Grade R teachers' perceived competency and knowledge of oral language development in isiXhosa

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Abstract

Oral language development is a concern to the early childhood development sector due to the fact that Grade R learners generally display lack of readiness development on language skills. With a vast majority of unqualified Grade R teachers in schools and independent sites it becomes a challenge to address the problem. The Minister of Basic Education commented that the quality of the Grade R teachers' knowledge and skills is still a challenge for these practitioners. The theoretical framework for this study is drawn from Chall's (1996a:21) reading stage theory, Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social development and Ehri's (2005) phases of learning to read as they relate to the connection between early oral language development and later reading comprehension in children.

The purpose of this study was to determine:

- Grade R teachers' knowledge of strategies involving dialogic reading, promoting extended discourse and using specific vocabulary.
- Grade R teachers' perceived knowledge of strategies involving engaging in dialogic reading, promoting extended discourse and using specific vocabulary for developing oral language.
- To what extent these above-mentioned practices are practiced in the Grade R classrooms.

The research design used in this study is a multiple site case study. It is applicable to this study because multiple perspectives from the isiXhosa-speaking Grade R teachers was gathered to get a better understanding of their competency and knowledge of oral language development in isiXhosa. The inquiry was done in nine schools in a district in the North West Province where communities speak more than one African language. The nine participants were selected because they taught isiXhosa home language in the Grade R class.

Interviews, observations, questionnaires and document analysis were conducted to determine the participants' perspectives of their competency and knowledge of oral language development. Data were analysed through a qualitative content analysis process, by tracing major emerging themes that were in line with the research questions.

The results indicated that Grade R teachers understood some of the principles of oral language development, however, there is a gap in their pedagogical content knowledge. Their perceptions indicated that participants had challenges with understanding what was required of them with regard to implementing strategies for oral language development. The participants rated their own knowledge as fairly good on dialogic reading, these ratings also revealed that participants had a fair understanding of extended discourse, however with the use of vocabulary and rare words, participants had challenges.

Limitations in this case study included the diversity of languages which limited the scope to only nine schools that offered teaching and learning in isiXhosa throughout the district. This study cannot be generalised to other languages as it was conducted with isiXhosa Home Language Grade R teachers. In spite of its limitations, the study brought to light Grade R teachers' perceived competency and knowledge of oral language development in isiXhosa and the support strategies required to assist these teachers.

Recommendations were made in terms of the employment of isiXhosa home language subject advisors who should be deployed to provide guidance and support to Grade R teachers in the form of quarterly workshops and evaluate the process in collaboration with cluster leaders and Head of Departments in schools.

Key terms:
Oral language, language development, perceived competency, teachers' knowledge, Grade R teachers, Grade R learners, expressive language, receptive language

Terminology

Oral language

In this study oral language development is described according to Lyle, (1993:190) as the system through which young children use spoken words to express knowledge, ideas, and feelings. According to Snow (2013:1), oral language is the spoken characteristics of language that can be heard, interpreted, and understood. It is the building block for establishing success in all areas of literacy.

Language development

The understanding of language development in this study draws on the work of Snow (2013:1) who refers to language development as the process by which humans, young children acquire the capacity to perceive and comprehend language, as well as produce and use words to communicate. Language development is the ability to both express and understand verbal messages (Snow, 2013:1). Language development is the process by which children come to understand and communicate language during early childhood. Language development supports a child's ability to communicate, and express and understand feelings.

Perceived competency

Perceived competency is a self-perception of an individual in his/her capabilities and the ability to control his/her environment and situation. It is how skilled and effective a person perceives himself /herself to be in a particular situation. In the context of this study perceived competency is self-evaluation of teacher's effectiveness and capability on oral language development (specific context). It is defined as one's awareness, beliefs, expectancy, understanding of abilities, skills and capabilities.

Teachers' knowledge

Teachers' knowledge is a body of professional knowledge that encompasses both knowledge of general pedagogical principles and skills, and knowledge of the subject matter to be taught. Ben-Peretz (2011:4) elaborates the concept of teacher knowledge and suggest the distinction between professional and personal knowledge of teachers. He defines "professional knowledge" as the body of knowledge and skills which is needed in order to function successfully in a particular profession. In the case of a teaching profession, this knowledge is both general and personal-experiential. Personal knowledge of teachers is viewed by Ben-Peretz (2011:4) as a term

designed to capture the idea of experience in a way that allows people to talk about teachers as knowledgeable and knowing persons.

Grade R teachers

Grade R teachers are teachers who are involved in practices of the specified grade R class.

Grade R learners

Grade R learners are registered learners for grade R at age four, turning five on 30th June of their grade R year.

Expressive language

Expressive language means being able to put thoughts into words and sentences, in a way that makes sense and is accurate. It is spoken language. According to Otto (cited by Snow, 2013:2) expressive language is a form of communicating with others through written or spoken words as well as through signs and pictures.

Receptive language

Receptive language means the ability to understand or comprehend language heard or read. Otto (cited by Snow, 2013:2) refers to receptive language as the comprehension of language, listening and understanding what is communicated. It is the receiving aspect of language, to be attentive to what is said, ability to comprehend the message.

Isishwankathelo esifutshane sophando

Ukuphuhliswa kolwimi oluthethwayo kuyaxhalabisa kwicandelo lophuhliso lwemfundo esisiSiseko ngenxa yokuba abafundi bebanga labaQalayo (R) babonisa ukungabikho kokulungela ukukhula kwezakhono zolwimi. Uninzi lwabafundisi-ntsapho bebanga labaQalayo ezikolweni nakumaziko azimeleyo abakalufumani uqeqesho olwaneleyo, oko ngumceli mngeni ekusombululeni le ngxaki. UMphathiswa weMfundo esiSiseko uvakalise ukuba umgangatho wolwazi kunye nezakhono zabafundisi-ntsapho bebanga labaQalayo kulwazi lwekharityhulam ngumceli mngeni. Uphando-nzulu olubalulekileyo, olwenziwe eMzantsi Afrika, lubonisa ukuba ulwazi lwabafundisi-ntsapho bebanga labaQalayo kwizicwangciso neendlela zokufundisa kunye noko kulindelweyo kubo kusengumceli mngeni.

Zimbalwa kakhulu izifundo zophando nzulu ngolwazi lwabafundisi-ntsapho bebanga labaQalayo kwindlela abakhulisa ngayo izifundo zomlomo. Eyona mbunguzulu yezifundo zomlomo yindima yazo kwizifundo ezisakhulayo zolwimi nakwimpumelelo yofundo ncwadi olusaqalayo. Izifundo ezigxininisa kwizifundo zomlomo kumabanga aphantsi ingakumbi kwibanga labaQalayo zibonakala zingathathelwa ngqalelo, sisizathu esenze umphandi-nzulu afune ulwazi kwezi zifundo zomlomo zebanga labaQalayo.

Esi sifundo sophando nzulu sakhelwe kwisiseko sokuphononongа izimvo zabafundisi-ntsapho bebanga labaQalayo kwindlela abakhulisa ngayo izifundo zomlomo. Isifundo esi sijonge nokugqamisa siqaqambise ukubaluleka kwezifundo zomlomo kufundo ncwadi olusakhulayo. Abafundisi-ntsapho bebanga labaQalayo kufanele babenolwazi, isakhono, nobungcali kulwimi lwesiXhosa. Isiseko sesi sifundo besiqamele, sacangcatha, sacamngca kulwazi luka Chall (1996a:21) kwizigaba zokufunda nonxibelelewano oluphakathi kwezifundo zomlomo nokufunda. Kwisigaba seqanda uChall uthetha ngokulungiselela ukufunda phambi kokufunda, isigaba apho umntwana esamkela ulwazi lwezifundo zomlomo (ukuthetha nokuphulaphula) okuzizakhono zokuqala phambi kokuphuhla kwesakhono sokufunda.

Injongo zesifundo esi ziphunyezwe ngokuthi kwenziwe uphando nzulu ukuze kufumaneke izimvo zabafundisi-ntsapho bebanga labaQalayo ngendlela abakhulisa ngayo izifundo zomlomo. Imibuzo yophando nzulu yakhelwe kwinjongo zesifundo ezizezi; ulwazi lokubandakanya incoko kufunda, ulwazi lokukhulisa ukuthetha okongezelelweyo / ukuxoxa ngokubanzi kunye nolwazi lokusebenzisa isigama esiqinisekisiweyo nesikumgangatho webanga labaQalayo.

Uphando lwenziwe kubathathi-nxanxeba abalithoba kwizikolo ezahlukeneyo zesithili iDr KK Kaunda kwiphondo loMntla Ntshona, apho abahlali bakhona bethetha iilwimi zasekhaya ezininzi,

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Udliwanondlebe, ukuqwalasela, imibuzo ebhaliweyo, nokuphononongwa kweencwadi zindlela ezisetyenzisiweyo ukufumana izimvo zabathathi nxaxheba kulwazi lwabo, ixabiso nendlela abazisebenzisayo ukufundisa izifundo zomlomo kwibanga labaQalayo. Idatha irekhodiwe, yabhalwa kwaye yahlaziywa ukuze inike iziphumo ezinyanisekileyo. Idatha ihlaziywe ngenkqubo yohlalutyo lomxholo, ngokukhangela imixholo ephambili evelayo engqinelana nophando. Iziphumo zophando zifumanise ukuba abafundisi-ntsapho bebanga labaQalayo bayaziqonda izifundo zomlomo nangona ulwazi lwendlela yokufundisa ezi zifundo zomlomo ingunobangela wokusilela kwazo. Ulwazi noluvo lwabafundisi ntsapho lubonakele lwaqapheleka ukuba lushokoxekile, lunqongophele xa kufikwa kwizifundo zomlomo nezisisiqalo sokufunda.

Isiphelo sesifundo sithathwe kwiziphumo zophando; ulwazi lwezifundo zomlomo kubafundisi-ntsapho bebanga labaQalayo alwenelanga. Iziphumo zophando zibonise ukuba izicwangciso zophuhliso lolwimi oluthethwayo zisengumceli mngeni kubafundisi-ntsapho bebanga labaQalayo.

Izithintelo kolu phando nzulu yiyantlukwano yeelwimi, eyathi yanciphisa umda ngenxa yezikolo ezisithoba (9) kuphela ezifundisa ukufundisa nokufunda ngesiXhosa kwisithili sephondo loMntla Ntshona. Iziphumo zolu phando-nzulu azinakusetyenziswa ngokubanzi kwezinye iilwimi njengoko uphononongo lwaluqhutywa ngolwimi lwasekhaya isiXhosa. Ngaphandle kwezithintelo, iziphumo zophando-nzulu zicacise gca okwekat'emhloph'ehlungwini ubuchule babafundisi-ntsapho bebanga labaQalayo kunye nolwazi lwabo lokuphuhlisa izifundo zomlomo esiXhoseni.

Izicwangciso zenkxaso ukuphumeza iingcebiso zokuhlangabezana neziphumo ngolwazi lwabafundisi-ntsapho bebanga labaQalayo ziquka intsebenziswano neSebe leMfundo esiSiseko ukuxhasa izifundo zolwimi lwasekhaya, ukuze abafundisi-ntsapho bebanga labaQalayo babenako ukukhulisa nokuphuhlisa izifundo zomlomo. Iphondo lomNtla Ntshona linoxanduva lokuthumela abacebisi ngezifundo zesiXhosa ukunika isikhokelo nenkxaso kubafundisi-ntsapho bebanga labaQalayo ngohlobo lweendibano zocweyo zekota nokuvavanya inkqubo ngokusebenzisana neenkokheli zeqela kunye neNtloko yeSebe ezikolweni.

Amagama aphambili:
Ulwimi oluthethwayo, ukukhula kolwimi, ubuchule obucingelwayo, ulwazi lootitshala, ootitshala bebanga labaQalayo, abafundi bebanga labaQalayo, ulwimi olucacisayo, ulwimi olwamkelayo.

Abbreviations and acronyms

CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CUP	Common Underlying Proficiency
CES	Curriculum Education Specialist
DoBE	Department of Basic Education
Dr. KK	Doctor Kenneth Kaunda
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ELP	Emergent literacy programme
FP	Foundation Phase
HL	Home Language
IIAL	Incremental Implementation of African Languages
LiEP	Language in Education Policy
LOLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
LTSM	Learner Teachers Support Material
NAPTOSA	National Professional Teachers Organisation of South Africa
NCFL	National Center for Family Literacy
NDP	National Developmental Plan
NELP	National Early Literacy Panel
NIECD	National Integrated Early Childhood Development
NRP	National Reading Panel
NSNP	National Schools Nutrition Programme
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
OLD	Oral Language Development
PDST	Professional Development Services for Teachers
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SACE	South African Council of Educators
SMT	School Management Team
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to give the necessary background in order to contextualise the research topic, namely Grade R teachers' perceived competency and knowledge of oral language development in isiXhosa. It is of importance to investigate Grade R teachers' knowledge of oral language development for the reason that it is a prerequisite to success for early literacy skills. The research questions and the central theoretical statement is formulated. This is followed by a narrative research methodology. A brief overview of other chapters is provided to conclude the chapter.

1.2 Problem statement

As a previous isiXhosa teacher with many years of teaching experience in the Foundation Phase, I was faced with similar challenges most teachers responsible for teaching isiXhosa are facing now; numerous iterations of national curricula, diverse learners, and a lack of professional development support. As a teacher, I faced similar challenges to the current teachers – trying to teach isiXhosa learners to read, but having received little explicit training relevant for isiXhosa. As a researcher, I consider myself to be an insider with a lived familiarity of the target population. However, by focusing on the explicitly formulated research topic and formulating questions in such a way, that my own biases would not affect the data collection enabled me to present the issue of the Grade R teachers' perceived knowledge regarding strategies that support oral language development in the Grade R classroom; including engaging in dialogic reading, promoting extended discourse, and using specific vocabulary and rare words in a way that highlighted their perceptions only.

Oral language development is a concern to the early childhood development sector due to the fact that Grade R learners generally display lack of readiness and development on language skills. With a vast majority of unqualified Grade R teachers in schools and independent sites it becomes a challenge to address the problem (Moodley, Kritzinger & Vinck 2014:11). The Minister of Basic Education commented on the importance of the Grade R teachers' knowledge and skills on curriculum knowledge and implementation (Motshekga, 2014: 5). Andrich, Hill and Steenkamp (2015:2) and Moodley *et al.* (2014:8) emphasized that Grade R practitioners' knowledge of teaching strategies and methods and what is expected from these practitioners is still a challenge.

Only recently have researchers begun to examine teachers' knowledge (Cunningham, Zibulsky, & Callahan. 2009:489; Moats & Foorman, 2003:390) but there has yet to be an emphasis on early oral language development and whether or not Grade R teachers have the knowledge of the type of instruction that should take place in Grade R classrooms. Cunningham *et al.* (2009:501) state that teachers "may need to recognize their skill deficits before beginning to benefit from professional development." Determining the state of Grade R teachers' perceived competency and knowledge is critical to providing understanding on the instructional decisions that these teachers make. Research by Nicolopoulou, Cortina, Ilgaz, Cates, and de Sá, (2015:145) has demonstrated that poor readers may show a variety of language deficits and children with language difficulties have difficulty reading later in life. Teachers are likely to be faced with the challenge of implementing the needs of children with varying language needs. Therefore, teachers' knowledge of language is essential. McIntyre and Hellsten (2004:140) affirm that young children do not receive explicit instruction on how to use language in different situations and many young children need teachers to assist in the acquisition and development of their use of language. Supporting this notion, this study seeks to investigate Grade R teachers' perceived competency and knowledge of oral development and to provide valuable information to assist teachers in improving language instruction for Grade R learners.

The researcher has therefore identified a need for basic research in order to determine the Grade R teachers' perceived knowledge regarding strategies that support oral language development in the Grade R classroom; including engaging in dialogic reading, promoting extended discourse, and using specific vocabulary and rare words.

1.3 Literature overview

A review of the literature determined that there is an abundance of research on effective practices for teaching children to read, (National Reading Panel, 2000). However, researchers, according to Mushoriwa and Mavuso (2014:2), do not know whether Grade R teachers have the knowledge necessary for helping children develop early oral language skills and for this reason, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) urged all governments to show serious commitment to the development of high quality Early Childhood Education (ECE) by funding researchers to support such a venture.

As a lecturer working with and training Grade R teachers, I experienced first-hand the instructional emphasis that is often placed on phonics instruction in Grade R classrooms.

Though this instruction is necessary for early literacy achievement, Grade R teachers may not fully understand the importance of oral language development in the early years and its relationship to later reading comprehension (Moats & Foorman, 2003:389).

Empirical results of a research study by Roberts, Jergens and Burchinal (2005) indicate that exposure to extended discourse at home and in Grade R classes has been identified as a key predictor of later literacy success. Several studies have shown that the quality of book reading interactions during Grade R instruction predicts vocabulary outcomes (Van Kleeck, 2003:294), and that these, in turn, predict later reading outcomes. Lawrence and Snow (2011:239) noted that the ultimate goal of dialogic reading, learning to retell a story autonomously, constitutes direct instruction in comprehension of written texts, delivered to children at an age before they read those texts.

The growing body of research on literacy instruction has demonstrated that the early years are the most significant years for teaching children to read. According to Wilsenach (2015:4), early literacy depends on a number of interrelated variables including oral language, similarly Jensen, Reese, Hall-Kenyon and Bennett, (2015:936) state that oral language competence includes a complex set of skills that develop over time through rich, ongoing language experiences that take place both within and outside of school. Mather, Bos, and Babur (2001:400) found that children who are behind in reading skills at the end of first grade remain behind at the end of third grade, whereas children exposed to emergent reading (informal reading, a path before conventional reading and writing skills emerge) in their Grade R year become fluent readers.

Work by Lonigan and Shanahan (2009) on the National Early Literacy Panel summarized the research on learning to read in the early years in order to determine which early literacy skills are most predictive of later literacy achievement. Eleven variables were found to be moderately to strongly correlated to reading achievement including alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, rapid automatized naming of letters/digits, rapid automatized naming of objects/colours, writing/writing name, phonological memory, concepts about print, print knowledge, reading readiness, oral language, and visual processing. For all but two of these variables, rapid automatic naming and phonological memory, the correlation was stronger when the outcome was tested at the end of the kindergarten year (which refers to Grade R in the South African context). Oral language and rapid automatized naming of letters/digits were the two exceptions. Oral language was found to be more strongly correlated to literacy achievement at the end of first and second grade (Nevo, Vaknin-Nusbaum, Brande & Gambrell, 2020).

There are, therefore, many reasons why it is important to prioritise oral language in the Foundation Phase, starting with Grade R. According to Cregan, McGough and Archer (2012)

> *Oral language is the child's first, most important, and most frequently used structured medium of communication. It is the primary means through which each individual child will be enabled to structure, to evaluate, to describe and to control their experience. In addition, and most significantly, oral language is the primary mediator of culture, the way in which children locate themselves in the world, and define themselves with it and within it.*

In addition to being important in its own right, oral language is important because of its associations with reading and writing (Moats & Hennessy, 2009). Oral language, reading and writing draw heavily on each other, and on a common set of phonological, meaning and grammatical structures, as well as on common processes or purposes (Snow, 1999). However, oral language may be especially important since it functions as a prerequisite for success in many aspects of reading and writing.

Recent research has documented the importance of knowledgeable teachers and the impact that teachers have on learners' success in school and a child's ability to learn to read (Corrigan, 2011; Cunningham *et al.*, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Mather *et al.*, 2001; McCutchen *et al.*, 2002; Moats & Foorman, 2003; Piasta *et al.*, 2009; Podhajski *et al.*, 2009; Shaw *et al.*, 2007 & Wilkins, 2008). "Teacher expertise, more than any other variable, accounts for increases in student achievement in reading and other academic areas" (Wilkins, 2008:140). Teachers play a tremendous role in whether or not children learn to read.

Darling-Hammond (2000:21) found that learner achievement increases when there is an increase in teachers' knowledge of the content they are teaching and when teachers are more familiar with the learning styles of the students they are teaching. Without proper knowledge of how children learn, teachers may not be fully prepared to teach the varying types of learners in their classrooms (Wilkins, 2008:140). Cunningham *et al.* (2009:511) stress the importance of knowledgeable teachers and suggest that teachers must understand the connection between early oral language experiences and the reading process. The authors specifically identify vocabulary, syntactical awareness, pragmatics, phonological awareness, and phonemic awareness as critical knowledge for teachers. Despite what research suggests as important for teachers to know, studies have demonstrated that teachers may lack this knowledge (Corrigan, 2011; Cunningham *et al.*, 2009; Moats & Foorman, 2003).

The aim of this study is, therefore, to determine the Grade R teachers' perceived competence and knowledge of oral language development. In order to address the aim, the following research questions are addressed:

- What is Grade R teachers' knowledge of strategies involving dialogic reading, promoting extended discourse and using specific vocabulary?
- What is Grade R teachers' perceived knowledge of strategies involving engaging in dialogic reading, promoting extended discourse and using specific vocabulary for developing oral language?
- To what extent are these above-mentioned practices manifested in the Grade R classrooms and documentation?

1.4 Purpose of the study

In accordance with the background information and problem statement, the purpose of this research study is to determine:

- Grade R teachers' knowledge of strategies involving dialogic reading, promoting extended discourse and using specific vocabulary
- Grade R teachers' perceived knowledge of strategies involving engaging in dialogic reading, promoting extended discourse and using specific vocabulary for developing oral language?
- The extent to which the above-mentioned practices are manifested in the Grade R classrooms and documentation.

1.5 Central theoretical statement

Grade R teachers in a district in the North West Province lack understanding in relation to the oral language development necessary for instruction in the Grade R classrooms.

1.6 Research design and methodology

This section serves to explain the research methodology and design used in this study.

1.6.1 Research paradigm

Scientific research is conducted from the specific perspective from which one's research material is viewed. An interpretive research paradigm is adopted in the study as it is concerned with the uniqueness of a particular situation, contributing to the underlying pursuit of contextual depth. The basic interest of interpretivists according to Merriam and Tisdell (2015:24) is how

people interpret their experiences; how they construct their worlds and what meaning they attribute to their lives and experiences. It is applicable to the study because the researcher seeks to determine the Grade R teachers' perceived knowledge of strategies for developing oral language, which is how they understand oral language, and how they interpret it.

1.6.2 Research approach

A qualitative research approach which is exploratory and interpretive in nature is chosen as the most appropriate approach for this study. To conduct the study in a natural way the researcher used an inquiry process of understanding, developing a complex, holistic picture, analyses of words and reports on detailed views of informants. Suter (2011:365) observes a qualitative research approach as the logic that links data to be collected and the conclusions to be drawn to the initial question of the study.

1.6.3 The research design

The research design that was used in this study is a multiple site case study. A multiple site case study enabled the researcher to gain information from various settings. The aim was to determine whether the perceptions of Grade R teachers are similar across the sites. Case studies offer a multiple perspective analysis in which the researcher considers not just the voice and perspective of one or two participants in a situation but also the views of other relevant groups of actors and the interaction between them (Suter, 2011:366). It is applicable to this study because multiple perspectives from the Grade R teachers were gathered to get a better understanding of the real situation.

Creswell (2007:73) indicates that case study research involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system. According to Maree (2007:75), "A key strength of the case study method is the use of multiple sources and techniques in the data gathering process.''

1.6.4 Participants

Participants for this study were selected by means of purposive sampling. The specific purpose in mind was to get Grade R teachers' views on their perceived competency and knowledge of oral language development. Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Purposeful sampling means that the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study

(Creswell, 2007:125). Nine Grade R teachers from nine schools where the language of learning and teaching (LOLT) is isiXhosa, were purposely selected to participate in the study.

1.6.5 Data collection methods

A variety of qualitative research instruments were used for collection of data; it was conducted through questionnaires, individual interviews, observation and examination of documents.

1.6.5.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires are practical, and information can be collected from a large number of people in a short period of time and in a relatively cost-effective way (Suter, 2011:114). The majority of questions in the questionnaire prepared for this study assessed Grade R teachers' perceived knowledge of strategies for developing oral language in the Grade R classroom. The questions were grouped into three main categories: engaging in dialogic reading, promoting extended discourse, and using specific vocabulary and rare words.

1.6.5.2 Individual interviews

According to Seidman (2006), the purpose of interviewing is not to get answers to questions, nor to test hypotheses, and not to evaluate, but at the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people. The meaning they make of their experiences is of vital importance; hence Grade R teachers were given the liberty to express themselves in the language they were comfortable with.

Individual interviews with the researcher offered both the researcher and the Grade R teachers an opportunity to gain insight into the perceived knowledge of strategies involving dialogic reading, promoting extended discourse and using specific vocabulary for developing oral language, with actual knowledge of oral language development.

1.6.5.3 Observation

The observations focused on Grade R teacher's implementation of strategies involving dialogic reading, promoting extended discourse and using specific vocabulary. Observations were conducted to triangulate emerging findings, which is, they are used in conjunction with interviewing and document analysis to substantiate the findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015:139). According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2013:139), an observation gives an understanding

of the context that can come only from personal experience. An observation schedule was administered by the researcher.

1.6.5.4 Examination of documents

Like other analytical methods in qualitative research, document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Bowen, 2009:27). Documents validate researchers' observations and interviews and thus make the findings more trustworthy. Various documents (i.e. CAPS document for isiXhosa Home Language, teacher's guide(s) and any material used by teachers for language purposes) were analysed.

1.7 Data collection process

The description of the research data collection process of *what* is done, *how* it is done and *why* it is done as well as the implementation according to the criteria for qualitative research ensured that the authenticity and trustworthiness of the research was increased.

The stated criteria did not serve as a restrictive checklist for the qualitative research process but was regarded as parameters to generate informational knowledge in accordance to the research aims (Suter, 2012:345). The legitimacy of the interviews was assured by a clear conceptualisation, a purposeful design of an interview schedule, as well as a set plan or protocol to conduct the interviews. The consistency of responses was checked by restating questions in different forms at various stages of the interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015:7).

1.8 Data analysis

The data analysis was according to themes that emerged during the interviews, observation and questionnaires. The research findings were presented according to the themes identified during the data analysis.

1.9 Ethical aspects

The principle of beneficence speaks to the maximising of benefits and minimising of risks in the research process. According to the Belmont Report, researchers are to adhere to two general rules: (a) do no harm, and (b) maximise the possible benefits and minimise possible harms (Cassell, 2000:21). Essentially, "we must actively attempt not only to avoid harms, but to benefit those studied, to augment, not merely respect, their autonomy" (Cassell, 2000: 27). Permission to conduct the research within the district was obtained from the District manager.

Permission to conduct the research at the schools was attained from the School Management Team (SMT) of the respective schools.

The researcher informed the participants of the purpose and extent of the research prior to commencement. Furthermore, the researcher explained the participants' typical roles. In line with this, the researcher obtained Grade R teachers' consent.

The researcher attained ethical clearance from the Ethics Committee of the North-West University, Potchefstroom (cf. Appendix 8).

1.10 Chapter Division

Chapter 1 presents an orientation to the research in which the primary problem statement, research questions and research aims are stated. Background information about the research topic is described and substantiated with a brief literature review on the research topic. The initial chapter also provides a concise explanation of the research approach, design and methodology employed for conducting this research.

Chapter 2 specifies the relevant literature and constitutes the theoretical framework underpinning the research study. Conceptual, theoretical background and literature study has enabled the researcher to gain a deeper understanding and insight into the strategies to promote oral language development and the extent to which these practices are implemented in the Grade R class.

Chapter 3 deals in detail with the research design and methodology. The research was conducted from an interpretative qualitative paradigm and subsequently, the participants were the primary sources of data by means of their insights and experiences related to the research topic. The interpretive nature of the qualitative research has enabled the researcher to gain an understanding into the implementation challenges of oral language in isiXhosa. The data collection methods included questionnaires, interviews, document analysis and observation. The chapter is concluded with a clarification of the ethical precautions taken to ensure that no harm was done to any of the participants. It also lists the appendices applicable to the research methodology.

Chapter 4 reports on the data analysis and commences with a discussion of the biographical information which indicated that the data was provided by the Grade R teachers teaching isiXhosa home language. The data analysis procedure was performed according to a coding

structure consisting of categories, themes and patterns. The research questions served as directives for reporting on and interpreting data.

Chapter 5 gives an overview of the study with concluding remarks and recommendations on teaching and learning of oral language development in isiXhosa as one of the indigenous languages in the CAPS curriculum.

1.11 Conclusion

This chapter introduces and gives an overview of the study at hand. The following chapter focuses on the literature review.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

A growing body of research demonstrates the role of early language development on later reading comprehension ability (Cutting & Scarborough, 2006; Kendeou *et al.*, 2009; Tivnan & Hemphill, 2005; Vellutino *et al.*, 2007) therefore, ensuring that the Grade R curriculum includes adequate orientation to oral language development that will provide learners with more opportunities to acquire literacy before they are required to use reading literacy as a tool for learning. The link between oral language development and reading comprehension in children makes it appealing to understand Grade R teachers' perceived competence and knowledge of oral language development in isiXhosa.

According to Hoadley (2012: 198) in South Africa the quality of early literacy instruction includes aspects such as poorly trained teachers, overcrowded classrooms and inadequate instructional material which constrain children's literacy development. Improving early literacy instruction entails focusing on both the quality and timing of that instruction. ''Timing of exposure to literacy is especially critical to the South African context for several reasons, and that includes the historical legacy of inequality in the education system that has resulted in children's educational experiences'' (Willenberg, 2007: 25).

Most Grade R teachers are untrained and are unfamiliar with what teaching Grade R learners require. Mushoriwa and Mavuso (2014:336) further affirm that Grade R teachers show inadequate knowledge and skills which are necessary to support the growth and development of the Grade R learners. Grade R teachers have difficulty applying culturally relevant pedagogy to accommodate culturally-diverse learners.

The review of the literature is organized in the following manner: (1) a discussion of selected relevant theories, (2) policies and early childhood in South Africa (3) ideas on home language versus language of learning and teaching (4) an overview of research on the development of oral language, (5) teachers perceived knowledge of oral language development, (6) strategies that support oral language development and (7) teaching practices in Early Childhood Development.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that underpins the present study is drawn from various theories, which are intertwined in order to understand better the study at hand. These theories are: Chall's (1996) reading stage theory as it relates to the connection between early oral language

development and later reading comprehension in children. Relating to Grade R teachers' perceived knowledge of oral language development, Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social development and Ehri's (2005) phases of learning to read were important. Below is a discussion of each theory and how it relates to the current study.

2.3 Chall's Reading Stage Theory

The first theory is Chall's model (1996:21) which proposes six stages of reading, with the lowest being 0, the pre-reading stage, and the highest being stage 5, construction and reconstruction. Chall identified stages 1 and 2 as the time of 'learning to read' and stages 3 to 5 as the 'reading to learn' stages. Chall postulated that up to approximately Grade 3, the emphasis is on learning to read and acquiring reading fluency using texts that have familiar content. After Grade 3 Chall asserted that reading becomes a tool for learning and children encounter texts that include mostly unfamiliar content. For children who arrive at school with limited exposure to literacy, the learning to read process is likely to proceed more slowly as reading is used to integrate and create knowledge.

Carnine *et al.* (2004:14), in trying to prevent misunderstanding of Chall's model of reading development elaborate that the ages or grades at which the stages occur are approximate. Whether reading develops as described at any given stage depends to a considerable extent upon the instruction that is provided in the classroom and/or at home. Development at each stage is dependent upon adequate development at the prior stages. For example, Stage 1 reading is dependent upon the development of oral language in Stage 0; rhyming, alliteration, and vocabulary particularly are important prerequisites to beginning reading instruction. Reading development in Stage 4 (i.e., critical reading) is dependent upon the acquisition of a rich base of information and vocabulary in Stage 3. The reading stages are not discrete; they are continuous and overlapping. For example, most spelling-sound correspondences are learned in Stage 1, other more complex correspondences are learned throughout Stages 3 and 4 and perhaps even Stage 5. And, even though fluent passage reading does not become a clear focus of reading development until Stage 2, the basics of fluency are developed in Stage 1. Also, although comprehension is not emphasized in Stages 1 and 2, literal comprehension of simple passages is inherent in the development of word recognition skills (Stage 1) and fluency (Stage 2). Although not discrete, each of the stages is associated with particular aspects of development that are of primary importance including oral language development.

Research literature Bates and Tregenza (2007) on critical thinking and cognitive development specify that the development of language has a close relationship to the development of thinking abilities. Before achieving proficiency in reading and writing and even after proficiency in reading and writing have been achieved, oral language is one of the most important means of learning and of acquiring knowledge. Throughout life, oral language skills remain essential for engagement in intellectual dialogue, reading development and for the communication of ideas (Education Endowment Foundation, 2019).

2.4 Ehri's phases of learning to read

Another theory that supports Chall's initial work is Ehri's (2005) phases of learning to reading. In order to describe the process that children go through when learning to read print, Ehri (2005) theorises four phases: pre-alphabetic, partial alphabetic, full alphabetic, and consolidated alphabetic. The pre-alphabetic phase is most similar to Chall's Stage 0. Children at this phase have no knowledge of letter to sound correspondences; therefore, they rely on visual clues to support their ability to read words. For example, children begin to recognize the word stop because of the shape and colour of a stop sign that is seen often in their environment. At this point in learning to read, children are not using letters, sounds, and blending abilities to read the word. Instead, children at this phase are non-readers and will only pretend to read books that they have heard often and will use pictures throughout books to support their pretend reading. Reading stories aloud to children is important at this point because it expands their vocabulary and background knowledge and helps children become familiar with the syntax of written language (Ehri, 1999). On the contrary, "readers who have impoverished experiences or poor memories for information about the world may lack the vocabulary and background knowledge to interpret some kinds of texts" (Ehri & Williams, 1996: 234). Therefore, Ehri and Williams (1996) stress the importance of building vocabulary and background knowledge as early as possible and throughout the process of learning to read.

Ehri's reading phases are similar to Chall's reading stages; however, Ehri's phases suggest a more fluid process from one component to another in the progression of learning to read. Most pertinent to this study, Ehri's description of Stage 0 supports the research about the importance of early literacy experiences, as described in the literature review. Ehri and Williams (1996) describe Stage 0 as emergent reading which takes place in the preschool years. Children gain early reading skills at this phase in the process by listening to storybooks read by parents, by learning to name alphabet letters, [and] by seeing labels and signs marking objects and places in their environment. Most importantly, children begin to gain an

understanding of how our language works, and background knowledge is gained as early as this phase in the process.

Additionally, as children have more experiences listening to stories read to them, they are introduced to more complicated patterns in our language and differences between spoken and written language (Ehri & Williams, 1996). Understanding spoken and written language, or language comprehension, becomes extremely important as children develop as readers. Even complex ideas can be understood if they are embedded in a familiar situation, whereas simple concepts may be harder to grasp if they are written rather than discussed orally. Therefore, language is an indispensable element of learning, thinking, understanding and communication (Cummins, 2014: 10).

2.5 Lev Vygotsky's Social Development Theory

Vygotsky's (1978) theory strongly supports the use of oral language and the social interaction both from the learner's home and at school, hence its relevancy to the current study. Vygotsky's theory of development is particularly beneficial in describing children's mental, language and social development. Vygotsky believed that children's mental, language, and social development is supported and enhanced by others through social interaction. This view is opposite to that of the Piagetian perspective, in which children are much more solitary developers of their own intelligence and language. For Vygotsky, development is supported by social interaction; learning awakens a variety of developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in the child's environment and in collaboration with the child's peers. Once these processes are internalized, they become part of the child's independent developmental achievement. Bloch (2006:11) has the same perception as Vygotsky that language is "a personal-social invention" and children learn oral and written language in the same way. In fact, Bloch (2006:11) affirms that "the same dynamics that promote oral language development promote reading and writing development, for they are the dynamics that promote learning."

Accordingly, communication or dialogue between teacher and child is very important and literally becomes a means for helping children to develop new concepts and thus think their way to higher level concepts. According to Bloch (2006:11), babies learn oral language (speaking and listening) "naturally" in social situations as Vygotsky has stated because they are exposed to and interact with significant people who role-model the use of the language (or languages, in case of bilingual situations) as they go about their daily activities. Motivation is high because they use language to get things done at the same time as they are learning it and emotional satisfaction is tied intimately into the experience. This active way that babies

learn oral language provides researchers with a model of effective language learning. There is no more successful example of language learning than that provided by mastery of native language during infancy. Regardless of race, class or educational background, families have succeeded in transmitting their native language to their infants, or their infants have succeeded in learning the language within a natural environment of language use (Holdaway, 1982:18).

According to Gxilishe (2009:5), existing theories on language acquisition are focused on Indo-European languages, especially English, little is known about indigenous language theories. In South Africa for instance, the information on early language development relates mainly to Afrikaans and English, there is none on indigenous languages. Maphalala, Pascoe and Smouse (2014:8) however, recommend that amongst isiXhosa speaking children, there is a need to have normative data on language development and no such data exist for isiXhosa language speaking children which is a huge challenge to researchers because there are limited sources for reference on language development in isiXhosa. It is through this inadequacy that this research study attempts to expand the knowledge base of isiXhosa oral language development.

2.6 Policies and Early Childhood in South Africa

There are many definitions of policy, ranging from the very broad to the precise and specific. Policy is a form of decision making that has goals and purposes. It is a value driven activity, based on what people would like a society to look like. Understanding policy means understanding how governments, as legitimate decision-makers in societies, act to achieve goals in their particular political, social and economic contexts (Christie, 2008). According to Roux (2002: 421), “policy is part of politics, as groups and individuals with competing interests strive to decide how society should be organised and what actions should be taken in the best interests of all.’’ Language as the foundation for learning (Motshekga, DBE, 2010), and an integral part of the Foundation Phase curriculum has its policies, ranging from national policies to the level of school policies on language of learning and teaching in the classroom.

The following policies are discussed and the listing is according to their importance and relevance to the study. The Incremental Implementation of African Languages (IAAL: 2013), Language in Education Policy (LiEP: 1997), National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy (NIECD: 2015), National Developmental Plan (NDP: 2012) and Education White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Education (2001).

2.6.1 Incremental Introduction of African Languages

According to Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa (ISASA, 2019:1) the Incremental Introduction of African Languages (IIAL) is a priority programme aimed at facilitating social cohesion. Since linguistic inclusiveness is espoused in the South African Constitution and the National Development Plan, IIAL is intended to promote and develop South Africa's previously marginalised African languages in schools. IIAL is a strategy aimed at introducing previously marginalised official languages in all the schools that are currently not offering any African language, other than Afrikaans. The Department of Basic Education has indicated that the period 2017 to 2019 should be used by schools that currently do not offer an African language, other than Afrikaans, to introduce a previously marginalised African language. During a portfolio committee (2013) on Basic Education the Director General of the Department of Basic Education Mweli affirms that the Incremental Introduction of African Languages Policy (IIAL) promotes proficiency in and the use of African languages at home language level. It increases access to languages by all learners beyond English and Afrikaans. It promotes social cohesion and economic empowerment and expands opportunities for the development of African languages as a significant way of preserving heritage and cultures.

According to Mweli (2013:1) "the policy is long overdue", and there was ample empirical evidence to suggest there is a "desperate need" for it. Explaining the legislative background to the policy, Mweli declares that the IIAL policy flows from the constitutional provisions about languages, namely Section 6 requires that "all official languages must enjoy parity of esteem and must be treated equitably.'' Mweli further indicated that the South African Bill of Rights provides for everyone to receive an education in the official language of their choice (Mweli, 2013:1). Introducing learners to learn an African language "incrementally" from Grade R to Grade 12 and the utility of previously marginalized African languages is important.

The IIAL policy suggests instructional time changes for Grades R, 1, 2 and 3. Languages (as a subject) are allocated ten hours and eleven hours respectively for Grades R-2 and Grade 3. The ten hours in Grade R is allocated to the Home Language only. However, the Incremental Introduction of African Languages will now mean that all learners will offer three languages from Grade R-12. The compulsory learning of three languages in the Foundation Phase means that the instructional time for Grades R, 1 and 2 will need to be extended by two hours per week. The revised time allocation for Languages is as follows; Grade R will offer twelve (12) hours per week, ten (10) hours for the Home Language and one (1) hour for each First Additional Language. The learning of the two First Additional Languages in Grade R will be communicative and informal. Learners will begin to learn them formally from Grade 1 onwards.

By comparing the view of the National Professional Teachers Organisation of South Africa (2013:3) with that of Mweli (2013:1) it is confirmed that the compulsory learning of three languages in the Foundation Phase will extend instructional time because the (IIAL) policy requires all learners to offer three languages to the previously required two (i.e., one at Home Language level and two languages at First Additional Level FAL).

The acknowledgement of the crucial role that can be played by indigenous African languages in the continent's education efforts is highly recommended by the African governments. Most of these governments have made numerous statements and signed several declarations to show their commitment to the promotion of African languages in education (Mtenje, 2008: 24). However, despite such eagerness and enthusiasm, most indigenous African languages in education remain functionally inferior to the former colonial languages due to insufficient or inappropriate language policies and the implementation thereof (Mtenje, 2008:24), this is supported by Wolff (2006: 49) who affirms that even in those countries where African languages are constitutionally recognised as official languages, together with foreign languages, are enjoying tremendous privileges in terms of usage. “More than forty years after the political independence of most African states, African languages are largely reserved for informal domains, while the colonial languages are used in formal and prestigious domains as well as in higher levels of education” (Mtenje, 2008:24). Foreign languages remain the predominant medium of instruction at all levels of education provision (Mtenje, 2008:24).

2.6.2 The Language-in-Education Policy

The Language-in-Education Policy (LiEP) for schools was adopted in 1997 in terms of Section 3(4) of the National Education Policy Act (Act 27 of 1996) which aims to pursue a language policy supportive of conceptual growth amongst learners.

The LiEP (DBE, 1997) has its emphasis on developing multilingualism within a framework of bi/multilingualism. The underlying principle is to maintain home language(s) while providing access to and the effective acquisition of additional language(s). Hence, the Basic Education Department’s position that an additive approach to bilingualism is to be seen as the normal orientation of the language-in-education policy. This approach is in line with the fact that both societal and individual multilingualism are the global norm today, especially on the African continent. As such, it assumes that the learning of more than one language should be the general practice and principle in our society. To be precise, being multilingual should be a defining characteristic of being South African.

The language in education policy is conceived of as an integral and necessary aspect of the government’s strategy of building a non-racial nation in South Africa. It is meant to facilitate

communication across the barriers of colour, language and region, while at the same time creating an environment in which respect for languages other than one's own would be encouraged.

South Africa's language policy is detailed and is supported by Constitutional provisions (South Africa, 1996a). Section 6 of the Constitution recognises eleven official languages: Afrikaans, English, IsiNdebele, isiXhosa, IsiZulu, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda and Xitsonga. According to Mayatula (2006:1), the Department of Education's Language in Education Policy since 1998 is based on the principle of the right of children to be educated in their mother tongue whilst having access to a global language such as English. The policy makes provision for home-language education. It is constructed also to counter any particularistic ethnic prejudice or separatism, through mutual understanding.

2.6.3 National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy

The National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy (NIECD, 2015), is child-centred and emphasises the important role of parents and primary caregivers in providing care, support and upbringing of the children. The policy recognises the combination of a range of services which contribute in ensuring infants and young children succeed. The policy provides government's recognition of the universal right of all children in South Africa to early childhood development services and the fundamental developmental importance of early childhood development. (Department of Social Development data, 2013).

A human rights-based approach is one of the principles underpinning the NIECD policy, which guides the development of all legislation, programmes, funding, monitoring and evaluation frameworks and institutional arrangements relating to its implementation. Play-based learning is another principle and a defining characteristic of childhood as enshrined in Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (2002).

Progressing capabilities is another principle as explained on the national integrated early childhood development system supported by Biersteker, (2012:124) that early childhood development is recognised as the foundation for success in future learning and is founded on the recognition that early childhood development is continuous. Starting at conception and evolving until the child enters school, quality early learning programmes prepare children for adulthood, providing them with the necessary opportunities for social, cognitive, spiritual, physical and emotional development (Biersteker, 2012: 122).

The National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy's (NIECD, 2015) progressive principle also recognises that children's needs differ depending on their age and developmental stage. Additionally, it recognises that protective and risk factors differ, depending on the children's context, including their age, backgrounds, geographic location, health and socioeconomic circumstances. The principle is supported by Morrison (2009) who emphasises the inclusion of diverse learners, additional curriculum and standards to the content that is age-specific, hence, (NIECD) is responsive to the context in which children live as well as their specific age and developmental stage needs.

The NIECD policy appreciates the promotion of existing resources and knowledge. The Policy recognises the good practices that exist and the systems in place which support various aspects of early childhood development. The aim is to build on the foundation provided by existing systems and knowledge, including beneficial indigenous and local early childhood development practices, to develop a stronger and more unified national integrated early childhood development system. Biersteker, (2012: 124) states that the starting point for monitoring early childhood development services is the child, and each child should be able to be uniquely identified to track his or her access of primary health care and participation in early learning programmes.

The purpose of this policy is to provide an all-encompassing multi-sectoral enabling framework of early childhood development services, inclusive of national, provincial and local spheres of government. NIECD policy safeguard that children are healthy through good nutrition and food security, have access to social protection and have opportunities for early learning and development. As specified in the Education White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Education (2001), the long-term goal of the Policy is that by 2030, a fully comprehensive developmentally appropriate, quality early childhood development programme is available and accessible to all infants and young children and their caregivers. This is supported by the medium and short term goals.

According to NIECD (2015), the Department of Basic Education is responsible for the development of early learning curriculum (birth to four years), continuity and collaboration between the early learning and Grade R curricula, and is also responsible for budgeting and procurement of training of early childhood development practitioners. The national Department of Basic Education will further be responsible for the integration of key health messages regarding health, pregnancy and anticipation of parenting into the school curriculum. The provincial departments will be responsible for the training, implementation and monitoring related to curriculum implementation. The NIECD policy, therefore, constitutes an important

step forward towards ensuring that every child, irrespective of their family circumstances, is given a better start through investment in the early years as clearly envisioned in the National Development Plan (NDP).

2.6.4 National Developmental Plan

The National Developmental Plan (NDP, 2012) envisages a South Africa where everyone feels free yet bounded to others; where everyone embraces their full potential, a country where opportunity is determined not by birth, but by ability, education and hard work. The vision for schools is an urgent need of making sure that every young South African receives quality schooling. In South Africa by 2030 schools should be accessible to all children. Learners should understand the importance of doing their schoolwork, in school and at home, and they should know their school will do everything possible to get them to learn what they should. According to Matu (2014: 3), “part of the reason why learners want to come to school is that they get to meet friends in a safe and secure environment where everyone is respected; they will get a good meal and know they can depend on their teachers for advice and guidance.’’ Teachers should receive the training they require, and continuously improve their capabilities and become confident in their profession. Teachers should understand the importance of their profession for the development of the nation and do their utmost to give their learners a good educational start in life.

The NDP policy envisages parents, who are well informed about what happens in the school, are keen to be involved in school affairs and receive regular reports about how well their children perform against clear standards that are shared by all schools. Learning and teaching materials should be in abundance and of a high quality. The NDP policy is supported by the National Policy on School Bag, (2020) which emphasise on the minimum quantity, however good quality of materials that every learner must have access to. The policy advocates that the bag used for children should be made of a light material, with its interior compartmentalised to prevent shifting of the contents from side to side as this creates discomfort to the child.

According to the Policy Framework, Universal Access to Quality Grade R, the Grade R curriculum is part the Foundation Phase curriculum as outlined in the Revised National Curriculum Statement R-9 (2002). This has been strengthened through the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (2011) that was implemented in the Foundation Phase in 2012. Policy options state that a) Retain Grade R within the Foundation Phase curriculum and all related policies, b) Include Grade R in the Foundation Phase catalogue and all related

processes for the resourcing of Foundation Phase classes, c) Include Grade R in all the training of Foundation Phase teachers on the curriculum and related matters.

2.6.5 Education White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Education

According to Education White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Education (2001), the South African government is committed to meeting the challenge of early childhood development, which is to break the cycle of poverty by increasing access to Early Childhood Development (ECD) programmes, particularly for poor children, and to improve the quality of these programmes. Early childhood development refers to a comprehensive approach to policies and programmes for children from birth to nine years of age with the active participation of their parents and caregivers. Its purpose is to protect the child's rights to develop his or her full cognitive, emotional, social and physical potential. Consistent with Education White Paper 1 on Education and Training (1995) and the Policy for Early Childhood Development (1996) both policies define early childhood development as an umbrella term that applies to the processes by which children from birth to at least nine years grow and thrive, physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, morally and socially. The policies additionally state that in order to improve the quality of reception year programmes, all programmes should be registered with provincial Departments of Education, that accredited reception year educators be registered with the South African Council of Educators. ''Grade R teachers who do not have a specialised qualification to teach the Reception class, should undergo approved training programmes'' (Hoadley, 2021: 187). While the policy acknowledges and recognises the vital importance of investment in early childhood development before the age of three years and the continuity of early childhood development until age nine, the policy priority is the implementation of Grade R programmes. In this regard, the medium-term policy goal is progressive in that it realises the constitutional obligation to provide all learners with ten years of compulsory school education (DoBE, 2011:4).

The Department of Basic Education's departure point for all ECD policy development is that the primary responsibility for the care and upbringing of young children belongs to parents and families (DoBE, 2011). However, because of the inequality in income distribution, and because ECD is a public foundation whose benefits spill over from individual parents to society as a whole, the Department understands that it is the state's responsibility to subsidise and assure the quality of ECD services. In order to achieve this, the Department of Basic Education through White Paper 5 strives to ensure that all children aged 5 have access to Reception Year (Grade R) programmes in which they are given adequate opportunities to develop to their fullest potential (DoBE, 2011).

School governing bodies of public primary schools that respond effectively to the ECD challenge outlined in the White Paper will, on a progressive basis be provided with grants-in-aid by provincial departments of education to establish accredited Reception Year programmes. These grants will be fully poverty targeted and the aim is that the children of the poorest 40 per cent of families will receive the highest per capita level of grants-in-aid. Through the hard work of all stakeholders and relevant research studies it will be easier for the government to monitor and evaluate the roll-out plan and evaluation of its progress and impact.

All these policies support Early Childhood Development in Education including Grade R. Andrich, Hill and Steenkamp (2015:6) affirm that South African children younger than five years of age, should be everybody's concern, as should be the seven-year-old children 'entering' the school system. But the children, five and six-years of age, must not be overlooked, nor must the Grade R teachers trained to prepare them to read, write and calculate. The threat remains that the window of opportunity to give learners a firm foundation, may still fall through the cracks of far-reaching developmental programmes, in spite of good intentions of phased national policy roll-out (Andrich *et al*., 2015:6).

2.7 Home language and Language of Learning and Teaching

According to Feza (2016:578), home language is the language that is learnt by members of a certain community and these community members use this particular language as the first medium of vocalised communication.

Instruction in a home language leads to inclusion of more localised content in the curriculum and makes the educational experience more relevant to the life-world of the learner, and this empowers parents to assist in their children's school work (Desai, 2010: 108). "Active learning takes place when instruction takes place in a language that the teacher and learner share and there is evidence that learners who learn in their own language perform better" (Nomlomo, 2006: 119).

Home language facilitates mutual communication between the teacher and learners (Nyangome, 2006: 23). Home language can be seen as the language of a resident community or group of people with a common heritage (Iyamu & Ogiegbaen, 2007: 98). Children are born into and grow up in the native language of their parents. Therefore, each of the various communities has its own language that is naturally learnt by members during socialisation (Keeves & Darmawan, 2007: 18).

The advantages ascribed to home language as LoLT are in relation to improved learning skills, because improved communication helps build on what learners and teachers already know (Djite, 2008: 11; Nyangome, 2006: 23).

There is wide-spread support for an emphasis on the increased use of home language as LoLT to promote, amongst other aspects, cognitive development and improved second language learning (Nomlomo, 2006: 119).

Learners who first learn to read and write in their home language have a better understanding of a second language in its written and oral mode (Ouane & Glanz, 2011: 5). This statement suggests that the learning of the learners should begin with the familiar work and move to the unfamiliar, from the known to the unknown. However, most learners are taught and learn in their home language from Grade 1-3 and instead of continuing this practice in their home language, the medium of instruction is changed from Grade 4 onwards with dire consequences for the cognitive and socio development of the learner (Feza, 2016:577). When learners master their home language, they are able to transfer knowledge from their home language to the second and even other additional languages. This transfer of knowledge from home language to second and other languages within the mind of the learner is known as Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) (Malone, 2003: 333).

“A familiar language of instruction improves the communication between teachers and learners as it facilitates easier negotiating of meaning” (Malekela, 2006: 61). The same argument applies for communication with parents and between teachers and parents. “Fluent and accessible communication encourages parents' participating in their children's school work, which leads to more effective teaching and learning” (Desai, 2010: 107). Parents experience less fear of becoming involved in school matters when they are able to discuss their child's learning with the teachers (Djite, 2008: 10).

Teachers confirmed that when learners' home language is used, it helps with the integration of traditional norms and values into the school curriculum (Muthwii & Kioko, 2004: 21). Teachers who are convinced that learners would perform better if taught and assessed in their home language are in the majority because these teachers are of the opinion that under normal circumstances learners think in their home language and translate into English (Muthwii & Kioko, 2004:21). Teachers' favourable attitude(s) towards the use of home language as LoLT include amongst other aspects the idea that Home Languages support the integration of traditional values and norms into the curriculum (Iyamu & Ogiegbaen, 2007: 101).

The use of home language allows teachers to create an atmosphere of trust between the learners and themselves thereby securing learners who are not intimidated by their teachers,

are more alert, take responsibility, participate more actively in classes and contribute to helping their peers (Alidou, Boly, Brock-Utne, Diallo, Heugh, & Wolff, 2006: 17).

The knowledge that children gain through interacting in their home language promotes the cognitive abilities and development of these children. As children interact with parents, immediate family members and friends they obtain a proper understanding and grasping of their home language. Children also learn through the naming of various objects around them and the immediate environment because they have acquired a certain level of proficiency in their home language. Furthermore, children develop vocabulary covering a lot of the objects, expressions and sense experiences of daily activities (Hamel, 2003: 9).

Keeves and Darmawan (2007: 19) is of the opinion that when home language is not used as a LoLT, a gap between the education system and the society results. This gap is the result of using any language other than the language of the society as the medium of school instruction. The curriculum, syllabus, teaching methodology and content of the lessons are not matched to norms of society and thus contribute to this gap and can lead to learning difficulty and poor performance (Senkoro, 2004: 47).

Gxilishe (2009:15) asserts that the current widespread mistrust of mother-tongue tuition originates from apartheid's attempt to foster and impose ethnicity as a divide and rule strategy. Other legacies from the apartheid era such as the Bantu Education Act of 1953 also perpetuated a stigma against mother-tongue education as disempowering which attributes to the current steady development of indigenous languages including isiXhosa. Despite isiXhosa being a 'majority' language in terms of number of speakers, it is a 'minority' language in terms of available resources and what is known about its development, specifically oral language development (Pascoe & Smouse, 2012). Suggestions are made for advancing knowledge and practice which is needed to provide a relevant and quality service to isiXhosa speakers (Gxilishe, 2009).

It is recognised that children learn best when their home language is used as a medium of instruction (Malekela, 2006: 65); yet for most African countries, formal education is offered in a language that is not familiar to the child. This is unlike the practice in most other leading countries of the world such as England, France, Italy, Germany, India, China, and Japan, to mention a few, where learners go through their primary, secondary and university education in their home language (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2009: 5).

In South Africa the custom in the majority of schools is to continue to use a second language, namely English, as the major medium of instruction in schools. It is the informed view of scholars such as Djite (2008: 7) that warns against the use of a second language as medium of instruction because it constitutes a barrier to effective teaching and learning. The current situation in South Africa is that the majority of teachers are not trained for the education profession in their home languages. “The lack of in-service training of educators in indigenous languages constitutes one of the major challenges to implement a home language as LoLT in schools” (Hamel, 2003: 10). With an untrained background to teach in a home language, teachers are sceptical and even unwilling to support home languages as LoLT (Malekela, 2006: 65).

“When children come to school they at least know one or two languages that are used in their community” (Brock-Utne, Desai & Qorro 2006). Children have learnt to use these languages for effective communication in mainly informal contexts. Teachers are certain that learners exposed to education in their home language have a wider scope of experience. What is expected in the school is that the home language skills of learners be further developed for academic use. Learners' thinking skills will be improved through overcoming the range of challenges across the curriculum, including the development of high levels of literacy for comprehension of and engagement with academic texts (Hamel, 2003). As the curriculum becomes progressively more challenging in the school system, so are the literacy and linguistic requirements. Learners should continue developing their literacy and language expertise in order to meet the ever increasing challenges and complexity of the formal curriculum (Mletshe, 2017:31).

2.7.1 Home language and Psycho-social Development

Home language plays a significant role in the psycho-social development of learners (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2009: 5). Teaching primary literacy in the learner's home language makes the most cognitive sense in the learning of a child (Iyamu & Ogiegbaen, 2007:9). Cognitive stability can be assured to some extent when home language is used as a medium of instruction because its usage provides a more rewarding learning environment. School learning and experience become a continuation of home experience. Nicolopoulou *et al*. (2015) assert that teachers have a way of ensuring a sound foundation for learners' psycho-social development in order to make school life less traumatic for the learner which lessens the experience of anxiety in situations of communication. “Through oral language development, teachers enhance interactivity in classroom situations” (Matu, 2014:18).

2.7.2 Home Language, Culture and Parental Involvement

"Language, culture and literacy are elements that define individuals and their sense of belonging to a group or a nation" (Alidou *et al.,* 2006: 30). According to Alexander (2003: 10), anthropologists as well as linguistics have long recognised that there is a relationship between language and culture. Feza, (2016:578) states that using the learner's home language quantifies the possibility to integrate, for example, African culture into the school curriculum and thereby creating a culturally sensitive curriculum and developing a positive perception of the culture. According to Excell (2011:98) integrating the learners' culture and language into curriculum activities ensures amongst other things parent involvement into school activities. Additionally the integration of cultural activities and parental involvement are important factors for making schools part of the community, because schools do not function in isolation but are societal institutions affirms (Alidou *et al.,* 2006: 17).

One of the important reasons for education in home language is to pass on the universally recognised moral values to the individual and to combine these with common values, cultural norms and the worldview of the learners' community. According to Makaluza (2018: 17), home language fosters cultural stories which may have both pastoral and academic value. The teacher can easily integrate these stories into existing classroom work. Ward, Bochner and Furnham 2011 (cited by Makaluza 2018: 18) state that folktales told in home language are embedded with indigenous knowledge systems such as values, customs, beliefs and practices of indigenous communities and are vital sources in promoting oral language development.

“It is necessary for parents and teachers to consider the role of oral competences as well as reading and writing skills in literacy development” (Gardener, 2016:65). Through interaction with parents, Robinson 2003 (cited by Makaluza, 2018: 19) mentions that efforts to empower young children include developing their oral expression skills, which is confidence in speaking, by building upon the oral knowledge they already possess. Maintaining and developing oral skills can be a means of language preservation (Makaluza, 2018:19) and that can be done through storytelling and traditional folktales to strengthen orality in the mother tongue. Listening to stories helps children build their oral communication skills by developing listening comprehension skills, attention span and auditory memory.

According to Prince (2006:120) Bennett-Armistead *et al.* (2005:120), children who have strong oral language skills often have strong reading and writing skills. Whereas, children with oral language problems are at high risk of reading and writing difficulties. Educators and parents

should encourage and engage in oral language practices at the earliest stages of children's development.

2.8 Oral Language Development

The National Center for Family Literacy (2008:93) defined oral language as the "ability to produce and/or comprehend aspects of spoken language, including vocabulary and grammar (semantics and syntax)." Dahlgren (2008:21) states that oral language is information sharing, telling others how you feel, giving advice, persuading others, entertaining, sharing ideas, and remembering. Zhang and Alex (1995) state that at the most basic level, oral language means communicating with other people. Zhang and Alex (1995:45) further emphasise that "when we talk about oral language development across the curriculum, we do not mean teaching children to speak as much as we mean improving their ability to talk or communicate more effectively." Similarly, Snow (2013:1) states that oral language is the ability to both express and understand verbal messages.

Oral language is often associated with vocabulary as the main component. However, in the broadest definition, oral language consists of phonology, grammar, morphology, vocabulary, discourse, and pragmatics. "Oral language consists of vocabulary knowledge and discourse knowledge" (Wilsenach, 2015:4). A child's vocabulary consists of words that the child can use (expressive) and/or understand (receptive), or all known words (Hart & Risley, 1995).

The development of language precedes learning to read print; therefore, language development contributes to a child's ability to learn to read in the early years, and its importance increases as a child grows older. According to Collier and Thomas 2012 (cited by Kotze 2017: 3), language is the core aspect of many independent cognitive, affective and social factors that shape learning and thinking. It is recognised as the means by which an individual learns to organise their experiences and thoughts. Dahlgren (2008:7) defines language as "a code made up of rules that include what words mean, how to make words, how to put them together, and what word combinations are best in what situations." Dahlgren further simplifies speech as the oral form of language, whereas Kortner (2000:1) states that speech is not simply basic communication as it involves thinking, knowledge, and skills. It also requires practice and training.

Kortner (2000:3) affirms that oral language acquisition is a natural process for children. It occurs almost without effort. The ability to speak grows with age, but it does not mean that such growth will automatically lead to perfection. To speak in more effective ways requires particular attention and constant practice. Kortner (2000:5) sets out three criteria for oral language competence: fluency of expression, clarity of expression, and sensitivity to

interaction, and to help children achieve these levels of development is the responsibility of teachers.

According to Shriver of the National Early Literacy Panel (2010: 74), “young children’s ability to use language and to listen to and understand the meaning of spoken and written words is related to their later literacy achievement in reading, writing, and spelling.” Furthermore, oral language development includes critical skills that begin to develop as early as infancy and continue to develop when formal schooling begins in preschool (Storch & Whitehurst, 2001). Oral language includes semantic, syntactic, and conceptual knowledge (Storch and Whitehurst, 2001). According to Paulson and Moats (2010:18), oral language includes five structural components: phonology, semantics, morphology, syntax, and prosody. By comparing the view of Storch and Whitehurst (2001) with that of Paulson and Moats (2010:18), it is clear that the semantic structure of oral language includes vocabulary development which consists of both expressive and receptive vocabulary. Hart and Risley (1995) assert that a vocabulary is the stock of words available to a person or a language community.

With reference to research studies, Holbrook (1983) and Kortner (2000) have indicated that oral language development has largely been neglected in the classroom. Most of the time oral language in the classroom is used more by teachers than by learners. However, oral language, even as used by the teachers, seldom functions as a means for learners to gain knowledge and to explore ideas. Similarly, Zhang and Alex (1995); Kainz and Vernon-Feagans (2007) affirm that underlying the fact of neglecting oral language are two assumptions; one of these assumptions is that the teacher's role to teach is usually interpreted that it means to talk. Consequently, teachers spend most of the time teaching by talking while the children sit listening passively. Such conventional teaching learning is one of the obstacles preventing the actual development of oral language. Children leaving these classrooms tend to carry the passivity over to their attitude toward learning, and tend to be incapacitated in their learning abilities as well.

The second assumption is based on the fact that children start learning and using oral language long before they attend school. Therefore, it is assumed that the primary learning tasks for children in school are reading and writing, which are usually seen as the two major aspects of literacy, with less focus being placed on oral language development (Lyle, 1993).

From the preceding, it is observed that oral language is indeed an important link in the process of children's learning and thinking development. It is not merely a language issue; it is also an

intellectual matter which deserves serious attention from both teachers and researchers. From the perspective of language development, oral language provides a foundation for the development of other language skills. For most children, the literacy learning process actually begins with speaking, talking about their experiences and talking about themselves. It is through speech that children learn to organize their thinking and focus their ideas (Lyle, 1993). The neglect of oral language in the classroom negatively affects the language foundation and severely hinders the development of other language skills.

Moats (2009) asserts that not all children are fortunate to be born into homes where parents or caregivers provide rich language experiences. These disadvantaged children enter Grade R classes lacking oral language skills. “Children arrive in Grade R classes with huge discrepancies in oral language development and the gap between language-advanced and language-delayed children grows throughout the primary school years.” (Moats, 2009). Oral language enrichment activities such as role playing, storytelling, and group discussions of direct experiences, deserve strong emphasis, particularly with children from culturally disadvantaged backgrounds (Prince, 2006). Establishment of a language base for the development of oral language, reading and writing skills is a need in any Grade R class. Ebbers (2004:3) states that “if we are to increase children’s ability to profit from education, we will have to enrich their oral language development during the early years of schooling.”

Developing oral language in isiXhosa, especially in the early grades including Grade R requires native isiXhosa teachers who will give detail to aspects of semantics, pragmatics, and vocabulary. Knowing and understanding how young children learn language, Loubser and Matu (2014:3) state that children learn language by listening to other people using language, imitating other people’s use of language. It then means that native isiXhosa teachers are crucial to Grade R learners’ oral language development.

Kese (2012:9) states that isiXhosa is an agglutinative tonal language, in which sentences are noun-governed. Nel (2015:39) asserts that in isiXhosa, the placement of sentence structures is dependent on the specific context in which the sentence is used, for example: (Nibona ntoni? *What do you see?* Sibona iimoto / *We see cars*). IsiXhosa is a highly modified language, with agreement indicators occurring as prefixed subject and object agreement markers to verbs. Nel (2015:40) further states that the appropriate prefix to be used is determined by the class of the relevant noun (there being 15 noun classes in isiXhosa), an example is *Class no.1 prefix is um-, and an example of a noun (umntu)*. *Class no.2 aba-, abantu*. Due to the agglutinative nature of isiXhosa, it is clear from nominal and verbal articulation what the subject and the object of a sentence are; Abafundi bahamba ngololiwe / *Learners are travelling*

by train. The lexical subject and object can occur in different surface positions within a sentence because comprehension of the isiXhosa sentence is not dependent on word order; word order does not determine which noun is the subject and which is the object. An example, Bayafunda abantwana */ direct translation, They learn the children.* Correct English translation*, The children are learning.*

2.9 Importance and role of oral language development in Grade R

There are many reasons why it is important to prioritise oral language in the Foundation Phase. According to Shiel, Cregan, McGough and Archer (2012:7) oral language is the child's first, most important, and most frequently used structured medium of communication. It is the primary means through which each individual child will be enabled to structure, to evaluate, to describe and to control their experience. Furthermore, and most significantly, "oral language is the primary mediator of culture, the way in which children locate themselves in the world, and define themselves with it and within it. Additionally to its importance, oral language is substantial because of its associations with reading and writing" (Shiel *et al.*, 2012:7).

Snow (2013:1) emphasizes that oral language has obvious importance for the development of everyday interpersonal skills. Moreover it has an additional but sometimes overlooked developmental significance as the basis of the transition to literacy in the first three years of school.

Despite the disagreement over which instructional philosophy is best, research continues to point to the importance of oral language development at an early age and its impact on a child's ability to comprehend text in later years (Cutting & Scarborough, 2006; Kendeou *et al.*, 2009; Tivnan & Hemphill, 2005; Vellutino *et al.*, 2007).

"Oral language, reading and writing draw heavily on each other, and on a common set of phonological, meaning and grammatical structures, as well as on common processes or purposes" (Zhang & Alex, 1995). However, oral language may be particularly important since it functions as a prerequisite for success in many aspects of reading and writing (Kortner, 2000:1).

According to Mol, Bus, and de Jong (2017:13), the functions of oral language development appear in a developmental progression as children grow. Oral language acquisition builds a desire to use language for a variety of purposes. The oral language functions emerge as the individual child sees the need for making meaning through a different avenue. Thus, as oral language is developing, children are adding to their concepts of functions of language. Functions of oral language represent a variety of ways that children and adults use for communication. Interactional function serves to create interactions while imaginative function

serves to create imaginary worlds. Informative function serves to communicate information while on the other hand personal function is used to express personal thoughts and opinions.

Punkoney (2015) asserts that there are many ways oral language development can prepare children for reading and writing. Oral language develops vocabulary concepts. Children gain information about word meanings and pronunciation and these concepts are first introduced in speaking and understanding each other's speech. According to Hargrave and Sénéchal, (2000) children learn through oral language the structure of language and realize that through oral language meaning is communicated. Children who can articulate their words and thoughts clearly have an advantage in learning to read over those children who have poor oral language skills. Oral language teaches children cultural nuances, giving them specific background knowledge that aids in reading comprehension (Simsek & Erdogan, 2015:2).

Research studies of the following authors (Cutting & Scarborough, 2006; Tivnan & Hemphill, 2005; Kendeou *et al*., 2009; Vellutino *et al*., 2007) have indicated that children who enter formal schooling with strong oral language skills learn to read and write with greater ease and tend to excel more in school than their peers with less knowledge of vocabulary and language structure.

Punkoney (2015:3) contends that students vary in their ability to use their existing language in order to learn, however, studies of young children's emergent literacy development by Christie (2008) and Bloch (2006: 10) maintain the view that when children are given tools, opportunities and space to play with language in literate ways, they explore and practise their meaning making; communication and self-expression; gaining control; knowledge and the ability to use their language in order to learn. According to Professional Development Services for Teachers (2014:1), oral language is the foundation for student learning, and successful use of language is critical for students' wellbeing. Almost all classroom-based learning relies on oral language.

2.10 Factors affecting language development in isiXhosa

The colonial history of South Africa is seen in all spheres of everyday life; this is the case with the 11 official languages that South Africa has, and isiXhosa being one of them. According to Pascoe and Smouse (2012:13), isiXhosa is spoken by an estimated 17.6% of the population, is one of the 11 official languages spoken in South Africa (SA). It is indigenous to the Cape regions and is the second most widely spoken language in the country after isiZulu. It is a South-Eastern Bantu language and part of the Nguni language family that includes isiZulu, isiNdebele and SiSwati. Within the Nguni group, the languages are, to some extent, mutually

intelligible, although they differ in phonology, morphology, vocabulary and sentence structure, and are considered separate languages with their unique identities and own dictionaries and grammars. Nel (2015:51) states that the Nguni Xhosa territory was the first of the territories to be incorporated into the Cape Colony at the start of the 19th century.

The *isiXhosa people* / amaXhosa were thus the first among the Nguni people to receive education in line with the European education system through the missions (although it is not specified whether this education was received in English or isiXhosa). As such, the isiXhosa people were able to start integrating into the economic and political spheres of the Cape Colony. According to Nel (2015:51), isiXhosa is used as LOLT in Grades R to 3 mainly in the Eastern Cape and Western Cape and in certain schools across the country. There are various factors which affect oral language development, three aspects that are major contributors to oral language development are discussed.

2.10.1 People's Language Attitudes

Attitudes can be described as strong positive or negative emotions or feelings that are experienced by people when they are faced with a particular matter or issue that requires from them to take a stance or viewpoint (Wolff, 2006:32; Pan & Snow, 1999:470). Attitudes are abstract phenomena and not something tangible. It can be that there is a difference between what people feel and think and what they actually say and do (Senkoro, 2004:48). What people think, say and do is determined to a great extent by their attitude(s) about the issue at hand (Dalvit & De Klerk, 2005:27). There are factors that influence one's actions, causing a relationship between attitudes and behaviour.

According to Aziakpono and Bekker (2010:51), language-attitude research highlights the significance of language in society. The importance of a language as LOLT or its role as a group marker can easily be determined by assessing or measuring the attitudes toward that language. Language attitudes play an important role in the educational context, attitude is one of the factors that influence the outcomes of language learning, (Aziakpono & Bekker, 2010:55).

Gxilishe (2009:15) states that people's language, attitudes and acceptability play an important role, as they protect people's self-esteem and allow people to express their fundamental values. Attitudes or perceptions play a crucial part when it comes to language policy implementation. Hence, in spite of the government and language planners, the implementation of a language policy depends to a large extent on the people's perception of or attitude towards

a language. What appears crucial in policy formulation is the language's acceptability. People can develop the necessary material, but without the people's will and right attitude nothing can be achieved. Mayaba (2016:9) supports the notion and further affirms the fact that the Bill of Rights guarantees the right of the individual to choose the language of learning but the low status and low economic value of African languages prevent a concerted effort being made to promote the use of these languages. Any policy for language, especially in the system of education, has to take into account the attitudes of those likely to be affected in the long run. According to Aziakpono and Bekker (2010:55), there is no policy that will succeed which does not comply with one of three things: conform to the expressed attitudes of those involved; persuade those who express negative attitudes about the rightness of the policy; or seek to remove the causes of the disagreement.

Attitudes may well determine the outcomes of education. This implies that if someone has a positive attitude towards a certain language, such a person is more likely to learn it well. It can also be a result of education (influence), meaning that a good and dedicated teacher can improve learners' attitudes in relation to a particular language. In the scope of oral language development, attitudes can either contribute or work against the role of home language as LoLT.

2.10.2 Environmental factors

Researchers (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001; Kainz & Vernon-Feagans, 2007; Merlo *et al.*, 2007) have examined the environmental factors of language development, in both home and childcare environments, in order to better understand why children struggle with acquiring literacy skills. The characteristics associated with growing up in a home of poverty have been found to negatively impact a child's oral language development. Moreover, research studies (Kennen, 2017:151; Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997) have demonstrated a correlation between a child's vocabulary size, parental education, and the quality of the child's environment.

Research by Pascoe and Smouse (2012:470) further affirms that in addition to social class differences, children experiencing difficulties with communication are prone to the psychosocial effects of low self-esteem and vulnerability. Similarly, in a well-known study by Hart and Risley (1995) social class differences were found to be significant indicators of the differences between the quantity and type of speech that took place between parents and children. Parents from higher social classes engage children in conversations whereas parents from lower social classes are less likely to engage in conversations and more likely to

spend time giving directions and orders (Evans, 2004:13). Children from low socioeconomic status families are also more likely to live in homes where there was tension and stress due to the lack of money and resources. Consequently, these children are less likely to experience the necessary positive parent-child interactions that contribute to a child's development of language (Biersteker, 2012).

Research conducted by Dickinson and Tabors (2001) investigated the home environment of children living in poverty for evidence of specific contributors to language development when children were 3, 4, and 5 years old. This longitudinal study used both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection, and descriptive, correlational, and regression analyses were used on the data. During the home visits, the investigators observed parents and children during book reading, playtime, and mealtime. It became evident that children living in poverty-stricken areas have more challenges in their language development, for example: increased prevalence of conduct problems, aggressive behaviours and concentration problems (Harwood & Stuart, 2002). Research conducted by Matu (2014:15) discovered that children affected by environmental factors are more likely to have slowed growth, delayed development, difficulty in school, and high rates of illness which ultimately affects their oral language development.

2.10.3 Economic factors

Another major factor that marginalises African languages, as stated by Bikitsha and Katz (2013:10) is the economic circumstances of the speakers of the languages. The speakers of African languages are not empowered economically and technologically enough to determine their own destiny. Nations that use their own languages practically in all aspects of the public domain are countries that are economically and technologically advanced. Examples of such nations are Japan, China and Malaysia. Another instructive example is Afrikaans, which was bestowed gratuities and status after the Afrikaners had made inroads into the economy. In a study of high-poverty schools, Hemphill and Tivnan (2008:423) found that children who began first grade with lower vocabulary skills continued to show deficits in reading comprehension through the duration of the study which ended when children were in third grade. If a group owns nothing, in terms of big companies that produce market products that sell, their language is not bestowed power. According to Gxilishe (2009:2) "African languages have not been used for economic value nor, at most times, in higher functions, for example in economic and practical situations, additionally nothing much exists in African languages because the speakers of those languages do not own big companies."

Chikutuma (2013:34) has established that children from economically advantaged homes have more advanced language skills than their counterparts from economically disadvantaged homes. Kainz and Vernon-Feagans (2007:418) also investigated data from 1,913 children involved in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Cohort and have revealed that children from families that have experienced persistent low income across the early years of elementary school have lower reading scores at kindergarten entry.

In a study of 325 families, Foster, Newburn and Souhami (2005) investigated three family level constructs; socioeconomic status, social risk, and home learning, in order to determine the relationship between these variables, children's emergent literacy and social functioning. Social risk factors included exposure to violence, depression on the part of a caregiver, social support provided to the parent, and primary caregivers' level of mastery. Home learning variables observed included reading to children, promoting enrichment experiences, providing learning activities, and having books in the home. Findings confirmed that all three family level constructs; socioeconomic status, social risk, and home learning, were significantly and directly related to both emergent literacy and social functioning.

During book reading, parents were observed using two types of talk: immediate and non-immediate. Immediate talk focused on basic recall of events happening in the story. On the contrary, non-immediate talk required children to use information from the story for higher level thinking such as inferring, generalizing, predicting, and connecting story events to personal experience. Forty-three to sixty percent of the observed talk during book reading was immediate talk whereas only eleven percent to eighteen percent of the talk involved non-immediate talk. Most notably, results of the study showed that it was the non-immediate talk that was associated with later literacy achievement (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001). Excell (2011:9) is of the opinion that learners who struggle with a language deficit will need many language-rich experiences, as well as systematic and explicit instruction to help them. Grade R teachers can be instrumental in closing the language experience gap.

2.11 Teachers' perceived knowledge of oral language development

Teachers' knowledge of oral language is essential. According to Hoadley (2016:6), learning oral language is a primary developmental process for children, therefore it is necessary for teachers to develop learners' receptive and expressive language skills for them to become effective communicators. Excell (2011:92) remarks that competence, as Gordon and Browne (2008) acknowledge, is underpinned by core values which include how teachers view and understand themselves, their practice and their perceived challenges as well as identifying

what helps them cope in the classroom environment. These aspects are largely informed by teachers' beliefs and understandings of what and how children learn. Excell's remarks on competency validate the importance of Grade R teacher's pedagogical knowledge.

Paulson and Moats (2010:50) point out that Grade R teachers/practitioners may not fully understand the importance of oral language development in the early years and its relationship to later reading comprehension; the notion is supported by Corrigan (2011) as well as Cunningham, Zibulsky and Callahan (2009) who state that despite what research suggests as important for teachers to know, studies have demonstrated that teachers may lack knowledge of oral language development. Teachers who do not fully understand the connection between oral language and reading comprehension perceive their role in a different way than those teachers who do understand the connection, and these two groups will make different instructional decisions (Moats, 2009:389). Research has documented the importance of knowledgeable teachers and the impact that teachers have on learners' success in school and a child's ability to learn to read (Corrigan, 2011; Cunningham *et al*., 2009; McCutchen *et al*., 2002; Piasta *et al*., 2009; Podhajski *et al*., 2009; Shaw *et al*., 2007; Wilkins, 2008). Teachers play a tremendous role in facilitating children's learning to read. "Teacher expertise, more than any other variable, accounts for increases in student achievement in reading and other academic areas" (Wilkins, 2008:140).

Studies by Darling-Hammond (2000:21) indicated that learner achievement increased when there was an increase in teachers' knowledge of the content they were teaching and when teachers were more familiar with the learning styles of the students they were teaching. Without proper knowledge of how children learn, teachers may not be fully prepared to teach the varying types of learners in their classrooms (Wilkins, 2008:140). Cunningham *et al*. (2009:511) presented the arguments to emphasize the importance of knowledgeable teachers and suggested that teachers must understand the connection between early oral language experiences and the reading process. The authors specifically identified vocabulary, syntactical awareness, pragmatics, phonological awareness, and phonemic awareness as critical knowledge for teachers. Teachers are models of the language for children, adults can use oral language as a tool to help children use more complex tasks (PDST, 2014).

According to Nomlomo (2006:114), promoting language development as part of an emergent literacy programme is important and language is a basic cornerstone of all learning. Well-developed language skills are important when one starts to learn, read, spell and write. Three basic skills that the teacher should give attention to are, listening, speaking and communication skills. Oral language is linked to literacy (Mpiti, 2012:19) as it mediates early

literacy learning, in fact the ability of children to reflect on language and to communicate new information has been linked to their future literacy abilities. When teachers engage children in cognitively challenging conversations, the children also benefit in terms of close relationships like friendship, support synchronous and cognitively complex interactions.

It is believed that throughout children's interactions with peers in play, both oral language and the mental processes for literacy are supported. When children use metalanguage (language in which the talk is about the actions and dialogue which are going to take place), they develop more emergent literacy concepts than those who use less metalanguage (Gardener, 2016:19). According to Swart, de Graaff, Onstenk and Knezic, (2017: 179) the interactions that take place in Grade R classrooms have an impact on children's oral language development. Therefore, it is important that every Grade R classroom is staffed with a teacher that is knowledgeable of the role of oral language development on literacy achievement.

McCutchen *et al.* (2002:144) examined teacher knowledge, practice, and student learning in a mixed methods study. Teachers were given the Informal Survey of Linguistic Knowledge developed by Louisa Moats in order to measure teachers' knowledge of phonological awareness and phonics skills. General knowledge of teachers was measured with a cultural literacy test, including questions from Social Studies and Science.
Classroom practice was observed and coded according to the skills being taught, the literacy activity being conducted, the textual context, and the group context. Students were assessed multiple times during the year in order to measure phonological awareness, listening comprehension, orthographic fluency, and word reading. Although teachers in both the control group and experimental group had very low levels of knowledge of phonological awareness at pre-test, the experimental group did increase their phonological knowledge after professional development. Teachers who received professional development in specific aspects of linguistics spent more instructional time on those aspects of language development than teachers in the control group not receiving professional development. Similarly, when teachers were trained on elements of orthography and comprehension activities, they began to spend more time instructing in those areas.

In a study similar to McCutchen's research, Shaw, Dvorak, and Bates (2007) conducted a mixed methods study in which teachers' knowledge was measured using an instructor made open-ended short-answer questionnaire that required teachers to document their knowledge about reading and to describe their personal reading practices (Shaw *et al.*, 2007:231). Average scores favoured the phonics and skills-based approaches at both pre and post-test

rather than the whole language philosophy. However, teachers' knowledge of effective practices was limited, and their own personal reading practices were not in agreement with a phonics or skills-based approach at pre-test.

Saunders, Foorman and Carlson (2006: 97) confirmed that young children tend to imitate a teachers' speech mannerism. However, it remains to be seen regarding the extent to which children can learn basic oral language patterns merely from listening to the teacher's normal speech. This must be particularly true if the teacher does most of the talking and the children have little practice in oral communication. Although teachers' speaking habits may only be mildly influential, their classroom management patterns may have a much greater impact on oral language growth. Saunders *et al.* (2006: 97) is supported by Snow (2013: 81) whose research studies demonstrate the positive effects of supportive teachers on the self-confidence of students and their willingness to participate. It is apparent, then, that certain types of classroom management on the part of teachers encourage more practice in oral communication.

According to Ben- Peretz (2011:23), the teacher of basic language skills ought to be aware of the wide range in language development which can be anticipated in the classroom. The teacher's understanding of individual children should be more complete, enabling the planning of a more adequate language programme. Children's language is greatly influenced by the models presented in their environmental settings. A major purpose of the language arts programme in the kindergarten and elementary class is the development of each child's ability to utilize his skill in oral expression for effective communication. Devices such as the tape recorder should be considered for individual or group listening activities in presenting appropriate and contrasting language models to the children. Oral language enrichment activities such as role playing, storytelling, and group discussions of direct experiences, deserve strong emphasis, particularly with children from culturally disadvantaged backgrounds.

Oral language development can provide a basis for written language skill development in the integrated language skills curriculum (Costantino-Lane, 2013:21). Oral language activities such as reading literature to children, dramatic play and dialogue, combined with extensive use of experience charts, can serve to help children understand how intonation and punctuation may be used to convey meaning and the development of other language skills in oral and written expression. Such activities also provide an excellent way to show children how descriptive language can be used in developing story characters and story settings, and how certain parts of sentences can be expanded to provide the listener or reader more precise

information in an interesting way. According to Costantino-Lane (2013:32), an increased awareness of the interrelatedness of listening comprehension and reading comprehension skills should be fostered in the classroom.

Listening and reading activities should encompass a variety of purposes, ranging from direct recall to critical evaluation of material. In practice the development of these skills may evolve through the careful development of purposes for listening and reading. For example, news articles and advertisements found in the daily newspaper or on television may be used in fostering critical comprehension skills. Listening comprehension skills can be taught to enhance reading comprehension skills.

Careful consideration should be given to children's concept development in relation to their own experiences. The child must have a firm grasp of the concept he is attempting to express in oral form if their communication attempt is to be successful. The teacher should attempt to develop and expand concepts through concrete experiences in the classroom, and field trips, and by showing children how words convey different meanings in a variety of oral and written sentence contexts (Davin, 2013:31). Understanding the contribution of oral language to the development of other basic communication skills, is vital to the classroom teacher. Such an understanding should enable the teacher to utilize better the inter-relatedness of all communication skills (Gardener, 2016: 19).

Wilson, McNeill and Gillon (2015:14) present strong arguments to emphasize knowledge and perceptions of prospective teachers in language and literacy instruction. Their findings show that student teachers should be equipped with understanding of expressive vocabulary, phoneme and oral language. However, these findings proved that student teachers demonstrated limited familiarity with literacy curriculum content. They were largely unable to identify common classroom literacy practices and curriculum documents. Overall, the results confirmed previously reported concerns that teachers are not well equipped with a body of shared knowledge of the linguistic features of language and of literacy curriculum. Even though the study was conducted in Florida, possibilities exists that in the South African context the state of affairs may be the same, until researchers prove it scientifically.

Although research findings identify different aspects of teacher knowledge, it is imperative to conduct the study about teachers' perceived knowledge of oral language development to gain insight of how oral language skills are imparted to young Grade R children.

2.12 Professional development of Grade R practitioners

Grade R professional development must become more than temporary rhetorical words so that the way forward into the reading world is not a stumble down but a step up with a steady hand-up from a competent Grade R teacher. In South Africa, children's access to printed books varies according to their social class, home language and whether they live in a rural or urban area. Similarly children's oral language development follows the same pattern (DoBE, 2011). The challenge for Grade R teachers is to connect with the literacy practices of children who do not come from privileged backgrounds and to build on these. The teacher also needs to create a rich literacy environment in the classroom for these children, to model literacy practices including oral language. This is difficult in South Africa where many teachers have not had the literacy experiences and professional development (Matu, 2014).

The importance of teacher preparation including what is known about the contributions of knowledgeable teachers and how professional development for teachers, can make an impact on the field of education (Mayaba, 2016:19). According to Hodgskiss (2007:19), professional development is important in helping teachers understand, firstly, their role in implementing a balanced approach to literacy in Grade R and, secondly, that appropriate language skills should be taught to meet the varying needs of each individual learner.

2.12.1 Initial Teacher Education

Teacher education in South Africa is a matter of concern. It is a concern because students who choose teaching as a career are few. The profession is surviving because of students who pass Grade 12 and find out that they are not qualified to pursue their first prioritized, desired or chosen career in the university and hence turn to teaching as an alternative career. It becomes important to keep these teachers in the profession (DoBE, 2012). It should always be remembered that teaching is a noble profession. It needs a professional individual who is dedicated to his work and who will practice roles of a teacher as per the norms and standards for educators. Teaching needs a professional individual who will be a role model to his learners. Students who choose teaching as a second choice and even those who choose teaching as their first priority career path need to undergo teacher education in-order for them to remain in the teaching profession for their entire career. According to Wilson *et al*. (2015:15), initial teacher education provides insufficient opportunity to develop prospective teachers' knowledge of linguistic concepts that are critical to children's reading and learning.

2.12.2 In-service teacher training

Andrich *et al*. (2015:9) states that in 2011 the Department of Basic Education produced the Grade R CAPS curriculum and provided in-service teacher training before implementing it in 2012. Role players believe that in fusing the behaviouristic National Christian Education curriculum with the constructivist Outcomes Based Education curriculum, CAPS represents a material improvement of these. How Grade R CAPS could improve Grade R teaching is closely linked to how well Grade R teachers can be trained to use it. According to Motshekga (2014), the quality of the Grade R teachers' knowledge and skill is pivotal to the effectiveness of the Grade R programme. The inequality of teachers' training is an important factor emerging with reference to planning and implementing the curriculum in Grade R. Determining Grade R teachers' perceived competence and knowledge of oral language development signifies the need to understand their level of knowledge in order to make informed decision of need analysis for developmental purposes.

According to Nel (2015:19), the Department of Education has provided in-service training on the philosophy and technicalities of the (CAPS) curriculum but very little or inadequate training on the implementation of the subject matter of the curriculum, for example, emergent literacy. Consequently, teachers may be given the tools and materials to implement literacy in schools without long-term professional development like in-service training in order to ensure a deep understanding of children's literacy development.

2.13 Teaching approaches in Early Childhood Education

This section focuses on curriculum implementation approach, the play-based approach and the integrated approach as used in early childhood education.

2.13.1 Curriculum implementation approach

For the success of curriculum implementation, Grade R curriculum implementation approach are dependent upon teachers who have a clear idea of what they want to achieve and who are familiar with the curriculum content as well as methodologies and know how to implement a high quality integrated daily programme. Taking cognisance of children's individual contexts is also essential. In other words, teachers ought to have a rich and deep understanding of practice as well as of the theory that drives practice (Christie, 2008:163).

According to Barber and Mourshed (2007:5), in McKinsey's report on the world's top school systems, findings show that the three best practices which are all related to teacher knowledge namely; getting the right people to become teachers; developing them into effective instructors

and ensuring that the system is able to deliver the best possible instruction to every child are relevant to Grade R programme implementation. Studies conducted by Andrich *et al*. (2015: 11) consequently affirm that the analysis of the Grade R curriculum in the form of the *CAPS Resource File 2012 for Grade R,* reveal that little explicit content is provided by CAPS and that much should still be added into CAPS.

With reference to the thematic approach, Shoemaker 1981 (cited by Niipare, 2007:15) defines a thematic approach as education that is organized in a way that it cuts across subject-matter lines, bringing together various aspects of the curriculum into meaningful association to focus upon broad areas of study. According to Lake 1994 (cited by Niipare, 2007: 15) links exist among languages, environmental studies, mathematics, social studies, music and arts. In such an approach skills and knowledge are simultaneously applied in more than one area of study. Niipare (2007:19) suggests "students learn better from thematic, interdisciplinary instruction than from a traditional, single-subject curriculum." This view is supported by John (2015:184) asserting that "cross curricular thematic instruction encourages learners to explore important topics, problems, and questions by engaging students in many varied reading and writing opportunities." Niipare (2007: 20) further argues that thematic instruction builds upon what learners know. Themes increase confidence, improve reading and writing, expand concepts and background, and foster positive attitudes about reading and writing.

A thematic approach as opposed to a compartmentalised approach to the curriculum can be an effective tool in helping learners to construct knowledge (Excell, 2011). The benefits of a thematic approach have been supported by the work of psychologists such as Vygotsky, Bruner and Donaldson, all of whom emphasized the importance of educating the whole child and of revisiting themes through a spiral curriculum which supports a child's past achievements.

"Themes, if thoughtfully and collaboratively chosen are also able to offer exciting learning opportunities which can be appropriately contextualised for children" (Kotze *et al*. 2017:9). The core role and duties of teachers require delivery of the curriculum. Teachers are given the curriculum, CAPS, and should follow the guidelines that meet South Africa's educational policies. Throughout the year, CAPS is executed by teachers so that all pertinent language knowledge and expected language competencies are developed.

2.13.2 The play based approach

Play based approach promotes play-based learning which is the right to play as enshrined in Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and a defining characteristic of

childhood. Lonigan and Shanahan (2009:4) states that play is the principle means by which children learn and explore the world around them, while developing cognitively, socially, emotionally, creatively and physically. When we talk about 'education' in early childhood, we mean the opportunity to learn through play-based activities supported by caring adults, rather than to be 'taught' in a formal sense (Excell, 2011:263). Teachers need to be cognisant of the potential of formal and informal play when planning and implementing the curriculum in Grade R (Pascoe & Smouse, 2012).

Research by Excell (2011:304) indicates that many teachers, especially those in previously disadvantaged environments, appeared to be less familiar with the pedagogy of play (Excell, 2011:60). Teachers are aware of the essential role of play in young children's lives as well as the interrelatedness to children's early development. However, there still appears to be a lack of knowledge concerning how to employ spontaneous informal play moments to enhance the learning process.

According to Excell (2011:279), improving the quality of play remains a central concern in Grade R and any improvements in practice should be based on more detailed knowledge than is currently available on the progression of learning. To capitalise on the values of play to children's cognitive, social and cultural development, teachers must develop a more critical understanding of what different forms of play mean to individuals and groups of children. Accordingly, there should be an emphasis on equipping teachers with this information in order to provide positive opportunities for both structured and unstructured play in the classrooms. Wilkins (2008) states that this approach, based on the children's interests provides a familiar context for them, and children's interests become a useful point of departure enabling the class to explore new and exciting ideas within a coherent, integrated framework. Tabors, Snow, and Dickinson (2001) affirm that in collaboration with parents, teachers should provide prompts that promote oral language which include microphones, old telephones, puppets and even paper towel tubes in the children's play area. Items to play dress-up are big hits with children and need to be part of the fantasy play area. "Pretending to be someone else encourages children to mimic the vocabulary, facial expressions and body language that they see and hear from others, hence pretend play is one of the strategies to promote oral language development" (Excell, 2011:279).

To contribute to the future development of quality educator programmes for Reception Year, the implementation and design of curriculum and content at institutions of higher learning

requires a strong emphasis and commitment on the role of play. It is an educationally sound way of implementing the daily programme and of choosing content.

2.13.3 The integrated approach

The integrated approach, using themes, is suitable for young learners because they learn about the world around them systematically (Chikutuma, 2013). A theme is chosen by the teacher and extended to the learners through the various activities they perform.

Learning areas are integrated in developmentally appropriate activities for reception year learners. According to Morrison (2013:7) selecting and using developmentally effective approaches is an essential part of teachers' professional responsibility. Developmentally effective approaches and methods include fostering oral language and communication; making the most of the environment and routines; capitalizing on incidental teaching; focusing on children's characteristics; needs and interests; linking children's language and culture to the early childhood program; teaching through social interactions and creating support for play (Excell, 2011:285). Niipare (2007) affirms that teacher's planning is underpinned by a developmentally appropriate approach. From a developmentally appropriate practice perspective, the idea of an emergent curriculum based on the children's interests is desirable (Vander Wilt & Monroe, 1998).

According to Ssembatya (2017:24), four language strands such as reading, listening, speaking and writing can be enhanced by the integrated approach in different language classroom contexts. It is then through a social practice that the integrated approach in the language classroom motivates learners in a collaborative and social learning environment to think, analyse and create their knowledge. The integrated approach mediates through active and collaborative strategies employed in the language classroom to generate meaningful practices. In addition, learners learn from real situations, which motivate them to use language by themselves and support them to communicate with competence Muneeroh, Surachi and Wacheerapan 2013 (cited by Ssembatya 2017: 40).

Globally, the use of the integrated approach to language teaching focuses on communicative and sociolinguistic competencies to promote the authentic and pragmatic use of language, fluency and accuracy, (Morrison, 2013:11). In support of oral language development an integrated approach to language learning is ideal for Grade R learners and mainly because the nature of the daily planning in Grade R is highly integrated (Excell, 2011:286).

2.14 Strategies that support oral language development

"Literacy acquisition is associated with language acquisition" (Malone, 2003: 333). It takes time for learners to acquire high levels of literacy and language acquisition and it requires continuing teaching and guidance from a competent and knowledgeable person (Shiel *et al*., 2012). Understanding the contribution of oral language to the development of other basic communication skills is vital to the classroom teacher; such an understanding should enable the teacher to utilize better the transfer potential present in the inter- relatedness of all communication skills (Gardener, 2016:28).

A Grade R teacher, Mollo told Mail and Guardian (2015) that young children are sensitive and fragile and, therefore, Grade R teachers need to remember that they are developing the children not teaching them. From experience, Mollo affirms that teachers, to a certain extent, have to know about the social and psychological aspects including specific language impairments, hearing problems, vision problems and behavioral problems. Funda uJabule's principal, Maboya, (Mail & Guardian, 2015) further suggested that teachers need to be informed about teaching through structured play as it is a complex approach.

According to Hodgskiss (2007:29), children are influenced greatly by the people in their environment. In order for children to develop intellectual oral language competence, they must interact with grown-ups. The talk between the children and adults is very important to literacy development. Parents and other significant adults in children's lives, especially teachers, serve both as models of oral language and as practice grounds for children to try out their emerging language skills.

Dahlgren (2008) affirms that there are various strategies to promote oral language development in young children. Among many strategies is *Respond to expand*; which means when a child says something, respond and try to expand the conversation to add more context to the language. Talk about what you are doing; talk to children about daily activities. This type of conversation exposes children to language in general and involves them in learning conversational skills. Bennett-Armistead *et al*. (2005:120) assert that children should acquire and use words that are important in their everyday lives.

According to Constantio (2013), teachers and parents should learn to talk with the children, like talking about their friends, families, and or favourite activities. A conversation needs to be posed as folktales and or a game / *iintsomi, oorayi-rayi kunye okanye umdlalo* in the context of amaXhosa.

Parents should be encouraged to tell stories every day about things from the past or things that will happen (Loubser & Matu 2014). For instance, the teacher can talk about something

the class might do that day or the parent can talk about an upcoming event. According to Cregan *et al.* (2012), the teacher should use prompts to encourage storytelling including the use of appropriate levels of vocabulary. Andrich *et al.* (2015) suggest that when speaking with children teachers have to be careful not to use too many new words or too few new words. The belief is supported by Excell (2011) who affirms that there is no magic formula for the correct number of words, and that implies that teachers and parents must be mindful of each child's abilities. That also implies that the adults should figure out if the vocabulary is confusing to the child or whether the child is able to keep up and understand.

According to Gardener (2016:22), teachers need to engage in conversation directly with every child in their care in meaningful ways. Moreover, they must organise communication between parents and teachers about the importance of using the functions of language with children on a daily basis. Dahlgren (2008) states that Grade R teachers need to share information with parents and other teachers about the role friendship plays in cognitive development and the direct link with literacy. Parents need to organize the children's schedule at home and or daily routine in order to support their active engagement in meaningful activities. Learners need to be presented with opportunities to engage in activities which support the development of verbal thought. Mpiti (2012) recommends that the strategies of children's play, e.g. free plays, sociodramatic plays, replay of stories, retelling of stories, and acting out of stories heard need to be supported to enhance oral language development in Grade R.

Children's experience with books plays an important role, for example picture book reading provides children with many skills that are necessary for school readiness, for example vocabulary, sound structure, the meaning of print, the structure of stories and language, sustained attention and the pleasure of learning (Burns, 2006:18). "It is important to encourage parents to begin reading to their children at an early age" (Excell, 2011:46).

Effective communication leads to better teaching on the part of teachers and better learning for learners (Alidou *et al.,* 2006*:* 17). Clearly, the body of research above underscores the vital necessity of employing an assortment of reading strategies as and when a need arises.

2.14.1 Engaging in dialogic reading

Dialogic reading is a form of shared book reading in which the questioning and prompts are used with a small group to develop deeper understanding (Gunning, 2010:139).

Vocabulary is developed through dialogic reading, for instance, a classroom discussion in one dialogic reading session becomes an extended discussion of the character in the story (new

vocabulary words). Through discussions, dialogic reading is used to develop social and emotional skills as learners read about and discuss challenging situations. According to Whitehurst *et al.* (2007:1), dialogic reading is an interactive shared picture book reading practice designed to enhance young children's language and literacy skills.

When parents and teachers properly plan and execute dialogic reading, research by Willenberg, (2007) advocates its effectiveness at improving skills such as print awareness, oral language, and comprehension. Most importantly, dialogic reading helps model how good readers think about the text as they are reading it (Folsom, 2017:3).

During the shared reading practice, Whitehurst *et al.* (2007:1) recommends that the adult and a child switch roles with the intention that the child learns to become a storyteller assisted by an adult who functions as an active listener, the questioner and the audience for the child. Through dialogic reading, children learn from the books they are actively involved in. The adult helps, then the child becomes the teller of the story.

Botwe (2015:13) at Sibabalwe Primary School, in a video recording where she teaches an isiXhosa lesson on Shared Reading begins her lesson with a rhyme to create enthusiasm and goes on to use flash cards to revise vocabulary. She engages the learners in drama by letting them get dressed up in costumes which suit the story. After the drama she asks them to retell the story in sequence. Botwe further engages learners by bringing out varied groups to do activities about the story on their reading ability level. The balanced approach used by Botwe is defined by Morrison (2013:250) as the best literacy approach as it promotes oral language development and meets the specific needs of individual children.

When engaging in dialogic reading two approaches are advised by PDST (2014) PEER (*prompts* the child to say something about the book; *evaluates* the child's response; *expands* the child's response; *repeats* the prompt). CROWD (*completion* prompts; *recall* prompts; *open-ended* prompts; *what, when, where,* and *why* prompts; *distancing* prompts).

According to Flynn (2011), a traditional implementation of dialogic reading involves repeatedly reading the same book and interacting around levels of questions. Level one questions are basic "wh" type questions focused on what can immediately be seen (or read) in the text. The "wh" questions also include introducing new vocabulary. For example, while pointing to a picture, the adult reader may ask, "What type of feet does this animal have?" in isiXhosa the question can be phrased as *"Zinjani iinyawo zesi silwanyana?"* Here the adult is looking for a specific, correct response to expand the child's oral vocabulary. Level two questions are open-ended and are used to solicit the child's feedback. For example, the adult reader might ask, "What is happening in this part of the story?" / "*Kwenzeka ntoni kwesi sigaba sebali?"* Here

the adult is trying to encourage the child to share what he or she is thinking about and make meaning from the text. Level three questions are more advanced and introduce concepts like text features and story components. For example, the adult reader might ask, “Who was the main character and how did he feel?” / *“Ngubani umlinganiswa oyintloko kwaye ubonakala eziva njani?”* This also may include questions that distance the student from the text and connect the story to their own life. For example, “What would you feel like if that happened to you?” *“Wena ungaziva njani xa oko kunokwenzeka kuwe?”*

Whitehurst *et al.* (2007:1) and Folsom (2017:3) emphasize that dialogic reading is interactive; it is student centered; is conducted with narrative and expository text with questions and discussion throughout and is an activity requiring careful planning. Dialogic reading is the practice of shared book reading which is included in the Grade R curriculum (CAPS). According to CAPS (2011:14), shared reading usually happens in the first 15 minutes of the Reading Focus Time. The teacher works with the whole class. Shared Reading is executed using a single, enlarged text for the whole class such as big books, posters and pictures or a text on an overhead transparency or individual fiction and non-fiction texts for each child. Although there will normally be only one text used per week, the texts selected for each grade should increase in length and complexity across the year and across the grades. Children will be introduced to a range of stories, poems, rhymes and plays as well as information and graphical texts, (CAPS, 2011).

Each shared reading session will have a learning focus; the first session focuses on the enjoyment and first look at the text, with the children giving a personal response to the text. In the next session the same text is used and the focus shifts to more involvement in the reading with the teacher using the discussions that take place to develop vocabulary, comprehension, decoding skills and text structures. On the third, and possibly the fourth day, learners engage in oral practical activities based on the text. Without oral language skills learners will struggle to engage in dialogic reading as stated by CAPS.

2.14.2 Promoting extended discourse

According to Makoe (2007:57), “extended discourse is a social discursive framework and hierarchy that orders reality in specific ways. Discourse is not a passive body of knowledge or immutable. An extended discourse assumes different forms and trails depending on conditions of use.” It also enables the production of social knowledge; it allows certain ways of thinking and talking about aspects of reality (Makoe, 2007:57). Through extended discourse teachers can determine who can speak, with whom and when. Classroom discourse does not only reflect the larger social, ideological context, it also plays a contributory role in shaping the

context and the manner in which students are socialized into classroom practices and activities (Rowe, 2013:45). As one of the strategies to promote oral language development, extended discourse also encourages teacher-learner relationship.

Olaussen (2016:15) asserts that in building an understanding beyond the concrete situation, the use of decontextualized language or non-immediate talk is necessary. Decontextualized language refers to information that is not immediately visible, for instance, in an illustration. This type of language typically involves longer utterances and more explicit, complex language than labelling or "yes/no" questions that constitutes most immediate talk. Snow (1990: 32) defines decontextualized language as the language that is removed from the here-and-now. Snow (1990: 32) refers to examples of decontextualized language as used in early conversations between parents and children, parents' uses of explanations, narratives, pretend, non-immediate talk during book reading. Decontextualized language is also a characteristic of extended discourse.

Explanatory talk is another aspect of extended discourse. It is defined as the talk that requested and/or made a logical connection between objects, events, concepts and conclusions (Olaussen, 2016:86). Indeed, it is an explanation of people's actions or speech. Narrative talk or storytelling as part of extended discourse tells us about an event in the past or an event that will happen in the future. Narratives may especially foster children's abstract understanding of how to organize a set of events into a story and to comprehend others' narratives.

Pretend talk as the last aspect of different kinds of talk connected to extended discourse, is most frequently used during play. Olaussen (2016:56) defines social pretend play as a situation in which participants explicitly or implicitly make objects, people, places or other aspects of the here and now, they make symbolic transformations. "Children must be given opportunities to gain competence in talking, expressing their meanings and providing reasoning for their thoughts" Olaussen (2016:56). Children need to be asked for their opinion and use "open questions" which articulate to children that teachers are interested in their thoughts and the intention for their thoughts. A "yes/no "constraining answer is not sufficient. Discourse requires participants to formulate their arguments, give a reason for their argument and connect their arguments in a logical way to a conclusion. Listening to classmates' thoughts and reason for their arguments gives new perspectives. In this way the discourse provides other developmental opportunities than narratives (Rowe, 2013:45).

According to Nel (2015:193), the Grade R curriculum outlines the specific activities which should be done for each of the language components. The relevance of the notion to the

current study is embedded in the listening and speaking component. Grade R teachers should be aware of the strategies to develop oral language skills. In essence the study is to determine Grade R teachers' knowledge of strategies to promote oral language development with regard to extended discourse and the extent to which these strategies are put in practice in the Grade R classrooms.

2.14.3 Using specific vocabulary and rare words

According to Joubert, Bester, Meyer and Evans (2008:69), learners' own words become the starting point for reading. According to Dickson and Tabors (2001:32), rare words are defined as words that might be new words for preschool and young school-age children. These words are low frequent and concrete words. IsiXhosa, like all Bantu languages, has a relatively simple syllable structure based around a (C) V (C) V (lala / *sleep*); V (C) V (ewe / *yes*) template which serves as the basic word formation for Grade R learners. In addition, there are constraints on complex syllable inceptions. Nel (2015:55) affirms that although some words appear to have a complex onset orthographically, these are often single consonants corresponding to single phonemes and most suitable for vocabulary development in Grade R classes.

Conversation situations enable learners to discover what they want to say and communicate in a meaningful way. Learners should be encouraged to talk to one another on the playground and wherever the opportunity for social conversation allows. Teachers should encourage learners to have conversations with people on all social levels (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001).

Dickson and Tabors (2001:20) attest that when preschool teachers use rare words in discussions with children their vocabulary expands. Research by Vellutino *et al*. (2007:109) confirm that the relationship between vocabulary and reading comprehension gets stronger as children grow older. Therefore, it is important to determine specific ways in which language development, and more specifically, vocabulary development, can best be supported in children as early as possible.

Olaussen (2016:58) states that discussing rare words as vocabulary development could be placed as a category alone in emergent reading scope. The reason for considering the introduction of rare words is that rare words are often introduced in connection with decontextualized talk, explanatory talk or book reading. According to Cohen *et al.* (2013) and Morrison (2013:241), kindergarten (Grade R in South Africa) children experience a rapid intellectual and language growth and have a tremendous capacity to learn new words that appealingly challenge them. Their love for rare words and their ability to say and use them

should be encouraged and supported by allowing many opportunities to engage in various language activities such as singing, telling stories, being involved in drama and reciting poetry.

Burns (2006) affirms that when literacy instruction is integrated in a primary classroom, a teacher may read a story aloud as the children listen and make predictions. The teacher and the children discuss the story together, talking about unfamiliar vocabulary words. An aspect of word recognition based on the words in the story is taught and practiced. The story is reread with partners in shared reading, with the support of the teacher, for practice and fluency. Children then orally retell the story to ensure they comprehend the meaning. According to Sedita (2005:261), developing vocabulary is not simply a matter of listing words and their definitions but in a sense, it is part of living. Children learn their initial words by interacting with parents and peers, gradually learn labels for the people, objects, and ideas in the environment.

According to Otto, (2006) as children grow and have additional experiences their vocabularies continue to develop. Depending upon the nature of the words to be learned and learner background knowledge, vocabulary development represents two related but somewhat different cognitive tasks, establishing associations and developing conceptual knowledge, a child makes the most of word learning by drawing of associations between a label and its referent (Neuman, Newman & Dwyer (2011:251). Additionally children relate words / sounds to objects, and the activity is not just mapping the label but actually establishing a concept of what is and what is not of the word. The example of “Sport”, as a theme, as stated in CAPS Grade R term four; amongst other topic selecting is relevant. (I like my sport). A picture of a soccer ball (*ibhola ekhatywayo*) rugby (*ibhola yombhoxo*) netball (*ibhola yomnyazi*) and physical objects will be displayed. Infusing the thematic approach to vocabulary development lends itself to the application of constructive theory of learning by Vygotsky which provides an environment where knowledge is socially constructed. Children need opportunities to acquire their own views and ways of thinking, some children will be in favour of sports like tennis (*ibhola yentenetya*) and cricket (*ibhola yeqakamba*). Developing conceptual knowledge is another cognitive task of learning words through categorisation. Continuing with the topic (I like sport), placing equipment of the sport they like and of the sport they do not like, children will start from what is known to them, revisit basic concepts until they grasp a particular concept. An activity of grouping objects and or picture/ word cards will be ideal.

Grade R teachers should be cognisant of the strategies to develop oral language skills hence the researcher’s interest is basically to determine Grade R teachers’ knowledge of strategies to promote oral language development with reference to the use of vocabulary and rare words, dialogic reading and extended discourse and the extent to which these strategies are put in practice in the Grade R classrooms.

2.15 Conclusion

The review of literature provides an insight of the existing knowledge base of the phenomena under investigation (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:137). Literature has revealed that there are many factors that influence young children's literacy learning in isiXhosa, notwithstanding the inadequate teacher training which compromises Grade R teachers' efforts in enhancing literacy development through learner-centred approaches. Literature corresponds with the research findings by Makaluza (2018:69) which indicates that impoverished communities tend to have low literacy rates due to limited teaching and learning literacy resources. Makaluza (2018:69) also revealed that the CAPS investment on literacy enrichment is limited.

In the next chapter the research methodology as implemented within this study is outlined.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The research methodology and design are important for any study as it structures the content and supports the specific research paradigm of the study (Adler & Clark, 2014:6). The purpose of this chapter is to explain the research methodology and design used in this study to gather information and draw conclusions about Grade R teachers' perceived competency and knowledge of oral language development in isiXhosa including strategies that support oral language development in their respective classrooms.

This chapter provides the outline for the empirical research process of a systematic and focussed investigation according to the following topics: research paradigm, research approach, research design, sampling, data collection methods, data collection procedures and the analyses of the data as well as the quality assurance and the ethical considerations regarding this study.

3.2 Research paradigm

This study is situated within an interpretive paradigm. Interpretivists believe that reality is not objectively determined but is socially constructed. Merriam and Tisdell (2015:9) state that as the reality is socially constructed, there is no single, observable reality rather multiple realities or interpretations of a single event. Creswell (2007:24) affirms that interpretive positions provide a universal lens or perspective on all aspects of a qualitative research project. In essence, this research paradigm is concerned with the uniqueness of a particular situation, contributing to the underlying pursuit of contextual depth.

The basic interest of interpretivists according to Merriam and Tisdell (2015:24) is how people interpret their experiences; how they construct their worlds and what meaning they attribute to their lives and experiences. This paradigm is applicable to the study because the aim was to determine the Grade R teachers' perceived knowledge of oral language development and strategies for developing oral language, which is how they understood oral language, and how they interpreted it. Interpretive approaches rely heavily on naturalistic methods (interviewing, observation and analysis of existing texts) hence it is suitable for the study. These methods ensure an adequate dialogue between the researcher and those with whom she interacts in order to collaboratively construct a meaningful reality (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015:9). According

to Gray (2018:24), an interpretive paradigm gives the researcher an opportunity to understand and interpret human action. During classroom observation, when the researcher observes the teacher's actions throughout an oral language lesson, the interpretive paradigm becomes practical. The researcher discovered the relationship between the perceived level of knowledge and the actual knowledge level of Grade R teachers regarding strategies that support oral language development in isiXhosa.

In the light of the above, the qualitative interpretive paradigm supports the researcher in giving meaning to the data that was collected for the study.

3.3 Research approach and design

A qualitative research approach which is exploratory and interpretive in nature has been chosen as the most appropriate approach for this study. To conduct the study in a natural way the researcher used an inquiry process of understanding, developing a complex, holistic picture, analyses of words and reports on detailed views of informants. Suter (2011:365) observes a qualitative research approach as the logic that links data collected, and the conclusions drawn to the initial question of the study.

The research design used in this study was a multiple site case study. Case studies offer a multiple perspective analysis in which the researcher considers not just the voice and perspective of one or two participants in a situation but also the views of other relevant groups of actors and the interaction between them (Suter 2011:366). It was applicable to this study because multiple perspectives from the Grade R teachers were gathered to get a better understanding of the real situation. Yin (2014:109) states that a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomena and context may not be clearly evident.

Creswell (2007:73) indicates that case study research involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases. According to Maree (2007: 75), "A key strength of the case study method is the use of multiple sources and techniques in the data gathering process". Furthermore, the advantage of case studies is that phenomenon can be studied in "real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly" (Cohen *et al.*, 2013:289). It is noted that a case study produces a "detailed and rich story about a phenomenon under inquiry" (Patton, 2014:259).

3.4 Research sites, population and sampling

The research consisted of investigations in nine schools and only those schools in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District that use isiXhosa as a medium of instruction were included in the study.

The researcher selected nine government/public schools in the circuit areas of Potchefstroom, Stilfontein, Orkney, Klerksdorp and Jouberton. The nine schools were situated in the townships of the Dr. Kenneth Kaunda district.

Six schools had two Grade R classes, one offering isiXhosa and another offering Setswana. The medium of instruction in the other three schools was isiXhosa only. Most learners in all nine schools speak more than one African language because of the influence from parents who largely speak isiXhosa, Setswana and Sesotho.

Participants for this study were selected by means of purposive sampling. The specific purpose in mind was to determine Grade R teachers' perception on competency and knowledge of oral language development in isiXhosa including strategies that support oral language development in their respective classrooms. According to Creswell (2007:74), purposeful sampling shows different perspectives on the problem. Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the researcher wants to discover, understand and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which most information can be learned (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015:96). Creswell (2007:125) explains that purposeful sampling means that the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study. The criteria a researcher established for purposeful sampling directly reflected the purpose of the study and guided in the identification of information-rich cases. Purposive sampling was used to select the Grade R teachers for their expertise as practitioners in the sector. Cohen *et al.* (2013) support the use of purposive sampling as it allows the selection of knowledgeable people about a phenomenon.

The participants for this study, the Grade R teachers, hold the essential characteristics that make them holders of the data needed for the study. Out of the nine Grade R teachers, six Grade R teachers were fully qualified to teach Grade R and three Grade R teachers were still student teachers. These participants were purposively selected from nine schools where the language of learning and teaching (LOLT) is isiXhosa. Inclusion criteria was that the teachers had to teach isiXhosa to Grade R learners and the LOLT of the school was isiXhosa. Exclusion criteria was LOLT not being isiXhosa and teachers teaching either a home language or an additional language that was not isiXhosa.

3.5 Participants profile

Table 3.1 gives an overview of the biographical information of the participants included in the study

Table 3.1: Participant's profiles

Name	School Type	Qualifications	Number of years in Education	Number of years teaching Grade R	Circuits in Dr. KK District
P-J3	Township/ semi-urban	Diploma Grade R	5	3	Jouberton
P-K4	Township/ semi-urban	Diploma Grade R	3	4	Klerksdorp
P-J5	Township/ semi-urban	Diploma Grade R	6	5	Jouberton
P-P5	Township/ semi-urban	Diploma Grade R	5	5	Potchefstroom
P-K8	Township/ semi-urban	Senior Primary Teachers Diploma	12	8	Klerksdorp
P-S5	Township/ semi-urban	Senior Primary Teachers Diploma	10	5	Stilfontein
P-S4	Township/ semi-urban	Student Teachers	0	4	Stilfontein
P-O2	Township/ semi-urban	Student Teachers	0	2	Orkney
P-S3	Township/ semi-urban	Student Teachers	0	3	Stilfontein

The demographical data focused on providing an insight of the participants' number of years in education, number of years teaching the phase and the contextual environment in which the school is situated for example, semi-urban / township school as well as the district and circuits.

In order to maintain ethical responsibility towards the participants and protect their confidentiality all names were replaced with a code indicated with P for participants followed by the letter S, O, P, J and K which indicated Stilfontein, Orkney, Potchefstroom, Jouberton and Klerksdorp, the circuit in which the participants are currently teaching. With a number which indicates the number of years teaching the Grade R, for example P-S5 is Participant, Circuit/ Stilfontein and 5 years teaching within the phase.

From the nine teachers, six were experienced in teaching in the Grade R classes whereas three teachers had less than five years teaching experience in the Grade R class. Five teachers had a junior primary teacher's diploma, whereas one teacher qualified with a Senior Primary Teacher's Diploma and the last three were Grade R Diploma final year students.

3.6 Data collection methods and instruments

The following data collection methods were utilised in this study: questionnaires, interviews, classroom observation and document analysis.

3.6.1 Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions and other prompts for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. Questionnaires are practical, and information can be collected from a large number of people in a short period of time and in a relatively cost-effective way (Suter, 2011:114). Additionally, each question in a questionnaire deals with a single idea, all questions are worded as simply and clearly as possible, and the categories provide an opportunity for easy, accurate, and unambiguous responses.

The majority of questions in the questionnaire prepared for this study assessed Grade R teachers' knowledge of strategies for developing oral language in the Grade R classroom. The questions were grouped into three main categories: engaging in dialogic reading, promoting extended discourse, and using specific vocabulary and rare words (cf. Appendix 1).

The researcher had one-on-one sessions with the Grade R teachers of each of the sites mentioned in 3.4 above. The purpose was to explain thoroughly as there were three categories of questions with nine questions each. Each category required enough time and understanding before answering. Questions were in a multiple-choice format and participants needed to read

with understanding. A total of twenty seven questions were posed and the participants were allowed to complete the questionnaire at their own pace. The researcher collected the questionnaires on the day chosen for classroom observation. The participants had a chance to ask questions during the fifteen minutes that was allocated for explanation and seeking clarity. The participants were given the option of completing the questionnaire in English or in isiXhosa.

3.6.2 Individual interviews

In this study, individual interviews were used to generate perspectives and experiences on Grade R teachers' knowledge of oral language development and its implementation in their respective classes (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015:5). Unlike the spontaneous exchange of views in everyday conversation, Merriam and Tisdell (2015:107) states that an interview is a conversation that has a structure and a purpose. According to Minichiello (2001:124), the purpose of interviewing is not to get answers to questions, nor to test hypotheses, and not to evaluate, but at the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of the experience hence Grade R teachers were given liberty to express themselves in the language they were comfortable with, questions were posed in both English and isiXhosa (cf. Appendix 2). Interviews elicit data that is not evident from documents or observation alone (Suter, 2011:114).

Interviews provide access to multiple perspectives. Although, according to Creswell (2007:133), individual interviews may be a challenge to a researcher where the interviewee may be less articulate, shy and present less adequate data, in contrast to that perception; Grade R teachers were eloquent. Only one Grade teacher had a challenge speaking isiXhosa as she grew up speaking Setswana, but later her isiXhosa parents redirected her to isiXhosa both at home and at school.

Each interview session lasted between 20-30 minutes; all interviews were conducted in the Grade R classrooms. In two schools there were assistant teachers and/or care givers. In such schools, interviews were conducted during break. In seven schools, interviews were conducted after school when learners had already left to avoid interfering with teaching and learning time and disturbing the daily schedule. The reason for individual teacher interviews was to get information from the participating teachers themselves, thereby ensuring relevant and credible data. Yin, (2017) states that an in-depth interview is to encourage full participation by the participants.

In the beginning of each individual interview the researcher encouraged the participants to relax and to contribute to the conversation as they saw fit. The researcher reiterated the purpose of the interview and the aim which formed the basis of the discussion. Interviewees were informed and guaranteed that their identity and that of their schools would not be revealed. Permission to audio record the conversation was obtained from the participants.
Interview questions were prepared in advance and probing was used throughout the interviews to allow interviewees to connect their experience with the subject under discussion. At the end of the interview, the participants requested a replay of the recording, and few comments were exchanged. As stated, that Grade R teachers were given the liberty to express themselves in the language, they were comfortable with, they were free to code switch during the interview as some concepts surfaced quicker in English than in isiXhosa. The advantage of using individual teacher interviews for this study was to obtain rich data. Through individual interviews Grade R teachers and the researcher gained insight into the perceived knowledge of strategies involving dialogic reading, promoting extended discourse and using specific vocabulary for developing oral language.

3.6.3 Observation

Direct observation allows an observer to draw inferences about someone's meaning and perspective that the observer couldn't obtain by relying exclusively on interview data. This is particularly true for getting at implicit understandings (Maxwell, 2012: 76). In this study, the researcher as an observer was present in each site for at least 60 minutes in each of the nine Grade R classes. The observations focused on Grade R teachers' knowledge of strategies involving dialogic reading, promoting extended discourse and using specific vocabulary. In this study, the researcher conducted classroom observations to gain insight on teachers' implementation of strategies for oral language development. Classroom observations were conducted to triangulate emerging findings, which is, they are used in conjunction with interviewing and document analysis to substantiate the findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015:139).

The classroom observation took nine weeks because the researcher used one day per week to conduct observations in each of the nine schools that were part of the research study. The preferable time for conducting the observations was in the morning before the National Schools Nutrition Programme (NSNP) feeding times varied per school, in six schools the programme started at 9h00 and three schools between 9h30 and 10h00. The details of the classroom observation were discussed by the researcher and the participants before each classroom observation, and the criteria was well understood by the participants. Having a

checklist for the classroom observation assisted the researcher to focus on aspects the researcher wanted to investigate, however the researcher became part of the classroom environment as learners also communicated with the researcher.

Through this method of data collection, the researcher was able to observe the practicality of oral language development in isiXhosa Grade R classes. As a non-participant observer, the researcher had a chance to freely observe the interactions without interfering and influencing the lesson proceedings. According to Cohen *et al.* (2013:139), observation gives an understanding of the context that can come only from personal experience. The researcher planned what was going to be observed and had a clear purpose. An observation schedule was administered by the researcher and this entailed: the research topic, the researcher's name, the class / grade, and the duration of the observation. The observation checklist consisted of four components and under each component was a series of each components' characteristics (cf. Appendix 3).

Merriam (2009: 101) argues that observations are the major means of collecting data in qualitative research, observations offer a first-hand account of the phenomenon under investigation. Classroom observation assisted the researcher to see how the teachers communicated their knowledge of oral language development, seeing what the teachers were doing rather than what they said they were doing helped to answer the research question of the phenomena being investigated.

3.6.4 Examination of documents

Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents, both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material. Like other analytical methods in qualitative research, document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Bowen, 2009:27). Documents validate researchers' observations and interviews and thus make the findings more trustworthy. Beyond validation, they may raise questions about the researchers' intuition and thereby shape new directions for observations and interviews (Bowen, 2009:28).

Maree (2007:80) affirms that when one uses documents as a data collection technique, the focus will be on written communications that shed light on a particular phenomenon that is being investigated. Document examination was executed after teaching and learning hours, one afternoon was spent in each school which ultimately added up to nine days of doing

document analysis at all the school sites. Various documents (i.e. CAPS document for isiXhosa Home Language, the teacher's guide(s) and any material used by teachers for language purposes) were examined, interpreted and analysed (cf. Appendix 4). The documents that were examined varied per school, for instance there were two schools which had teacher guides and big books with guiding instructions, some schools had learner workbooks only with no teacher's guide. Other schools had either English reader books or no reader books at all. All schools had CAPS learner workbooks. Only two schools were well resourced and had isiXhosa readers for Grade R.

Documents are a good source of data for numerous reasons most of which is that they contain information that support the subject of enquiry. Merriam, (2009: 101) affirms that documents are a particular good source of information for qualitative case studies because they can ground an investigation in the context of the problem being investigated.

3.7 Data Analysis

According to Maree (2007:78), data analysis requires organisation of information and data reduction. Qualitative data analysis is the range of processes and procedures whereby a researcher moves from the qualitative data that have been collected, into some form of explanation, understanding or interpretation of the people and situations investigated. Qualitative data analysis is usually based on an interpretative philosophy. The idea is to examine the meaningful and symbolic content of qualitative data.

Remler and Van Ryzin (2014:77) point out that, "qualitative data analysis is the organization and interpretation of field notes, interviews and recordings". The method involves assemblage, coding and establishing themes (Creswell, 2014; De Wever *et al.*, 2006; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Mayring, 2004). The method unearths themes and patterns and it explores the implications of the messages (Creswell, 2014; Patton, 2002). The advantage of grouped data is that it enables themes, patterns and similarities to be established (Cohen *et al.*, 2013)

Qualitative content analysis attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings (Patton, 2002:453). These definitions illustrate that qualitative content analysis emphasizes an integrated view of speech/texts and their specific contexts. Qualitative content analysis goes beyond merely counting words or extracting content from texts to examine meanings, themes and patterns that may be manifest in a text. It allows researchers to understand social reality in a subjective but scientific manner. Qualitative content analysis is mainly inductive, grounding the examination of topics and themes, as well as the inferences drawn from them in the data.

The qualitative data analysis of this research is done according to a qualitative content analysis process.

Steps in data analysis

Step 1: Prepare the data

Qualitative content analysis can be used to analyse various types of data, but generally the data need to be transformed into written text before analysis can start. If the data come from existing texts, the choice of the content must be justified by what you want to know (e.g., documents in this study) (Patton, 2002:148). When transcribing interviews, the following questions arise: (1) should all the questions of the interviewer or only the main questions from the interview guide be transcribed; (2) should the verbalizations be transcribed literally or only in a summary; and (3) should observations during the interview (e.g., sounds, pauses, and other audible behaviours) be transcribed or not? (Schilling, 2006). In this study all questions of the interviewer and the responses of the interviewee were transcribed verbatim.

Step 2: Define the unit of analysis

The unit of analysis refers to the basic unit of text to be classified during content analysis. Messages must be unitized before they can be coded, and differences in the unit definition can affect coding decisions as well as the comparability of outcomes with other similar studies (De Wever *et al.*, 2006:18). Therefore, defining the coding unit is one of the most fundamental and important decisions (Suter 2011: 353). Qualitative content analysis usually uses individual themes as the unit for analysis, rather than the physical linguistic units (e.g., word, sentence, or paragraph) most often used in quantitative content analysis. An instance of a theme might be expressed in a single word, a phrase, a sentence, a paragraph, or an entire document. When using theme as the coding unit, you are primarily looking for the expressions of an idea (Minichiello 2001:120).

Step 3: Develop categories and a coding scheme

Codes are names or labels assigned to specific units or segments of related meaning identified within the transcripts (Neuman, 2014:170). The coding process for the transcripts consists of three coding steps as described by Neuman (2014:173) and Thietart (2007:94), namely: open coding, axial coding and selective coding.

Open coding involves the identification and naming of segments of meaning from the transcripts in relation to the research topic. The focus of open coding is on wording, phrasing, context, consistency, frequency, extensiveness and specificity of comments. The segments of

meaning from the transcripts were clearly marked (highlighted) and labelled in a descriptive manner.

Axial coding was done by reviewing and examining the initial codes that were identified during the previous procedure. Categories and patterns were identified during this step and organised in terms of causality, context and coherence.
Selective coding as the final coding procedure involves the selective scanning of all the codes that were identified for comparison, contrast and linkage to the research topic as well as for a central theme.

The codes were eventually evaluated for relevance to the research purpose. Related codes were then listed in categories according to the research purpose and theoretical framework from the literature study.

Step 4: Test the coding scheme on a sample of text

A standardized process was used in the analysis to develop and validate the coding scheme early in the process. The best test of the clarity and consistency of the category definitions was to code a sample of the data (Suter 2011:353). After the sample was coded, the researcher checked the coding consistency through an assessment of inter-coder which was implemented with the expertise of a qualitative research. Coding sample text, checking coding consistency, and revising coding rules is an iterative process and was continued until enough coding consistency was achieved (Suter 2011:353).

Step 5: Code all the text

When consistency in coding was achieved, the coding rules were applied to the entire corpus of text. During the coding process, it was necessary to check the coding repeatedly, to prevent "drifting into an idiosyncratic sense of what the codes mean" (Schilling, 2006:25).

Step 6: Assess the coding consistency

After coding the entire data set, the researcher rechecked the consistency of the coding. It is not safe to assume that, if a sample is coded in a consistent and reliable manner, the coding of the whole corpus of text is also consistent. Human coders are subject to fatigue and are likely to make more mistakes as the coding proceeds (Johnson and Christensen, 2019). Also, the coders' understanding of the categories and coding rules may change subtly over time, which may lead to greater inconsistency (Miles & Huberman, 1994:402; Suter 2011:355).

Step 7: Draw conclusions from the coded data

This step involves making sense of the themes or categories identified, and their properties. At this stage, the researcher made interpretations and presented the reconstructions of meanings that were derived from the data.

The outlined process qualified a systematic and logic step-by-step approach for the analysis of the qualitative data, and it allowed the researcher to go beyond mere descriptive, comparative and explanatory conclusions (Thiétart, 2007:180). The qualitative analysis process is approached like a spiral or circular process and not as a fixed linear action.

The content analysis approach implies that the various steps of analysis are regarded as procedural guidelines and not as rigid steps like that of a recipe (Thietart, 2007:184).

3.8 Trustworthiness

The aim of trustworthiness in a qualitative inquiry is to support the argument that the inquiry's findings are "worth paying attention to" (Suter 2011:276). This is especially important when using inductive content analysis as categories are created from the raw data without a theory-based categorisation matrix.

According to Huberman and Miles (2002:109) and Tobin and Begley (2004:280), it is inappropriate to transfer terminology across paradigms. The authors suggest alternative ways to demonstrate reliability and validity outside the linguistic confines of a qualitative research paradigm. The trend to rather emphasise the use of rigour to assure reliability and validity in qualitative research was followed in this section of the research (Twycross & Shields, 2005:43). Rigour refers to the demonstration of integrity and competence in qualitative research by adherence to detail and accuracy to assure authenticity and trustworthiness of the research process. As such the rigour of this qualitative section related to the overall planning and implementation of the planned research design conducted in a logical, systematic manner which ensured the authenticity and trustworthiness of procedures according to the following criteria (Roberts & Priest, 2006:43; Tobin & Begley, 2004:286).

- *Credibility*: Engagement with the data (recordings, notes and transcripts) was done intensively to demonstrate clear links between the data collected. The use and indication of verbatim examples of participants' responses reflected the range and tone of the gathered responses. The researcher made use of member checking to systematically solicit feedback about the data and conclusions from the participants in the study. In this study, the participants can review their interview text, provide feedback, correct inaccuracies, and/or clarify ambiguities in the text. Due to the use of more than one language in the areas where the research was conducted, the

researcher reviewed the interview text and clarified uncertainties in the text using a mutual language that benefited both the researcher and the participants.

- *Dependability*: Care was taken to ensure that the research process was logical, traceable, and clearly documented in a reflexive manner by giving a detailed account of the research process.
- *Transferability*: This indicates the extent to which the findings can be applied in other contexts or with other participants (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:278). The strategies for achieving transferability comprises of thorough descriptions and purposive sampling (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:280). To ensure thorough descriptions, detailed descriptions of data was provided. Purposive sampling has been applied within this study because of its propensity to maximise the variety of the information obtained within a specific context (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:296).
- *Confirmability*: An audit process was implemented while working forward as well as backward through the research process to ensure that the data and interpretations of the findings were not figments of imagination, but clearly derived, sound and confirmed findings. The intention during the interpretation process was not to generalise findings to a population, but to identify generic accepted principles and trends related to the research topic. Confirmability, therefore, constitutes the degree to which the researcher's own biases are excluded from the finding (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:298). The description of the research process of what was done, how it was done and why it was done as well as the implementation according to criteria for qualitative research ensured that the authenticity and trustworthiness of the research was increased.

The stated criteria did not serve as a restrictive checklist for the qualitative research process; however, it was regarded as the parameters to generate informational knowledge in accordance with the research aims (Thietart, 2007:133). The legitimacy of the interviews was assured by a clear conceptualisation, a purposeful design of an interview schedule, as well as a planned protocol that guided the way the interviews were conducted. The consistency of responses was checked by reiterating questions in different forms at various stages of the interview.

3.9 Researcher role in the research process

During the research process, the researcher established a good professional relationship with the Grade R teachers. Prior to any data collection process, the researcher obtained official permission to perform research and adhered to ethical research principles. This was followed by the application for permission to conduct research in the schools that were identified. The

researcher also sought permission from Grade R teachers to conduct classroom observation in their respective Grade R isiXhosa classrooms.

An orientation session was conducted successfully prior the formal data collection where the researcher introduced the study and verbally reaffirmed the ethical issues for clarity and assurance of understanding. During orientation sessions the researcher and the participants drafted a schedule for mutual benefit. Dates, days, times were set out clearly and the instrument to be used during each visit was communicated in advance.

During formal data collection the researcher acted as a non-participant observer and remained cautiously objective as possible. The role of a non-participant observer assisted the researcher to record every detail in the researcher's journal. The researcher collected data by means of questionnaires, individual interviews, classroom observation and examination of documents.

3.10 Ethical Issues

The history of research misapplication led to the creation of ethics policies focusing on the protection of human subjects from exploitation or exposure to unacceptable levels of risk through their participation in research. Three basic principles are set forth in the Belmont Report to provide an analytical framework towards the resolution of ethical problems that develop with research involving human subjects: (a) respect for persons, (b) kindness, and (c) justice (Cassell, 2000). These principles provide a framework within which to think about risks to human subjects participating in research; in addition, these principles "provide a basis on which specific rules may be formulated, criticized, and interpreted" (Cassell, 2000).

Tobin and Begley, (2004) states that respect for persons represents flip sides of the same idea: that individuals are independent persons, capable and entitled to personal decision making in terms of participating or not in the research process, conversely, Cassell, (2000) supports, if the individual's autonomy is diminished, they are persons in need of protection in terms of their possible participation in the research process.

In terms of respecting the Grade R teachers as the research participants in this study, the researcher communicated the information necessary to the participants. The participants reached an agreement to participate based on the relevant information and a complete description of what to expect and what is expected of them during their involvement in the research. This explanation involved a spelling out of the procedures of the research and anything that the participant would be asked to do as part of the research. The whole idea was to make the participants aware and be fully informed of the research process.

The principle of justice in research speaks to the fair distribution of the burdens and benefits of research in the selection and recruitment of participants (Cassell 2000: 19). The principle of beneficence speaks to the maximising of benefits and the minimising of risks in the research

process. According to the Belmont Report, researchers are to adhere to two general rules: (a) do no harm, and (b) maximise the possible benefits and minimise possible harms (Cassell 2000:21). Essentially, “we must actively attempt not only to avoid harms, but to benefit those studied, to augment, not merely respect, their autonomy” (Cassell, 2000).

The researcher dealt with the ethical issues in the following way:

- **Permission and consent**

Permission to conduct the research within the district was obtained from the District Director of the Department of Basic Education North west province, in the Dr. KKD area (cf. Appendix 5). Permission to conduct the research at the schools was obtained from the School Management Team (SMT) of the respective schools (cf. Appendix 6). The thought behind obtaining permission from SMT and the class teacher participant was due to the fact that the researcher was involved in classroom observation(s) of the Grade R teacher participant(s). The letters granting permission have not been included in the study to ensure the anonymity of the schools because the principals signed and stamped the consent forms.

Rewards or gifts were not promised nor offered to participants and (money, bonus points, extramural participation had no influence in their decision to participate in the study. There is no vulnerability status connected to this case study. There was no link or personal relation to the participants that could lead to a "captive audience". The researcher was not familiar with the schools therefore there was no conflict of interest.

The researcher informed the participants of the purpose, nature, data collection methods, and the extent of the research prior to commencement. Furthermore, the researcher explained the participants’ distinctive roles (cf. Appendix 7).

The researcher applied for ethical clearance from the Ethics Committee of the North-West University, Potchefstroom. The Ethics number: NWU-00329-17-A2 was allocated for this study (cf. Appendix 8).

- **Protection from harm**

In this research study the researcher assured that no participants were put in a risky situation of being harmed as a result of their participation whether physically or psychologically.

Participants were not subjected to unusual stress or embarrassment (Trochim & Donnelly, 2001:77) as the researcher emphasised and ensured that the classroom observation was not intended to judge nor to criticise but merely to understand the strategies teachers employ for oral language development in isiXhosa.

- **Honesty and trust**

The researcher adhered strictly to all the ethical guidelines that served as standards about the honesty and trustworthiness of the data collected and the accompanying data analysis.

- **Privacy, and confidentiality**

In this study the researcher ensured that the confidentiality of the participants was maintained through the removal of any identifying characteristics before the widespread dissemination of information. The researcher made it clear that the participants' names were not used for any other purposes, nor would information be shared that revealed their identity in any way. The researcher used pseudo names to identify the schools and number symbols to identify participants.

- **Voluntary participation**

Despite all the above-mentioned precautions, it was made clear to the participants that the research was only for academic purposes and their participation in it was absolutely voluntary. No one was forced to participate. The participants had the freedom to withdraw from the research at any time.

3.11 Data storage and disposal

Data has been stored in digital and non-digital format on a password protected computer. Data was also stored on an external hard drive. The researcher ensured there was an antivirus software on the computer to avoid loss of data from a virus attack.

In order to manage the data, files were created to ensure easy access to the data whenever it is required. File names that are concise and meaningful including dates, month and year have been used for easy access to them whenever required by the custodians. It was essential to keep recordings and transcripts used in the interviews and in order to keep record of what emerged during the study (data trail).

3.12 Conclusion

The chapter explained the methodology used in the study. The following methodological aspects were addressed: the research paradigm, the research approach, research design, data collection methods, data collection procedure, data analysis, the role of the researcher as well as ethical issues pertaining to the study.

In the next chapter, the data are presented and discussed.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided an in-depth discussion of the research design and research methodology that were employed in this study. The purpose of this study was to determine Grade R teachers' competency and knowledge of oral language development in isiXhosa**.** This chapter is concerned with presenting the data analysis of the findings according to the themes that emerged during the interviews, observation, questionnaires and document analysis. The research findings are presented according to the themes identified during the data analysis. The purpose of this chapter is to address the research questions as set out in chapter 1:

- What is Grade R teachers' knowledge of strategies involving dialogic reading, promoting extended discourse and using specific vocabulary?
- What is Grade R teachers' perceived knowledge of strategies involving engaging in dialogic reading, promoting extended discourse and using specific vocabulary for developing oral language?
- To what extent are these above-mentioned practices manifested in the Grade R classrooms and documentation?

4.2 Grade R teachers' knowledge of oral language development

As indicated in chapter 3, nine participants formed part of this study. Out of the nine, seven participants' comments indicated an understanding of oral language development. The researcher engaged participants during the interviews to obtain background information in terms of how they viewed oral language development.

P-K8 captured the concept as follows, *oral language is speaking and listening of learners while sharing ideas, expressing themselves during morning greeting and discussion of daily experiences.* P-S4 explained that *it promotes speaking and sharing daily events during daily news.*

This was further elaborated by *P-O2 and P-S3, who* explained *it as promoting talking in the class. It helps prepare learners for role play, dramatization and speaking and listening, sharing ideas, expressing themselves, discussion of daily experiences. Oral language promotes*

learner understanding, this was the only participant who acknowledged the role of oral language in learners understanding*.'*

P-J3 explained*, it involves speaking and listening, extending talking time with learners. It can help shy learners to also speak openly during pre-reading.*

P-J4 *said that, it is when learners speak. It promotes use of isiXhosa language and learners gain confidence in asking questions.*

One participant, P-S5 emphasized, *it is doing rhymes, singing, listening to stories and further discussion with learners. My knowledge is that it can be practised for early reading. P*-P5 explained *it as picture reading. It is voicing out their views during discussion and sharing ideas. It promotes an open talk.* Which was also stated by P-J5 who explained, oral language as *involving picture reading and storytelling, and* lastly P-J3 who articulated it as *picture reading.*

The data presented above ties together with literature that was presented in Chapter 2. The findings discussed above show that the participants refer to oral language as allowing learners the opportunity to speak and listen. This is supported by Lyle (1993) who explained that for most children, the literacy learning process actually begins with speaking, talking about their experiences and talking about themselves during the teaching and learning process. This idea is also supported by Wilsenach (2015:4) who stated that from the perspective of language development, oral language provides a foundation for the development of other language skills. It is evident that these findings and literature given by these scholars that participants seem to understand the elements of oral language and development.

Presented below are the results of Grade R teachers' views of strategies for oral language development involving dialogic reading, promoting extended discourse and using specific vocabulary. The data presented in this theme focus on the data collected by means of the questionnaire, interviews and document analysis.

This section entails subthemes which focus on dialogic reading, promoting extended discourse and using specific vocabulary.

4.2.1 Grade R Teachers' views of strategies for oral language development involving dialogic reading

In this section the results gathered by means of Section A of the questionnaire are presented and discussed. The results indicated that the majority of the participants answered questions 2, 3, 5, 6 and 8 correctly. However, the participants were not quite sure about questions 1, 4,

7 and 9 (cf. Figure 4.1). The results indicated that the teachers were not quite sure about the different types of questions to use in order to engage learners, exactly how shared reading contributed to the learning of the learners, and teachers were of the opinion that they should select books that were familiar to learners rather than select unfamiliar texts.

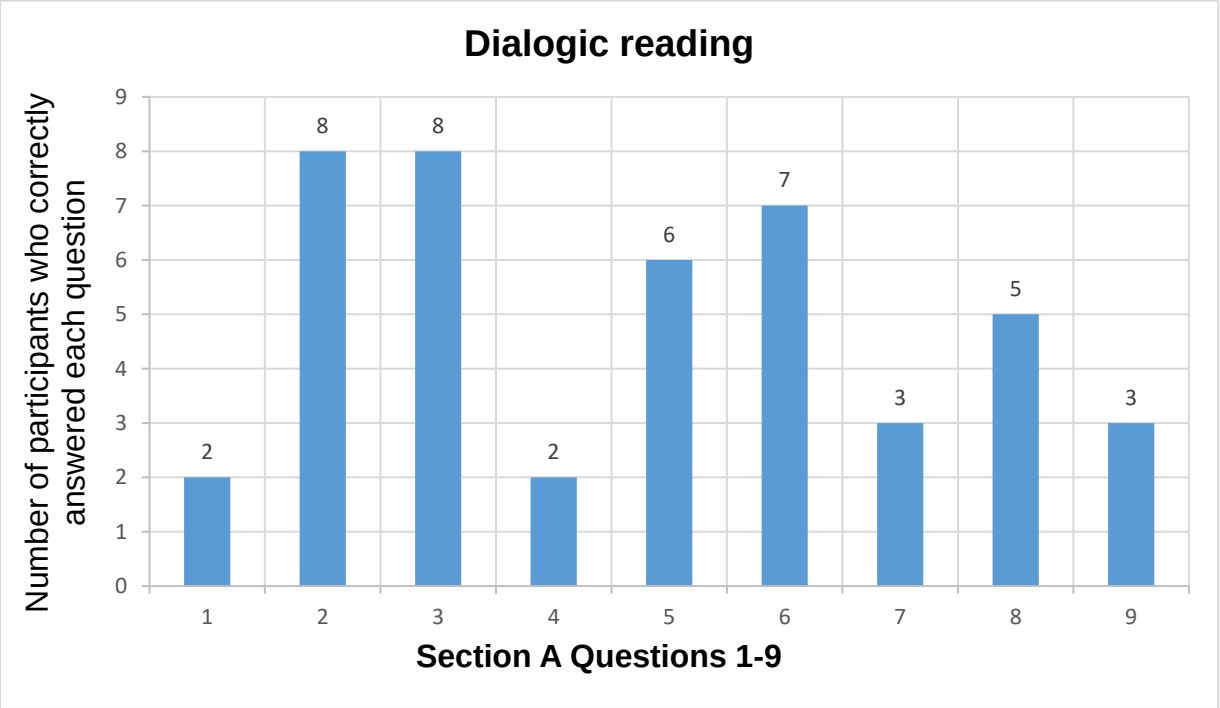

Figure 4.1: Dialogic reading

During interviews participants were asked about their understanding of the concept 'dialogic reading'. Responses indicated:

Using puppets

Is using the language

A conversation between the teacher and the learner

Its questions and answers after a story telling and/or reading

I do not know it and I am not aware of it

Yes it promotes learner understanding

It promotes use of isiXhosa language and learners gain confidence in asking questions.

The results seem to indicate that not all teachers were sure of what dialogic reading was. From the above it is clear that there was a lot of uncertainty. This could be because the teachers were not familiar with the term 'dialogic reading' and might have never heard it before.

The researcher observed lessons based on listening and speaking language components which are the basis of oral language. One of the aspects observed and recorded was the strategies the participants used for oral language development. Participants P-K8 and P-P5 presented their oral lessons well, these participants engaged learners in the process of having a dialogue around the text they were reading for the learners. Participants asked questions, which included levels 1-3 (what, tell me more, why) and that helped the learners to explore the text at a deeper level. The participants followed learners answers with expansions, they defined words, analysed the components of the story while asking questions related to the story plot. Through asking open ended questions e.g. *"have you ever seen a Ndebele house painting, have you been there?"* / Wawukhe wayibona indlu ecakwe ngemizobo yamaNdebele, wawukhe waya khona?" that related to the learner's personal experiences, learners were able to talk freely about the text.

In order to implement dialogic reading well, teachers need to have access to a great variety of books; during my observations, however, it was clear that there *was a* shortage and/or no reading books, and this is a concern as Knauer *et al.* (2019) states that dialogic reading is an interactive shared picture book reading practice designed to enhance young children's language and literacy skills and so without any books allocated to teacher the learners will not be able to get exposure to a variety of texts, as well as unfamiliar vocabulary. When asked for readers by the researcher, participants responded, "I do not have readers, I borrow books from Grade 1 teachers" some stated, "I only use CAPS workbooks, in our school only HOD's select and order books." Participants indicated that they do not select their own reading books instead the HOD's do the selection, and this raises concern amongst the Grade R teachers as they are denied the opportunity to choose themselves based on their learners' needs.

Seven participants relied on the departmental workbooks for reading opportunities. In the analysis of CAPS learner workbooks to pursue activities that support dialogic reading; the results showed (cf. Figure 4.2) the activity Masithethe / *Let's talk.* The instruction on the activity was Jonga / *Look*, Ncamathelisa / *Paste*, Xela / *Tell*. The teachers indicated that they used the activities in the workbook as required by the department, and they did not use it, for example, to discuss or enhance the activity to support additional oral language activity by the learners.

Figure 4.2: Masithethe / Let's talk

It was evident from the findings that reading books play an essential part in a child's life. This is emphasized by Excell (2011:46) who explains children's experience with books plays an important role. Picture book reading provides children with many skills that are necessary for example vocabulary, sound structure, the meaning of print, the structure of stories and language, sustained attention and the pleasure of learning. Ensor, Devine, Marks and Hughes (2014:2) emphasized that it is necessary for teachers to develop learners' receptive and expressive language skills, therefore learning oral language is a primary developmental process for children. Overall, it seems as if the teachers knew what the basics of dialogic reading entailed, but that they were not familiar with the term and they tended to stick to the guidelines and workbooks provided by the department without doing additional activities.

4.2.2 Grade R teachers' views of strategies for oral language development: Knowledge of promoting extended discourse

The results gathered by means of Section B on the questionnaire related to knowledge of promoting extended discourse (cf. Figure 4.3).

Overall, the results in this section indicated that the teachers were not sure about what "promoting extended discourse" entails. In order to promote extended discourse teachers would have to engage the learners in all aspects of talk in the classroom; this seems to be an unfamiliar aspect for the teachers who tend to dominate discourse in the classroom; this was supported by observation in the classroom. From the options selected by the teachers on the questionnaire, it is also clear that they tend to give short answers such as "a car" instead of extending the discourse by, for example, rather answering "Yes you are playing with a big, blue car." Teachers tended to select answers that required short answers, familiar vocabulary words, and activities that did not challenge learners too much in terms of oral language development, specifically during free play.

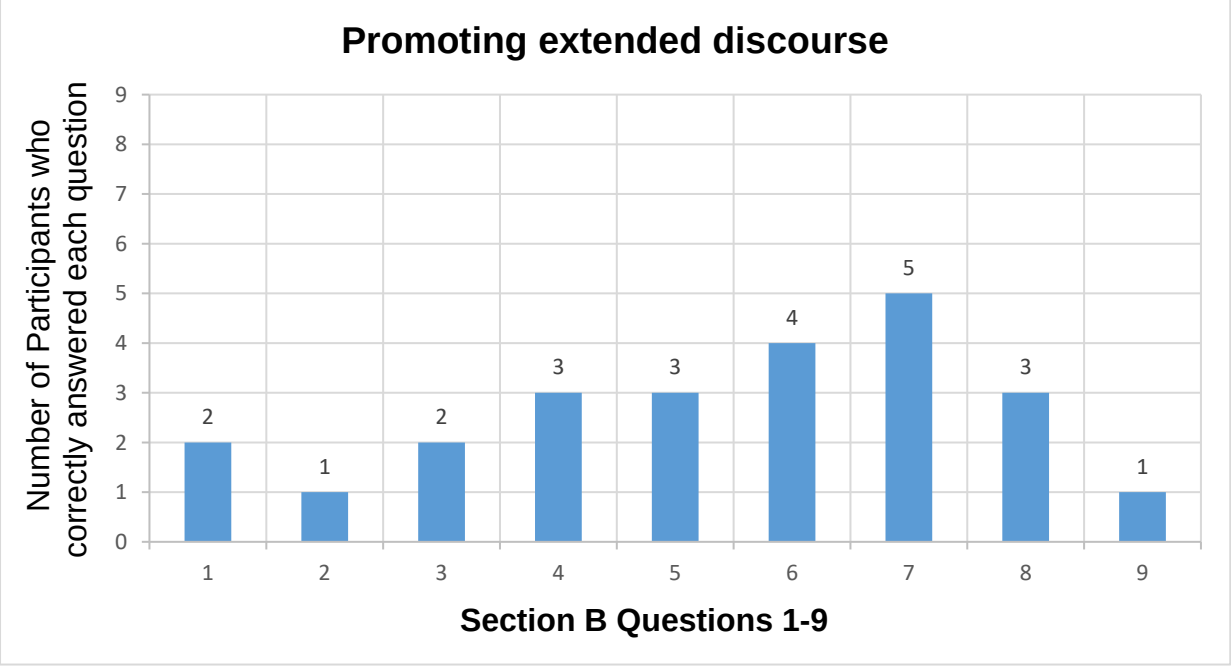

Figure 4.3: Promoting extended discourse

Participants responses on extended discourse during the interview included the following:

- *a platform to practise isiXhosa language, the teacher can identify childrens' challenges and weakness in language.*
- *sharing daily events.*
- *it is voicing out their views during discussion and sharing ideas.*
- *extending talking time with learners.*
- *is further discussion with learners.*

Some participants specifically stated their unsureness:

"Not aware of,.."

"Not clear,...."

"I am not sure of it."

"I don't know extended discourse."

The responses during the interviews supported that collected on the questionnaire. The results indicated that not all teachers were sure of what extended discourse was. From the comments it is clear that there were major uncertainties about extended discourse. This could be because the teachers were not familiar with the term 'extended discourse' and might not have known it at all. To obtain in-depth understanding of teachers knowledge of extended discourse for the development of oral language, some of the participants responded, *I am not clear about these strategies, maybe I do practice unaware;* "I cannot say I practice these strategy because I don't know some of them; *I need more knowledge on these strategies.*

During my observation in the classroom it was clear that the teachers did engage the learners in talk, but the quality of the engagement was limited and it was clear that the teachers were not quite sure how to engage learners in extended discourse for an extended period of time. Overall, the participants did involve the learners in narrative talk or storytelling. This is important as indicated by Olaussen (2016:86), that narrative talk or storytelling gives an opportunity for learners to talk about events in the past or events that will happen in the future. Participants asked learners to predict the story events. Learners shared their real life experiences in connection with the story. Narratives may foster children's abstract understanding of how to organize a set of events into a story and to comprehend others' narratives. The findings revealed that participants had a challenge including use of non-immediate talk. This argument is further explained by Snow *et al*. (2009:32), that non-immediate talk as decontextualized language which involves longer utterances and more explicit, complex language than labelling or "yes/no" questions that constitutes most

immediate talk, it is the language that is removed from the here-and-now. Participants were more comfortable in engaging learners on yes/no questions and labelling.

An activity in the learners workbook required the learners to identify the season shown (cf. Figure 4.4). The question to learners as written on the instruction is, *"How do they know it is Autumn?* / "Nazi njani ukuba kuseKwindla." Learners have been clearly guided, told upfront of what the season is, there is limited discussion they need to do, as they will recall the features of the season in question. Further discussion within the classroom is guided by the question *"Look at the picture and talk about what you see"* / "Jonga umfanekiso uthethe ngokubonayo." Building an understanding beyond the stated situation and the use of decontextualized language or nonimmediate talk is necessary to realise extended discourse. According to Rowe (2013:45) children must be given opportunities to gain competence in talking, expressing their meanings and providing reasoning for their thoughts. Children need to be asked for their opinion and use "open questions" which articulate to children that teachers are interested in their thoughts and the intention for their thoughts. A "yes/no" answer is not sufficient. Discourse requires participants to formulate their arguments, give a reason for their argument and connect their arguments in a logical way to a conclusion. Listening to classmates gives new perspectives, this way discourse provides other developmental opportunities than narratives. Figure 4.4 could be a good example of an activity for extended discourse, however, it lacked detail and only a knowledgeable teacher could engage learners in dialogic reading activities using this activity. Cunningham *et al.* (2009:511) presented the arguments to emphasize the importance of knowledgeable teachers and suggested that teachers must understand the connection between early oral language experiences and the reading process. The authors specifically identified vocabulary, syntactical awareness, pragmatics, phonological awareness, and phonemic awareness as critical knowledge for teachers as most participants were not aware of.

Figure 4.4: Masithethe / *Let's talk*

4.2.3 Grade R teachers' views of strategies for oral language development: Knowledge of using specific vocabulary and rare words

The focus of the questions in section C was on determining teachers' knowledge of using specific vocabulary. The results indicated that the teachers were able to answer five of the nine questions fairly well. The questions that were causing uncertainty relate to the use of rare (unfamiliar) vocabulary words and aspects related to an underlying knowledge of how oral language development contributes to reading development. This is not an unfamiliar finding and is supported by research indicated that teachers need more explicit knowledge on how the core concepts of structured literacy enhance the development of children's literacy. The reason for considering the introduction of rare words is that rare words are often introduced in connection with decontextualized talk, explanatory talk or book reading (Olaussen, 2016).

It was clear that the teachers knew various methods to use to support vocabulary development; they did, however, tend to stick to the familiar without challenging the learners.

Question 3 was answered correctly by 7 participants. Participants were asked to identify an effective strategy for teaching new words. By answering this question correctly, participants indicated that using demonstrations and/or pictures, providing multiple definitions and examples, and connecting new words to concepts children already know are the best methods for teaching new words to children. This method is supported by Dickinson and Tabors (2001:20) who attest that using rare words in discussion with children, expands their vocabulary. Research by Vellutino *et al*. (2007:109) confirms that the relationship between vocabulary and reading comprehension gets stronger as children grow older. Therefore, it is important to determine specific ways in which language development, and more specifically, vocabulary development, can best be supported in children as early as possible. Two participants selected the incorrect answers suggesting that providing single definitions and examples and asking children to explain what they think the word means are effective strategies for teaching new words. Another question participants answered correctly was Question 4. Six participants correctly identified the predominant way that children acquire vocabulary, by hearing new words used in their environment, including in conversations, television, and storybooks read aloud to them. Neuman *et al.* (2011) states that as children grow and have additional experiences their vocabularies continue to develop. Depending upon the nature of the words to be learned and learner background knowledge, vocabulary development represents two related but somewhat different cognitive tasks; establishing associations and developing conceptual knowledge.

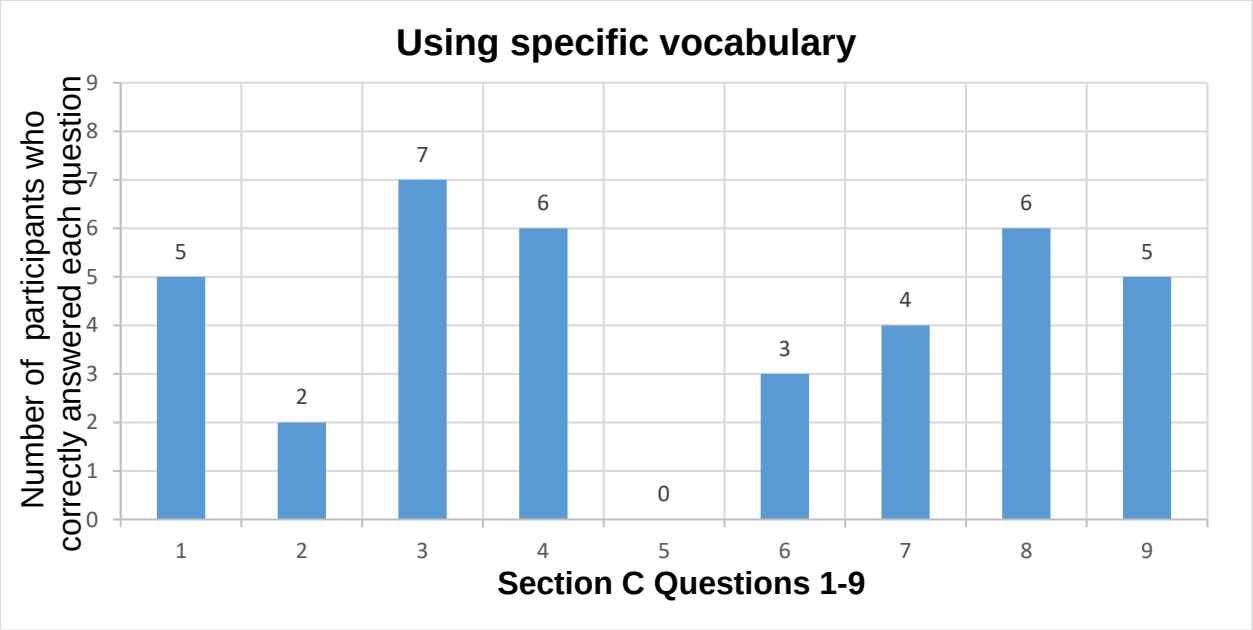

Figure 4.5: Using specific vocabulary and rare words

Observation of lessons presented the following results, participants used isiXhosa vocabulary that is in the Grade R learner's level of understanding. P-J5 shared, *learners are exposed into many different languages in the township, I encourage them to speak isiXhosa*. P-S5 communicated as follows, *I help them with isiXhosa translation of a word when the learners use Setswana, which is a communal language in the area.*

Analysis of learner workbooks presented these results; emphasis was given more to picture interpretation, reading single sounds and single words. The workbooks presented activities for reading, three word sentences which were written in bold type were observed. Participants who had an idea of using specific vocabulary exposed learners to meaning of words, rare words *defined as words that might be new to Grade R learners*. These words are low frequent and concrete words such as simple syllable structure based around a (C) V (C) V (lala / *sleep*); V (C) V (ewe / *yes*). The teacher and the children discussed the story together, talking about unfamiliar vocabulary words. An aspect of word recognition based on the words in the story was taught and practiced. The story was reread with partners in shared reading, with the support of the teacher, for practice and fluency. Grade R learners orally retold the story to ensure they comprehend the meaning.

The activity represented in Figure 4.6 in the workbook required learners to identify the sound they hear most in each word. It offers them the opportunity to say the sound, to write it over the dotted lines and also to give other words they knew with the same sound. The development of phonemic awareness at an early age allow learners to extend their vocabulary and be able to build their emergent reading skills.

Figure 4.6: Masimamele izandi / Let's listen to the sounds

Despite the fact that this activity focuses on sounds whereas the heading under discussion is vocabulary and rare words, Figure 4.6 poses multiple opportunities, namely a written activity (Masibhale), an opportunity to sound the word, to write over the dots in order to understand the written form of the *sound*-isandi u-**i**. Engaging learners in this activity could aid the use of vocabulary and rare words, however participants seemed to miss an opportunity to address vocabulary as well.

The activity represented in Figure 4.6 requires learners to know each sound as represented in a word.

Omnye umba obalulekileyo wokwandisa isigama yintoni? kuba isakhono sokubiza igama sixhomekeke kukuva igama nokuzinza kwalo engqondweni, impendulo echanekileyo 'kukwazi izandi', ngumbuzo abafundisi-ntsapho abangawuphendulekanga kakuhle. As stated in Figure 4.5 both questions (5&6) received little or no appropriate response.
As a matter of fact, the word isitshixo / *key* is known by its different dialect name(s) than the isiXhosa word as indicated in the activity above, Figure 4.6 is indeed an opportunity to promote

the use of such rare words and an opportunity for alphabet knowledge and phonological representation.

4.3 Grade R teachers' perceived knowledge of strategies involving engaging in dialogic reading, promoting extended discourse and using specific vocabulary for developing oral language?

Three sub-sections within the main parts of the questionnaire were included to determine how the participants perceived their own competence on the aspects of dialogic reading, promoting extended discourse, and the use of specific vocabulary and rare words. In addition, they were also asked to compare themselves to other teachers on the above mentioned three aspects of oral language development.

The results indicated that 40% of the participants indicated that they were of the opinion that their knowledge on dialogic reading was good (ratings of 4, 5 and 6), whereas 27% indicated that their knowledge of extended discourse was good and 33% indicated that their knowledge of using specific vocabulary was good (cf. Figure 4.7). The results seem to correlate with the results found on the questionnaire, the comments made during the interviews as well as during the observations and the document analysis. The teachers were not quite sure about how to extend discourse in the classroom. Overall, the results also indicate that the teachers themselves felt that they would like to know more about oral language development.

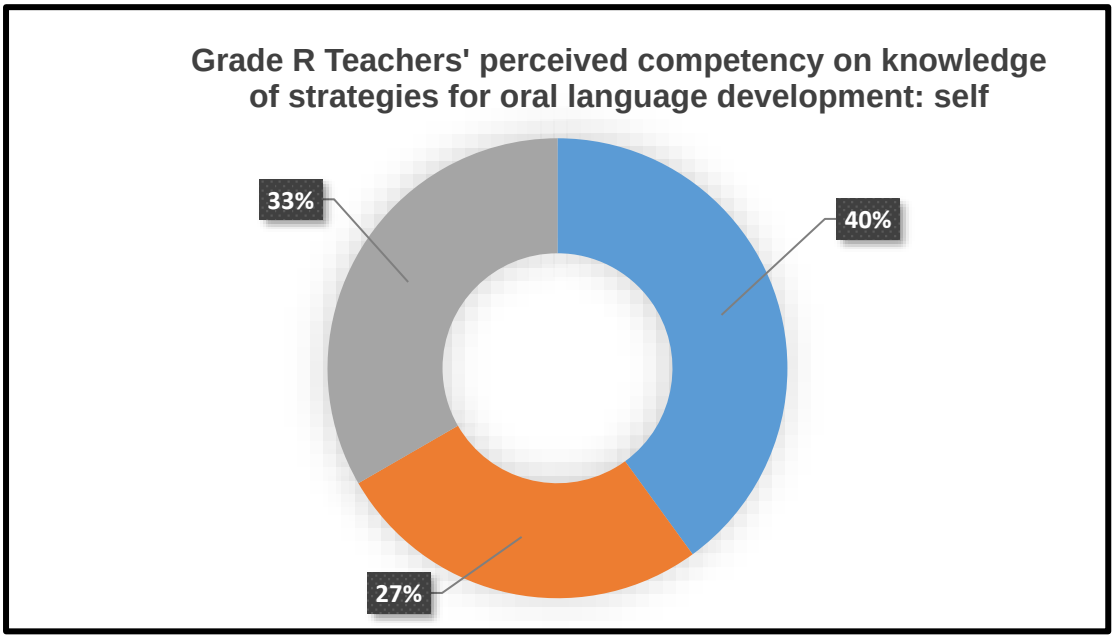

Figure 4.7: Self-assessment of oral language development

When asked to compare their perception of their own knowledge and implementation to that of their peers the teachers indicated that 45% were of the opinion that they compared very well to their peers in terms of dialogic reading, 20% on extended discourse and 35% on specific vocabulary (cf. Figure 4.8).

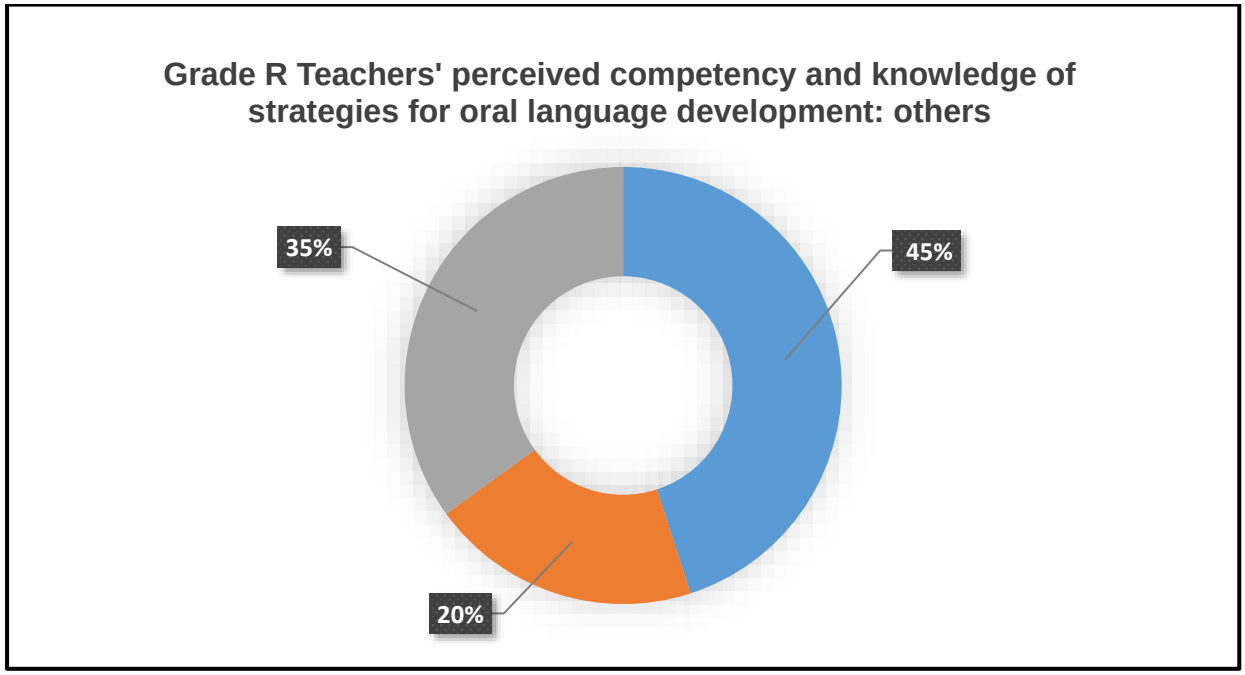

Figure 4.8: Comparison of own knowledge to that of peers

Overall, the results clearly indicate that the teachers feel that the promotion of extended discourse is a cause for concern. However, the results also indicate that the teachers are very aware of what needs to be done in the classroom and they are also able to identify areas they would like to improve on.

4.4 Oral language development practice manifestation in Grade R classrooms and documentation

The researcher conducted classroom observation as well as document analysis to gain insight into the oral language development practices of the participants. The following documents were analysed: CAPS policy documents for isiXhosa home language, learners' workbooks *(incwadi yomsebenzi wabafundi)* and Readers *(iincwadi zokufunda)*. The purpose of the analysis was to determine to what extent oral language development features could be gleaned from these documents (e.g., the visibility of listening and speaking language components, the strategies used for oral language development and the activities to promote and support oral language development).

The learner's workbooks were examined as activity books that consolidate teaching and learning. Among other activities the learner workbooks comprised of illustrations for interpretation. Instructions were written in isiXhosa and symbolized by icons, namely, *Let's read* (Masifunde), *Let's sing* (Masicule), *Let's recite* (Masicengceleze), *and Let's discuss* (Masixoxe).

One surprising aspect within the learners worksbook were language-specific errors which may impact the quality of teaching. Figure 4.9 presented errors within the learner workbook, for example the direct translation of instructions from English to isiXhosa which distorted the meaning and was misleading to learners., However it takes a vigilant teacher to notice and correct such mistakes. The observation was made in term two (2) page (6) of the learner's workbook, where an instruction did not correlate with the picture.

Learner workbook sample Figure 4.9: **izandi *I phonics or sounds***

Pictures on this page represent English words with english phonemes (b**ee**, t**ea**, k**ey**)**;** isiXhosa words would be (*bee*-inyosi, *tea* -iti, *key*-isitshixo, and there is no relationship between the phonemes).

The first row would be {inyosi *(bee)*, inyoka *(snake)*, inye *(one)*} and the instruction would be the identification of the beginning sound not the last sound, it would be easier to identify two phonemes **[i-ny-]**.

Second row would be {ikati *(cat)*, ikomityi *(cup)*, ikawusi *(socks)*} the identification of the last sound **[-i-k]**.

Third row {utata *(dad)*, itafile *(table)*, itikiti *(ticket)*, itolofiya *(prickle pear)*}, identify the sound that you hear most **[-t-]**. The researcher identified the challenge and P-S5 was the only participant who emphasised that there are a number of challenges of this nature within the learners' readers . The instruction would be a direct translation of English which distorts the meaning in isiXhosa and could potentially affect instruction if teachers don't pick up on this.

Figure 4.9: Errors in the learner workbook

Figure 4.10 below refers to an activity where learners are required to discuss the sunny day, what people wear and why; and what games they engage in on a sunny day. This activity also allows for extended discourse within the classroom as learners share (listen and talk) with

each other. *Pasting a sticker on its relevant space* / ukuncamathelisa kwindawo echanekileyo is a task that learners should do within the activity.

Figure 4.10: MASENZE / *LET'S DO and* MASIXOXE / *LET'S DISCUSS*

Figure 4.11, activity below need learners to observe the picture in each block, have a conversation about what is happening in each picture and finally identify whether the activity is done during the day or at night. Shared reading with the teacher is the main activity and usually happens in the first 15 minutes of the reading focus time (DBE, 2011:14). It is implementend using a single, enlarged text for the whole class, it can be from the big books, posters and pictures. Figure 4-11 above in block 1, the text selection included these words,

(*sleep* / uku-lala), block 2 (*bus* / ibhasi), block 3 (*girl* / intombazana) and block 4 (boy / inkwenkwe) and (*television* / umabonakude). The selected text is on Grade R learner's level of understanding, learners' emergent reading skills are developed through picture reading and later the identification of words (Intombazana, inkwenkwe, umabonakude) might sound difficult by the mere look of its length however they are everyday words used even at home. As stated in CAPS (DBE, 2011:16) each shared reading session has a learning focus; the first session focuses on the enjoyment and first look at the text, with the children giving a personal response to the text. These words (ukukhwela, iyaqubha, ibukele) posed the opportunity for the next session in which the same text is used and the focus shifts to more involvement in the reading with the teacher using the discussions that take place to develop vocabulary and comprehension.

Figure 4.11: Masifunde / *Let's read*

The purpose of the (CAPS) policy document for isiXhosa home language is to guide teachers and is used in conjunction with the learner workbook. Eight participants had enough learner workbooks in their classrooms. Only one participant had black and white copied learner workbooks. The researcher's focus was on two language components, listening and speaking. In the policy document it was stated that Listening and Speaking components will be further developed in other subjects; keeping in mind that the Grade R daily programme is highly integrated. Seven (7) to eight (8) hours per week is set for oral language (izifundo zomlomo) and daily activities (imisebenzi yemihla ngemihla). Two participants were equipped with a teacher's guide policy document, seven participants did not have the documents. Where the researcher had access to the teacher's guide policy document, it is structured well and organised into four terms. The teacher's guide policy document is a resourceful document, it has incorporated all language components and explained how to mediate learning with CAPS learner workbooks.

The findings indicated that classroom pratices differed based on the knowledge and competency of each participants nevertheless teachers made an effort to create an environment within their classrooms which enhanced the development of oral language regardless of the results on their average competency (cf. Figure 4.7).

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented the data analysis of the findings according to the themes that emerged during the questionnaire, interviews, observation, and document analysis (i.e. departmental workbooks). The themes that were discussed included, Grade R teachers' perspectives of oral language development in isiXhosa, teachers' views of strategies for oral language development involving dialogic reading, promoting extended discourse and using specific vocabulary and rare words, and the extent to which Grade R teachers implement the strategies of oral language development. In summary, the findings provided evidence that Gr. R teachers' did have knowledge or oral language development and they did implement some practices well. However, overall, and this is supported by the teachers' own admissions, teachers responsible for teaching Grade R need more support and guidance. Many of these teachers have been left to their own devices and they are implementing a sink or swim approach.

The following chapter presents the recommendations and conclusion for the study.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This study was centred in the North West Province, in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda district focusing on Grade R teachers' knowledge and perceived competency of oral language development in isiXhosa. This chapter gives an overview of the study with concluding remarks and recommendations on teaching and learning of oral language development in isiXhosa as an indigenous language in the Grade R curriculum.

5.2 Overview of the research

Chapter 1 presented an orientation to the research in which the primary problem statement, research questions and research aims were stated. Background information about the research topic was described and substantiated with a brief literature review on the research topic. Sources of relevant information pertaining to oral language development were identified, studied and used as a motivation and substantiation for this research. The initial chapter also provided a concise explanation of the research approach, design and methodology employed within this study. This chapter is concluded by providing an advance organiser of the chapters that followed.

Chapter 2 focuses on the theoretical framework underpinning the research study. The literature study enabled the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of relevant language issues and policies that affect the way oral language development should be interpreted within a language and early childhood policy framework as well as review scholarly literature pertaining to oral language development, especially within teacher training and development.

Chapter 3 dealt in detail with the research design and methodology. The research was conducted from an interpretive qualitative paradigm. The participants, Grade R teachers were the primary sources of data by means of their insights and experiences related to the research topic. The interpretive nature of the qualitative research enabled the researcher to gain an understanding of the perceptions of the Grade R teachers. The data collection methods included questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis and classroom observation. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The transcriptions were analysed by means of coding data in relation to categories, themes and patterns. Measures were taken to ensure trustworthiness and the researcher explained each step of the research process.

The chapter is concluded with a clarification of the ethical precautions that were taken to ensure that participants were exposed to no harm and their engagement was voluntary.

Chapter 4 focused on the presentation and discussion of the collected data.

Chapter 5 concludes the study with a brief overview, summary of the core findings emanating from the study, the limitations as well as recommendations for teaching and learning as well as future research.

5.3 Summary of core research findings

The findings of this study have been an aid in addressing the research questions that guided the study:

- What is Grade R teachers' knowledge of strategies involving dialogic reading, promoting extended discourse and using specific vocabulary?
- What is Grade R teachers' perceived knowledge of strategies involving engaging in dialogic reading, promoting extended discourse and using specific vocabulary for developing oral language?
- To what extent are these above-mentioned practices manifested in the Grade R classrooms and documentation?

Cunningham *et al*. (2009:501) state that teachers "may need to recognize their skill deficits before beginning to benefit from professional development". The findings from this study clearly indicate that the Grade R teachers are aware of their skill deficits related to oral language development practices. Overall, it seems as if the teachers knew what the basics of dialogic reading entailed, but that they were not familiar with the term and they tended to stick to the guidelines and workbooks provided by the department without doing additional activities. In addition, the teachers were not sure about what "promoting extended discourse" entails. In order to promote extended discourse teachers would have to engage the learners in all aspects of talk in the classroom; this seems to be an unfamiliar aspect for the teachers who tend to dominate discourse in the classroom; this was supported by observation in the classroom. From the options selected by the teachers on the questionnaire, it is also clear that they tend to give short answers such as "a car" instead of extending the discourse by, for example, rather answering "Yes you are playing with a big, blue car." Teachers tended to select answers that required short answers, familiar vocabulary words, and activities that did not challenge learners too much in terms of oral language development, specifically during

free play. During observations in the classroom it was clear that the teachers did engage the learners in talk, but the quality of the engagement was limited and it was clear that the teachers were not quite sure how to engage learners in extended discourse for some time. Overall, the participants did involve the learners in the narrative talk or storytelling. With regard to teachers' knowledge of vocabulary and rare word, the results indicated uncertainty about the teaching of rare (unfamiliar) vocabulary words. It was clear that the teachers knew various methods to use to support vocabulary development; they did, however, tend to stick to the familiar without challenging the learners.

Results related to the teachers' perceived knowledge of dialogic reading, extended discourse and vocabulary and rare words indicated that 40% of the participants indicated that they were of the opinion that their knowledge on dialogic reading was good (ratings of 4, 5 and 6), whereas 27% indicated that their knowledge of extended discourse was good and 33% indicated that their knowledge of using specific vocabulary was good (cf. Figure 4.4). The results seem to correlate with the results found on the questionnaire, the comments made during the interviews as well as during the observations and the document analysis. The teachers were not quite sure about how to extend discourse in the classroom. Overall, the results also indicate that the teachers themselves felt that they would like to know more about oral language development.

With regard to the manifestation of oral language development practices in the Grade R classroom and documentation, the results supported the perceptions of the teachers as expressed during the interviews, the observations as well as the document analysis. Oral language development enacted by the participants seems to reflect common practice in most South African classrooms, namely interaction dominated by the teacher.

The results have clear indications for initial teacher education as well as in-service professional development. As stated by Professional Development Services for Teachers (2014:3) "if primary teachers are not fully equipped and capacitated to be models of effective oral language instruction, early reading will suffer the consequences", because it was unclear to them due to inadequate knowledge of its implementation. In light of the research results, recommendations for addressing oral language development within the South African Grade R landscape are offered below.

5.4 Recommendations for addressing oral language development within the South African Grade R landscape

The following recommendations are made on the basis of the findings in the study and are referred to a number of key stakeholders.

5.4.1 The DoBE, General Education and Training Band Nationally

The DoBE national directorate should make certain that funding is available and accessible for Grade R teachers to further their knowledge and become specialists in the field as lifelong learners.

At the level of language policy development, the value and development of African languages should be given a priority and there must be no direct translation of learner workbooks, instead they must be outsourced to highly qualified and passionate native speakers of the relevant languages.

The DoBE national directorate should make sure that the university curriculum is inclusive of language development in the Foundation Phase.

5.4.2 The DoBE, Provincial Directorate

Employment and or deployment of isiXhosa home language subject advisors in all areas of the province that offer tuition in isiXhosa to provide guidance and support to all stakeholders in the form of seminars is obligatory. Planning should include annual reports to evaluate the process.

The DoBE should work in close collaboration with the NWU to develop African Languages through forming partnerships with Language Directorates of the three Campuses of the university. It is essential that the provincial directorate form partnership with non-governmental organisations (NGO's) to offer training opportunities, distribution of LTSM and involving Grade R teachers in READ projects.

5.4.3 District FP Curriculum Education Specialists (CES)

The FP CES and cluster leaders should conduct quarterly workshops to capacitate Grade R teachers on the development of oral language and its importance in early reading. Grade R teachers should receive appropriate in-service training on the methodology of oral language development. Follow up meetings should form part of the strategic planning and the roll-out of the process.

5.4.4 FP Head of Departments

The Heads of Departments in the Foundation Phase should monitor the development, implementation and promotion of oral language by means of monthly class visits with the intention to develop and support teachers not to criticise their efforts.

5.4.5 Grade R teachers

Grade R teachers should further their knowledge on strategies for the development of oral language by reading books on the subject. They should also create language opportunities for learners on a daily basis, reflect its impact on learners and improve on implementation where necessary. Global exposure through the use of the internet to learn more about oral language development is a need. They should emphasise the importance of reading books selection to the SMT in order to be afforded the opportunity to engage with the publishing companies' marketers on their visits to schools.

They should also create partnerships with other Grade R teachers in the District for mentorship purposes through the use of social media. Grade R teachers in the Dr. KKD need to share resources (reading books) and the process should be monitored by cluster leaders.

At the level of the classroom, Grade R teachers need to be confident in content knowledge implementation strategies and must learn to prioritize oral language development. Grade R teachers should adapt the implementation of the two language components (listening and speaking) to provide effective oral language instruction.

5.5 Limitations of the study

Contextual limitations in this multisite case study included the diversity of languages which limited the scope as there were only nine (9) schools that offered teaching and learning in isiXhosa in the entire Dr. Kenneth Kaunda district. There was a variety of languages in each school which included Setswana, isiZulu and Sesotho. The liberty to code switch during interviews made it possible to obtain data in the midst of the language barriers. English language was incorporated in the questionnaire though the questionnaire was written in isiXhosa. This study cannot be generalised to other languages as it was conducted in isiXhosa home language. In spite of its limitations, the study brought to light Grade R teachers' perceived competency and knowledge of oral language development in isiXhosa.

5.6 Recommendations for further research

The research was based on a qualitative case study which enabled deep understanding of a particular case, without any indication of its impact at a larger scale. This study focus is specifically in the Dr. Kenneth Kaunda district and it can be expanded to other grades and extended to more schools in the province to qualify conclusions in all isiXhosa Primary schools in the North West province.

Further research on the implementation of the curriculum in terms of Oral Language Development is crucial. Furthermore, the study offers opportunities to African language (isiXhosa) researchers to develop isiXhosa as language of teaching and learning. The knowledge gap on teaching and learning strategies for oral language development, specifically for isiXhosa, poses an opportunity for continued further research.

5.7 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate Grade R teachers' perceived competency and knowledge of oral language development in isiXhosa. The literature reviewed showed a dearth of South African research on oral language development henceforth emphasizing the importance and the gap that needs to be filled in academia, schooling and professional development of ECDE practitioners.

The findings of this study suggest a need for the DBE under the ECDE sector to invest in the development of Grade R teachers, to empower and capacitate these teachers through various professional development initiatives and also provide funding for studies in African languages. Therefore, the primary recommendation suggests the government commitment on prioritising the development of oral language development in the Foundation Phase, especially in Grade R.

For the country to reach and achieve the vision of the National Reading Strategy and NDP (2030) that envisage learners who are fluent readers, who read to learn, read for enjoyment and enrichment, Grade R oral language development should be prioritised because it is a prerequisite for early reading. Priority has been given to reading and writing language components with no emphasis on developing oral language (listening and speaking language components).

Investing in early reading and oral language development will go a long way in improving the quality of education especially in the ECDE sector.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Knowledge of Oral Language Development
Ulwazi lotitshala ngokukhulisa ulwimi, ukuthetha nokumamela
(TKOLD)

***Instructions**: This instrument is designed to assess your current knowledge of strategies for supporting oral language development in the Grade R classroom.*

Umyalelo: Esi sixhobo silungiselelwe ukuvavanya ulwazi lwakho ngendlela nenkqubo zokuncedisa ukukhulisa ulwimi kwibanga labaQalayo.

***Please carefully read** the directions for each section and mark the answers you feel are most appropriate. It is acceptable to mark more than one answer where appropriate*

Nceda ufunde ngocoseleleo imiyalelo yecandelo ngalinye wenze isangqa kwimpendulo ocinga ukuba zezichanekileyo. Kwamkelekile kwaye uvumelekile ukuba wenze isangqa esinye nangaphezulu kwimpendulo ezichanekileyo.

Section 1: Knowledge of Engaging in Dialogic Reading
Icandelo lokuqala: Ulwazi lokubandakanya incoko kufunda

***1. During book reading activities, the most effective types of questions for building oral language skills include** (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001):*

a. questions that can be answered directly from the story, including who and what questions
b. questions that challenge learners to think, including why, how, and when questions
c. factual questions asked before, during, and after reading the story
d. questions that are closely tied to the illustrations and/or words in the text

1. Ngexesha lemisebenzi yokufunda, eyona mibuzo eluncedo ukwakha izakhono zolwimi ukuthetha nokumamela iquka:

a. imisebenzi enokuphendulwa ngqo esuka ebalini, iquka imibuzo ebuza *ungubani, yintoni*?
b. imibuzo ekhuthaza abafundi ukuba bacinge, iquka *kutheni, kanjani, nini?*
c. imibuzo engqalileyo ebuzwa phambi ko.., ngexesha lo..,nasemva ko.., kufunda
d. imibuzo engqamene nemifanekiso okanye amagama

2. In order to support learner's language growth, book reading activities should include *(Dickinson & Tabors, 2001)**:***

a. discussions about the words, pictures, and events in the story

b. opportunities for learners to join in with the reading of the text

c. analytical conversations and talk about vocabulary

d. discussions about topics that are familiar to the learners

2. Ukuxhasa abantwana ngokukhula kolwimi, imisebenzi yokufunda kufanele iquke

a. ingxoxo ngamagama, imifanekiso, neziganeko zebali.

b. amathuba okuba abafundi bangenelele xa kufundwa

c. incoko ecacileyo nokuthetha ngesigam asebali.

d. ukuxoxa ngezihloko eziqhelekileyo kubafundi.

3. ***When selecting books for read aloud activities that will support oral language development, choose books that*** *(Dickinson & Tabors, 2001)**:***

a. have words that will be easily understood by all learners

b. have high quality illustrations that relate directly to the text

c. are predictable in nature and can be read along with the teacher

d. include real-life experiences, communicate information, and /or contain varied vocabulary

3. Xa ukhetha iincwadi zokufunda nemisebenzi exhasa ukukhula kolwimi, kufanele ukhethe iincwadi ezi:

a. namagama alula ukuba abafundi bawaqonde

b. nemifanekiso echanekileyo, egqamileyo necacileyo ehambelana namagama ebali

c. eyenza kubelula ukuqikelela ibali, ibeyincwadi enokufundwa ngabafundi kunye notitshala

d. equka amava abafundi, bakwazi ukuncokola besabelana ngolwazi, iquke nesigama

4. During book reading activities, teachers should deal with new and unfamiliar vocabulary by *(National Institute for Literacy, 2010)**:***

a. stopping and asking learners what they think the word means

b. continuing to read and telling learners the definition of the word later

c. embedding definitions during the reading of the text

d. referring to pictures that give clues to the meaning of the words

4. Ngexesha lemisebenzi yokufundwa kwencwadi, utitshala kufanele alungiselele ukufundisa amagama amatsha nesigama:

a. ngokuma ukufunda ubuze imibuzo kubafundi ngentsingiselo yegama

b. ngokuqhubeleka ukufunda ukuze uxelele abafundi intsingiselo yegama kamva

c. ngokudibanisa ingcaciso yamagama ngeli xesha ufunda

d. ukutshatisa amagama nemifanekiso enika intsingiselo yawo

5. An effective strategy for reading books aloud is often referred to as dialogic reading. *(Dickinson & Tabors, 2001)* ***this strategy includes:***

a. the adult reading the text aloud and doing the majority of the talking about the text as it is read

b. a shared reading approach in which the adult engages the learner in storytelling by discussing the text and asking questions about the text, and the child takes on a more active role, becoming the teller of the story

c. the adult reading the story aloud, asking questions throughout, and summarizing the book after it is read

d. the adult and learner previewing the text, discussing key vocabulary, reading the text aloud, and engaging in conversations about the text as directed by the learner

5. Enye yenkqubo esebenzayo yokufundwa kwencwadi kukufunda ngokuxoxa. Le nkqubo iquka:

a. ukufundwa kwencwadi ngumntu omdala nokwenza intetho / ncoko ngokubanzi ngokufundwayo / okufundiweyo

b. ukufunda ukwabelana kukuba umntu omdala kunye nomntwana bezibandakanya ngokubalisa ibali, bexoxa ngokufundiweyo, ukubuza imibuzo, umfundi athathe inxaxheba ukuze abe ngumbalisi webali

c. umntu omdala ufunda ibali ngokukhwaza, abuze imibuzo, nokushwankathela incwadi emva kokuba efundile

d. umntu omdala nomfundi bafunda ibali, baxoxa ngesigama esingundoqo, bancokola ngebali ingumfundi ophambili kumkhomba ndlela

6. In order to support learner's oral language development when reading books aloud, the type of talk teachers and learners should engage in includes *(Dickinson & Tabors, 2001):*

a. talk that connects story events to personal experience

b. talk about the events and characters in the story

c. discussions about the illustrations and words in the story

d. all of the above

6. Ukuze uxhase ukukhula kolwimi ngokufundela abafundi incwadi, utitshala nabafundi kufanele bazibandakanye kwezi ntlobo zencoko

a. ukweyamanisa ibali namava abo

b. ukuthetha ngeziganeko nabalinganiswa bebali

c. ukuxoxa ngemifanekiso nesigama sebali

d. zonke iimpendulo ezingasentla zamkelekile

7. Shared reading has a significant effect on learner's *(National Center for Literacy, 2008):*

a. alphabet knowledge

b. phonemic awareness and reading readiness

c. oral language and print knowledge

d. cognitive ability

7. Ukufunda ngokwabelana kunendima ebalulekileyo kwindlela abafundi abafunda ngayo

a. kulwazi lwezandi

b. ukwazi izandi nokulungela ukufunda

c. ukumamela nokuthetha uwlimi nolwazi lulwimi olubhaliweyo

d. ukubanako ukusebenzisa ukucinga ngokupheleleyo

8. An example of a scaffolding technique during a read-aloud activity is *(Paulson & Moats, 2010)**:***

a. pausing while reading to have children fill in words they know

b. asking direct questions while reading the book

c. creating stories about pictures or providing a storyline using only the pictures while reading

d. all of the above

8. Umzekelo wenkqubo yokuncedisa umfundi ngexesha lokufunda

a. ukuphumla xa ufunda ukuze abafundi bagqibezele amagama abawaziyo

b. ukubuza imibuzo ngelixa ufunda incwadi

c. ukwenza amabali ngemifanekiso nokuqhubeka nebali usebenzisa imifanekiso

d. zonke iimpendulo ezingasentla zamkelekile

9. A teacher is selecting a book for the read-aloud portion of the day in order to support learner's receptive vocabulary development. He/she should *(National Institute for Literacy, 2010):*

a. select a book that the learners have never heard before

b. re-read the book introduced on the previous day

c. choose a book with familiar words and concepts

d. pick a book with more text and few illustrations

Directions: *Regarding the questions asked in section 1 (questions 1-9) above, please answer the following: (Cunningham, Zibulsky, & Callahan, 2009).*

Imiyalelo: Ngokwemibuzo ebuzwe kwicandelo lokuqala (umbuzo 1-9) nceda uphendule le mibuzo ilandelayo:

How well do you think you answered on questions 1-9?

Poorly **0-------1-------2-------3-------4-------5-------6** *Very well*

Ucinga ukuba uphendule njani kwimibuzo 1-9?

Kakubi **0-------1-------2-------3-------4-------5-------6** kakuhle kakhulu

Of all the Grade R teachers completing questions 1-9, how well do you think you answered compared to the other teachers?

Well below average **0------1------2------3------4------5------6** *Well above average*

Kubo bonke otitshala bebanga labaQalayo abaphendule imibuzo 1-9, ucinga ukuba uqhube njani kunabo?

Ngezantsi kunabo bonke **0------1------2------3------4------5------6** ngaphezulu kunabo bonke

Section 2: Knowledge of Promoting Extended Discourse

Icandelo 2: Ulwazi lokukhulisa ukuthetha okongezelelweyo / ukuxoxa ngokubanzi

1. During mealtimes, teachers can support learner's oral language development by (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001):

a. engaging learners in conversations about events happening in the present (present talk)

b. remaining stationary and engaging learners in extended discussions about decontextualized events or activities (non-present talk)

c. moving around the classroom engaging many learners in short conversations

d. having discussions that are supported by things in the classroom environment

1. Ngexesha lesidlo, otitshala bangaxhasa ukukhula kolwimi ngoku:

a. bandakanya abantwana kwincoko ngeziganeko ezenzeka ngoku

b. ukulinda abantwana bexoxa ngokohlula imo yentlalo neziganeko nemisebenzi

c. ukujikeleza iklasi ubandakanya abantwana kwincoko ezimfutshane

d. ukuqala ingxoxo ezixhaswa zizinto ezikwigumbi lokufundela / eklasini

2. When engaging in conversations with learners, teachers should use language that includes *(Christ & Wang, 2010)**:***

a. familiar words and phrases that learners can understand

b. descriptions of events happening in the present

c. simple sentences that are easily understood by all learners

d. targeted vocabulary that may not be familiar to learners

2. Xa ubandakanya abafundi kwingxoxo, utitshala kufuneka asebenzise ulwimi oluquka

a. amagama aqhelekileyo abanowaqonda abafundi

b. ingcaciso yeziganeko ezenzekileyo ngexesha langoku

c. izivakalisi ezilula ezinokuqondwa lula ngabafundi bonke

d. isigama esingekho lula nabangasiqhelanga abafundi

3. In order to support learner's oral language development during free play, teachers should *(Dickinson & Tabors, 2001):*

a. spend time engaged in very short conversations with many learners

b. move around the room frequently

c. engage learners in extended conversations that are intellectually challenging

d. ensure that there are ample amounts of time for free play throughout the day

3. Ukuxhasa nokukhuthaza ukukhuliswa kolwimi lwabafundi ngexesha lokudlala, utitshala kufanele enze oku:

a. ukuchitha ixsha encokola nabafundi abaninzi kangangoko

b. ukujikeleza kwigumbi lokufundela rhoqo

c. ukubandakanya abafundi kwincoko ezinde ezibakhuthazayo ukuba bacinge

d. uqiniseke ukuba kukho ixesha elaneleyo lokudlala emini.

4. Throughout the day, teachers can model how language works by (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001; Paulson & Moats, 2010):

a. engaging in parallel talk or the type of talk that narrates or describes what the learner is doing at that moment

b. doing the majority of the talking when engaging in conversations with learners

c. using concrete and specific words

d. speaking in simple sentences that are easily understood

4. Usuku lonke utitshala angangumzekelo wokuthethwa nokusetyenziswa kolwimi

a. ngokubandakanya abafundi kwintetho notitshala, okanye kwincoko apho umfundi acacisa ngakwenzayo ngelo xesha

b ukuthetha rhoqo ngexesha lokuzibandakanya kwincoko nabafundi

c. ukusebenzisa amagama achanekileyo nangqale kwintsngiselo yegama

d. ukuthetha ngesivakalisi esilula nabasiqondayo abafundi

5. Learner's oral language development is supported by conversations that (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001):

a. include vocabulary that learners are familiar with

b. include informative uses of rare words

c. are primarily focused on events occurring in the here and now

d. rely on the adult to guide the discussion

5. Ukukhula kolwimi lwabafundi kuxhaswa ngencoko equka:

a. ukubandakanywa kwesigama abasiqhelileyo abafundi

b. ukubandakanya amagama angaqhelekanga

c. ukuqwalasela iziganeko eziqhubekayo ezenzeka ngoku

d. ukuxhomekeka kumntu omdala ukubancedisa kwingxoxo

6. Of three types of talk *(pretend, non-toy, and non-pretend) that may accompany free play in Grade R,* ***which type is most supportive of language and literacy skills that are important for learners in Grade R?*** *(Dickinson & Tabors, 2001)*

a. talk with pretend elements and a nonliteral approach to features in the immediate environment

b. talk about events or concerns that are unrelated to the immediate play setting

c. talk that maintains a literal approach to actions and toys

d. all of the above

6. Kwindlela zokuthetha ezintathu (ukuzenzisa, ukuthetha okungangqamenanga nencoko, ukuthetha okungqalileyo) **ezincedisa kumdlalo kwibanga labaQalayo, loluphi uhlobo lokuthetha elincedisa izakhono zolwimi ezibalulekileyo kwibanga labaQalayo?**

a. ukuthetha ngokuzenzisa okanye ukulinganisa

b. ukuthetha ngaphandle kwezinto zokudlala

c. ukuthetha okungqalileyo okanye ngokungalinganisi

d. zonke iimpendulo ezingasentla zamkelekile

7. During a conversation, a learner points to a toy and says, 'A car.' The facilitative way to respond in order to stimulate oral language development is *(National Institute for Literacy, 2010; Paulson & Moats, 2010):*

a. "Yes, a car."

b. "Yes, you are playing with a big, blue car."

c. "This is a car."

d. "You are playing with a car."

7. Ngexesha lencoko, umfundi ukhomba isixhobo sokudlala, 'imoto.' Ukuncedisa ukukhulisa ulwimi nokumncedisa aphendule ngendlela echanekileyo nefanelekileyo

a. "Ewe, yimoto."

b. "Ewe, udlala ngemoto enkulu, eluhlaza."

c. "Le yimoto."

d. "Wena udlala ngemoto."

8. In order for learners to develop language, adults must intentionally engage learners in conversations using language stimulation techniques. Examples of language stimulation techniques often used in Grade R classrooms include (Paulson & Moats, 2010):

a. parallel talk, self-talk, and expansion

b. interaction and language modelling

c. waiting and extending

d. pausing, confirming, and imitating

8. Ukuze abafundi bakhulise ulwimi, abantu abadala kufanele balungiselele ukuba bandakanya kwincoko besebenzisa indlela ezahlukeneyo zokusebenzisa ulwimi. Imizekelo yendlela ezahlukeneyo zokusetyenziswa kolwimi eziqhele ukusetyenziswa kwibanga labaQalayo ziquka:

a. ukuthetha nabafundi, ukuzithethela kwabafundi bebodwa, nokwandisa intetho

b. ukungenelela kwintetho nokubumba ulwimi

c. ukulinda nokwandisa ulwimi

d. ukuphumla, ukuqinisekisa, nokulinganisa

9. An example of an interaction response in which the teacher is using the "labeling" technique to support language development is (Paulson & Moats, 2010):

a. A child says, "I drew a circle," and the teacher responds, "Yes, you drew a circle."

b. A child says, "I drew a circle," and the teacher responds, "You drew a small, yellow circle."

c. A child chooses a crayon and the teacher says, "You are drawing a circle. What are you drawing?"

d. A child draws a circle with a crayon and the teacher says, "You are drawing a circle."

9. Umzekelo wempendulo nokunxibelelana ngokukhulisa ulwimi apho umfundisi-ntsapho esebenzisa "ukubhala, ukungqamanisa amagama nezinto amele zona"

a. Umntwana uthi "Ndizobe isangqa," utitshala aphendule, "Ewe, uzobe isangqa."

b. Umntwana uthi "Ndizobe isangqa," utitshala aphendule, "Ewe, uzobe isangqa esincinci esimthubi."

c. Umntwana ukhetha ikhrayoni aze utitshala athi, "Uzoba isangqa. Uzoba ntoni?"

d. Umntwana uzoba isangqa ngekhrayoni aze utitshala athi "Uzoba isangqa."

Directions: *Regarding the questions asked in section II (questions 1-9) above, please answer the following: (Cunningham, Zibulsky, & Callahan, 2009).*

Imiyalelo: Ngokwemibuzo ebuzwe kwicandelo lokuqala (umbuzo 1-9) nceda uphendule le mibuzo ilandelayo:

How well do you think you answered on questions 1-9?

Poorly **0-------1-------2-------<u>3</u>-------4-------5-------6** *Very well*

Ucinga ukuba uphendule njani kwimibuzo 1-9?

Kakubi **0-------1-------2-------3-------4-------5-------6** kakuhle kakhulu

Of all the Grade R teachers completing questions 1-9, how well do you think you did compared to the other teachers?

Well below average **0------1------2------3------4------5------6** *Well above average*

Kubo bonke otitshala bebanga labaQalayo abaphendule imibuzo 1-9, ucinga ukuba uqhube njani kunabo?

Ngezantsi kunabo bonke **0------1------2------3------4------5------6** ngaphezulu kunabo bonke

Section 3: Knowledge of Using Specific Vocabulary

Icandelo 3: Ulwazi lokusebenzisa isigama esiqinisekisiweyo

1. Teachers can encourage the continued development of new vocabulary during free play by *(Christ & Wang, 2010):*

a. setting up play areas that extend upon a classroom theme and related vocabulary

b. setting up media centres (DVDs, electronic books, computers) that engage learners in interactions with the new vocabulary

c. providing props related to the theme that may elicit theme-related vocabulary use

d. all of the above

1. Utitshala angakukhuthaza ukuqhubeleka kokukhuliswa kwesigama ngexesha lomdlalo ngokwenza oku:

a. ngokwakha iindawo zokudlala ezikhulisa isigama sesihloko segumbi lokufundela ngalo veki okanye ngaloo mini.

b. ngokwakha iindawo kwigumbi lokufundela ezikhulisa ukuzibandakanya kwabafundi kwiincoko ezikhuthaza ukufundwa kwesigama esitsha.

c. ukwenza kufumaneke onopopi abangqamene nesigama nabanokwenza ukukhula kwesigama .

d. zonke iimpendulo zamkelekile

2. Large group time provides an opportunity for teachers to extend upon learner's language development through the use of *(Dickinson & Tabors, 2001)**:***

a. rare words

b. common words

c. non-pretend talk

d. all of the above

2. Ixesha lamaqela amakhulu linika utitshala inxaxheba yokuba abenexesha lokwandisa ukukhuliswa kolwimi nokusetyenziswa kwalo ngokusebenzisa:

a. amagama angaqhelekanga

b. amagama aqhelekileyo

c. ukungazenzisi xa uthetha

d. zonke iimpendulo zamkelekile

3. An effective strategy for teaching new words is to (Christ & Wang, 2010; National Institute for Literacy, 2010):

a. provide a single definition and example in order to avoid complicating the explanation

b. ask the learner to explain what they think the word means

c. use demonstrations and/or pictures, provide multiple definitions and examples, and connect new words to concepts learners already know

d. ask learners to use the word in a sentence

3. Indlela ekhuthazayo yokufundisa amagama amatsha iquka:

a. ukunika ingcaciso yegama nomzekelo ukunqanda ingcaciso embaxa

b. ukucela abafundi bacacise intsingiselo yegama / bacinga ukuba igama lithetha ntoni

c. ukusebenzisa imizekelo nezilinganiso okanye imifanekiso, ukunika ingcaciso nemizekelo emininzi, ukungqamanisa igama nezinto abaziqhelileyo abafundi

d. ukucela abafundi basebenzise igama elitsha kwisivakalisi

4. The predominant way that learners acquire vocabulary is by (Christ & Wang, 2010)*:*

a. having words explicitly taught to them

b. hearing new words used in their environment, including in conversations, television, and storybooks read aloud to them

c. asking adults to explain what words mean

d. reading books themselves, including a wide variety of themes

4. Indlela eqhelekileyo abafundi abafunda ngayo isigama:

a. ukufundiswa kwamagama ngokucacileyo

b. ukumamela amagama amatsha esetyenziswa kwimo eqhelekileyo, kuquka iincoko, ukubukela umabonakude nokufundwa kweencwadi

c. ukucela umntu omdala acacise amagama ukuba athetha ntoni / intsingiselo yawo

d. ukuzifundela iincwadi ngokwabo eziquka izihloko ezahlukeneyo

5. It is important to build learner's _____while working to increase learner's vocabulary because the two skills are related *(Paulson & Moats, 2010).*

a. alphabet knowledge

b. concepts of print

c. phonological awareness

d. all of the above

5. Kubalulekile ukwakha _____ ngaxesha nye nokukhulisa isigama sabantwana, kuba ezi zakhono ziyasebenzisana

a. ulwazi lwezandi

b. ukuqonda okubhaliweyo

c. ukuqonda izandi

d. zonke iimpendulo zichanekile

6. One very important aspect of vocabulary development is _____ because the ability to say a word is dependent on the ability to hear the word in your mind *(Paulson & Moats, 2010).*

a. phonological representation

b. expressive language

c. receptive language

d. decontextualized language

6. Omnye umba obalulekileyo wokwandisa isigama _____ kuba isakhono sokubiza igama sixhomekeke kukuva igama nokuzinza kwalo engqondweni

a. kukwazi izandi

b. kukuthetha

c. kukumamela

d. kukusebenzisa ulwimi ngaphandle komxholo

7. During mealtime conversations, teachers can extend upon vocabulary that has been previously taught during the day by *(Dickinson & Tabors, 2001):*

a. asking open ended questions to elicit thoughtful and elaborate uses of words

b. discussing events that have taken place in the classroom during the day

c. talking about the book that was read earlier in the day

d. all of the above

7. Ngexesha lokutya otitshala bangalwandisa ulwimi lwabafundi ngesigama okanye ngamagama afundiweyo ngolo suku

a. ukubuza imibuzo ekhuthaza ukucinga okucacileyo nokucaciswa kwamagama

b. ukuxoxa ngeziganeko ebeziqhubeka okanye ezithathe inxaxheba kwigumbi lokufundela ngexesha lokufunda

c. ukuthetha ngencwadi ebifundiwe ngaphambili okanye ngexesha lokufunda

d. zonke iimpendulo zamkelekile

8. A teacher is reading aloud a story and comes across a word for which she knows the learners have not been exposed. What is the best way to approach the word in order to begin the process of intentionally adding it to the learner's vocabulary? *(National Institute for Literacy, 2010).*

a. replace the word with another word while reading

b. continue reading and explain the meaning of the word if learners ask

c. embed the definition of the word into the reading of the text

d. ask learners what they think the word means

8. Utitshala ufundela abafundi ibali, adibane negama aliqondayo ukuba abafundi abalazi okanye abakadibani nalo, litsha kubo. Yeyiphi eyona ndlela ingcono yokuqalisa ukwazisa igama ukukhulisa isigama?

a. ukusebenzisa elinye igama endaweni yegama elitsha ngelixesha efunda

b. ukuqhubeleka nokufunda ukuze acacise igama elo xa abafundi belibuza

c. ukulibandakanya igama elitsha nenkcazelo yalo ngelixesha efunda

d. ukubuza abafundi intsingiselo yegama elitsha, bacinga ukuba lithetha ntoni.

9. Direct and explicit vocabulary instruction includes (National Institute for Literacy, 2010):

a. providing learners with a learner friendly definition and examples

b. directing learners to a visual in order to determine the word's meaning

c. using the word in a sentence before asking learners to think about the word's definition

d. asking learners to determine the word's meaning through context in the story

9. Indlela eqondileyo necacileyo yokufundisa isigama

a. ukunika abafundi ingcaciso yegama ekulula ukuba bayisebenzise, kunye nemizekelo

b. ukubonisa abafundi ingcaciso yegama ekwimifanekiso ukuze bafumane intsingiselo yegama

c. ukusebenzisa igama kwisivakalisi ngaphambi kokubuza abafundi ukuba bacinge intsingiselo yalo

d. ukucela abafundi ukuba bacacise intsingiselo yegama ngokwendlela abalifumana lisetyenziswe ngalo ebalini

Directions: *Regarding the questions asked in section III (questions 1-9) above, please answer the following: (Cunningham, Zibulsky, & Callahan, 2009).*

Imiyalelo: Ngokwemibuzo ebuzwe kwicandelo lokuqala (umbuzo 1-9) nceda uphendule le mibuzo ilandelayo:

How well do you think you answered questions 1-9?

Poorly **0-------1-------2-------3-------4-------5-------6** *Very well*

Ucinga ukuba uphendule njani kwimibuzo 1-9?

Kakubi **0-------1-------2-------<u>3</u>-------4-------5-------6** kakuhle kakhulu

Of all the Grade R teachers completing questions 1-9, how well do you think you did compared to the other teachers?

Well below average **0------1------2------3------4------5------6** *Well above average*

Kubo bonke otitshala bebanga labaQalayo abaphendule imibuzo 1-9, ucinga ukuba uqhube njani kunabo?

Ngezantsi kunabo bonke **0------1------2------<u>3</u>------4------5------6** ngaphezulu kunabo bonke

ENKOSI! ***THANK YOU!*** ***THE END*!**

Appendix 2: Interview Protocol

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Research topic: Grade R Teachers' Perceived Competency and Knowledge of Oral Language Development in isiXhosa

Name of interviewer: Matu PP **Interviewee (s):** Undisclosed

Language: isiXhosa **Class:** Gr.R

To facilitate the accuracy of my data capturing during the interview I would like to audio tape our conversation. Your personal details will be held confidential**.** Your participation is voluntary and you may stop at any time it suits you. I have planned this interview to last no longer than thirty minutes. You are given the liberty to express yourself in the language you are comfortable with.

1. Greetings and ice breaking conversing

1. Ukubulisa nencoko yokwazana

2. What do you understand by oral language?

2. Ungandixelela ngolwazi lwakho lokukhulisa ulwimi ukuthetha nokumamela/incoko mlomo

3. How do you promote oral language development in your Gr.R Class?

>>Probe: Do you think your strategy is successful and why?

3. Uyikhulisa njani incoko mlomo / ukumamela nokuthetha kwibanga labaQalayo?

>>Ucinga ukuba le ndlela yokufundisa inenkqubela, kutheni usitsho?

4. What is your understanding of dialogic reading?

4. Yintoni oyiqondayo ngencoko kufunda?

5. Do you think dialogic reading is a strategy that can be practised for early reading in Grade R?

>>Probe: Would you consider yourself competent to implement the strategy?

5. Ucinga ukuba incoko kufunda yindlela yokufundisa ukufunda iinwadi enokusetyenziswa kwibanga labaQalayo?

>> Uzibona uyisebenzisa ngokuchanekileyo le ndlela yokufundisa ukufunda iincwadi kwibanga labaQalayo?

6. *What is an extended discourse?*

>>*Probe: Would you say it has anything to do with oral language?*

6. Yintoni ukuxoxa ngokubanzi / ukuthetha okongezelelweyo kufundo ncwadi?

>> Ungatsho ukuba le ndlela yokufundisa ukufunda iyasebenzisana nokukhuliswa kolwimi?

7. Give a brief explanation on how you would promote an extended discourse in your Grade R class?

7. Nika inkcaza emfutshane ngendlela onokhulisa ngayo ukuxoxa ngokubanzi / ukuthetha okongezelelweyo?

8. Share your knowledge about the specific vocabulary that you use in your grade R class

8. Yabelana nam ngolwazi lwakho lwesigama osisebenzisayo kwibanga labaQalayo?

9. *To what extent do you practise the strategies involving dialogic reading, promoting extended discourse and using vocabulary?*

9. Uzisebenzisa kangakanani / njani indlela zokukhulisa ulwimi, incoko kufunda, ukuxoxa ngokubanzi nokukhulisa isisgama?

10. Would you say these strategies are supportive of oral language development?

10. Ingaba ezindlela zokufundisa nokukhulisa ulwimi ziyaluxhasa ulwimi ukuthetha

ENKOSI / *THANK YOU TEACHER!*

END OF THE CONVERSATION!

Appendix 3: Observation Schedule

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Research topic: Grade R Teachers' Perceived Competency and Knowledge of Oral Language Development in isiXhosa

Name of observer: Matu PP

Language: isiXhosa

Class: Gr.R

Duration: 15-30 minutes / 1hour

Rating:	**3 –** strongly demonstrated	**2 -** displayed	**1-** not displayed

		3	2	1
1.	**The teacher plans effectively and sets clear lesson objectives**			
	a. the structure of the learning programme			
	b. objectives are communicated at the start of the lesson			
2.	**The teacher shows knowledge and understanding of oral language**			
	a. teacher has knowledge of the language components, listening and speaking in isiXhosa			
	b. activation of prior knowledge is made interesting to learners in their home language			
3.	**Teacher's knowledge of strategies for oral language development**			
	a. knowledge and use of dialogic reading			
	b. promoting extended discourse			
	c. using specific vocabulary for Gr. R learners			
	d. the extent to which the strategies are used throughout the learning experience of Gr.R learners			
4.	**Teaching methods used enable all learners to learn effectively**			
	a. questioning techniques are used appropriately			
	b. instruction and explanations are clear and learners are encouraged to participate			
	c. learner teacher support material are appropriate for the lesson			

ENKOSI BAFUNDI! ***THANK YOU LEARNERS*!** ***THANK YOU TEACHER!***

Appendix 4: Document analysis checklist

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Document Title	Questions	Explanation	Evidence / Source	Analysis
	Purpose of the document			
	Listening and speaking language components to promote oral language development			
Document Title	**Characteristics**	**Explanation**	**Evidence / Source**	**Analysis**
	Methodology on oral language development for Gr.R teachers			
	Activities to promote oral language.			

ENKOSI! / *THANK YOU TEACHER!*

Appendix 5: DoE District Director Letter

Education and Sport Development
Department of Education and Sport Development
Departement van Onderwys en Sport Ontwikkeling
Lefapha la Thuto le Tlhabololo ya Metshameko
NORTH WEST PROVINCE

8 O.R. Tambo Street, Potchefstroom
Private Bag X1256,
Potchefstroom 2520
Tel.: (018) 299-8216
Fax: (018) 294-8234
Enquiries: Mr H. Motara
e-mail: hmotara@nwpg.gov.za

DR KENNETH KAUNDA DISTRICT
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR

Enquiries: Peter Phamodi	Tel:(018) 299 8264 / e-mail pphamodi@nwpg.gov.za	Fax: 018 294 8234

To : **University of the North West**
Potchefstroom Campus

Attention: **Pumla Pam Matu**

From : **Mr. H. Motara**
District Director

Date : 10 November 2016

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: "*Grade R Teachers Perceived Competency and Knowledge of Oral Language Development in Isixhosa*"

I refer to your letter dated 4th November 2016, being a request to conduct research in schools around Tlokwe and Matlosana areas of Dr. Kenneth Kaunda District on the topic, "*Grade R Teachers Perceived Competency and Knowledge of Oral Language Development in Isixhosa*"

Accordingly, permission is herewith granted for you to conduct the research as per request, subject to the following provisions:

- That the onus to contact your target schools in Tlokwe and Matlosana about your request to conduct research and this letter of permission rests with your good self.
- Considering that the research work will involve educators, the general functionality in terms of learning and teaching should not be compromised by this project.
- That educator participation in the research project remains voluntary.
- That the research findings will be made available to the Inclusive Education Unit of the Department of Education and Sport Development, Dr. Kenneth Kaunda District.
- That the principle of confidentiality will be observed in its strictest terms, in relation to information sourced from the research work conducted.

With our best wishes

.....

Mr. H.Motara
District Director
Dr Kenneth Kaunda District

Appendix 6: SMT/Principal Letter

NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
POTCHEFSTROOM CAMPUS

Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
School of Languages
Tel: 0182994774
Fax: 0182852080
Email: Maryna.Reyneke@nwu.ac.za

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

I hereby wish to request for your consent of the Grade R teachers whose instructional practices are in isiXhosa, to participate in the research project which involves teachers from other Primary schools in the Kenneth Kaunda District. This request includes the SMT and the FP HOD.

Before you give consent, please acquaint yourself with the information below.

The details of the research are as follow:

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:

Grade R teachers' perceived competency and knowledge of oral language development in isiXhosa

What is this research about?
The aim of this research is:

- to determine the Grade R teachers' perceived competence and knowledge relative to actual knowledge of oral language development.

Participants
- Grade R teachers in schools where the language of learning and teaching is isiXhosa

What is expected of the participants?
To present oral language lessons in Grade R classes while the researcher observes.
Allow the researcher to examine the teaching and learning support material.
To conduct an individual interview.
To complete a questionnaire.

Benefits to the participants
The project will make a contribution to the better understanding of Grade R teacher's knowledge of oral language development and its implementation.

The project findings may possibly help to delineate what the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) and Early Childhood Education (ECD) sectors should do to empower and capacitate grade R teachers.

Risks involved for participants

There are no risks involved. The only requirement is time because classroom observations will take place in scheduled time frames.

Confidentiality and protection of identity

All the information gathered, as well as personal details will be kept confidential.
In this study the researcher will ensure that confidentiality and anonymity of the participants would be maintained through the removal of any identifying characteristics before the widespread dissemination of information. The researcher will make it clear that the participant's names will not be used for any other purpose nor would information be shared that reveals their identity in any way.

Dissemination of findings

Access to information supplied by the participants will be made available as soon as the study has been examined and will be disseminated in the form of reports, articles and conference presentations.

If you have any further questions or enquiries regarding this research, please contact the following primary researchers for more information.

Project supervisor: Prof. C. Nel
Co-supervisor: Dr. A Loubser
Address: B11 G32
Contact number:
Member of the project team MEd-Student: Ms. PP Matu
Address: B11 G20
Contact number:

This study has been approved by the Ethics committee of the Faculty of Education Sciences of the North-West University and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines of this committee. Permission was also asked from the Department of Basic Education.

DECLARATION BY THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL:

By signing below, I ……..……. …… (Principal) agree to allow the researcher time and physical space to conduct the research study entitled:

Grade R teachers' perceived competency and knowledge of oral language development in isiXhosa

I declare that:

- I have read this information and understand what is expected of the Grade R teachers in this research project.
- I have had a chance to ask questions to the researcher and all my questions have been adequately answered.

Signed at (place) _____on (date) _____/_____/2019

Appendix 7: Participants Consent

NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
POTCHEFSTROOM CAMPUS

Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
School of Languages
Tel: 0182994774
Fax: 0182852080
Email: Maryna.Reyneke@nwu.ac.za

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

I hereby wish to request for your consent to participate in this research project which involves the Grade R teachers from Primary schools in the Kenneth Kaunda District.

Before you give consent, please acquaint yourself with the information below.
The details of the research are as follows:

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:

Grade R teachers' perceived competency and knowledge of oral language development in isiXhosa

What is this research about?
The aim of this research is:

- to determine the Grade R teachers' perceived competence and knowledge relative to actual knowledge of oral language development.

Participants
- Grade R teachers in schools where the language of learning and teaching is isiXhosa

What is expected of you as a participant?
To present the oral language lesson in your Grade R class while the researcher observes.
Allow the researcher to examine the teaching and learning support material.
To conduct an individual interview.
To complete a questionnaire.

Benefits to the participants
The project will make a contribution to the better understanding of Grade R teachers' knowledge of oral language development and its implementation.
The project findings may possibly help to delineate what the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) and Early Childhood Education (ECD) sectors should do to empower and capacitate grade R teachers.

Risks involved for participants
There are no risks involved. The only requirement is time because classroom observations will take place in scheduled time frames.

Confidentiality and protection of identity
All the information gathered, as well as personal details will be kept confidential.
In this study the researcher will ensure that confidentiality and anonymity of the participants would be maintained through the removal of any identifying characteristics before the widespread dissemination of information. The researcher will make it clear that the participants' names will not be used for any other purpose nor would information be shared that reveals their identity in any way.

Dissemination of findings
Access to information supplied by the participants will be made available as soon as the study has been examined and will be disseminated in the form of reports, articles and conference presentations.

If you have any further questions or enquiries regarding this research, please contact the following primary researchers for more information.

Project supervisor: Prof. C. Nel
Co-supervisor: Dr. A Loubser
Address: B11 G32
Contact number: 018 299 4586

Member of the project team MEd-Student: Ms. PP Matu
Address: B11 G20
Contact number: 018 299 2146

This study has been approved by the Ethics committee of the Faculty of Education Sciences of the North-West University and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines of this committee. Permission was also granted by the Department of Basic Education, Kenneth Kaunda District.

DECLARATION BY THE PARTICIPANT:

By signing below, I ……..…….……agree to take part in a research study entitled:

Grade R teachers' perceived competency and knowledge of oral language development in isiXhosa

I declare that:

- I have read this information and consent form and understand what is expected of me in the research.
- I have had a chance to ask questions to the researcher and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and I have not been pressurised to take part.

- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
- I may be asked to leave the research process before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the research procedures, as agreed to.

Signed at (place) _____on (date) _____/_____/2019

_____ _____

Signature of participant **Signature of witness**

Appendix 8: NWU Ethics Letter

NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
POTCHEFSTROOM CAMPUS
Fakulteit Opvoedkunde / Faculty Education
Privaatsak / Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
Suid-Afrika / South Africa 2520
T: 018 299 4656
F: 086 661 8589
http://www.nwu.ac.za

8 February 2019

To Whom It May Concern

I hereby confirm that the ethics application, as stated below, was approved at the Ethics Committee meeting of the Faculty of Education of 4 May 2017.

Ethics number: NWU-00329-17-A2

Project head: Prof C Nel

Project team: Ms PP Matu, Dr A Loubser

Title: Grade R teachers' perceived competency and knowledge of oral language development in isiXhosa

Period: 8 February 2019 – 8 February 2020

Risk level: Low

Should you have further enquiries in this regard, you are welcome to contact Prof Jako Olivier at 018 285 2078 or by email at Jako.Olivier@nwu.ac.za or Ms Erna Greyling at 018 299 4656 or by email at Erna.Greyling@nwu.ac.za .

Yours sincerely

Prof J Olivier
Chair Edu-REC

Appendix 9: Proof reading certificate

Registration No: 2009/037004/23

BANK: Cap: 1454 8907 87

Acct no: ETDP 10867

✉: 685 nu 10 Mdantsane

: vivimpi5703@gmail.com

✆: 0829273139

CERTIFICATE OF PROOFREADING

Student name: **Pumla Pam Matu**

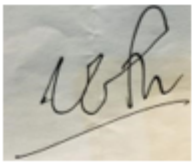
Student No: **13257323**

Thesis:

Grade R teachers' perceived competency and knowledge of oral language development in IsiXhosa.

This is to certify that the above work has been edited and proofreading done to the best of our ability. Comments and corrections have been sent to and received by the author.

Vivi Mpikashe (Mr)



DATE: December 17, 2020