicate and sing songs.	LIP-P6 felt that Vinolia was too young to be read to and allowed her to watch TV often. She spoke to Vinolia in her home language and English, occasionally mixing the languages.	

4.7.1 Participant responses connected to Vygotsky's theories

The final question of the interviews prompted the participants to regard three pictures (stock images, illustrated below) and reveal their opinions of activities that are most advantageous to toddlers' development. They all selected the third picture showing playful interaction between an adult, a toddler and a sibling.



(Byrne, 2017)



(Renee, 2019)



(How kids learn to play, 2019)

Figure 4.14, 4.15 & 4.16: Three pictures presented to participants

As indicated in Chapter 2, stimulating interaction and communication fulfil vital functions in a child's development, according to Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development (Close, 2010; Mooney, 2013; Vygotsky, 1986). Parents and teachers largely understand that toddlers may not yet be able to manage certain tasks on their own, and hence teach them new skills and guide them to complete those tasks (Hulit, Howard & Fahey, 2011). Vygotsky (1978) further explains how 'book sharing' can scaffold a toddler's language learning ability by encouraging the acquisition of new words. Some of the participating parents and teachers in this study frequently read stories to their toddlers, allowing them to recognise narrative aspects and to learn how to answer questions correctly and explain the pictures in the books.

Children need to be constantly stimulated and allowed to join social groups. In this way, an individual's learning takes place through interactive means (Hartas, 2015). Most parents and teachers understand the importance of assisting their toddlers in their quests to develop towards maturity, and that interaction is a key element in that process (Hulit, Howard & Fahey, 2011). Socialising with siblings and other toddlers encourage togetherness, scaffolding and the forming of human connections. Vygotsky (1978) illustrated that adults' interaction with children guides their development.

Parents and teachers who participated in this study could recognise the various advantages of interacting learning, while presenting a variety of views regarding the development of their toddlers' communicative and language skills. Some parents and teachers seemed educated, well informed and innovative in relation to the matters of interaction and development. The participants could also explain the differences between various methods of supporting toddlers' development, as evidenced by this selection of recorded comments made by parents and teachers:

“Developing fine and gross motor skills, the child can identify objects and ‘read’” (HIP-P1).

“Siblings have a major influence on development and so do parents. Spending time with a child helps them develop faster than parents who don’t spend time with them” (HIP-P2).

“Interaction is important for me. If you give love and interaction they learn quite anything. Actions and love make them communicate in what comes naturally. If I don’t do activities, I still give them love and interaction” (MIP-T2).

“When children watch TV they mimic what happens, especially with accents like Pepa Pig, children would have a British accent but with playing blocks you see the way a child responds to things, especially with blocks. If you can’t manage a thing, you can work around it” (LIP-P5).

“So that they can have the bond with you. For TV it’s TV but you can’t have a bond with TV but with me or the father you can play with your kid and understand maybe how to pack things and whatsoever” (LIP-P6).

4.8 SUMMARY

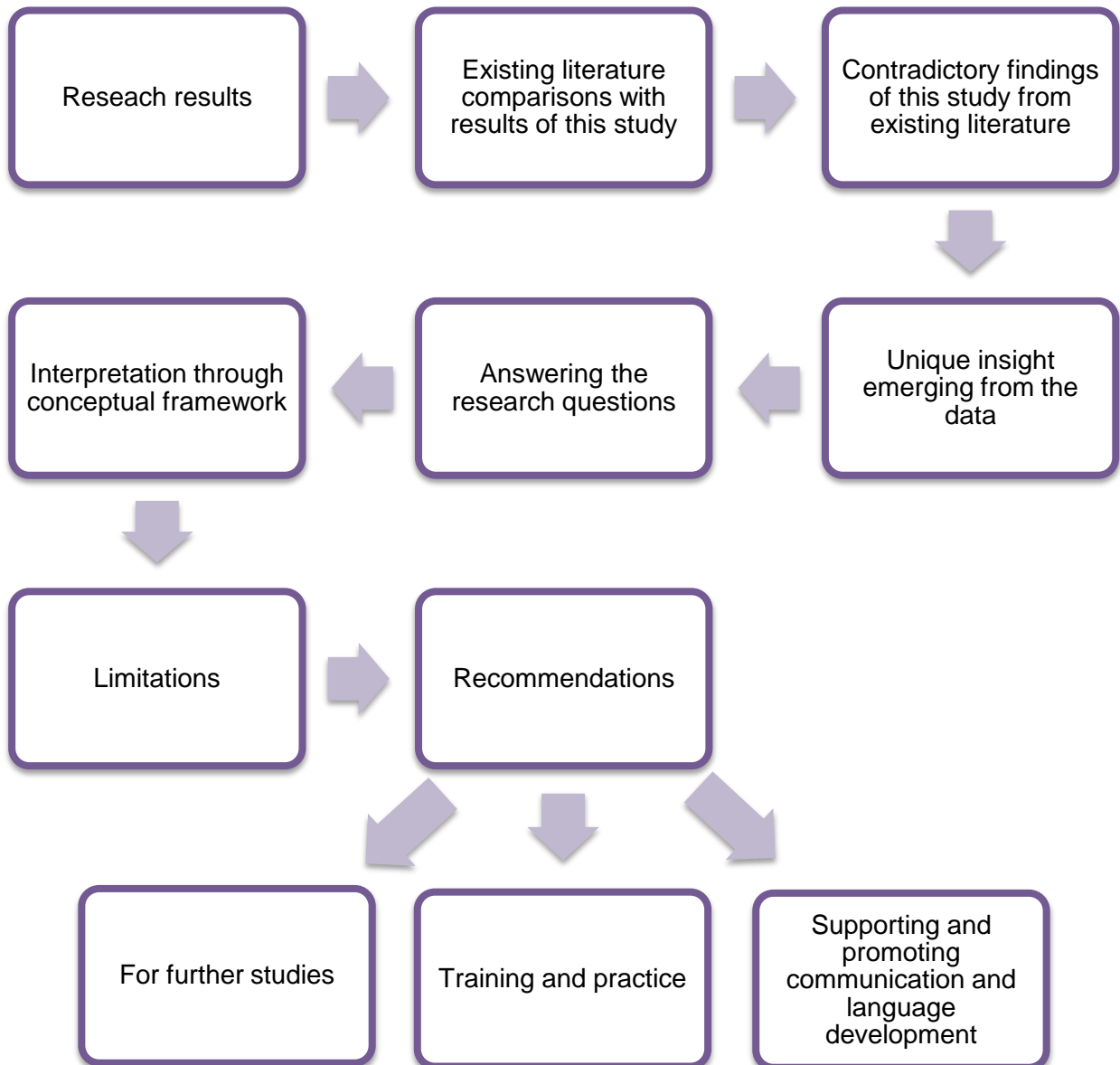
The data discussed in this chapter represents the participating parents' and teachers' perceptions and understanding of the research topic. An analysis of the empirical data dissected those perceptions and views, established their methods and principles, and determined some gaps in their understanding of toddlers' communication and language development. Understanding is defined as "the

knowledge that someone has about a particular subject or situation” (Oxford Dictionary, 2010).

Chapter 5 revises and applies the literature review, summarises the findings, answers the research questions and specifies the emerging conceptual framework's relevance to this study by interpreting the findings and the research questions' answers.

Chapter 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER OVERVIEW



5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter commences by discussing the reviewed literature's relationships with the findings that were presented in Chapter 4. Any finding that either verifies or contradicts existing literature is compared to that body of knowledge, followed by an outlay of the insights gained and conclusive interpretations of the results. Limitations of the study are revealed, followed by recommendations on improving ways to assist parents and teachers in their task to develop the communication and language skills of their toddlers.

The chapter contains the following sections to present the study's findings: literature control, contradictions with literature, existing knowledge contradictions and the detailed understanding of parents and teacher perceptions of toddlers' communication and language development that has emerged through finding answers to the research questions.

5.2 LITERATURE CONTROL SUPPORTING THE RESEARCH RESULTS

The tables presented in this section contain the literature control applied that serves to explain their links to this study's results. A comparative outlay of existing literature's relations to this study's results is presented in Table 5.1. The table interprets the value of the data within the themes and subthemes of this study alongside similar elements in existing literature. The third column, therefore, provides an interpretive discussion of the study's findings in terms of the existing knowledge that reflect similar outcomes (second column).

The ECD centres are called playrooms in this section of the chapter, as motivated in the introduction to Chapter 4.

Table 5.1: Existing literature comparisons with results of this research

Theme 1: Factors that enhance communication and language development		
Sources	Existing knowledge	Interpretive discussion
Birken (2017) Hulit, Howard and Fahey (2011) Wittmer and	Birken states that paediatric guidelines suggest less screen time for young children.	HIP-P1 limited Ethan's screen time to only 30 minutes of television and 15 minutes of cell phone use a day. She filled his days with various other activities instead, in which

Petersen (2014)	<p>Higher attention from an adult is more beneficial to learning compared to higher attention to the children's programme.</p> <p>Many adults follow a policy of placing their toddlers in front of television sets to hear and grasp language.</p>	<p>she participated while conversing with him. LIP-T3, LIP-P5 and LIP-P6, conversely, believed it is normal that their toddlers watch television for language learning. LIP-T3 would place her toddlers in front of the television to watch children's programmes, which, as I could testify, were all educational and of high English standards. She did not intervene or disrupt them when they stood up and danced or answered questions that Mickey Mouse asked them.</p>
Manolson (1992)	<p>Children's programmes quickly jump from one topic to another; the graphics, voices and actions are all fast. This overwhelms children and causes them to <i>tune out</i>.</p>	<p>Mulalo and Vinolia of Playroom 3 were not interested in watching the television and preferred having social interactions with others around them. Mulalo would stand up and copy other children around him. Vinolia would follow her friends around and talk to them, most of the time in baby talk. Mulalo occasionally stared at the TV, being in his own world and <i>tuned out</i>.</p>

Subtheme 1.1: Speaking

Sources	Existing knowledge	Interpretive discussion
<p>Manolson (1992) Otto (2014) Wittmer and Petersen (2014)</p>	<p>Through musical activities, children can acquire pre-language skills, like learning how to anticipate what comes next and to concentrate – this forms the foundation for language learning. Musical activities such as the singing of lullabies encourage physical contact, repetition, taking of turns, non-verbal responses, vocal play, action, speech and timing of words. Toddlers imitate what they hear.</p>	<p>The toddlers seemed excited to sing along with their teachers and they clearly enjoyed the vocal interactive playtime. The teacher in Playroom 3 would fall in with songs that the toddlers started to sing, and encourage the quieter toddlers to join in song. Singing is an initiating process of learning and building on language. The toddlers in Playrooms 1 and 3 could sing all the songs sung by HIP-T1 and LIP-T3 or played on a CD. Those toddlers could use a language fluently, which perhaps was an outcome of the influence of all the singing they did.</p>
<p>Hulit, Howard and Fahey (2011)</p>	<p>Songs shared by adults and children allow several aspects of human development to occur. Singing allows adults and toddlers to synchronise their emotional states, which leads to social regulation. Songs contribute to language acquisition by increasing levels of aural arousal and attention (through emotional aspects) and phonological discrimination (enhanced by pitch contours).</p>	<p>Nolan and Zoe would listen and watch MIP-T2 as she sang nursery rhymes. The enjoyment these toddlers had during singing sessions was evident, while it also visibly encouraged them to socialise and mingle with the adults and their peers in the playroom.</p>

<p>Wittmer and Petersen (2014)</p> <p>Woodward, Markman & Fitzsimmons (1994)</p>	<p>The concept of <i>language explosion</i> demonstrates toddlers' desires to learn how to label people, places and things accurately.</p> <p>When an adult demonstrates where ears, noses, knees and toes are, a toddler will soon learn that every part of a body has a name, leading to a language explosion.</p>	<p>LIP-P5 was excited to notice how quickly Mulalo's vocabulary expanded thanks to the words contained in the lyrics of the songs he learnt and sang at the playroom. Ethan and Liyah would call others by name at their playroom and, as Mulalo did, could point to body parts and name them as part of their songs.</p>
<p>Subtheme 1.2: Meaning making and communication</p>		
<p>Sources</p>	<p>Existing knowledge</p>	<p>Interpretive discussion</p>
<p>Manolson (1992)</p> <p>Otto (2014)</p> <p>Wittmer and Petersen (2014)</p>	<p>Books are valuable "tools" to promote toddlers' communicative development and they can be effectively used in interactive partnerships. The rereading of books reinforces newly learned words. Imitating, expanding on, finding and labelling illustrated objects in a book occurs naturally, while toddlers also learn to take turns as adults read to them, explain things or ask questions during their shared reading experiences.</p>	<p>Each participating adult, apart from LIP-P5 and LIP-P6, knew the importance of exposing their toddlers to books. Those adults created positive environments for reading – Ethan was so keen he would even fetch his book of choice to be read at bedtime. Ethan and Liyah were able to explain, retell and name things in a book when the story became familiar, as they grew to understand it better every time a particular book was read to them. Zoe, according to MIP-P4, could look at pictures and imitate the calls of the portrayed animals. LIP-P5 encouraged Mulalo to understand the principle of taking turns. She would ask Mulalo questions about the stories she read and then connect his answers with his everyday activities; in that way, he learnt to relate new information to his own environment.</p>
<p>Manolson (1992)</p>	<p>Adults prompt children to use language when they frequently repeat words in their presence. The more a child hears words associated with particular objects, the easier they understand what is being said and to anticipate what comes next – they will soon be ready to use those words.</p>	<p>Ethan and Liyah managed to memorise stories because the books were frequently read to them. Because of the repetition, they could name things in the book and retell the stories from what they remembered, according to HIP-P1 and HIP-P2. Liyah could sometimes do this "word for word". Those two toddlers could also say big words such as 'dinosaur'. Their playroom teacher constantly referred to a dinosaur displayed on the wall during my presence in the room.</p>

<p>Scribner (2013)</p>	<p>Adults who frequently read to their toddlers stimulate their desires to learn about letters and the meaning of words. This activity fosters a healthy attitude to reading, guiding them closer to the zone of proximal development. This becomes evident when the children begin to tell coherent stories.</p>	<p>Each participant, apart from LIP-P6, evidently realised the importance – in terms of their development – of regular reading sessions shared with their toddlers. LIP-P6, however, did read to Vinolia’s sister while Vinolia was present in the room. Hearing stories from books appeared to directly enhance their vocabularies, as well as their listening and comprehensive skills. I noticed the effects of the reading sessions during my daily observations in the playrooms. Ethan, Liyah, Nolan, Mulalo and Vinolia would constantly talk to themselves, especially when they looked at pictures in a book. Their engagement in stories was nurtured by their parents who made the effort to read them stories on a regular basis.</p>
<p>Vally et al. (2015)</p>	<p>Vygotsky explains how the use of book sharing scaffolds a child’s mastery of language through initiating, encouraging and supporting the acquisition of new words. This is achieved by engaging in the labelling of objects, questioning and commenting on pictures.</p>	<p>HIP-T1 explained how the toddlers went about understanding and analysing the stories read to them – they did so by asking questions. The adults in Playrooms 1 and 3 used the serve and return approach, which resulted in back-and-forth responses after stories were read. As observed by myself, Liyah would comment on the pictures in books she opened. Ethan opened a magazine and asked HIP-T1 to explain one of the pictures. Nolan pointed to a picture of a man and woman in a magazine, calling them “mamma dada”.</p>
<p>Manolson (1992) UNESCO (2006)</p>	<p>Early years schooling is play-based and activity-oriented, allowing children to explore the topics that emphasise a child’s active participation, since children prefer to learn by <i>doing</i>.</p>	<p>All participant teachers incorporated playing sessions in their daily activities, during which they would ask the toddlers questions. This encouraged the toddlers to speak during the social activities, to get to know one another and to talk, thereby strengthening their communicative development.</p>
<p>Manolson (1992)</p>	<p>Play-activities allow adults to set realistic communication goals for their children to attain, to plan their communicative activities and to interactively participate in playing with their children to support their</p>	<p>HIP-P1 encouraged Ethan to use play to indicate his needs, like when he told her “Mamma, my apie is honger”. She had a “wacky box” of activities that she completed with Ethan during weekends. These</p>

	learning processes.	activities encouraged Ethan to work with his parents and complete activities that involved numbers and words. As an example, HIP-P1 used hopscotch to teach Ethan about different colours (shown in Figure 4.9).
Wittmer and Petersen (2014)	Playful activities, such as peek-a-boo, are crucial for making language learning enjoyable for toddlers.	Mulalo loved to play peek-a-boo with other toddlers. He would first communicate with the toddlers next to him and would soon start to play with them. After the games, short conversations would take place.

Theme 2: Parent interaction with toddler

Sources	Existing knowledge	Interpretive discussion
Hulit, Howard and Fahey (2011) Scribner (2013)	It appears that, when adults sense a child is old enough to develop speech, they pay better attention to the lengths and complexities of conversations to give their children clear and attainable language targets.	Most parents constantly read to their toddlers. LIP-P6, however, felt that Vinolia was still too young to be read stories to. This translated into differences in the speaking skills of this toddler, in comparison to the others. Vinolia tended to be quiet and simply followed other children around. HIP-P1 and HIP-P2, conversely, constantly spoke to their toddlers in an adult manner, resulting in those toddlers' abilities to form sentences and rapidly expand their vocabularies.

Subtheme 2.1: Listening

Sources	Existing knowledge	Interpretive discussion
Manolson (1992) Wittmer and Petersen (2014)	Being responsive provides limitless opportunities to communicate with children and guide them towards learning. Parents' and teachers' use of responsive language strategies directly relate to children's language development. Toddlers need responsive adults to become competent in using languages.	Even though circumstances may force them to be responsive, most adults would understand its importance and respond to their toddlers. Ethan and Liyah displayed excellent language usage at their ages, as their parents read them daily stories. HIP-P1 stimulated Ethan further by performing activities with him during weekends. HIP-P1 was very responsive at other times too – she played me a video showed her and Ethan playing together in the mud. Ethan's use of language was well developed and he managed to learn new words every day.

Subtheme 2.2: Speaking		
Sources	Existing knowledge	Interpretive discussion
<p>Law et al. (2017) Levine et al. (2016) Manolson (1992) Wittmer and Petersen (2014)</p>	<p>When a parent responds to a child's message, the child understands that the adults are interested in their messages. They would thus feel encouraged to share information about their daily activities. It is helpful when adults can keep any such conversations going by asking more questions.</p>	<p>Liyah's parent (HIP-P2) showed her that she is interested in Liyah's desires and needs, like the kind of food she wanted to eat on any occasion. She would extend such a conversation by letting Liyah choose between a few options for food, and then ask her more questions about the food she chose. HIP-P1 would prompt Ethan to make and communicate his own decisions, like whether he wanted to use the toilet or the potty.</p>
Subtheme 2.3: Meaning making and communication		
Sources	Existing knowledge	Interpretive discussion
<p>Manolson (1992)</p>	<p>Adults need to ask questions, show interest and create anticipation, thus exercising children's thinking 'muscles'. This teaches children how to make decisions and to become curious about things.</p>	<p>HIP-P1 asked Ethan why he is sitting against the wall, and he responded. Ethan, therefore, could understand that his parent was interested in what he was doing and what he had to say about that.</p>

Theme 3: Teacher interaction with toddler		
Subtheme 3.1: Listening		
Sources	Existing knowledge	Interpretive discussion
<p>Manolson (1992)</p>	<p>Allowing children to lead conversations about their experiences encourage them to confidently express their feelings, needs and interests. It also prompts them to connect with others, speak to them and to feel recognised.</p>	<p>LIP-T3 mentioned that her toddlers spoke continuously – this was because she allowed them to freely express themselves and to communicate their needs. HIP-T1 and LIP-T3 paid attention to the toddlers in their playrooms and responded to them whenever they were approached. Liyah went up to HIP-T1 and spoke to her about a car outside, saying that it is her mother. HIP-T1 responded by telling her the cars look the same but that her mother will arrive soon.</p>

Subtheme 3.2: Speaking		
Sources	Existing knowledge	Interpretive discussion
Hulit, Howard and Fahey (2011) Manolson (1992) Wittmer and Petersen (2014)	<p>Parents and teachers speak to children in significantly different ways than with other adults. They try to simplify their language to maintain toddlers' attention and facilitate the toddler's acquisition of basic language skills.</p> <p>Adults continue to use baby talk to respond to children when they can acquire and learn more words.</p>	<p>MIP-T2 constantly used CDS when communicating with the toddlers, even when she sang and read to them. At this playroom, toddlers generally used gestures to communicate. HIP-T1 and LIP-T3 spoke in relatively adult ways to the toddlers, occasionally using simple words such as "pee-pee". All the toddlers at those playrooms used several words to communicate, even though one toddler was only 18 months old.</p>
Hulit, Howard and Fahey (2011) Manolson (1992) Wittmer and Petersen (2014)	<p>Toddlers' development is furthered when adults use semantically responsive talk; toddlers will gain more language information about objects in this way. For instance, if a toddler talks about an aeroplane and the adult responds with other information about the plane, like its colour or shape, the toddler will quickly absorb new words related to colours and shapes.</p> <p>When responsive adults expand on messages from children, then they help the children to understand their experiences better, while it also helps them to learn and say new words.</p>	<p>HIP-T1 used semantically responsive talk in the playrooms, adding more words to the words that the toddlers uttered. This method exposed Liyah to new ideas and words connected to what she was interested in. For example, HIP-T1 added words to colours, like when she said, "Green like the grass, blue like the sky". On another occasion, Liyah went to the jungle gym and asked HIP-T1 to tell her the colours painted on it. HIP-T1 showed responsiveness on such occasions. MIP-T2, however, did not do this with her toddlers and simply told them the colours.</p>
Subtheme 3.3: Meaning making and communication		
Sources	Existing knowledge	Interpretive discussion
Manolson (1992)	<p>It does not help a child learn to talk when adults do everything for them. Children learn by doing, therefore, simple and easy means of instructing a child in language learning deprive them of opportunities needed to formulate words by themselves and give expression to their feelings and experiences.</p>	<p>MIP-T2 and LIP-T3 would simply take toddlers to change their nappies instead of communicating with them to find out if any toddlers needed to change their diapers and hence encourage them to speak for themselves. HIP-T1 would communicate with her toddlers and ask them if they need to "pee-pee".</p>

Theme 4: Toddler interaction with parent and teacher		
Subtheme 4.1: Listening		
Sources	Existing knowledge	Interpretive discussion
Hulit, Howard and Fahey (2011)	Toddlers need active engagement with adults to guide their focus and maintain their attention.	LIP-P6 asked Vinolia to kiss her sister. Through listening, Vinolia understood the instruction and did what was requested of her. Although Vinolia did not speak during this communication, she understood.
Subtheme 4.2: Speaking		
Sources	Existing knowledge	Interpretive discussion
Manolson (1992) Wittmer and Petersen (2014)	Children often differ in their interest and ability to communicate. By being sensitive to their changing moods, behaviour and agenda, parents and teachers consciously adapt their own behaviour to share experiences with children. Children use words and sentences initially for basic purposes such as demanding attention or protesting "no".	Ethan and Liyah demanded prompt attention by repeating "teacher teacher teacher teacher" or "mommy mommy mommy" when they wanted attention. HIP-T1, HIP-P1, HIP-P2 and LIP-T3 indicated that they modify their behaviour to listen to their toddlers whenever they demanded attention. They would stop what they were doing and prioritise their toddler's needs for a while.
Hulit, Howard and Fahey (2011) Wittmer and Petersen (2014)	Toddlers want to tell you what to feed them and how to dress them.	The toddlers were able to specify what they chose what to wear, for instance, by saying "bird" or "car" or a colour. Liyah could tell her parent what she wanted to eat, and Ethan told his parent what he wanted to wear.
Wittmer and Petersen (2014)	Children use words and sentences for basic purposes such as requesting food, learning to say "no" to adults, expressing feelings and to inform.	They were able to form short sentences while speaking to their parents, whereas Nolan and Zoe pointed to objects to convey their wishes.
Subtheme 4.3: Meaning making and communication		
Sources	Existing knowledge	Interpretive discussion
Wittmer and Petersen (2014)	When a toddler runs towards an adult it could mean they wish to connect.	In Playrooms 1 and 2, toddlers would often initiate interaction by going to assistants; the assistants would then give them the attention they needed. In Playroom 3, toddlers would run among assistants, sit next to them or even on their laps to try to get their attention, but would end up playing by themselves because the required attention was not received.

<p>Begus & Southgate (2012) Law et al. (2017) Levine et al. (2016) Wittmer and Petersen (2014)</p>	<p>Toddlers initially familiarise themselves with communication by using non-verbal gestures and facial expressions. At 18 months, toddlers begin to intentionally point to people to obtain attention, or they would direct another person's attention towards the object they are pointing at. Toddlers request to be handed objects with an open or closed hand, request actions through pointing, take an adults hand, give an object and comment through pointing.</p> <p>Such gestures are important precursors of subsequent language development.</p> <p>Toddlers also point to gain information about something, like a picture in a book.</p>	<p>Nolan, as shown in Figure 4.12, and Zoe only used gestures to capture others' interest, focus their attention, obtain information or display their emotions. They pointed to objects in their playroom to inform MIP-T2 what they wanted.</p>
<p>DBE, 2015 Hulit, Howard and Fahey (2011) Wittmer and Petersen (2014)</p>	<p>At 18 months, toddlers use gestures and some words to name objects. At 24 months they use mostly words to name objects. Toddlers are able to use various single words by 18 months and to use two- to three-word phrases by age 2. Most toddlers focus on learning words rather than gestures because they observe that the people around them mostly use words to communicate.</p>	<p>A few months can make a difference on development. Toddlers in Playrooms 1 and 3, aged between 18 to 28 months, used mostly words and sentences when communicating. The toddlers in Playroom 2, aged 18 and 19 months, used gestures to communicate. The people around the toddlers in Playrooms 1 and 3 were interactive and constantly conversing, listening to what they had to say and feel.</p>
<p>Hulit, Howard and Fahey (2011) Wittmer and Petersen (2014)</p>	<p>Toddlers want to share their stories, inform others what is bothering them or where to look for something. They wish to share what they have found and want adults to share their experiences with them on emotional and communicative levels.</p>	<p>The people around the toddlers in Playroom 2 barely communicated with them, even after a toddler indicated to them that something is bothering her.</p>

5.3 LITERATURE IN CONTRADICTION TO THE RESEARCH RESULTS

Table 5.2 contains and discusses findings of this study that contradict the knowledge as obtained from existing literature on the topic. The ECD centres are again referenced as playrooms in this table.

Table 5.2: Study findings that contradict existing literature

Theme 1: Factors that enhance communication and language development			
Sources	Existing knowledge	Contradiction to what is known	Interpretive discussion
National Planning Commission (2011)	The standard of ECD in poor communities is generally inadequate, due to limited funds. The government underfunds ECD and support is usually provided by donors. This situation is caused by a lack of policy, research and examples to implement effective ways to promote language and literacy development. Poor implementation of ECD significantly affects the poor communities.	The playroom in the low-income area was surprisingly well equipped – it contained all that the high-income playroom had. All equipment was in working condition. The playroom in the medium-income area, however, was not stocked to the same extent and facilities were relatively sparse, leaving the children to find stimulation and entertainment on their own for periods during the day.	The Gauteng Department of Education plays a vital role in the teaching and learning processes, being tasked with the responsibility to supply schools with essential resources. Not all the playrooms in this study were adequately supplied, however. When children are denied fair opportunities to learn, it negatively affects the education of South Africa's future youth and leaders.
Du Plessis and Louw (2008) Li and Rao (2005) O'Connor and Geiger (2009) Sarda et al. (2016)	Many parents in South Africa enrol their children in urban schools where English is the only language of Learning and Teaching. Those children attend crèches where languages are used that may not be their first language. Teachers within these schools are expected to prepare the toddlers for formal preschool in English, and are pressurised by parents who expect their children to be fluent in the language by the time they enter preschool. For many parents, English denotes a route to a more advanced life.	The participating teachers at the three playrooms spoke to the toddlers in their first languages, whether it was English, Afrikaans or Zulu.	Teachers would speak to their toddlers in their respective home languages while varying the languages throughout the day. Some participants would occasionally expose the toddlers to English, but would not enforce the language on them.

Theme 2: Parent interaction with toddler			
Sources	Existing knowledge	Contradiction to what is known	Interpretive discussion
Dodici (2002)	Toddlers from low-income households are exposed to fewer words than toddlers from high-income families.	I observed that the toddlers in both high- and low-income playrooms used longer sentences and used a wider range of words compared to toddlers from the medium-income playroom whose toddlers used mostly gestures to communicate. The toddlers in all the households included in the study had access to a variety of books.	Toddlers in the low-income playroom could speak as many words and express themselves as clearly as the toddlers in the high-income playroom. This included an 18-month-old toddler who no longer used gestures but used words to communicate. The toddler's parent stated that this toddler had a collection of books that were occasionally read to him.

5.4 UNIQUE INSIGHTS TO HAVE EMERGED FROM THE DATA

The parent and teacher participants of this study, as a whole, understood the importance of encouraging their toddlers' communication and language skills, knowing that resources, stimulating activities, routines, quality time, expansion of vocabularies and continuity in conversations are all determining factors in this developmental process.

Participants were aware that, since they effectively were the toddlers' primary teachers of language, they needed to provide the sources of communicative stimulation to set their children on their way to future successes. Although their respective teaching styles and views differed, each participant showed at least a single means of promoting their toddlers' communicative and language development, even if done so through daily life activities.

The participants' responses to the final interview question (as discussed near the end of Chapter 4) indicated that the parents and teachers instinctively grasped the crucial role that interaction plays in a toddler's communication and language development. A parent, whose toddler preferred to watch television and learn about

languages that way instead of having stories read to her, also stated that adult interaction with children is crucial for language development.

One research site (ECD centre) was located in a low-income area, known to be a previously disadvantaged suburb as established during the Apartheid era. Contrary to stereotypical expectations, this centre was equipped to deliver a high standard of ECD education. I was impressed with the professional management at the centre and the competency of the staff members. The educators and assistants were compassionate and dedicated in fulfilling their classroom duties. They made the effort to ensure that every child is moulded holistically and guided in his/her own direction. They regarded the toddlers firstly as children, each with unique capabilities and talents. Each child's strengths were identified and enhanced, while their flaws were accepted without judgement. Each toddler being observed by myself evidently felt comfortable and filled with confidence in this pleasant learning environment.

Unfortunately, another ECD centre to have served as a research site did not bestow the same favourable impressions on me. It was a registered, medium-income suburban ECD centre where the parents paid regular fees. One can reasonably expect that these centres should have highly capable educators and functioning facilities, which was unfortunately not the case. I observed minimal levels of dedication, interaction and communication between the toddlers, educator and assistants. I saw unsafe toys on the premises, such as empty containers of medical products and body lotion bottles. The playrooms, apart from the presence of the teacher and assistants, seemed void of a human factor or element. Responsiveness and the serve and return technique of interaction were never evident. The centre appeared to be managed as a babysitting corner rather than a care and development centre. Some forms of routine to encourage the toddlers to engage in activities were observed, although they were infrequently implemented and at short notice, depending on the teacher's decisions on that day. I noted that the toddlers at that centre yearned to receive some attention and sensitivity from any adult that walked into the classroom.

5.5 RESPONSES TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

My motivation to conduct this research was to obtain answers to the proposed research questions that address an important facet of early childhood education. Vitally, I needed to gain fresh insights into parent and teacher perceptions of toddlers' communication and language development through valid means of research. This section presents my answers to the proposed research questions as supported by the findings from the data analysis. The secondary research questions are answered first to guide me towards finding a credible answer to the main research question.

5.5.1 Secondary research questions

5.5.1.1 How do parents perceive the communication and language development of their toddlers?

The first place a child is exposed to language is their home (Scribner, 2013). Children bring a strong biological drive in developing language to the acquisition process, but they will not acquire language unless they are exposed to language models (Hulit, Howard & Fahey, 2011). Their communicative interactions with adults facilitate the acquisition of vocabulary and language development.

A research participant, HIP-P1, found it important to constantly stimulate Ethan by performing fun educational activities with him during weekends. This proved advantageous as I observed Ethan's vocabulary and use of sentence structure to be of a very high standard for a toddler at his age. He used words like "dinosaur", constructed full sentences to request things and he applied a vivid imagination during his days at the ECD centre. Vinolia represented an opposite end of the communication spectrum. Although she attended a well-functioning ECD centre (in a low socio-economic area) where children were encouraged to engage in activities, she still used minimal words when communicating. She had not received the same levels of communicative stimulation as Ethan, because her parent, MIP-P6, felt that she was still too young to understand stories read to her. Scribner (2013) found that adults pay more attention to the length and complexity of conversations when they sense a child is old enough to acquire speech patterns. LIP-P6 did not believe that Vinolia was old enough to follow a story read to her from a book. Conversely, the

parents of toddlers who attended ECD centre 1 constantly read to their toddlers, regardless of the toddlers' age and understanding.

When songs are sung together – in the parent-toddler context – then several aspects of human development come to the fore (Hulit, Howard & Fahey, 2011). Parents convey emotional information to their toddlers through CDS singing, which contributes to language acquisition. Parents, when speaking, use pitch levels and emotional expressions that are different from the acoustical properties contained in singing. The differences between talking and singing prompt cyclical interactions to occur, which are then reflected in children's behavioural responses to their parents. The frequency of speech directed to a child, the range of words used and the way new words are presented determine a child's rate of word-learning attributes, while individual differences need to be kept in mind (Otto, 2014).

A socio-cultural perspective of toddler development is that toddlers learn skills through adult-toddler interaction and communication (Dodici, 2002). Skill development requires an apprenticeship-type relationship involving a teacher (parent) and learner (toddler). Previous studies indicate that high levels of parental responsiveness enhance children's receptiveness to language at later stages of their childhood (Garbe et al., 2016; Levine et al., 2016). Parents' verbal and non-verbal responses to toddlers' behaviour help to construct a communication foundation. Such a foundation positively influences toddlers' communicative abilities, which means parents are effectively toddlers' first true teachers. The participating parents in this research were all very responsive to their toddlers. Most of them said or implied, "We don't have an option, we have to listen", because their toddlers would be "demanding" and have a "need [that] has to be satisfied". Toddlers whose communication interactions were encouraged by their parents would find themselves in advantageous positions when they've grown up to attend primary school, in comparison to peers who may have had limited opportunities to enjoy meaningful conversations as toddlers (Dixon, 2006).

Rogoff (1990) introduced the idea of guided participation that focuses on adult-child interactions during every-day experiences and activities, as opposed to learning in more structured ways. HIP-P1 adopted the strategy of learning-through-play, hence allowing Ethan to play in mud or pretend to ride his father's motorbike during the fun-

filled and shared activities. The number of words that parents direct to toddlers over time correlates directly with their language abilities (Dodici, 2002). Among the main influences in parent-toddler engagement are the aspects of joint attention and the amount of time parents and toddlers focus on the same topic. This facet is illustrated by HIP-P2 when she asked Liyah what she wanted to eat that day. After Liyah answered, HIP-P2 continued the conversation by asking her other questions about the food.

All the participating parents perceived their own roles in the education of their toddlers in terms of their communicative development as important. They demonstrated this by encouraging their children to engage in stimulating activities that promoted their toddlers' acquisition of relatively advanced vocabularies and usage of sentence structures. Other parents were aware of their functions as enablers of language use, although they perceived their toddlers as still too young to be learning through stimulation of their senses. This resulted in quieter toddlers who relied on gestures to convey information. All the parents understood the importance of song in their toddler's daily lives, as songs serve as sources for both education and entertainment.

5.5.1.2 How do teachers perceive the communication and language development of their toddlers?

Responses to toddlers' messages encourage them to share information about their everyday activities, as they realise that the adults are interested in their attempts to communicate and their stories (Law et al., 2017; Levine et al., 2016; Manolson, 1992). When adults communicate face-to-face, toddlers can learn more about them, their facial expressions and the way they move their mouths to form words. They also experience adults' acceptance of their attempts to communicate when give-and-take, "serve and return" modes of communication occur (Manolson, 1992). When adults signal to toddlers that they are anticipating them to respond and take their turn, toddlers become more confident to participate in conversations (Law et al., 2017; Levine et al., 2016; Manolson, 1992). By teaching toddlers to take turns during conversations, longer conversations can result, allowing the children to express what is on their minds. They will also learn that conversations can provide them with new information about their worlds (Manolson, 1992; Otto, 2014; Wittmer & Petersen,

2014). The participating teachers were appreciative of the serve and return strategy of language teaching during the early stages of toddlers' communicative development.

Teachers have varying teaching styles and, depending on circumstances, each style works in a different way to accommodate a toddler. The teacher in the low socio-economic ECD centre seemed to grasp the fact that the toddlers used their voices to get attention, and thus listened to them when they spoke. She would interact with them when they started singing by themselves and join them in singing more songs, always encouraging them to keep singing. This scenario contrasts starkly with the medium socio-economic ECD centre whose teacher viewed the toddlers as too young to understand what she said and merely placed toys in front of them. Communicating with toddlers on their level and in a language that they understand simplifies toddlers' learning capacity. These teachers knew the value of the voice in "listening to sounds" and knew that toddlers would repeat these sounds.

Teachers spend ample amounts of time with toddlers while engaging in their diverse activities. ECD teachers play a vital role in presenting all the toddlers in their care with the requisite high standards of early learning that are necessary for their development (DSD, 2014). During my observations, I noticed that HIP-T1 would perform stimulating activities with her toddlers, like asking them questions, teaching them new words and sounds, and giving them enough time to respond. LIP-T3 would sing with her toddlers every morning during the assembly, while MIP-T2 would simply let her toddlers play with toys.

When teachers plan the weekly and annual activities, they fulfil the key role of ensuring that they implement structured learning programmes, that the resources required will be available and that there is a learning flow to the agenda. Planning also addresses the efficiency and coherency standards of the learning programme. HIP-T1 would always have an educational activity planned for the toddlers each morning, such as issuing photocopied sheets of paper that the toddlers used to complete specified tasks. Even though this may seem to be a "schoolification" action, the teachers felt that the toddlers were capable of performing such activities and wanted to document those capabilities on paper.

The teachers at ECD centres 1 and 3 seemed to understand the importance of listening and responding to their toddlers. They would stimulate their toddlers by performing activities along with them or singing with them. While those two teachers perceived that strategy as an important concept of effective teaching and learning, the third teacher perceived individual play with toys as the important aspect.

5.5.1.3 Which factors influence communication and language development of toddlers?

A toddler's ability to communicate is affected when adults impose their thoughts and ideas on them. An adult's sensitivity towards a toddler's behaviour creates the shared moments that bolster their feelings of security and confidence. It had noticed that the toddlers in ECD centres 1 and 3 were more confident in their communication endeavours than the toddlers in ECD centre 2, where they were more reserved and tended to play on their own. The teachers working at ECD centres 1 and 3 appeared warm and responsive in their general demeanour. Before a child learns how to talk, they learn a lot about connecting and communicating from the adults around them. Because they cannot speak yet or know of no other ways, they may run towards an adult to gain their attention (Manolson, 1992). Several households neglect such opportunities to return the attention and support the toddlers' efforts to connect with them, only because they lack the experience or knowledge to understand what type of encouragement they should provide to their toddlers.

LIP-P5 and LIP-P6 had the resources available to strengthen the language development of their toddlers but opted not to use them, letting their toddlers watch television instead. When parents use a television as a means to pacify a restless toddler, they negatively affect their toddler's language and development – although they may not be aware of that effect. The process of language acquisition entails firstly experience, then understanding, and finally language. Repetition of words, as illustrated by HIP-P1 and HIP-P2, creates understanding in toddlers' minds who learn how to anticipate what comes next. Ethan and Liyah knew the books that were read to them, and hence could retell the stories and explain the accompanying pictures. Furthermore, when an adult repeats a word that a child uttered, then adding another word or action related to the original word, then children's understanding of the meaning of words can increase exponentially. This process opens a completely

new world of information to toddlers. Gestures, too, can be effectively harnessed to help a toddler to understand words.

Play is one of the best ways for a child to learn (Manolson, 1992). Toddlers learn and remember objects and words when they see, hear, feel, smell and taste – sensations that send messages to the brain. Play that includes the imitation of actions and sound is a vital factor in language and communication development. Musical activities such as singing lullabies encourage physical contact, repetition, turn-taking, non-verbal responses, vocal play, action and timing of words. Every observed toddler thoroughly enjoyed singing and playing games with their teachers, occasionally not wanting to stop. Liyah and Mulalo knew every word to every song they sang. The free play sessions in these ECD centres encouraged more social interaction, even if it only involved gesturing.

Books are valuable sources for encouraging the development of toddlers' communication (Manolson, 1992). An adult's involvement allows the child to rapidly further his/her learning of language. Participating parents and teachers who guide their toddlers towards the zone of proximal development by being interactive in their presence, remarked that their toddlers could tell quite coherent versions of stories. Liyah, for instance, could retell stories read to her and explain the pictures (Scribner, 2013). Ethan constantly spoke to himself while looking at pictures in a book. The parents clearly understood the importance of talking, storytelling and attentive conversations with their toddlers.

The South African government underfunds ECD centres, affecting the ability of poor communities to provide a high standard of education. Donors usually step in with financial support to keep educational institutions functioning. This situation is the consequence of the authorities' lack of policy, guidelines, commitment and research to find effective ways of implementing programmes that support the development of children. It was, therefore, surprising to discover that the low socio-economic ECD centre provided toddlers with more effective language and communication developmental activities than another centre located in a region with a higher socio-economic status. This centre housed a variety of resources to choose from to provide stimulating exercises for the toddlers to further strengthen their nascent communicative abilities. The teacher and assistants were involved in the lives and

development of the toddlers, whereas the toddlers at the medium socio-economic centre did not receive the same support from their teaching staff, where assistants simply placed toys in front of them to keep them occupied.

The parents of the two observed toddlers at the medium-income centre, MIP-P3 and MIP-P4, provided their toddlers with some activities – such as reading to them – to support their development, while expecting that the teacher at their centre would continue this process. Parents tend to think they do justice to their toddlers by sending them to centres in areas that are perceived to be performing well economically. Unfortunately, I observed that MIP-T2 was more interested in completing activities for the sake of the centre's reports than interacting with the toddlers.

Globally, specialists have developed educational policies based purely on early language and communication endeavours. This initiated new campaigns and drives to develop programmes to improve ECD practitioners and services. Children living in low-income households tend to hear prohibitions as affirmation statements from their parents twice as many times than children living in medium or upper-income households (Dodici, 2002). These prohibition statements are reported to have lasting effects on children's language and cognitive abilities. Similarly, children from low-income households are generally exposed to fewer words than children from higher-income families.

The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (1999) reported that a warm, supportive and engaged parent-child environment corresponds with toddlers' language competencies in their social domains. Research reveals that teachers should be qualified and trained to ensure they possess the necessary skills required for effective teaching of toddlers (Atmore, 2013). Teachers' continuous participation in professional development training programmes is important to ensure that toddlers' language skills keep developing, and to keep ECD centres on par with recurring global developments in the ECD field. Teachers also need to continually update their knowledge of toddlers' needs throughout the ECD period (DSD, 2014). This report contrasts with the data collected during this research. Even though LIP-T3 was not professionally qualified, she managed to understand every aspect related to the toddlers' development, while providing her toddlers with suitable activities to

further their development. It can be argued that, had she been better qualified, she could then have provided even better methods of supporting the toddlers at the centre. Yet, her methods were still effective and yielded positive results. South Africa lacks qualified ECD practitioners, especially in rural areas (DSD, 2014). Still, parents can contribute significantly to their toddler's development by showing interest and tending to their immediate communicative needs. HIP-P1 and MIP-P3 seemed well informed in terms of supporting their toddlers' growth and development by providing stimulating activities at home. Both these parents had teaching experience, while MIP-P3 earned a psychology degree.

The environment in which a toddler is placed plays a vital role in their communication and language development, especially when adults constantly communicate and respond to them. Parents and teachers can apply various educational means and fun activities to strengthen toddlers' quest to develop their communicative skills.

5.5.2 Main research question

5.5.2.1 How do parents and teachers perceive the communication and language development of toddlers?

During the early stages of a child's development, adults should keep their language use simple when addressing the child. However, if adults continue to use baby talk when the children grow to understand basic words, they will limit their opportunities to progress with language acquisition (Manolson, 1992). MIP-T2 would speak to the toddlers using child-directed speech (CDS) at the ECD centre, where I observed that the toddlers only used gestures to communicate. In contrast, HIP-T1 and LIP-T3 would use adult language when conversing with the toddlers at their centres, where I observed the toddlers being able to use words and even form complete sentences when communicating with the adults.

At times, mutual frustrations during communicative efforts cause a communication bridge to develop. A toddler's lack of response does not always mean they are uninterested, but rather that they do not yet know how to respond (Manolson, 1992). Among the interesting facets to have emerged during my interviews with the parents was hearing how MIP-P3 crossed the communication bridge with her son, Nolan.

She taught Nolan sign language when the communicative process became too frustrating due to misunderstandings. It was an effective solution.

Toddlers should be allowed to do tasks themselves instead of adults doing it for them, which would deprive them the opportunity to satisfy their curiosity and their need to learn about the world. Too often an adult takes over a situation, prompting the child to withdraw or retaliate, and a learning opportunity is lost (Manolson, 1992). At home and school, toddlers learn best by *doing* rather than being told what to do. Many adults, with good intentions, believe that they benefit a child's learning of languages by placing their toddlers in front of television sets. This is an ineffective method because the child is not receiving the necessary auditory and visual feedback required to learn a language (Wittmer & Petersen, 2014). HIP-P1 restricted Ethan to only 30 minutes a day of television and cell phone time, freeing up more time for him to play and develop his skills through being active. I indeed observed how Ethan preferred to play and communicate with others instead of sitting and watching television at his ECD centre, which illustrates the effectiveness of HIP-P1's parenting policy.

By placing toddlers in front of televisions, parents do not manage to expose their children to words and grammatical structures as they might think (Birken, 2017). Daily screen time with non-educational applications on electronic devices may even induce negative consequences for toddlers' development. The fact that toddlers can quickly master technological devices indicates that they are hungry to learn and able to grasp a lot at their age. To grasp the intricacies of language, however, remains a complex process that revolves around interactions.

Teachers and parents should expose toddlers to sounds and images they can comfortably absorb and assimilate, which would help them to make sense of the world and not to *tune out*. During my observations, I noticed that Mulalo and Vinolia preferred to talk to others rather than sit and watch television programmes. At home, though, Vinolia preferred to watch television rather than having a story read to her from a book, according to her mother (LIP-P6). Therefore, her behaviour indicates that, when she is in the presence of other children, she enjoys being social and becomes more talkative. Hulit, Howard and Fahey (2011) stated that reduced opportunities for practising speech and conversation are potentially harmful to

children's language acquisition and development. Adult attention and responsiveness are more beneficial to learning in comparison to television programmes and attempts to converse with peers. Toddlers need active engagement with their parents and teachers to guide their focuses and maintain their attention.

According to the National Curriculum Framework (NCF), toddlers learn new ideas and words and develop their conceptual skills best when educated in their mother tongues (DBE, 2015). Each toddler observed in this study received communications in their mother tongues at home as well as at the ECD centres. Teachers would repeat messages in the relevant languages so that all the toddlers could understand what they explained. Ethan and Liyah could understand a second language since they were often addressed in both languages. This bestowed them with the ability to understand conversations at home as well as future school lessons. When toddlers receive all the essentials for language learning at home and they are prepared well for preschooling activities, then they are also prepared to be successful during formal schooling and should have no disadvantages in relation to their peers (Scribner, 2013).

Considering all of the above, healthy parent-toddler and teacher-toddler interactions and conversations have to be considered as the most significant influences in the promotion of toddlers' early language acquisition. Significantly, the interviewed parents and teachers all selected the interactive-family picture (see Figures 4.14–4.16 in Section 4.7) as the strongest option to support the development of toddlers. They have all agreed that it is critically important for them to assist their children during activities and to respond to them at all times if they wish to enhance their development. They understood that interaction is a key concept in children's development.

5.6 INTERPRETATION THROUGH CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study adopted Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (1986) as its conceptual framework. This framework blended into the attunement and the serve and return approach. This framework made it possible to understand the data clearly and to obtain new knowledge and original insights.

A toddler's participatory habits expand while they build on social interactions with others. Similarly, social interaction can expand a knowledge base and learning skills. I kept these aspects of the conceptual framework in mind as I followed the research plan.

Therefore, as researcher, I managed to gain new insights into the studied phenomenon by applying Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD) conceptual framework to my research design and my execution of the data gathering and analytical processes. The framework allowed me to remove any doubt in determining and confirming the knowledge that toddlers construct meaning of their worlds through social interactions with others. During the data generation process, it became noticeable how the participants' perceptions settled on their understanding that toddlers' communication and language development rely on their respective social contexts and influences. The interviewed participants spoke about the importance of listening to and responding to their toddlers, and how bonding with a toddler can assist and strengthen their communicative development. This perception emerged strongly in the data and was hence illuminated in Theme 1, featuring the aspects of social interaction and collaborative engagement.

The ZPD centres on toddlers' interactions with adults, and it is realised when adults teach children new skills. Toddlers learn how to do things and to process their thoughts effectively while interacting with the adults around them when, for instance, tasks need to be completed that are not manageable by toddlers on their own. Toddlers harness the assistance from adults to develop and expand their knowledge, experience and skills.

As I journeyed along this research path, I continually reflected on the ways that toddlers derive their motivations to talk from their parents and teachers. I reflected on their imitations of adults and how they endeavoured to add more words to their sentences and vocabularies, and how they tried to ask and answer questions. I needed to understand how the guidance received from adults constituted a large step towards children's independence in their thoughts, speech and actions.

This study illustrated how and why children who have more responsive parents/caretakers and teachers are able to communicate much better – at an early

age – than other children who receive their guidance from less responsive adults. Some participants used book sharing to scaffold their toddlers' mastery of language through initiating and encouraging the acquisition of new words. This occurs when adults and toddlers engage together to label objects, comment on pictures and ask questions about the stories.

It became evident during the conducting of this study that the ZPD allows parents and teachers to provide their toddlers with the help they need to progress in their development of language skills. The transcribed interviews and observational notes illustrated how parents and teachers would often expand toddlers' sentences by using more words related to something the toddlers had just said. At a later stage, those toddlers would recall the new information and say new words on their own, not needing further assistance by an adult – yet ready to learn even more.

5.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Data generation proved to be challenging for a few reasons:

At times during the period of data generation, a Thursday happened to be a public holiday. Resultantly, many toddlers did not arrive at the centre on the following Friday, so I had to adapt my schedule and return on two other days to catch up. Furthermore, the spate of public holidays also caused the general attendance numbers to drop, so the ECD centre I visited had less than half the regular number of toddlers present. Consequently, the teachers limited their planned activities for those days and placed the toddlers in front of the television set. After a while, the toddlers would grow disinterested in the television programmes and they would *tune out*. Those changes in routine made it difficult to observe typical toddler behaviour at the centres on some days.

At other times the toddlers I needed to observe fell ill and were absent on my observation days. This placed a further limitation on my opportunities to obtain rich data for this study, keeping in mind that I needed to spend equal amounts of time one each toddler participating in the study. The circumstances meant that I had to focus on a different case on one day to supplement my observational data. At times, therefore, it became challenging to sensibly connect my observations with the parent

and teacher interviews respectively. Thankfully, each interviewed participant's unique contributions on the views of their toddler's behaviour and development clarified many of the interpretations of my observations and assisted me to link each case correctly with their parent's and teacher's recorded comments.

Participants would often misunderstand what I asked during the interviews, causing me to explain and repeat the questions. Some participants provided vague responses at other times. After the interviews, however, I did member checking to ensure that I allocated each data element to the correct participant and align my observations and interpretations accordingly. In this way, I prevented misunderstandings or misplaced interpretations to affect my findings.

A limitation of the multiple case study method, as pointed out by Maree (2016), is that its findings cannot be generalised due to the reliance on single cases as well, thus limiting the provision of a valid generalised conclusion. However, this is not the ultimate objective of multiple case study research, since "a well-selected case constitutes the dewdrop in which the world is reflected" (Maree, 2007, p. 76). According to Rule and John (2011) cautious generalisations can sometimes be made during multiple case study research, but then further proof or disproof of research would be required.

During this study, using multiple case studies as the research method, I provided all the relevant details of each stage so that peers in research could assess this research's validity, transferability and credibility (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The transferability level is determined by contrasts or similarities between surroundings or two backgrounds. Gomm, Hammersley and Foster (2000) state that findings can be generalised to other populations if their surroundings and backgrounds are similar to those of the original study. This study's transferability, however, may be limited. Nevertheless, the collected data, which includes the diverse backgrounds of participants, could make certain findings transferable.

I assembled and provided rich descriptions during the observations, and I validated the transcribed information obtained from the parents and teachers via the interviews and observation notes. I did member checking and generated an audit trail of the three different ECD centres with field notes. The toddlers' mother tongues were used

more frequently in certain centres, constituting a limitation to my use of English as the dominant language. The purpose of my study, however, was not to investigate the use of a home language versus the language of learning and teaching. At the same time, I noticed that some teachers used a variety of languages among different toddlers (multiliteracy), which helped them all to understand her instructions. Some interviewed participants' use of language suggested that they were not fluent in English, resulting in their toddler not being able to speak the language well either.

5.8 RECOMMENDATIONS

A desired result, as listed in NELDS (DBE, 2009, p. 24), is that “children are learning to communicate effectively and use language”, with its first standard requiring that “children listen, understand and respond when communicating with others”. This study proves that those desired results and standards can only be achieved when language is *communicated* to toddlers. Adults' responsibility towards toddlers is to ensure that they have the necessary tools to develop. Two of the three ECD centres selected as research sites were well equipped and they evidently provided stimulating and pleasant environments for toddlers, whereas the third centre provided empty medication and lotion bottles and some second-hand toys to keep the toddlers busy. Some of the centres provided appetising meals that the toddlers enjoyed so much that they even asked for more.

The factors that enhance the development of toddlers' communication and language skills emerged clearly from the data. The gathered data further indicated that the study participants largely had an advanced understanding of their toddlers' keenness to participate in activities that could also be used to stimulate their developmental inclinations. The NCF's guidelines (DBE, 2015) for children from birth to 4-years-old stipulate the need for adults to pay close attention to a child's communication skills. Figure 5.1 depicts how families can promote communication.

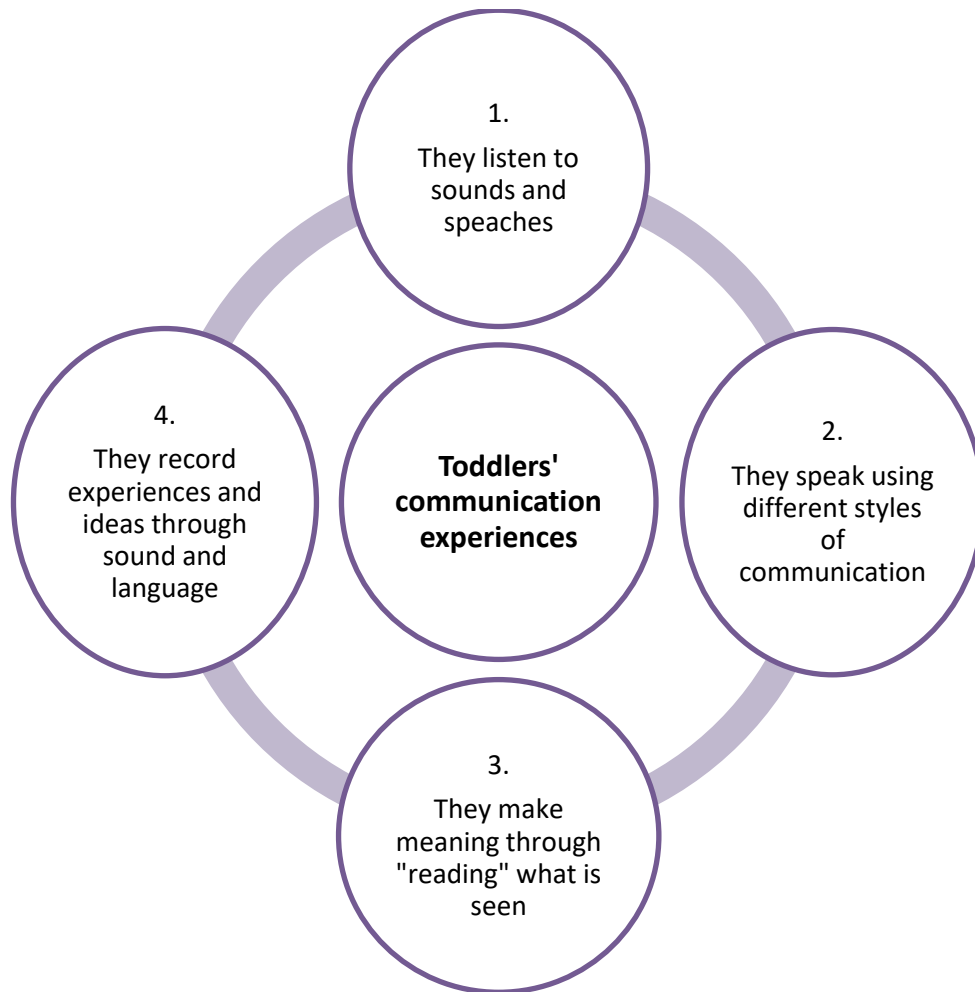


Figure 5.1: Illustration of families promoting communication (DBE, 2015).

The parents and teachers who participated in this study displayed their intellectual potential, while some had advanced background knowledge of the processes involved in toddlers' communication and language development. The gathered data illustrated their abilities to incorporate effective methods in strengthening their toddlers' developmental prowess. The transcribed remarks by the majority of participants revealed that they had at least basic understandings of the phenomenon investigated by this study. In addition, it is important to provide educational programmes within ECD centres to update teachers' and parents' knowledge base and strengthen their abilities to implement advantageous parenting and teaching methods.

This study strongly recommends that parents and teachers work together to enhance their toddlers' language learning and communicative skills.

5.8.1 Recommendations for the Department of Basic Education

Teachers must be trained on the importance of resources, interaction and scaffolding of toddlers during the time when toddlers are learning to use language and communicate effectively. They should also be trained on how to use resources, fantasy corners, book corners, games, songs and playground walks to stimulate toddlers' language development. Toddlers deserve opportunities to act out – or dramatise – what they see and experience, to do things by themselves and to imitate what others do. Teachers should be educated and qualified, or at least have prior experience caring for children so that they may understand the psychology driving the minds of children. All early learning educators need to display knowledge of how young developing brains function.

5.8.2 Recommendations for the departments of Social Development and of Health

The Department of Health (DoH) should ensure that they have “mum, dad and tots classes”. When children are born, both parents must be given ideas, fact sheets and classes on how to be responsive to their toddlers and allow them the space to communicate. Children do not only communicate with voices but also through body language and eye contact. Children must be listened to and given a chance to communicate and become confident.

5.8.3 Strategies to support and promote communication and language development of toddlers

Adults can employ the following strategies to support toddlers' development as suggested by DBE (2009) and Wittmer & Petersen (2014):

1. Recognise toddlers' innate ability to grasp communicative endeavours such as gestures, sounds, words and facial expressions.
2. Use a variety of voice volumes and pitches to tell stories, which will help toddlers to make meaning of soft and loud vocal transmissions.
3. Identify language delay early in a toddler's life to provide immediate support for the child and energise the development of their language skills.
4. Draw the toddlers' attention to printed forms in their environment.

5. Create a relaxing and fun environment during daily storytelling.
6. Use the various strategies mentioned at the end of Chapter 2 – as identified by Wittmer and Petersen (2014) – that parents and teachers can use to support toddlers' efforts to hear and understand language, express themselves, and become competent communicators.
7. Give your toddler the confidence to explain pictures in books.
8. Be mindful that responsive and sensitive language strategies, as well as the quality of the environment, relate to toddlers' language development.
9. Use routine-based intervention strategies.
10. Introduce toddlers to various learning techniques.
11. Construct stories together.
12. Sing nursery rhymes and other songs toddlers may enjoy.

In promoting effective ways of successfully incorporating communication and language development in a toddler's daily lifestyle, a multiple approach to parents, teachers and ECD centres should be engaged. The table below lists ideas and suggestions to promote this.

Table 5.3: Ideas and suggestions to promote communicative development

Participants	Contents
ECD centres	ECD centres should brighten up their buildings, put up posters and paint colourful walls to continually stimulate the attending toddlers.
	ECD centres should provide playrooms with relevant supplies, appropriate resources and educational toys to stimulate toddlers' minds, such as puzzles to complete during free playtime.
	ECD centres should host meetings every term to inform parents and teachers about various ways and activities to strengthen toddlers' development and language learning.
Headmasters	Headmasters should evaluate teachers and only appoint applicants who are qualified for the job, or who can prove competence. They should also provide support and training for teachers.
Parents and	Parents and teachers should understand the importance of constantly

teachers	talking to their toddlers and exposing them to new words every day. They should give toddlers the opportunity to communicate with them through 'serve and return' talk (thus avoiding tantrums for attention).
Parents	Parents can play games with their toddlers and share in activities that promote learning opportunities and afford quality time together.
	Parents should read new books to toddlers as often as possible to introduce new words, stories and questions to their lives.
Teachers	Teachers should be evaluated on their facilitation and teaching styles.
	Teachers need to present stimulating activities to the toddlers, read them stories and allow singing sessions, preferably daily.

5.8.4 Recommendations for further studies and research topics

Toddlers' best interests should always be prioritised. Placing them in front of a television is not the best option for a young developing mind. I recommend that schools and ECD centres provide parents with the necessary information to help them in strengthening their children's communication and language skills. A clear message to all parents should be that the reading of stories to toddlers benefits their language acquisition skills, and that reading sessions should start while they are still in this fragile age bracket. Communication does not have to be only through talking – gestures are also beneficial since toddlers often communicate with each other through gestures alone. Language and communication should be regarded as equally important in schools and at home. According to NELDS (DBE, 2015), the use of toddlers' mother tongues in learning have several advantages in the development of young minds, as toddlers learn new words easier that way. This means that education in the mother tongue allows toddlers to learn about new concepts and speeds up their language learning processes.

Further research topics could include:

- How do toddlers communicate?

- How do teachers utilise multiliteracies in the language development and communication of toddlers?
- How do teachers and caretakers of babies stimulate language development and communication?
- What model could we use to involve both parents and teachers in the effort to advance communication and language development among young children?
- “Mum and tots” – what are the contents in these groups that enhance communication and playful language development?
- How do we encourage parents to speak, listen and involve themselves in the language and communication efforts of young children?

5.9 CONCLUDING REMARKS

During this study, I used observations, interviews and visual methods to focus on toddlers' interactions with the adults and peers in their environments. I triangulated the interviews with parents and teachers through observing the toddlers in their natural playroom surroundings. I listened to parents' and teachers' views to gain a clear understanding of their perceptions of toddlers' communication and language development. I also listened to the toddlers during my observation sessions.

As the study progressed, I realised that each participant had various levels of understanding and knowledge of the phenomenon. Some participants displayed an in-depth understanding of the research topic, while others conveyed only partial understanding. It is crucial to foster more awareness among adults and encourage them to be interactive, responsive and share stimulating activities with their toddlers. Those policies and parenting methods will strengthen the cognitive development of their toddlers and help them to become successful communicative beings later in life. Finally, and not the least, the advocacy of programmes that promote the development of all toddlers' communicative and language skills will help to level the playing fields amongst the “haves” and “haves nots”.

~

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world” – Nelson Mandela (UNESCO, 2016)

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ADDENDUM 1

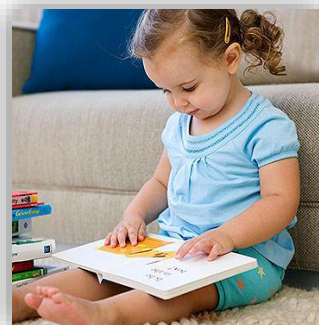
Interview schedule

Interview questions:

1. How often do you read to your toddler?
2. How often do you listen to your toddler?
3. How responsive are you to your toddler?
4. How often do you expose your toddler to books?
5. If English is not the toddler's home language, do you speak English more to your toddler than their home language?

Photovoice question guide:

1. How does the toddler communicate that they want food?
2. How does the toddler communicate that they need to go to the toilet or needs a diaper change?
3. How does the toddler ask for their choice of clothing to wear in the morning?
4. How does the toddler communicate their choice of toys to play with?
5. How does the toddler communicate to stories read to him?
6. How does the toddler respond to games and songs?
7. How does the toddler communicate their happiness or sadness?
8. Look at these three pictures. Between the three, which do you think involves the most communication? Which one do you perceive to have more advantage for your child's development? Why?



ADDENDUM 2

A consent letter



Dear teacher,

I am a student studying through the University of Pretoria. I am currently enrolled for my Bed (Masters) in the Faculty of Education. I have to complete a research module and one of the requirements is that I conduct a research and write a research report about my work. I would like to ask you whether you will be willing to participate in this research.

The topic of my research is: **Parent and teacher perceptions of communication and language development of toddlers**. The main purpose of language is to communicate and ideally communication involves learning all forms of language and using them to communicate from birth seeing that this time is where acquisition begins. All these emanate from parents and teachers continuously conversing and exposing children to language daily. Strengthening this leads to future communication skills needed to thrive academically and socially. Several households neglect these opportunities and neglect providing support for their child resulting in academic delays and personal conflict. Research has been conducted on a teacher's perception of development and to strengthen this gap, we hope to find more information on both parents and teachers perceptions of communication and language development of toddlers. The research will include observing toddlers and interviewing the parents and teachers of these toddlers.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to observe and thereafter interviewed about this topic.

Observations will be done by you, the teacher, and photos will be taken of the various observations of the selected two toddlers. These observations will be conducted at your own time during the day. After observations are complete, I would like to conduct a narrative interview related to these observations. The interview will take place at a venue and time that will suit you, but it may not interfere with crèche activities or teaching time and will not take longer than an hour. The interview will be audiotaped and transcribed for analytic purposes. Only my supervisor and I will have access to this

information and will be regarded as confidential and anonymous. The selected toddler's parents/guardians will receive letters to inform them about the research. Parents will also take part in observations at their own time out of crèche hours.

You do not have to participate in this research if you do not want to and you will not be penalised in any way if you decide not to take part. If you decide to participate, but change your mind later, you can withdraw your participation at any time.

Your identity will be protected. Only my supervisor and I will know your real name and any details. Your crèche will not be identified either. The information you give will only be used for academic purposes. In my research report and in any other academic communication, your pseudonym (number/ code) will be used and no other identifying information will be given. Collected data will be in my possession or my supervisor's and will be locked up for safety and confidential purposes.

If you agree to take part in this research, please fill in the consent form provided below. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact my supervisor or me using the contact details below.

Signature of researcher: _____ Date: _____

Name of researcher: Shezeen Suleman

Name of supervisor: Dr Keshni Bipath

Contact number: 071 364 7438

Contact number: 083 627 8570

E-mail: shezeens@gmail.com

E-mail: keshni.bipath@up.ac.za

Consent form

I, _____(your name), agree / do not agree (delete what is not applicable) to take part in the research project titled: **Parent and teacher perceptions of communication and language development of toddlers**. I understand that I will be observing (using photographs) two toddlers during crèche hours and interviewed about this topic and these observations for approximately one hour at a venue and time that will suit me, but that will not interfere with crèche activities or teaching time. The interview will be audiotaped.

I understand that the researcher subscribes to the principles of:

- Voluntary participation* in research, implying that the participants might withdraw from the research at any time.
- Informed consent*, meaning that research participants must at all times be fully informed about the research process and purposes, and must give consent to their participation in the research.
- Safety in participation*; put differently, that the human respondents should not be placed at risk or harm of any kind e.g., research with young children.
- Privacy*, meaning that the *confidentiality* and *anonymity* of human respondents should be protected at all times.
- Trust*, which implies that human respondents will not be respondent to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

ADDENDUM 3

An example of a Child Tracking Observation sheet

If child speaks Afrikaans Sometimes and English Sometimes
**very strong - broke up fights and didn't mind giving his bike to others*
** Is fine playing by himself but loves playing with others*
**Very friendly, happy child that's strong*

8 March

Appendix C
Child tracking observation sheet (Researcher)

Child: child1

Time	Description of activity
7:57	when I walked in he screamed "leeser hets leerse" and waved
7:59	got up and said his goal is "oh"
	-our at last a hug
	-teacher asked him to bring that toy to her and he held his hand to take him to the teacher
8:00	ran and hugged teacher
8:05	got a book, opened it and started talking to himself
	- turned pages and started pointing to pictures
	- turned on looking at pages and spoke to himself "Grouite"
8:08	teacher asked him to pee pee and he went
	- played with others
	- made his book into a gym and other things
8:11	played shooting with a child - teacher called him to sit by her and he sat
8:18	playtime teacher came - he ran and screamed "leeser hets leerse"
8:25	came back from playtime, stood at the gate and screamed "hels" - he ran in excited and started playing
	- teacher asked him to go pee pee and he went
8:27	had a conversation with 2 children
8:30	came to me as I spoke to another child - spoke to me
	- found something and showed teacher - spoke to teacher
8:40	found children lying down and layed down next to them
	- went to children that were fighting and made them stop
	- called a child by name "come here please, come up here" and pointed at the jungle gym
8:45	said "no" to a child when they screamed in his face
8:48	said "hels" to 1 of the ladies that walked in and gave her a hug
8:49	listened to teacher when she asked him to open his legs
	- asked for "more" flour to play with
8:52	showed me his face mess with flour then showed teacher
	- made some flour and rubbed it on other children's cheeks
	- showed me his face again pointing to his face saying "Gee"
	- played with a toy - showed the toy to teacher he picked up
8:57	played by himself
8:58	went to teacher again
	- saw as teacher came out with juice he ran and said "yummy juice"
8:59	moved away from other children because they bothered him
	while he drank his juice
9:00	teacher called him to pee pee - he said "pee pee later" - just a minute after that he wet his pants
9:05	a lady called in and he smiled, stood up, waved and ran to higher

Interaction: (circle dominant one)

TC ↔ A	→ TC ←	A ↔ GC	C → TC
TC → A	TC → GC	A → GC	GC → TC
TC ↔ C	TC → C	A → TC	TC
TC ↔ GC			

ADDENDUM 4

An example of a transcribed interview with a parent

Boy: 28 months (2 yrs 4 months)	
Shed 1 (Parent 1 - child 1)	8 March 2019
Interview	more than willing to answer questions + enjoy talking about her child
1) "every night, we have a fixed routine where we have play time, eating time, bath time, reading time and sleep time and that's how we do it"	
2) "all day (laughs) he talks a lot and if you don't respond he or son if you do respond he keeps on saying 'mummy mummy mummy mummy' so I listen the whole time (laughs)"	
3) "no it's immediately because he has that head and it has to be satisfied and if I can't I'll tell him I'm not the only living human being in the house so he can go and ask his dad (laughs)" - they can now walk around their dad's	
a) "Go bats? Yeah everyday"	
s) "No it's Afrikaans but we teach him English because I was brought up English so it's quite important, it's dual"	
Picture	
1) "So he will come and tell me 'mummy my pie is longer' (laughs) then he will point to his banana, his little monkey is hungry and wants to be fed (laughs)"	
2) "he will tell me 'mummy I have a peepee' or 'mummy I pooped' and I'll tell him do you want the potty or the basket and then he'll choose and then we'll use the chosen option"	
3) "Oh he goes and fetches the clothing himself, yes because his dad that he has arms and legs, he can do it himself or I either pre chose clothes which I choose in the evenings because he bathes in the evenings so I go and choose unless I didn't get time to I tell him come show me and he'll tell me he wants (shows) with the motor bike or the one with the bird or the car, he'll be quite specific, with the colour as well"	
a) "The picture shows him playing with his guitar, so he asks me to switch on the TV so he can copy the guy playing"	
	Typo

	his guitar. He'll go and choose them but I have to
↳ quality time	specific events with the Woody Bar I get for month with 16 activities for Saturdays and Sundays - 4 per weekend so I'll choose the activities which are suitable for me which means I choose these
↳ Routine	I shouldn't mess that much unless the outside playtime we have in the afternoon from 4-6 then I will choose activities that suit that time but he normally goes and chooses either a game or a book or a puzzle piece he needs to do or anything
↳ specific →	that he likes like a ball, his quite specific, he goes and he catches it and his helmet and his motor bike - he loves guns. This other picture shows him playing in the mud - it's exciting (laughs), he rides his bike with training wheels. This one shows him learning to swim, that's his gemmy and this one is him on a motor bike pretending to drive it"
	5) "well he remembers, his looking at memory of the stage because we started reading from 3 months on he started reading" So now he knows the stories and he'll tell you he wants a specific story and he'll go and fetch the book as well and then he'll tell you I want to hear the story of the little owl and then we'll read the little owl story, so ya his quite specific"
4.2	6) "yeah has he shown you he can play guitar? He has his own ukulele ukulele since his been a year and a half so he'll tell me tomorrow I want to see the uncle with the guitars so we put on youtube and Joe Black and he'll play guitar and sing - I'll show you a video now and send it through to you as well"
	7) "oh yes, when he laughs he laughs he laughs out of his funny as you've seen here and he does it quite directly when his upset he will stomp his feet he'll go sit in a corner and then you'll ask him but why are you there and he'll tell you it's because I'm naughty (laughs) so that's how he looks, so

ADDENDUM 5

An example of a transcribed interview with a teacher

	School 1 (teacher)	7 March 2009
	Interview	Teacher was more than willing to answer questions & seemed to enjoy it
1)	"Mostly in the afternoon or they have a specific day that they read during story time"	
2)	"You, when like I'll listen to them if they ask me something, 'Ya' everyday, most of the time"	
3)	"What is what say?" "Yes yes I do usually, everytime yes, I will reply to them and explain to them if they are asking something"	
4)	"Ya everyday, they love it"	
5)	"Uh no, I'll talk to them in their language yes", "they understand more than English"	
	Pretence	
1)	"Ya, some of them will say 'ka' or 'more', that's mostly what they use like 'more more'"	
2)	"mmm they do it, most of them will say they made a 'pa' but most of them do it really talk, they just do it, you seen today (laughs)"	
3)	-	
4)	"they will usually say 'kaka' or 'kakkas', so they will specifically say what they want or I'll ask them"	
5)	"they will usually ask questions like when what is that or they'll need explanations of what I just read to them"	
6)	"ooh they love it (giggles) they dance all the time (Smbrend laughs) and sings with, I think they get more excited - too excited sometimes (giggles). If it's something new to see chaos because then they like 'oh yay' and everyone wants to come, it's not a bad time (laughs)"	
7)	"they usually frown if they sad, if they happy you'll see them smile all the time and they will play and laugh and run around. But you can see the difference when they sad and happy or they cry"	
8)	Chess picture with interaction - "there is not only 1 thing they can learn, so there's more than 1 - they can learn colors, blocks and there's a lot you can teach them like shapes etc"	
		Typo

She replies to every child and gives them all equal attention

Teaching skills include all areas of development

Qualifications

- Degree in psychology
- completing her degree in Education
- Diploma in ministry of education for kids
- Studied Mandarin in China
 - ↳ taught primary, pre primary and high school in China
- Various certificates for education courses
- looking at further studies in the medical field

Interview protocol

- Time = 1:30-1:45
- Duration = 15 minutes
- 7 March 2019
- Teachers classroom
- Interviewer - Shereen (Researcher)
- Interviewee - Chirell Stander
- Pseudonym =
- Female

ADDENDUM 6

Sample of an analysis of a single case over the course of a week

Observation 1	Observation 2	Observation 3	Observation 4
<p>TC 6-9 GC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows lamp asks teacher to write handwriting - 'ice pop' writes lamp writes them in a row Writes to teacher when she asks things Someone prefers to others than Writing to teacher Writes to teacher asks for assistance clears up when asked points to body parts gets distracted asks for more food - 'more' 'bina' - says when hurt has string him - shows teacher shows others that he did pointed to pictures on wall communicates with - by hand to teacher Speaks to Dad others copy him breaks up after aggressive caught teacher to explain or fix plays with others asked to see mother via voice prefers looking with others 	<p>TC 6-9 GC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows lamp writes to teacher Shows others that he did points to body parts gets distracted asks for more food - 'more' 'bina' - says when hurt has string him - shows teacher shows others that he did pointed to pictures on wall communicates with - by hand to teacher Speaks to Dad others copy him breaks up after aggressive caught teacher to explain or fix plays with others asked to see mother via voice prefers looking with others 	<p>TC 6-9 GC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicates with by hand Shows lamp Writes to teacher Shows others that he did points to body parts gets distracted asks for more food - 'more' 'bina' - says when hurt has string him - shows teacher shows others that he did pointed to pictures on wall communicates with - by hand to teacher Speaks to Dad others copy him breaks up after aggressive caught teacher to explain or fix plays with others asked to see mother via voice prefers looking with others 	<p>TC 6-9 GC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When he gets words he speaks to himself as if talking to himself the words to himself points to pictures and words Writes to teacher Shows others that he did points to body parts gets distracted asks for more food - 'more' 'bina' - says when hurt has string him - shows teacher shows others that he did pointed to pictures on wall communicates with - by hand to teacher Speaks to Dad others copy him breaks up after aggressive caught teacher to explain or fix plays with others asked to see mother via voice prefers looking with others

ADDENDUM 7

Sample of an analysis of the cases – transcribed parent interview

Sched 1 (parent - child)	DATE
→ Routine - habit forming, discipline <i>discipline - with work</i>	
→ Parents → Very responsive - listening all the time → child - attention seeking - mother must listen all the time → child likes being heard - child needs approval/recognition → child manipulates parent	
→ Mum is the first person to talk to - communication here is more with mother than father → Mum realizes importance of communicating - the "next" step is to talk to father → goes a long way with mother - more on subtle and both to share ideas and discuss it - mother idea of sharing is key → by mother's focal point of his communication - mother makes approval	
→ Active openness to books - "read everyday" - routine and habit <i>child's interests concerning - about elaborate language</i>	
→ Progress that English is a universal language → fluency of both languages → bilingual emphasis in that English although it's not home lang → parents recognize you can't escape English being necessary for life	
→ Role model for language is father - Africans <i>long play to imitate habits</i>	
→ Baby talk regarding toilet training → Mother allows child to decide on his own - constant answering back and forth when she asks questions → trying to help to choose his own clothes and shoes → his other request? and date - communicates through play his needs → system of choice	
→ Independence - can communicate which set of clothing he wants, colour and pattern → Autonomy - self-assertion - little Adult → choice → when is when request begins → awareness of this request → link to speaker sharing on playground → equal choice from both - individual → quality time → child knows what he likes - specific - capable of accepting an order / making own choice	
→ Children's rights - resources → High socio-economic status - can afford to buy the for child → has more opportunities to communicate - has exposure to resources	

ADDENDUM 8

Sample of an analysis of the cases – transcribed teacher interview

	<p style="color: red;">A job to do and do it right with the correct kid</p> <p>DATE _____</p>
<p style="color: purple;">School - teacher</p>	
<p>1 → Regular reading - daily Specific spot kept for reading time discipline, routine</p>	<p style="color: green;">teacher has a routine</p>
<p>2 → very responsive - as much as Sharon mother & alternative</p>	<p style="color: green;">only responds if kids want something</p>
<p>3 → still engage with them - make an effort to understand what the child is trying to say negotiate with them</p>	<p style="color: green;">sincerely don't they read something</p>
<p>4 → as standard of her - they see books everyday and are used to reading books seem disinterested</p>	
<p>5 → takes her language of child into consideration stating that they understand more understand more understand more understand more</p>	<p style="color: green;">to make them more comfortable with the language</p>
<p>6 → makes clear that she is long as she can understand that she wants to engage with child understands that she wants to engage with child</p>	<p style="color: red;">child understands she is going to speak in English</p>
<p>7 → notices when a child wants to read and how they communicate to get that child's request</p>	<p style="color: green;">child is long as she can</p>
<p>8 → imagines words that they use to say they did something child's request</p>	<p style="color: green;">child's request</p>
<p>9 → makes an effort to converse by asking questions child's request</p>	<p style="color: green;">child's request</p>
<p>10 → children are comfortable asking questions and expressing their feelings child's request</p>	<p style="color: green;">child's request</p>
<p>11 → enthusiastic - children are involved entirely with singing child's request</p>	<p style="color: green;">child's request</p>
<p>12 → can differentiate emotions child's request</p>	<p style="color: green;">child's request</p>
<p>13 → looks at not only 1 thing but various advantages Success</p>	
<p>Feels like interaction allows them to learn more as opposed to when they on their own - can do more than 1 activity if have someone</p>	
	Type