EXPLORING THE TEACHING OF READING COMPREHENSION IN ISIZULU HOME LANGUAGE IN GRADE 7 CLASSROOMS AT UMVOTI CIRCUIT

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Declaration

I, Sibongile Mzila, declare that:

(i) The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work. Quotes and where exact words have been used, the writing has been placed inside quotation marks and referenced.

(ii) This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

(iii) This dissertation does not contain text, graphics or tables copied and pasted from the Internet, unless specifically acknowledged, and the source being detailed in the dissertation and in the References sections.

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As the candidate's Supervisor I agree/do not agree to the submission of this thesis.

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Abstract

The study aims to explore how teachers teach reading comprehension in isiZulu home language in Grade 7 classrooms. The study utilized a purposive sample in which three schools from the UMvoti circuit were selected and six teachers were selected as the participants in the study. All the selected schools currently offered isiZulu as home language and all six teachers taught isiZulu in Grade 7 and also were isiZulu speakers. To fit the aim of the study, the scaffolding concept and the Establish, Maintain and Consolidate (EMC2) framework were chosen as the appropriate conceptual framework informing the methods of data analysis and overall findings. To explore teacher experiences, three research questions were posed, namely: 1) What are teachers' understandings of teaching reading comprehension in isiZulu home language in Grade 7? 2) What strategies do teachers use to teach reading comprehension in isiZulu home language in Grade 7? and 3) What other factors influence the teaching of reading comprehension in isiZulu? Lesson observations and semi-structured interviews were used to generate data in the study. Deductive content analysis and inductive methods were used to analyze data. Findings from the study revealed that teachers do not use a teaching reading comprehension strategy in their instruction. The findings also suggested that teachers had a significant role to play in assisting learners to read with understanding. From the findings it is recommended that the Department of Education should train teachers on how to implement reading comprehension strategies in their teaching and teachers should be taught how to scaffold and model appropriate reading comprehension strategies that enhance critical thinking by learners, in their instruction.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CAPS   Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement

DBE   Department of Basic Education

DoE   Department of Education

EMC2   Establish, Maintain and Consolidate Recurring Strategy

FAL   First Additional Language

KZN   KwaZulu-Natal

NEEDU   National Education Evaluation and Development Unit

PIRLS   Progress in International Reading Language Study

ORF   Oral Reading Fluency

STT   Strategy Transfer Test

RQ   Research Question

ZPD   Zone of Proximal Development

PCK   Pedagogical Content Knowledge

QAR   Question–Answer Relationship

CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Outline

This study is an exploration of teachers' understanding of teaching reading comprehension in isiZulu home language in Grade 7 classrooms in the UMvoti circuit in Greytown in KwaZulu-Natal. Chapter One provides an introduction to the study. It presents the state of teaching reading comprehension in the South African context by giving a brief analysis of the problem and motivation for the study. The purpose, background and the rationale of the study are outlined as well as the objectives and research questions. The research methodology is briefly outlined and the outline of the chapters is given for a global view of the study.

1.2 Background information

The study was conducted in KwaZulu-Natal at the UMzinyathi District under the UMvoti circuit, in three semi-rural schools of Greytown. The UMvoti circuit is a small circuit predominantly populated by disadvantaged schools. All these schools are no-fee schools. They depend on the government for everything to function, especially in human resources and teaching and learning resources. All the schools offer the isiZulu home language subject and the teachers who teach in these schools are isiZulu home language speakers.

1.2.1 A brief description of the Senior Phase Language Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement

Reading and viewing is one of the four learning outcomes in the language Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). The Department of Basic Education (2011) expects learners in Grade 7 to demonstrate the following skills: understanding of the read text, responding critically to the text, reflecting and the ability to use reading skills as readers explicitly (DBE, 2011). The policy statement included the reading skill in order to assist learners in addressing the reading comprehension problems. A study conducted by Pretorius and Lephalala (2011) on teaching of reading comprehension indicated that if a child comes from communities with no value of reading and attends schools where they have little access to textbooks, their reading skills may not develop effectively. It is within this context that the

researcher has conducted this study on reading comprehension. The Department of Education contends that in the senior phase, especially in Grade 7, learners should have already acquired decoding skills which means learners are not "learning to read" but they are "reading to learn" (Rose, 2003). This study aims to contribute to the teaching of reading comprehension in African languages particularly isiZulu since there is minimal knowledge of teaching comprehension in these languages.

1.2.2 Explanation of reading and comprehension

Reading is a complex process that includes individual cognitive–linguistic accomplishment as well as socially constituted practice (Pretorius, 2010). Cognitive–linguistic aspects of reading involve four main components, which are decoding, comprehension, response and meta-linguistic and meta-cognitive knowledge. These components form subcomponents that are interrelated and influence the response to text and the motivation to read. Comprehension is one of the components of reading and it is referred to as the ability to make meaning and understanding of what is read. The main aim of reading is to comprehend what is being read (Goodman & Goodman, 2009, p.92; Klapwijk, 2015).

1.3 Motivation for the study

The motivation of the study is driven by two imperatives. They are the areas of personal imperative and of literature-based imperative. Firstly, it emanates from my personal experience of attending workshops on the CAPS (curriculum) where aspects such as the teaching of language skills are taught. Although these skills are addressed in workshops, they do not cover skills on teaching comprehension. The teaching of comprehension is not explained and there are no clear strategies recommended for teaching comprehension in isiZulu in teacher learning activities. Researchers have revealed that teachers do not teach reading comprehension strategies and learners do not read with understanding (DoE, 2007: Fleisch, 2008; Hasbrouck & Tindal, 2006; Pretorius & Majtila, 2004; NEEDU, 2013; Pretorius & Lephalala 2011; Klapwijk & Van Der Walt, 2011; Howie et al., 2012). Therefore learners in South Africa tend to perform poorly in international and local bench marks tests and in systemic evaluations.

1.4 Problem statement

Studies conducted on learner's reading levels reveal poor reading levels in South African schools (Howie et al., 2007, 2012; Pretorius & Lephalala, 2011; Matjila & Pretorius, 2004; Klapwijk, 2015). NEEDU (2012) confirms that reading test scores in learners' home language are equally poor. Comprehension is a significant part of the reading process yet children continue to fight with it and teachers continue to overlook it in their teaching of reading (Klapwijk, 2015). The study conducted by Pretorius and Lephalala (2011) on the teaching of reading comprehension strategies revealed that there is still a problem in reading comprehension. Their findings also showed that learners had not yet achieved decoding skills, fluency and accuracy, and, therefore, it was difficult for them to apply and integrate comprehension strategies with pre-existing knowledge when they read (Pretorius & Lephalala, 2011).

1.5 Purpose of the study

The study aims to explore the teaching reading comprehension in isiZulu home language. The researcher further wishes to understand how teachers teach reading comprehension in isiZulu and identify teaching strategies, methods and interventions they utilize in their teaching of reading comprehension. The researcher wants to address the fall and shift from learning to read in the foundation phase identified by Chall, Jacobs and Baldwin (1990) to reading to learn in the senior phase identified by Cummins (2000). Poor reading skills mix learners' learning load both physically and cognitively. Most of the studies are conducted in the foundation phase and those which are conducted in reading do not focus on reading comprehension in depth.

1.6 Rationale

Learners show problems with decoding skills and comprehension skills. This is revealed in all levels of education in the foundation phase, intermediate phase, and senior phase and at tertiary level (Matjila & Pretorius, 2004; Bharuthram, 2012). Studies conducted by independent researchers and the Department of Education revealed that the reading standard is still low (PIRLS, 2006; Klapwijk & Pretorius, 2004; Majtila & Van Der Walt, 2006;

Bharuthram, 2012). Klapwijk (2011) states that teachers are lazy to teach reading comprehension as it demands time and a lot of scaffolding that includes hard work. The literature, for example Klapwijk (2011, 2015) and Sailors (2008), suggests that there is a lack of studies of teaching reading comprehension in isiZulu as opposed to teaching reading comprehension in English. This study attempts to address this shortage.

1.6.1 The objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To explore teacher's teaching of reading comprehension in isiZulu home language in Grade 7 classrooms.
- To identify teaching strategies used by teachers in teaching reading comprehension in isiZulu Grade 7 classrooms.
- To ascertain factors influencing the teaching of reading comprehension in isiZulu home language.

1.6.2 The research questions

The three questions which the research aims to answer are:
- What are teacher's understandings of teaching reading comprehension in isiZulu home language in Grade 7 classes?
- What reading strategies do teachers utilize in teaching reading comprehension in isiZulu?
- What factors influence the teaching of reading comprehension in isiZulu home language?

1.7 Research methodology

1.7.1. Research paradigm

The research paradigm refers to a set of assumptions about how things work (Henning, 2004). The actual interaction between the teacher and the learner is important in generating knowledge in the interpretive paradigm. The interpretive paradigm is a method of study that is more interested in interpreting the deeper meaning in a collection of personal narratives. It is more concerned with revealing multi-realities as opposed to one objective reality (Denzin,

2000). This study is located within the interpretive paradigm because the researcher interprets what teachers do and say. It seeks to understand reading comprehension in its natural setting which is in different school settings.

1.7.2 Qualitative approach

The study adopts a qualitative research approach to explore teachers' understanding of teaching reading comprehension in isiZulu. The qualitative approach is suitable for this study as it interprets teachers' practices in the classroom during teaching. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011), qualitative research involves understanding the phenomenon in depth and in more detail as it is in its natural setting. It is also more descriptive as it uses text not numbers and statistics. The qualitative approach involves choosing samples, data collection methods and instruments such as lesson observation and interviews.

1.7.3 Research design

A research design refers to overall strategies used to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, and therefore ensuring the effective addressing of the research problem. This study used qualitative case study in order to gain detailed data about the phenomenon in its natural context. A qualitative case study design helps to understand and describe the phenomenon of interest from the perspective of the participants. The purpose of the study is to understand how teachers teach reading comprehension. After observation, feedback and discussion, teachers shared their understanding of teaching reading comprehension.

1.7.4 Sampling

Purposive sampling means that a researcher chooses participants intentionally because they have defined characteristics that the researcher wants or is of interest and that will provide in-depth detailed information about the study. Participants were selected using a purposive convenience sample. The teachers that were selected shared the common aspect that they all teach isiZulu home language currently in Grade 7. The participants were selected because they had defined characteristics needed in the study. The participants were six teachers from three different schools. The researcher selected a sample of six teachers and observed them using an

observation schedule. All teachers had been teachers of isiZulu home language for the past five years in Grade 7.

1.7.5 Data generation methods

1.7.5.1 Lesson observation

Cohen et al. (2007) argue that observation is most appropriate for collecting data on naturally occurring behaviours in their usual context. Observation is an advantage in that what is not gained through interview can be gained through observation. In this study, structured observation was utilized so that the researcher observed exactly what the teachers did when they taught reading in the classrooms. This included teaching approaches, strategies used to teach reading comprehension, assessment tools and techniques to assess comprehension and observing other factors that influence the teaching of reading comprehension.

1.7.5.2 Semi-structured interviews

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) state that interviews are tools that the researcher uses to converse with the participant in order to argue, infer and to express their point of view about the world they reside in. They also argue that it is a significant tool that is most flexible for data collection. The researcher used semi-structured interviews. Maree (2010) states that the semi-structured interview enables the researcher to probe, if there is a need to do so. Creswell (2007) advises that interviews be conducted at the time convenient to the participants. This study used semi-structured interviews to allow for participants to express their ideas freely and to get more details on what was observed during lesson observation.

1.8 Data collection instruments

1.8.1 Lesson observation schedule

An observation schedule was used while observing the teachers teaching comprehension. The aspects covered in the observation schedule were the three stages of teaching reading which were to establish, maintain and consolidate. Teachers were observed using the observation schedule while teaching in their classrooms.

1.8.2 Interview schedule

The interview schedule is a tool that helps the researcher to collect data about the phenomenon of interest while conducting the interviews with the participants. The interview schedule seeks to guide the focus of the interview. The interview is not just a data generating exercise but a social interpersonal communication (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). A significant consideration for transcribing the data generated by interviews was the fact that this form of inquiry generates a very large amount of rich textual data. To try to limit the distortion of information, all the interviews were recorded using a tape recorder and a laptop.

1.9 Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis is 'the process of breaking data into categories so that it can make sense" (Boetjie, 2010, p.76). Similarly, Yin (2003) maintains that data analysis is the process of breaking data into categories and searching for patterns. Content analysis following the six steps discussed below, has been used to analyze data which was organized into categories and themes both from lesson observations and semi-structured interviews.

1.9.1 Lesson observation

The lesson observation transcript of participants was analyzed deductively using the content analysis outlined below. The researcher used Cohen, Manion and Morrison's (2011) content analysis and followed the six steps suggested by it which are:

1) First step was to familiarize myself with the data.

2) Second step was the coding of the data.

3) Third step involved coding the data into categories.

4) Fourth step, themes were reviewed.

5) Fifth step included categorizing themes across all categories

6) Sixth step included finalizing themes.

1.9.2 Interview analysis

Interview transcripts of participants were analyzed using content analysis which is similar to that of the lesson observations. The six stages in content analysis process included familiarizing with the data, coding the data, identifying patterns and connections between categories and searched for recurring themes and used themes and connections to explain findings and finally reporting the findings (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011).

1.10 Outline of Chapters

Chapter 1 provided the background to the study, the problem statement and the research questions, the purpose and rationale of the study. The research methodology is also outlined and significant key concepts are discussed**.** Chapter 2 constitutes the conceptual framework and literature within which the study is framed. It also provides models, strategies and guidelines for teaching reading comprehension. Chapter 3 presents the research methodology of the study. Research design, methods of collecting data and research tools are discussed**.** Chapter 4 presents the analysis of collected data through lesson observations and semi-structured interviews. Finally, Chapter 5 provides an interpretation of the main findings of this study and draws conclusions based on the research questions. Recommendations are also made in this chapter.

1.11 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the background, rationale and the purpose, problem statement of the study, the objectives and research questions. The research methodology has been briefly outlined to give a global view of the study. The next chapter will explore the literature and the conceptual framework of the study.

CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the literature relevant to the research topic. In this chapter, the literature is reviewed; and the conceptual framework, reading comprehension strategies and reading comprehension skills of the study are presented.

2.2 Literature review

2.2.1 Definition of reading and comprehension

a) What is reading?

Reading is a process through which the learner tries to engage in meaning with the text. It is the key to build meaning from the read text. There are two basic components of reading: decoding and comprehension. Decoding refers to the capability to recognize sound letter relationship and comprehension refers to meaning making (understanding of what is read).

The focus of learning to read is on acquiring decoding skills which the Department of Education recommends to be done in lower grades. The curriculum caters for that in the foundation phase. Although decoding is essential, it is not enough, as many readers may decode the text but still cannot comprehend what they read (Pretorius & Lephalala, 2011). The Department of Education when designing the curriculum for senior phase had expectations of the standard of decoding and comprehension as the main components of reading acquired at this level. At the entry level of the senior phase - Grade 7 - there are still challenges with decoding skills which the Department assumes had been covered in the Foundation Phase yet they are not.

b) What is comprehension?

Another component of reading is comprehension. Comprehension is the process of conveying meaning to the text that we read. Current theories of reading comprehension posit that while people read, they make an overall picture of what the text is about (Koda, 2007). Vocabulary

knowledge is an essential component of comprehension (National Reading Panel, 2000). However, vocabulary is needed but not a sufficient provision for reading comprehension. When one is reading to learn, one deals with new, unknown information, and one must be able to interact with the text in such a way that one can modify existing knowledge or acquire new awareness and knowledge in the process.

2.3 Approaches to reading

2.3.1 Intensive reading approach

This approach is known as a means of quickly going through a text to get specific information (Blachowicz & Olge, 2001). It is essential for reading in depth and is usually done in classrooms where each learner reads the same text. Intensive reading involves readers reading in detail with a specific learning aim unlike the extensive approach where a reader reads for fun and pleasure. A learner may read a specific paragraph and sum it up in a simple sentence to show understanding of the main idea. Intensive reading approach is reading at the higher level of reading (Blachowicz & Olge, 2001).

2.3.2 Extensive reading approach

Extensive reading approach is well known for reading a text usually for pleasure. It is usually known as the flexible reading of the text. This approach is more helpful in introducing learners to reading long scripts and texts and to develop lifelong independent readers. It further helps readers to find out more new words, grammar and develop a passion for reading, thus leading readers to become good readers and writers (Lephalala & Pretorius, 2011). Learners can view and review unknown words. Extensive reading enhances a learner's general language competence as it may lead to improvement in writing. It also motivates learners to read. It can combine pre-existing knowledge about the text and facilitate the development of prediction skills (Blachowicz & Olge, 2001).

2.3.3 Skimming and scanning techniques

Speed reading techniques enable the reader to read vast amounts of information in a small time. Skimming and scanning are two reading techniques that use the same process but that are different on the grounds of implementation. The skimming method is used with the aim of

only finding the main idea of the text and the overview of the text and is more fruitful in pre-reading activities, in reviewing already read text and during the reading process stage. Learners may read the first, middle and the last paragraph using headings, summaries or illustrations and the first sentence of each paragraph. This technique is more useful in content subjects when readers are seeking information rather than reading for comprehension. Skimming works well to find dates, places and names and can be used to review graphs, tasks and charts, whereas scanning techniques are more useful when the reader wants to find specific details about what one reads. This technique can be used to read a specific section or passage in a text.

2.3.4 Strategies to teach comprehension

Reading strategies are tools readers implement to make sure they understand what they read. The strategies discussed below can help teachers in developing good independent readers (Blachowicz & Olge, 2001; Klapwijk & Dutoit, 2009). The strategies are grouped into three stages namely before reading, during reading and after reading.

a) Before reading strategies

These are strategies that can be applied before reading resumes. These strategies are recommended by the majority of researchers in reading comprehension. Firstly in previewing the text, this can be achieved by looking at the title, pictures and graphics and other relevant items (chapter headings and summaries) to evoke ideas thoughts, relevant memories and experiences. This starts to activate what a reader already knows (Blachowicz & Olge, 2001) about the topic and content that can help the reader understand, as well as what is known about the form of the reading material. This previewing helps the reader draw on background knowledge about both the content and the type of reading material. Second is setting the purpose for reading by asking questions. For example based on predictions and questions, one may use a skimming or scanning technique to find out quickly what is happening in the text or one may decide to read a summary of the first chapter to get the overall gist of the chapter (Blachowicz & Olge, 2001).

b) During reading strategies

The EMC2 framework suggests the strategies that can be engaged with during the reading phase, including the checking of understanding. Understanding can be checked by keeping track of the essence of the material. This can be done by paraphrasing or by asking questions like "does this make sense to me?". Integrating new information with what is already known can be achieved by making connections, inferences, creating images and adding to what the reader already knows. Monitoring comprehension includes using all clues to figure out unfamiliar words, by determining what is important in the reading material and by using "fix-up strategies" such as re-reading and reading ahead when difficulties and challenges have been found. Continuing to predict helps to refine those predictions and answers, or you may re-formulate the questions and ask new questions (Klapwijk, 2015).

c) After reading strategies

These strategies help both the reader and the teacher to reflect on read text. Summarization and synthesizing are good strategies to be implemented after reading (Klapwijk, 2015). These can be done by dealing with the plot or central ideas as well as the author's purpose or perspective. This constructs a meaning for the whole that goes beyond the meaning of the individual part read, like a chapter or a section. Responding appropriately can be done personally, critically, evaluatively or creatively. In cross-checking with other information, one can make other connections across text and knowledge types, when it is appropriate. Checking for fulfillment of the purpose of reading can be checked through by whether the following questions were answered: was the writer's presentation adequate?; does the reader need or desire to read or learn more or search further for information? (Blachowicz & Olge, 2001).

2.3.5 Assessment of reading comprehension

Assessment forms an integral part of teaching and it must be continuous (DoE, 2007). It helps teachers to make an informed decision regarding the level of material learners can handle but knowing what learners can read is only the first step. The teacher also needs to know how readers read so that s/he can build on strong strategies and introduce new ones. Assessment helps the teacher to see the instructional needs of the learners. When teachers assess, they also

teach. Assessment focuses on what is important in reading. It can model or develop readers in the way in which good readers monitor and fix up their own comprehension.

2.4 Empirical studies on teaching reading comprehension

A study conducted by Pretorius and Lephalala in 2011, on teaching reading comprehension in high poverty schools, aimed to familiarize teachers with comprehension reading strategies, making teachers aware of different assessment strategies and integrating library use into teachers' practice. The five year longitudinal study involved two township schools in Atteridgeville Township, west of Pretoria. The findings showed that learners had not yet acquired decoding skills, and they struggled to read with fluency and accuracy. It was difficult for them to apply and combine comprehension strategies and knowledge when they read (Pretorius & Lephalala, 2011, p.16).

Another study was conducted by Matjila and Pretorius in 2004 on reading skills in Grade 8 in Setswana home language and English. The school offered Setswana as home language and English as the language for learning. The findings revealed that the reading levels in both languages were low and far lower than would be expected for the age developmental level of the learners. The second finding was that the learners' primary language performance was poor just as in English. Thus this concurs with the point that reading skills form the foundation for success at school and that they develop over time.

A study was conducted by Klapwijk and Van Der Walt in 2011 on reading strategy knowledge transfer and teachers' motivation for implementing the reading strategy instruction. The study aimed to measure whether reading strategy instruction had an effect on reading comprehension. Findings proved that reading strategy instruction is measurable and reading strategy can be used as motivation to teachers to use it in their instruction of reading. All three empirical studies revealed that teachers do not teach reading comprehension strategies at schools thus depriving learners of strategies they need when they encounter problems in their comprehension and in their thinking process of meaning making when reading text.

In China, there was a study conducted using the process approach in teaching reading comprehension which was understood by teachers to be the most important skill in language teaching. Researchers and teachers had observed that what made children's reading problems

was the way they read. They normally practiced flawed reading. It was important for teachers to come up with strategies to help children with their poor reading habits. It was observed that most children just looked for unfamiliar words in the passage and did not bother about the gist of the passage. The teacher used the process approach because he had the weaknesses and strengths of the learners in mind. This type of reading was "intensive" reading that focused on the understanding of what is read. The teacher decided to use four aspects to make the reading lesson effective. These aspects were tuning in, task setting, activity organizing and problem solving (Blachowicz & Olge, 2001).

2.5 Assessment strategies

2.5.1 Instructional level of assessment and matching learner with the material

Teachers can use various criteria to assess content, format and language. These components can assist the teacher to establish whether the material is at an appropriate level of difficulty for students in reading instruction. A reading selection is considered suitable for instruction when a learner, after reading, responds correctly to a certain proportion of the questions asked or can identify the majority of the important ideas in the selected text (Blachowicz & Olge, 2001).

2.5.2 Questioning

The use of the questioning method in instruction has a significant effect on both the development and the assessment of learners' comprehension strategies. The focus of the straight questioning affects the thinking strategies that the learner develops. Also when an instructional activity uses good questioning and models the process of self questioning, teachers help learners to develop into independent readers (Palincsar & Brown, 1984). Questions are a powerful guide to what learners have learnt to think whilst they read. Teachers ask questions to see how well the learner has comprehended the text. Some teachers use questions to model the process of thinking before and during reading. Teachers can ask questions before beginning to read a story by asking what learners already know about the topic. This type of questioning is not for testing but is for activating learners' thinking. Teachers also ask questions to consolidate what learners have read and to reflect on ideas.

Many studies indicate that teachers' questions are quite literal; however teachers can ask much more thoughtful and reflective questions.

2.5.3 Informal reading inventories

Teachers ask learners to read orally, or to read silently, to listen and to retell and interpret what has been read. Teachers ask learners to decode a graded word list of increasing difficulty. In reading for comprehension purposes, the questions should be clearly worded and should represent convergent and divergent thinking. Questions must be based on the text, which forces the reader to read in order for him/her to be able to respond correctly (Blachowicz & Olge, 2001).

2.5.4 Using close exercise

Close exercise is used to discover and monitor learners' knowledge and understanding of the reading process and to assess the extent of the learner's vocabulary and knowledge of a read text. A close exercise can be used to encourage learners to monitor their own understanding when they are engaged with the text. It also encourages learners to think positively and reasonably about text and content (Blachowicz & Olge, 2001).

2.5.5 Retelling

Many teachers prefer retelling (free recollection by learners) to asking questions because a retelling reveals how a child prioritizes and sequences information without the prompt of teacher's questions. The teacher may use probing questions to access further information the child does not give. The teacher can assess how the learner uses oral language and reconstructs passages (Blachowicz & Olge, 2001).

2.5.6 Think Aloud Strategy

This strategy expects learners to verbalize before, during and after reading. This reveals not only the information but also their internal thought processes. A teacher asks a learner to reflect on what he/she is reading, as the text is read chunk by chunk. Each chunk can be a line, a sentence, a paragraph or a larger selection depending on the learner and the task. Readers commonly comment on what they are reading, summarize it or predict what is coming by

analyzing a reading text; a teacher can often understand why a learner is having a difficulty understanding (Blachowicz & Olge,2001)..

2.5.7 Using a rubric for assessing reading comprehension

A rubric is a planned format for evaluating some performances. Rubrics assist teachers in looking at learners' oral reading or writing about reading and the way at which learners use what they have read after reading. This study uses two categories of rubrics, namely: holistic rating and detailed rating. The holistic rating focuses on the ways children use information in discussions or writing after reading. Detailed rating attempts to look at the development in the ways learners explore, apply strategies, gain meaning from reading and use reading for lifelong purposes as independent lifelong readers.

A rubric can also be seen as a set of guidelines for interpreting the thinking aloud process. It can help a teacher write down what the reader does before, during and after reading. Besides noting what the reader remembers; the teacher can use a checklist to analyze how the learner came to understand. The teacher listens to record and fill in the rubric and the main ideas remembered by the reader (Blachowicz & Olge, 2001).

Some of the aspects that can be assessed in the checklist before reading are the following. Did the reader notice cues for prediction, and did the reader make some suitable predictions about the text, topic, and genre? Did the reader bring something he/she already knows about the genre, topic or author? During reading, did the reader comment on what was read or ask questions?, Did the reader relate to what was being read to prior knowledge and re-read or read ahead when trying to make sense and meaning? Did the reader use context for word meaning or describe visualization? After reading, did the reader summarize, respond to questions and critically reflect or use judgment?

The checklist can also reveal what learners emphasize, how they make connections to what they know, how they use strategies like prediction, visualization, summarization and self-questioning. A think aloud strategy can let a reader and a teacher see the process of reading in action. Poor readers may tend only to write questions as they read, while the independent readers may write their questions, interpretations, convey messages, make criticisms and later reflect on reading. The teacher may give a chance after reading for writing, outlining and

mapping, and this will help give the teacher insight into both what and how learners understand.

2.5.8 Knowledge gaps and challenges in the teaching of reading comprehension

Several studies conducted reveal that teachers do not use a strategy for teaching reading comprehension in their instruction (Klapwijk & Van Der Walt, 2011; Pretorius & Lephalala, 2011; Klapwijk, 2015). The literature suggests that teachers seem to lack knowledge of teaching reading comprehension while they are at teacher training institutions and most developments seem to focus on reading instruction and teaching decoding (Sailors, 2008 and Klapwijk, 2015). They argue that the comprehension strategy instruction is painfully difficult and that it is time consuming (Block & Duffy, 2008; Klapwijk, 2015). Teachers seem not to be familiar with how to teach comprehension. This is confirmed by studies conducted in South Africa schools (Klapwijk, 2011; Pretorius, 2011; Zimmerman, 2010) and it is evident in the PILRS (2006 & 2011) result for South African learners (Howie et al., 2007, 2012). Klapwijk (2011) argues that teacher training institutions limit courses about comprehension strategy instruction. The challenges of teaching reading comprehension is that it needs sufficient time and teachers have to change their usual teaching approaches and teaching style to adopt and try to use the comprehension instruction strategy which is not easy for the teachers (Klapwijk, 2011).

2.6. Conceptual framework

The study focuses on the teaching of reading comprehension in isiZulu home language in Grade 7. According to Henning (2004) a conceptual framework is a lens at which the researcher positions the study. This study draws from Shulman's (1987) domains of teacher knowledge and Klapwijk (2015) EMC2 framework strategy. Shulman's domain of teacher knowledge will help to answer questions on teacher knowledge.

2.6.1 The socio-cultural framework of learning

Scaffolding and the zone of proximal development and schema theory are theoretical concepts underpinning the socio-cultural theory of learning. Scaffolding is used to explain the role of teachers as informed in guiding learner's learning and development (Stone, 1995; Wells, 1999).The socio-cultural theory of learning is relevant to the study because

learning is understood as social interaction involving learners and how teachers mediate learning. Both concepts are discussed in the subsequent sections.

2.6.1.1 Scaffolding

Scaffolding is described as the process through which the teacher supports the learner. Thus it helps the teacher to extend their knowledge and to try something that they would not do without the help of the teacher. Scaffolding is important when teachers introduce learners to new ideas and ways of solving problems. This is referred to in the ways in which teachers teach and plan their lessons and resources to create essential opportunities for scaffolding. Scaffolding is the concept that encourages learner–teacher interaction in understanding a text. When reading a text in class, the teacher should scaffold in order to activate learners' frames of reference and to determine learners' prior knowledge which will enable their understanding of the text. The main aim of reading is to comprehend what is being read (Goodman & Goodman, 2009, p.92). Block and Duffy (2008) argue that the reading process comprises communication between reader and the text and the context. Thus reading comprehension results from the interaction among the reader, the strategies used to read, the material that is read and the context in which reading occurs (Edward &Turner, 2009, p.631).

2.6.1.2 Vygotsky's zone of proximal development

The "zone of proximal development" (ZPD) is defined as the gap between what can be done without assistance and what can be performed with little assistance from the teachers. The concept focuses on socio-cultural interaction and scaffolding. The ZPD is considered because it relates to the student's at hand levels of understanding. Vygotsky notes that the space between what a student can achieve alone, and what can be achieved with someone else's help, is called the ZPD. For the foundations of learning and development, ZPD is successfully achieved through co-operation. A constructivist view of learning is that it views learners as active learners already holding schemata which they use to make sense of their daily experiences. In the process, learners make sense of the world by building meaning. Learning is successful in situations where social interaction is more encouraged between the teachers as the more informed one and the learners. It is learning that can happen because it is supported by a more informed other. Teachers give their learners relevant material and they make the learning situation helpful to reading comprehension by allowing learners to experiment with

failure and success. The help might include paraphrasing and showing how to break text into small parts. The teacher should model her/his own practice. He/she can help learners with the vocabulary and reading strategies that are beyond their understanding and reading levels. He/she can step back so learners can gradually take control of the reading process. Individual learning occurs in a rich social context and with the support of scaffolding.

2.6.1.3 Schema theory

Schema theory posits that reading comprehension is an interactive process between the text that is read and the reader's pre-existing knowledge (Wallace, 2003). Thus reading comprehension depends on how a reader interprets and makes meaning of words when reading the text (Grabe, 2004). A schema is cognitively constructed within specific social or cultural contexts so a text is better understood when related to the reader's cultural context. Similarly, Vygotsky (1978) concurs that a child better understands when assistance is offered and the use of familiar tools makes support more effective. Comprehension is motivated and purposeful which means that the reader needs to be motivated and have a purpose to read. A purpose for reading makes a person motivated to read.

2.6.2 Teacher knowledge

The framework of teacher knowledge is important in explaining the types of knowledge needed to teach reading comprehension in the classroom. Teacher knowledge begins with the teacher understanding what is to be learnt and how is to be taught. It proceeds to a series of activities where learners are instructed specifically and are given opportunities to learn (Shulman, 1987). Studies conducted seem to indicate that teachers hardly ever teach reading strategies explicitly, which deprives learners of the strategy they need to think about the processes of meaning making when they encounter text. Research also seems to indicate that teachers have difficulty in implementing strategy instruction without professional development. Professional development pays little attention to teachers in teaching reading and too little on comprehension instruction (Sailors, 2008, p.647). Research states that teaching teachers reading comprehension is hard and time consuming. It needs support and co-operation and it requires changes in teachers' teaching methods and approaches. Studies have pointed out that little formal comprehension instruction exists in schools. Sailors (2008, p.652) points out that, there are still only a few studies about teacher development of

comprehension instruction and new teachers still enter school without understanding how to teach comprehension. Furthermore teachers do not view comprehension as part of the reading process. Teachers are not able to teach reading strategies as they are not trained to teach reading comprehension. Teachers are lazy to take on comprehension instruction (Klapwijk, 2015).

2.6.2.1 Content knowledge or subject knowledge

The content knowledge and the pedagogical knowledge will be the ones discussed in this study. Grossman (1990) merged these seven categories of teacher knowledge into four categories which are general pedagogical knowledge, subject matter knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and knowledge of the context. Content knowledge forms the basis of all other teacher knowledge. Grossman (1990) argued that insufficient content knowledge will contribute to incompetence with the curriculum, the strategies to use in teaching and the lack of proper planning. Teachers must be experts in their subjects of specialization because they must know how to teach concepts and have ways to make difficult topics be more easily understandable by learners.

2.6.2.2 Pedagogical content knowledge

Pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) is referred to as the combination of the content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. The EMC 2 Strategy forms the part of knowing the PCK because the framework suggests strategies that teachers might use to better teach reading comprehension. Shulman (1987) states that pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) is the exceptionally special understanding of content and pedagogy for that subject, knowledge of learners and their characteristics, and knowledge of the educational context. Shulman (1987) posits that it includes the understanding of how learning of specific topics are easy or difficult, so teachers bring learners abilities, ages and background into consideration, knowledge of resources which can be easily accessible in the classroom to help learners in the learning process. Central to teaching reading comprehension is the teacher's knowledge of teaching comprehension strategies. The EMC2 strategy is one of the instructional strategies.

2.6.3 EMC2 framework strategy instruction

The EMC2 strategy aims at and focuses mainly on teachers' ability to teach comprehension (through the use of a strategy). The framework is designed to increase teachers' comprehension instruction abilities and assumes that learners will benefit from this. It states that all teachers should know their learners' developmental linguistic needs. Once children become exposed to a variety of texts, their ability to identify the text type in conjunction with the purpose of reading, lays the first foundation for meaning making. This process is not static. It is repeated in all stages of the reading process (Klapwijk, 2015).

2.6.3.1 Establish Phase in EMC2 framework

Establishing prior knowledge in the EMC2 framework helps to link new knowledge to the existing knowledge best (Klapwijk, 2011). At this stage the following predictors can be used to lay a foundation of meaning making, activating prior knowledge, asking pre-set questions based on the text and prediction. Prediction refers to learners making predictions about the text before reading it. Klapwijk (2015) states that predictions help learners set a purpose for reading and anticipate what they are going to read. Teachers should create the prediction guide and pre-reading questions can be used continually throughout the lesson.

2.6.3.2 Maintain stage in EMC2 framework

This is a meaning making process where learners are active participants in the reading process. They may read a text out aloud or the teacher might have individual learners read specific paragraphs. Individual reading must be emphasized either silently or aloud. Learners must monitor their own understanding of the text. The teacher monitors the learners' reading (Klapwijk, 2015). A fix it strategy is where the learners slow down the pace or stop if they do not understand and go back and re-read so that they do understand. During this stage the teacher should teach learners reading techniques like skimming, scanning and speed reading (Klapwijk, 2015).

2.6.3.3 Consolidate stage in the EMC2 framework

This process occurs after the reading process has occurred. The learners may write activities based on the read text. The teacher comes with pre-set questions based on the text or the questions pre-determined by the prescribed book. The teacher checks the learner's pre-reading

questions. The EMC2 strategy proposes that teachers teach learners how to ask questions, through the use of the "Question Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy".

The teacher teaches learners to summarize the text. Klapwijk (2015) states that it seems few teachers know how to teach summarization. Making a summary is at the top of the nine effective teaching strategies. It is challenging if learners did not understand the text sufficiently and it is time consuming. It requires strong comprehension or understanding and a high level of thinking (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2007).Summarizing must be made simple starting with a short paragraph and moving to many paragraphs. Therefore, summarization should be taught explicitly.

Table 1: EMC2 framework phases and strategies for each phase

EMC2 FRAMEWORK PHASES	STRATEGY/ACTIVITY
BEFORE READING PHASE • **ESTABLISH**	• Think about what learners know • Give them opportunity to predict • Learners can scan the title, sub-titles, pictures • What do I want them to learn?
DURING READING PHASE • **MAINTAIN**	• Self-check, whether you understand or not • Visualize • Confirm or revise prediction or ask questions • Re-read the confusing parts
AFTER READING PHASE • **CONSOLIDATE**	• Re-read the confusing part and help if necessary • Summarize or ask learners to tell what they have learnt • Were the questions you had before, answered? • Summarization and connections e.g. this reminds me of

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the literature on reading comprehension and the EMC2 framework on teaching strategies and the assessment strategies of reading comprehension. The conceptual framework was also presented. The next chapter will give a detailed description of the research methodology and data collection procedures and explain the processes of data collection.

CHAPTER 3:
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the research methodology and the research design that was used. It further explains the sampling procedure adopted the description of the research sites and provides a discussion of the data generation methods and data analysis. The ethical considerations followed are also stated.

3.2 Aim and Research Questions

The aim of the study is to explore teacher's understanding of teaching reading comprehension in isiZulu home language in Grade 7. In order to achieve the aim of the study, the following critical questions are explored:

1) What are teachers' understandings of teaching reading comprehension in isiZulu home language?
2) What reading strategies do teachers use in teaching reading comprehension?
3) What factors influence the teaching of reading comprehension in isiZulu home language?

3.3 Research design and Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative case study design. A research design refers to overall strategies used to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, therefore ensuring the effective addressing of the research problem. The study used qualitative case study in order to gain detailed data about the phenomenon in its natural context. A qualitative research design helps to understand and describe the phenomenon of interest from the perspective of the participants. Hence the purpose of the study is to understand how teachers teach reading comprehension.

Research paradigm refers to a set of assumptions about how things work and it is a shared understanding of realities .It is more concerned with revealing multi-realities as opposed to one objective reality (Henning, 2004). This study is located within the interpretive paradigm

because the researcher interprets things teachers do and say. It will seek to understand reading comprehension in its natural setting which is in different school settings.

3.4 Qualitative approach

A qualitative approach was selected to explore teachers' understanding of teaching reading comprehension in isiZulu home language in Grade 7. A qualitative approach was chosen, as it is exploratory, descriptive and interpretive by nature. Qualitative studies have the potential to provide rich and detailed data (Carr, 2008). According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) qualitative research involves understanding the phenomenon in depth and in more detail as it occurs in its natural setting. It is also more descriptive as it uses text, not numbers and statistics. The qualitative approach involves choosing samples, data collection methods and instruments such as (lesson observation and interviews). The qualitative approach is suitable for this study as it interprets teachers' understanding and practices in the classroom during teaching.

3.5 Research Context and Sampling

The research focused on exploring teacher's understanding of teaching reading comprehension in isiZulu home language in Grade 7 at the UMvoti circuit schools at Greytown. The researcher has selected a sample of six teachers and observed them using an observation schedule. After observation, feedback and discussion, teachers were asked to share their understanding about the phenomenon. Thereafter the analysis was done to explore possible ways of improving classroom practice.

Three schools were selected for the study and six teachers were selected thus two participants from each school. The study adopted purposive sampling to identify a sample for the study. Purposive sampling means that a researcher chooses participants intentionally because they have defined characteristics that the researcher wants or is of interest and that will provide in-depth detailed information about the study. The teachers that have been selected shared a common aspect in teaching isiZulu home language currently in Grade 7. All teachers were teachers of isiZulu home language for the past five years in Grade 7. The study adopted a small sample to get in-depth detail of the phenomenon.

3.5.1 Description of school A

School A is situated in the Mbuba location, which is a semi-rural area surrounded by forest and sugar plantations. There are about 30 educators. The school is well managed. It covers from Grade R to Grade 7. The school starts at 7:30am and finishes at 2:30 pm. It is a no-fee school. The school does not have enough resources for reading. It is disadvantaged and most parents are illiterate. The school has good infrastructure and is well managed but reading resources are inadequate. Teachers use the book corners of their classrooms to place reading materials. The school is accessible to everyone who is willing to learn at the school. Learners walk to school for about 5kms.

3.5.2 Description of school B

This school is located in the Matimatolo area which is under the UMvoti circuit. There are 39 educators and 1 400 learners. It is a big school with a very supportive management team. The school has good infrastructure and is well managed, but with no library or librarian. Reading resources are inadequate for the learners to use freely and to take them home.

The school starts from Grade R to Grade 7. The school starts at 7:30am and finishes at 2:30pm.The school is a no-fee school. It is disadvantaged and most parents are illiterate. The school only caters for learners who reside in the area and who are willing to learn isiZulu as a home language.

3.5.3 Description of school C

Figure 1: A photograph of learners assembled at school C

This school is located in the countryside of Greytown at Hermannsburg Mission. It is surrounded by forestry and most of the parents work in the forestry plantations and are illiterate. It is a no-fee school. There is a tavern 1 km away from the school. This is a school which produces good results. It covers from Grade R to Grade 12 and is a combined school. It is well resourced with qualified teachers. The school offers isiZulu as home language in all grades. There are about 35 teachers and 1 299 learners. Teachers are dedicated. Most learners are victims of the unsafe and insecure environment as the school is surrounded by the forests. The school is accessible to all learners and caters for inclusivity. There is a newly built library but it is not functional since there are very few books and no librarian.

3.5.4 Participant Profiles

School Name	Teacher	Experience in Senior Phase	Qualifications	Post level	Number of learners in the Grade
School A	Teacher G	7 years	Diploma, degree in inclusive education	1	59
School A	Teacher SM	17years	BED	1	70
School B	Teacher D	20 years	Degree in Tourism, Diploma in Education	1	76
School B	Teacher TN	15 years	BED	1	34
School C	Teacher NTU	20 years	BED	1	45
School C	Teacher LFB	7 years	BED Honours	1	45

3.6 Data collection methods

3.6.1 Lesson observation

Observation is integral to understanding the complexities of the participants' understanding of the phenomenon of teaching reading comprehension. Observation helps to understand and interpret data obtained from other methods, because it provides a context to understand that data. Cohen et al. (2011) define observation as a systematic process where behavioral patterns are observed and recorded. It is an advantage that what is not gained through interviews, can be gained through observation. In this study, structured observation was utilized so that the

researcher observed exactly what teachers did when they taught reading in the classrooms. This included teaching approaches, strategies used to teach reading comprehension, assessment tools and techniques to assess comprehension and to observe other factors that influence teaching of reading comprehension.

3.6.2 Semi structured interviews

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) state that interviews are tools that the researcher uses to communicate with the participants in order to discuss and interpret, and for them to express their point of view about the world they reside in. They also argue that it is a significant tool that is flexible for data collection. The researcher used semi-structured interviews. Maree (2010) states that a semi-structured interview enables the researcher to probe if there is a need to do so. Creswell (2003) advised that interviews be conducted at a time convenient to the participants. This study used semi-structured interviews to allow for the participants to express their ideas freely and to get more details about what was observed during the lesson observation.

3.7 Data generation instruments

3.7.1 Lesson observation schedule

An observation schedule was used to observe the teachers teaching comprehension. The aspects covered in the observation schedule were the three stages of teaching reading, namely, establish, maintain and consolidate. Teachers were observed during the observation schedule while teaching in their classrooms and they were also interviewed.

3.7.2 Interview schedule

An interview schedule is a device that helps the researcher to collect data about the phenomenon of interest while conducting the interview with the participants. The interview schedule seeks to guide the focus of the interview. An interview is not just a data generating exercise but a social interpersonal communication (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). A significant consideration for transcribing the data generated by interviews was the fact that this form of inquiry generates a very large amount of rich textual data. To try and limit distortion of information all the interviews were recorded using a tape recorder and laptop.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Ethical principles were followed in the study. Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2011) state that research should honour and respect human rights and dignity. They further highlight that the search for truth should not receive priority over the rights and dignity of the participants. The study focuses on teacher's experiences of teaching of reading comprehension thus it required an intense awareness of the ethical concerns which would affect the study. It aimed to be ethically sound as the researcher acknowledged the rights and dignity of all participants and each participant treated with respect and dignity.

Written permission was obtained from all relevant gatekeepers. These included the district manager, circuit manager, school principals and teachers involved. The relevant letters are attached at the end of the dissertation. The gatekeepers were informed of my intentions with this study and were requested to acknowledge and sign the attached consent letters.

The six teachers were given the background, objectives and motivation of the study. I explained my intentions and my expectations from them. After the University of KwaZulu-Natal had granted me an ethical clearance certificate and when all gatekeepers had given their written consent and agreed to the study, the actual research started. Participants were assured that any findings would be shared with them. An individual informed consent letter was signed by each teacher to ensure acceptable ethical procedures were followed. Participants were guaranteed their anonymity by using pseudonyms for them. The identity of the schools and principals were also protected by using pseudonyms. The collected data was ethically obtained and participants were informed that data would be stored in a safe place and after completion of the dissertation data would be kept safe in UKZN storage. It will be destroyed after five years.

3.9 Validity

The research process was intended and conducted in accordance with established research principles pertaining to the choice of an appropriate research approach. Data generation instruments and data analysis to ensure the validity and reliability of the research findings (Creswell, 2003; Cohen, Manion &Morrison, 2011). The use of more than one data collecting tool was also a measure to triangulate and verify the data collected in the study. To construct

validity, the researcher first undertook a comprehension review of literature to establish the theoretical foundation of the study and to ensure that the meaning attached to the concept was consistent. The literature review provided a rich background against which research findings were analyzed and interpreted.

3.10 Reliability (authenticity and trustworthiness)

Cohen et al. (2011, p119) suggest that qualitative research may use words like "credibility, trustworthiness and transferability" for the study to be trusted. The observation schedule used provided a trustworthy fit between actual activity and recorded data. The interpretive paradigm provided multiple realities and interpretations that hold reliability in the same setting by various researchers. The research instrument used in this study can provide important information if used in a similar context. The study used more than one source for data collection for triangulation purposes. Lesson observations and semi-structured interviews were sources of data used in this study. The study was taken back to the participants for member checking.

3.11 Limitations

The first limitation came about as a result of the researcher's personal knowledge and view of the teaching of the subject. The study uses case study and one of the limitations of case study is that the findings cannot be generalized as it uses a small sample. The researcher's influential ideas may have led to a distortion of information. Data can be overwhelming. The participants can influence the research process to suit their own interests and thus research can be biased. Only three schools in the UMvoti circuit were chosen for this study, so the findings were not generalisable to all UMvoti schools.

3.12 Data analysis

Data was analyzed utilizing the conceptual framework and literature reviewed in the study. The deductive analysis based on the indicators suggested in the EMC2 strategy was used in conjunction with an inductive analysis in order to identify the emerging themes and patterns from the data. The steps included transcribing data from interviews and their reduction to

make meaning. The different patterns which were identified helped to classify similarities and differences that created categories and themes.

3.12.1 Lesson Observation

The researcher followed the six steps suggested by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) to organize the data.

1) The first step was to familiarize myself with the data.

2) The second step was the coding of data.

3) The third step involved coding the data into categories.

4) In the fourth step, themes were reviewed.

5) The fifth step included categorizing themes across all categories

6) The sixth step included finalizing themes.

3.12.2 Interview analysis

The interview transcripts of participants were analyzed inductively using Cohen, Manion and Morrison's (2011) steps to organize and analyze the data. The interview questions were used to identify categories and themes to present data.

3.13 Role of the researcher / Positionality

The researcher teaches isiZulu also in Grade 8 and acknowledges that this may come with certain interests that could be influential on the participants' responses. Bracketing was utilized throughout the study to avoid distortion and bias by the researcher. Bracketing refers to forgetting temporarily what the researcher knows and feels about the phenomenon and listening to what the phenomenon tells him/her. Thus the researcher does not allow his /her preconceived ideas and notions to interfere in the study.

3.14 Conclusion

This chapter presented a discussion of the methodology implemented in this study. Having stated that my research is qualitative in nature, case study was most suitable for the study as it uses a small sample and provides in-depth understanding about the phenomenon. Data generation methods were discussed which included observations and semi-structured interviews. The interviews were audio-taped and the observations were audio-taped and transcribed. The final part of this chapter dealt with the issues of trustworthiness, ethical considerations and the limitations of the study. The next chapter will present the analysis of the data from lesson observations and the semi-structured interviews.

CHAPTER 4:
DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The aim of the study is to explore teacher's experiences of teaching reading comprehension of isiZulu home language in Grade 7. Reading comprehension is a necessary skill to understand the meaning of the text. If learners do not meaningfully understand a written text they may lose the intellectual and creative value of that particular text. This chapter presents the findings analyzed from data collected from the Grade 7 teachers teaching reading comprehension texts in isiZulu home language. The analysis is presented in two sections. Section 4.2 analyzes the data collected from lesson observations and Section 4.3 analyses data collected from the semi-structured interviews. The data collected consisted of six lesson observations and semi-structured interviews with the six teachers. The study sought to answer the following research questions:

a) What are teachers' understandings of teaching reading comprehension in isiZulu home language in Grade 7 classes?

b) What strategies do teachers use to teach reading comprehension in isiZulu?

c) What factors influence the teaching of reading comprehension in isiZulu?

In attempting to address the first and third critical questions, the six purposively selected participants were interviewed. The data was analyzed to establish the level of teaching of reading comprehension of isiZulu home language in Grade 7. All the teachers were also observed teaching isiZulu lessons but only three were observed teaching reading comprehension in isiZulu. Data from the observed comprehension lessons responded to the second critical question about strategies that teachers use to teach reading comprehension in isiZulu. The section below presents the analysis of the observed lessons.

The phenomenon of the study is how teachers teach comprehension. Lesson observations were deliberately conducted to get an in-depth understanding of how teachers teach reading comprehension in isiZulu. The study's aim was also to determine how isiZulu teachers

understand and implement comprehension strategy instruction in their practice of teaching the comprehension of isiZulu texts. The researcher used the EMC2 strategy framework for teaching comprehension texts as it states that the source and the core of comprehension is meaning making and understanding the language concepts that make the text. The EMC2 strategy required teachers to scaffold the teaching of comprehension until learners could read with understanding on their own. The EMC2 strategy is used repeatedly, meaning that it can be used again and again in each of the three stages of teaching reading comprehension which are establishing meaning making, maintaining meaning and consolidating meaning. EMC2 takes it a step further for teachers in teaching reading comprehension, as it can be used again and again as teachers are being trained and developed in workshops to use a strategy in their teaching of reading comprehension. The workshops put more emphasis on before reading, during reading and after reading. The EMC2 aims at increasing or giving confidence and providing the guidelines on how teachers should teach reading comprehension. Short descriptors are short phrases or keywords that identify the meaning of each component of the EMC strategy. These descriptors help to compare how teachers do and what they should do when they engage in reading comprehension practices.

The EMC2 strategy or framework is an unfamiliar concept to teachers, but the familiar concept used is that the comprehension teaching strategy involves teaching learners that, in order to comprehend or understand a text, learners must focus on the three stages of reading a text, which are: 'before reading', 'during reading' and 'after reading'. Using the 'before reading', 'during reading' and 'after reading' strategy' serves the same purpose of teaching how to comprehend texts. The EMC2 strategy framework suggests that teachers should teach explicit reading comprehension by modeling and scaffolding in each stage (phase) of the reading process.

The content of the observed lessons was compared with the EMC2 strategy guidelines of teaching reading comprehension using the three phases (stages) of comprehension, namely establish, maintain and consolidate. The analysis was conducted in deductive manner where the conceptual framework developed from using the EMC2 strategy and scaffolding which gave rise to the main categories by which the data was analyzed. The main categories were the

three stages of the EMC2 framework together with the descriptors suggested under each category. The table below shows the categories and indicators used in the EMC2 strategy.

Table 2: An illustration of the EMC strategy

STAGES OF READING	INDICATORS OF STAGES
• **ESTABLISH** (Before reading stage)	**ESTABLISH STAGE** • Establish culture of learning • Continuous vocabulary development • Ask pre-reading questions • Establish prior knowledge • Making predictions • Motivate reading by the teacher • Determine the purpose of reading and select the type of text to read • Activate prior knowledge
• **MAINTAIN** (During reading stage)	**MAINTAINING STAGE** • Teach learners different reading techniques like speed reading • Monitoring reading • Reading aloud either by teacher or learners themselves • Fix it strategy • Teach learners to monitor their own behaviour during reading • Teacher to study children's problems and behaviour • Teacher to maintain good discipline during reading phase
• **CONSOLIDATE** (After reading stage)	**CONSOLIDATE STAGE** • Consolidate through writing • Ask questions based on Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy • Summarization

4.2 The Analysis of Lesson Observations

The analysis of lessons taught by three of the teachers are presented below. Six teachers were observed but because they were using the same topics and genre in their teaching, only three teachers out of these six are presented. The analysis presents findings on what happened at each of the stages of each comprehension lesson. The analysis of the observed lessons was done by means of a combination of deductive and inductive analytical approaches.

4.2.1 Lesson 1 taught by Teacher G

Establish stage (before reading stage)

Teacher G's lesson lasted for an hour. The text was based on "Amagqubu ayagqilaza".

Findings: In order to establish a platform to teach comprehension, Teacher G used the title and a picture to ask learners to imagine and predict what the text could be about and also to establish the purpose of reading and to ask questions. The teacher also explained the vocabulary at this stage of reading. She also asked questions which were pre-set by her before learners started reading. Examples of questions and requests asked at this stage:

Teacher G   :Bukisisa isihloko sale ndantshana bese usho ukuthi ucabanga indaba izobe ikhuluma ngani?" (Carefully look at the title of the text and imagine what will happen in the text.)

Learners   :"Ngicabanga imayelana nomuntu onenhliziyo embi engenakho ukuthula ehlala ibalisa." (It is about a hard, heartless person.)

Teacher G   :"Kusho ukuthini ukugqilaza?" (What does the word exploitation mean?)

Learners   :"Ukusebenza noma ungasathandi."(Work hard even when you are tired.)

Teacher G used two indicators suggested in the establish stage of the EMC2 framework namely: prediction and asking questions to help learners imagine what the text was about before reading it. Prediction is necessary because it helps learners set a purpose for reading and anticipate what they are going to read (Lubliner, 2001).

This way of establishing knowledge to understand the text was satisfactory as the teacher allowed for prediction using the picture and topic and set pre-reading questions that were

asked in order to establish the platform to teach comprehension. The teacher may use all five indicators suggested in the EMC2 strategy framework so make sure that all learners' prior knowledge is activated and learners develop the intention to read the text with understanding.

<u>Maintaining stage</u> **(during reading stage)**

Findings: In the maintain stage, Teacher G grouped the learners. She also read out aloud to the learners, explained vocabulary, integrated the lesson with grammar and monitored the learner's behaviour during reading.

She grouped the learners according to their reading fluency in isiZulu and used a group guided reading strategy. Learners read out aloud in groups. Learners with reading difficulties were set aside and the teacher read with them. Learners were asked to pick unfamiliar, new and difficult words from the text and the teacher explained those words (vocabulary). Learners were also asked questions based on the text. The teacher explained after each sentence was read and even modeled how learners could ask questions.

Teacher G   :'Masifunde ngokuqonda esikufundayo sifunde ngokuphindelela.' (The teacher put emphasis on pre reading for understanding of the text.)

The teacher monitored the learners' behaviour during reading and whilst learners were reading, she corrected incorrect pronunciation and monitored punctuation. She stopped learners whilst reading a paragraph and then explained how they were supposed to read. This helps to check learners' understanding as they read the text. The teacher asked some questions to motivate participation and to check learners understanding. The questions asked were balanced, including low order, middle order and high order questions. Questions such as:

Teacher G   :*Ithini indikimba yendaba?* (What is the lesson/message you get as you read the text?)

Learners   :*Ithi indaba masingabambelani izinhliziyo ezimbi ngezigameko esezadlula.* (Don't bear grudges against other people who have done bad things to you.)

Teacher G   :*Chaza kabanzi ukuthi wawungenze njani uma ubhekene nesimo esinjena*? (Explain how you would act if you were in a same situation and why do you think this story is so important to the reader?)

Learners   :*Ngangingayixoxa indaba khona izodlula enhliziyweni yami.* (I will bottle up by telling someone I trust so that I find peace and forgiveness in my heart.)

This shows that the teacher had understanding and knowledge of the comprehension strategy as she used five indicators suggested in the establish stage of the EMC framework namely: reading aloud, explaining vocabulary, monitoring reading, and re-reading She also asked questions to help learners actively participate in the reading process and to try and read with understanding, but these strategies were insufficiently used in her teaching. The teacher read the text before explaining each sentence and each of the paragraphs but she did not demonstrate skimming and scanning of the text. Besides that, the teacher did not show any application of an appropriate monitoring reading comprehension strategy where learners monitor their own reading comprehension. The teacher monitored the learners' behaviour as opposed to learners monitoring their own reading. Monitoring of content and instruction happened less often. The teacher did not seem to have knowledge of the strategies of teaching reading at this stage which is where meaning making is constructed.

Consolidate stage (after reading stage)

Findings: Teacher G asked pre-set questions and she gave an opportunity for summarization.

The consolidation stage suggests that there are some forms of teaching comprehension conducted in the maintain stage. Teacher G gave learners who were independent readers an opportunity to summarize the text in writing short paragraphs using the key ideas and their own words to show understanding of the text. The rest of the class were given questions to be answered in writing. The teacher did not ask the learners to do all questions in the prescribed text used in the lesson but picked certain questions. The teacher gave instruction on how the task should be done, both on questions and summarization. The teacher marked the task and wrote the correct answers on the board that formed the feed-back for the learners.

> **Teacher G:**
> _"Iqembu lokuqala nelesibili lizofingqa indaba likhombise amaphuzu abalulekile ngelikuzwile ngesikhathi lifunda indaba bese kuthi thina sonke abanye sizobe siphendula imibuzo engenzansi kwendaba. Sizophendula umbuzo wokuqala, owesithathu nowokugcina wesihlanu."_ (Group 1 and 2 you will summarize the text in your own words.Write in short paragraphs. The rest of the class will answer questions in the prescribed book after the text. You will not answer all questions, its only question number 1, 3 and the last question.)

This shows that the teacher used two indicators suggested in the establish stage of the EMC2 framework namely, summarization and asking questions to check learners' understanding of the text read. This helped the teacher to cater for all learners reading stages. Those who were independent readers were given the opportunity to summarize and those who were still struggling were only given questions based on the text to answer. The Question–Answer Relationship was implemented as learners looked for answers in the text and learners were allowed to think about what they had read.

The teacher can even model to the struggling learner how to read with understanding and model how to write a short small paragraph so that all the learners in the class can sum up what they have read.

Overall findings and interpretations from teacher G's lesson observation is that the teacher showed understanding of the strategies of teaching reading in general. She even followed the intensive reading approach following the three steps of the reading process which are before, during and after the reading process. The teacher had little knowledge of establishing meaning making, so she needed to learn the strategies of the reading stage appropriate to develop independent readers. Moreover, Teacher G did not use and teach reading comprehension strategies to the learners which would have helped them to construct meaning on their own, without assistance from the teacher since the reading comprehension strategy was unknown to her. This deprives learners of reading comprehension strategies which they need when they read to get meaning out of what they read and to develop comprehension skills.

4.2.2 Lesson 2 taught by Teacher D

Establish stage

Findings: The teacher asked questions and asked the learners to predict using the title of a poem. The poetry lesson lasted an hour. The teacher asked questions of the learners so that they could engage themselves in the lesson. The teacher asked questions such as:

Teacher D   :*Masibuke isihloko bese sicabanga ukuthi inkondlo imayelana nani?* (Look at the topic and tell me: what is the poem about?)

Learners   :*Imayelana nesiketi esifushane kakhulu abanye bathi imfashini.* (It is about a mini-skirt, a short skirt, fashion.) There were various answers that were mostly relevant to what the poem was about.

The teacher stated the purpose of reading the poem as follows:

> **Teacher D:**
> *Inhloso yokufundi inkondlo ukuveza imizwa lapho imbongi ukudlulisa ukubaluleka kwendikimba ethize isebenzisa ulwimi lwenkondlo ukuxhumana nomfundi wenkondlo.* (The intention of writing a poem is for a poet to render a message using assimilations, alliterations and language in the poem to the reader).
> The teacher put more emphasis on reading the poem thoroughly and looking for aspects like the figurative meaning of the poem, line, stanzas and structure and the mood of the poem, before learners started reading the poem. The teacher highlighted the following words: *Izithombe mazwi, isibhuklabhukla, ubuchwichwichwi.*

This strategy was helpful in motivating the active participation of learners and for learners to determine the purpose of reading. The data shows that the teacher used reading comprehension strategy and used four indicators suggested in the establish stage of the EMC2 framework, namely: prediction, explaining vocabulary, asking questions and setting the purpose of the lesson, and monitoring reading. The teacher might have combined all the strategies and not to have used only a few, so that the platform for meaning making was more accessible and meaningful to all learners.

Maintaining stage

Findings: The teacher grouped the learners into heterogeneous groups and used the group guided reading strategy. She also read out aloud to the learners, explained vocabulary, integrated a lesson with grammar and monitored learner's behaviour during reading.

The teacher divided the learners into four groups of different reading levels and made the lesson a game by giving credit points to the group for answering correctly. The teacher stressed the importance of reading a text more than once for understanding.

"*Kumele sifunde, siphinde sifundisise ukuze sizothola umqondo wenkondlo*" (Read, read and read slowly but surely so that you understand. Poems have figurative and literal meanings.)
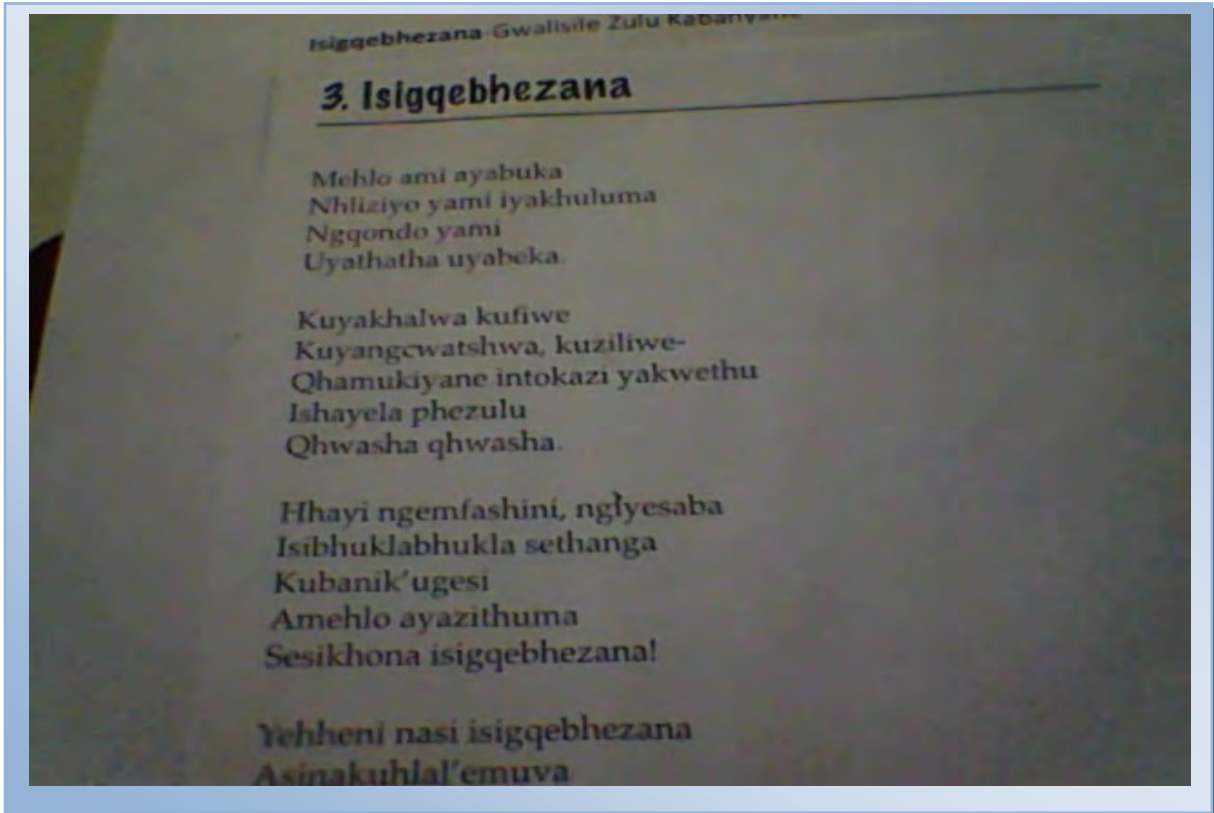
Figure 2: Extract of the poem

Learners read the first stanza twice and the teacher explained for clarity before moving to the second stanza. Below is the example of the first read stanza:

Mehlo ami uyabuka

Nhliziyo yami uyakhuluma

Ngqondo yami

Uyathatha uyabeka.

The teacher explained each line of the first stanza and asked learners to read silently. She gave learners the opportunity to tell what they understood about the stanza and questions were also asked. These questions were asked to monitor both literal and figurative reading for understanding. For example such questions were asked:

Teacher D	:*Ithini indikimba yenkondlo emigqeni yonke yesigaba sokuqala?* (What is the main idea in the first two lines of the first stanza?)
Learners	:*Akumele singahloniphi imizimba yethu, kumele sihloniphe imizimba yethu.* (Let us respect ourselves and our bodies too.)
Teacher D	:*Ake sibheke isakhiwo sangaphandle sale nkondlo njengokuxhumana, isakhiwo sangaphakathi ukukhethwa kwamagama asetshenziswe enkondlweni ukuchaza indikimba, umoya ukugcizelela umoya wenkondlo.* (Let us describe the structure and the message and emotions and feelings that the poet arouse in this poem.)

Kuyakhalwa kufiwe

Kuyangcwatshwa, kuziliwe

Hhayi ngemfashini ngiyesaba.

Kubanik'ogesi

Amehlo ayazithuma

Sesikhona isigqebhezana!

The teacher continued to read first and sometimes she picked one learner to read out aloud for the whole class then she explained each line. Some words and main issues were highlighted and discussed by the whole class putting themselves in the writer's shoes. Then the teacher continued to discuss the stanzas with the learners who were awarded points for answering correctly and if they responded quoting from the poem. This method helps every learner to understand better and see what they are reading. The teacher gave the learners the opportunity to discuss their views after reading. This helped those who did not understand immediately, to understand whilst they were discussing in groups later. The teacher also gave learners a chance to read for themselves and had set questions for them to answer as they continued reading. Whilst the teacher explained, the learners were taking notes of new words and their explanations.

The teacher used five indicators suggested in the establish stage of the EMC2 framework, namely: reading aloud ,explaining vocabulary, monitoring reading, re-reading and asking questions to help learners actively participate in the reading process and to try and read with understanding. According to the EMC2 framework the descriptors in the maintaining stage consist of reading, the monitoring of comprehension, checking prediction, asking questions,

and vocabulary development. The teacher read the poem before explaining each line and each stanza. She demonstrated skimming and scanning of lines and stanzas in the poem as each of the stanzas was unpacked. The teacher together with the learners read each line of each stanza. Besides that, the teacher did not show any application of the appropriate monitoring of reading comprehension strategy where learners monitor their own reading comprehension. The teacher monitored the learners' behaviour more than their comprehension and learners were not taught the strategies of how to monitor their own understanding. Emphasis was on re-read again and again in order to understand. The teacher taught little in this maintaining stage that is suggested in the EMC strategy. If the teacher had taught learners the strategy to monitor their reading comprehension, learners would easily have understood with little dependence on the teacher to explain.

Consolidate stage

Findings: Teacher D asked low and middle order questions after the poem was read, and asked learners to copy the poem on the board.

Learners copied the poem into their work books. The teacher had copied the poem onto the board so that all learners could access the poem. The assessment task was based on the read poem. The teacher gave homework where learners were expected to create their own poem.

The teacher used one indicator from the establish stage of the EMC2 framework where she was asking questions to check learners' understanding of the poem.

Overall findings: Teacher D did not use any of the strategy sufficiently, meaningfully and purposefully for meaning making in her teaching. She was just teaching learners how to read, not to read with understanding as neither of the reading comprehension strategies was well taught or taught at all. The teacher seemed to lack knowledge of the reading comprehension strategies.

4.2.3 Lesson 3 taught by Teacher SM

Establish stage

Findings: Teacher SM stated the purpose of the lesson and asked learners to predict what the text would be about by looking at the picture and the topic. He also developed vocabulary.

Teacher SM was teaching a short story entitled "*UMandela esemusha*". The lesson lasted an hour but only 7 minutes was spent on establishing meaning making and to lay the foundation of the text to be read in the lesson. The teacher asked questions to activate the learners' prior knowledge about the text and to motivate their active participation in the lesson. Examples of questions and instructions were:

Teacher SM   :*Ngubani uNelson Mandela?* (Who is Nelson Mandela?)

Learners   :*Ngumholi wokuqala wezwe laseNingizimu Afrika osadlula emhlabeni.* (He was the first South African Democratic President. He is dead.)

Teacher SM   :*Bukisisa isithombe nesihloko bese uchaza ucabanga kuzohambisana yini nendaba*. (Imagine what the text will be about through looking carefully at the picture and the topic of the text.)

Another question that was asked was; what is the difference between a novel and a short story? Responses varied, including characters, structure, number of incidents and number of pages. The learners were asked to pick unfamiliar words from the text and the teacher explained the term: *libunjwa liseva. (Teach a child whilst still young*).

The teacher used questions that do not serve the purpose of the EMC2 framework in the establish stage. These questions did not serve as a platform for comprehension of the text, but what did serve this purpose was when the teacher gave learners the opportunity to imagine what the text might be about, by looking at the title. Therefore the teacher used one of the descriptors indicated in the establish stage of the EMC2 framework, namely: prediction.

It was noted that the teacher did not use the five indicators suggested in the EMC2 framework to establish a meaning making foundation but just focused on asking questions. However, the questions asked were not balanced as they were only middle and low order questions. The teacher confused recalling questions of previously done work that had nothing to do with what was going to be read, with questions that were relevant to the current text to activate prior

knowledge of it. The teacher just asked questions for the sake of asking them. He showed no knowledge of the establish strategies that need to be used at this stage of the reading process.

Maintaining stage

Findings: During reading the teacher monitored the learners by moving around and checking how they read and monitored the learners' behaviour but not their reading comprehension during this stage of reading.

The teacher put the boys in one group called A and the girls in another called B. There were 70 learners in the class. The teacher first read aloud to the learners and the learners read silently whilst the teacher was reading. After she had finished reading the first paragraph, the vocabulary was developed through the explanation of unfamiliar words. This helped the teacher and learners to understand the text as their vocabulary was developed at this stage. There was also a focus on the pronunciation of words. The Both groups A and B read alternating paragraphs of the text. The teacher explained each sentence read. The teacher corrected learners if they gave wrong answers before they continued with reading. This served the purpose of adhering to language grammar and meaning making using the context of the sentence. The teacher also asked questions to stimulate the learners' participation. An example of a question asked was:

Teacher SM   :*Lichazani ngesiXhosa igama elithi "Rolihlahla?* (What does the name Rolihlahla mean in Xhosa?) The teacher gave learners an opportunity to think before they answered.

Learners   :*Inhlanhla?* (Fortune?) Read out aloud too.

During reading one learner was picked from each group to read out aloud to the class. The teacher further explained the vocabulary and monitored the learners' behaviour but not their comprehension during reading.

The teacher, by asking learners questions, gave the learners the opportunity after reading to assess their prediction before reading to see if they were still the same. Some of the questions were asked to motivate the learners' participation and reading with understanding of the text, and gave feedback to the learners' answers. The questions asked were not balanced: they were low and middle order questions only. For example:

Teacher SM	:*Wazalelwaphi uMandela?(*Where was Nelson Mandela born?)
Learners	:Eastern Cape.
Teacher SM	:*Shono izindawo ezintathu uMandela ake wahlala kuzo?* (Mention three other places where Nelson Mandela resided?)

The teacher monitored the learners' reading by moving around and asking various individuals questions to ensure understanding by the learners. The teacher disciplined learners who were not reading and who were just looking at the reading text. Good discipline helps to be able to observe each learner as the process continues and it gave the teacher the opportunity to focus on struggling readers and to assist them.

Teacher SM said:

> *Ngifuna wonke umuntu afundisise, ngizobuza imibuzo ukubona ukuthi niyafunda noma niyadlala.Kumele nifunde kaningana ukuze nizophendula ngokuzethemba lokhu ebenikufunda.* (You must read, go back and read again so that you are confident and you know what you read).

Teacher SM used the fix-it strategy. He gave enough time for thinking before children answered and that was the strength that helped learners to understand and express their thinking. The teacher moved around assessing and checking whether children were reading with understanding or not. The teacher posed questions and gave clarity if learners showed confusion. *"Yingani uphendula ngalolu hlobo, sekela ngokucaphuna endabeni."* (Answers must be supported by quoting from the text.)

The teacher asked the learners questions, encouraged them to ask questions and modeled how to ask good questions.

The teacher used five indicators suggested in the maintaining stage of the EMC2 framework namely: reading aloud, explaining vocabulary, monitoring reading, re- reading and asking questions to help learners actively participate in the reading process and to try and read with understanding. But the teacher monitored the learners' behaviour not their comprehending of the text. The teacher did not teach the learners strategies on how they should monitor their own understanding of the text. Skimming and scanning techniques were not demonstrated much by the teacher. She put more emphasis on reading slowly and re-reading, which does not guarantee comprehension of what the reader reads.

The data revealed that the teacher did understand how to teach reading but did not demonstrate understanding of the strategy of teaching reading comprehension. Thus the teacher did not teach reading comprehension strategies to learners. The teacher deprived the learners of the strategies that would assist them when they encounter problems in their reading so that they get the meaning and the gist of what they read.

Consolidate stage

Findings: The teacher asked questions and asked learners to write questions and answers in their workbooks. The questions were based on the text. The examples of questions that were asked were:

Teacher SM   :*Wazalelwaphi uMandela?* (Where is Nelson Mandela's birth place?)

Teacher SM   :*Nikeza indima ebalulekile edlalwe nguNelson Mandela empilweniyabantu baseNingizimu Afrika?* (Describe the role played by this icon Nelson Mandela in the South African nation.)

The teacher used only one indicator suggested in the EMC2 framework which was asking questions. The learners answered in writing at this stage. The questions asked were not balanced as they focused too much on low order and middle order questions. This strategy does not benefit the learners. The teacher did not teach summarization which is of a high thinking level. The teacher might have introduced the learners to all kinds of strategies in this phase so that learners could benefit and learn to put down their ideas in writing in a meaningful manner. The teacher's consolidation was not considerable and it was unsatisfactory. He just asked questions, not even following the Question Answer Relationship. This type of questioning requires learners to think critically and to justify their reasoning.

Overall, the data revealed that Teacher SM had no strategy for teaching reading comprehension since very few strategies were used in his teaching The teacher did not demonstrate any knowledge of the comprehension strategy therefore it was not used in teaching the learning process. In the maintaining stage, where the teacher should have applied various strategies so that the learners could understand what they had read like allowing opportunities for using skimming and scanning techniques and learners demonstrating their understanding of read text through summarizing, where learners use their own words to sum up what they have read.

4.2.4 Overall findings from lesson observations

The teachers seemed to show no understanding of the reading comprehension strategy and so they did not use it in their instruction. Very few activities focused on developing comprehension skills in learners. All three observed teachers demonstrated little and covered few aspects of the EMC2 framework at each stage of reading. In the establish reading stage, teachers covered only two indicators which were predictions using the pictures and the title to make learners imagine and predict what the text might be about. They neglected all the other descriptors suggested to be covered in this establishing meaning making stage. The teachers did establish prior knowledge and activate prior knowledge, but little was done to determine the purpose of reading.

In the maintain reading stage, teachers were expected to teach learners various reading comprehension strategies to construct meaning, but neither of the strategies was taught at this stage. Instead teachers asked learners to read aloud in groups and the groups were not planned to cater for the learners 'different reading abilities. The learners were asked to re-read without making them see the reason and purpose for re-reading the text. The teachers covered very few aspects as indicated in the EMC2 framework. It was only the monitoring of the learners' behaviour that was done a lot by all the teachers. Beyond that, the teachers read aloud and used the fix it strategy. They asked learners to slow down, re–read and go back. The learners could ask teachers for help. The EMC2 strategy states that learners' behaviour should be monitored but much emphasis should be put on teaching learners the strategies to monitor their own understanding, which did not happen at all during the maintaining stage. Reading techniques like speed reading, skimming and scanning was also not emphasized nor even taught. The data seemed to show that not even one teacher had used the reading techniques when teaching reading.

In the consolidate reading stage, the teachers just asked questions that were not well balanced and which may not have confirmed that the learner had understood the read text. The EMC2 framework indicates that summarization should be catered for as well as asking questions following the "Question–Answer Relationship strategy (QAR)" and that consolidation should be in writing at this stage. All teachers used the QAR strategy but only two teachers out of six gave learners the opportunity to summarize. Those teachers used summarization because they

believed it was the way they were taught whilst they were at school and that was why they were passionate about reading even today.

4.3 Analysis of Semi Structured Interviews

4.3.1 Introduction

In addition to the lesson observations, I also conducted semi-structured interviews with six teachers teaching reading comprehension in isiZulu in Grade 7. Each interview lasted an hour. The six interviews were conducted on three days. The aim of the interviews was to understand teacher practices and experiences of teaching reading comprehension in isiZulu home language in Grade 7.

4.3.2 Analysis of interviews

The interview questions were used to identify categories and themes to present data.

4.3.3 Findings from semi-structured interviews

1) Teachers' views about the importance of reading comprehension in a language curriculum

The question asked was "what are teacher's views about importance of reading comprehension in the curriculum?"

The purpose of asking the question was to understand teachers' knowledge of the importance of teaching reading comprehension in isiZulu home language in Grade 7. The data seemed to show that all the teachers were of the same view that reading comprehension is fundamental and is the essence of reading**.** Two teachers supported this view by saying:

> **Teacher G:**
> *"Umgogodla wokufunda ungukuqondisisa okufundayo. Ukufunda ngokuqonda kusiza ofundayo abenokuzethemba."*(Understanding is fundamental to all subjects. It is important and it also builds confidence in the reader.)

> **Teacher SM:**
> *"Ukufunda kubalulekile kuzo zonke izifundo.Kumele izingane zifundiswe ukufunda ukuze zizokwazi ukubhala."* (Every subject requires reading with understanding. Children must read so that they are able to write.)

2) Teachers' understanding of how prior knowledge is necessary to comprehend text

The teachers were asked the question "what are teachers' understandings of how prior knowledge is necessary to comprehend text?"

The rationale for this question was to explore teachers understanding and knowledge about the significance of prior knowledge before introducing new concepts. Activating prior knowledge helps the teacher to see links and commonness between already existing knowledge in learner's mind and new concepts.

All teachers show that their understanding of prior knowledge is that it helps to link new concepts with already existing knowledge or with what is already known about the topic or text. The examples of the strategies mentioned were the use of pictures or the topic of the text.

> **Teacher G:**
> *Kunokuxhumana kolwazi umfundi avese analo nolwazi olusha azolufunda. Kuyasiza kakhulu lokhu kumina njengomfundisi ngoba abantwana basheshe baqonde abakufundayo .Othisha akumele babheke abafundi ukuthi bebefunda kuziphi izikhungo zemfundo bese bebacabangela ukuthi bazi konke. Othisha kumele benze umsebenzi wabo bafundise.* (There is a link and commonness of knowledge that helps to make links between what learners know about the text. Prior knowledge helps the teacher when coming with new information. The child can integrate and link that new knowledge and already existing knowledge in the mind. Sometimes teachers neglect learners because they know the children are from the best school that has led to a gap of knowledge in learner's grade and stages of development. Teachers must not have an attitude towards kids and not assume kids know that. Teachers must do their work.)

3) Other colleagues' (teachers') views of teaching reading comprehension

The teachers were asked the question "what are your colleagues' views of teaching reading comprehension?"

The rationale for the question was to get a clear understanding on whether other subject teachers do teach comprehension in their subjects and support language teachers in teaching reading comprehension.

The data revealed that it seems as if it was only the responsibility of the language teachers to teach reading comprehension. Other teachers fall behind and expect language teachers to do everything pertaining to language and the understanding of language. All six teachers thought

51

that teaching reading comprehension was the responsibility of language teachers. The data revealed that, if there was any support for reading comprehension, it was from the school management teams only, and then only certain concerned individuals who were passionate about reading. The example below is what one of the teachers said.

Teacher G:
Othisha bathatha izinkinga zolimi bazixhumanise nothisha bolimi kanti lokho akubenzi ubulungiswa.Sonke singothisha kumele sifundise ngokuqonda okufundwayo ngoba zonke izifundo zidinga ukuba umuntu afunde ngokuqonda. (Teachers associate language problems with language teachers but it is unfair. All teachers have a duty to teach reading comprehension because in all subject learners have something to read and they must read it with understanding.)

Teacher SM:
Bonke ozakwethu abazibandakanyi ngokulekelela ukube kufundwe ngokuqondwa okufundwayo. UMphathi kanye nabasizi bakhe abayaye balekelele ukutshala umoya wokufunda. (The principal and HODs only help us to teach reading because they want to instill the culture of reading in the school but much of the work in reading comprehension, teachers thought is the responsibility of the language teacher.)

4) **Strategies teachers use when teaching reading comprehension.**

Teachers were asked the question "what strategies do teachers use when teaching reading comprehension?"

The purpose of asking the question was to understand and explore what teachers say whether it was the same as what they do when they teach reading comprehension.

The data suggested that teachers did not use a specific teaching comprehension strategy. The teachers grouped learners and made the learners re-read the text if they showed no understanding of the text. Teachers checked learners' understanding by posing questions. The example below is what one of the teachers said.

Teacher SM:
*Ngiqale ngifunde kakhulu abafundi balalele bese emva kokuba sengifundile abafundi bafunde buthule.Ngiyaye ngikhethe umfundi oyedwa ozofundela abafundi kuzwakale isigatshana.Abafundi bafunda ngokushintshana.Uma umfundi ekhombisa iphutha ngendlela afunda ngayo ngiyamumisa ukufunda ngilungise iphutha ngaphambi kokuba aqhubeke nokufunda. Ngesikhathi sifunda siyaxoxisana ngibuze imibuzo ukubhekelela ukuthi abafundi bayaqonda esikufundayo. (*Firstly I teach them how to read the punctuations marks. I am the role model. I read first and the children read silently. Thereafter I look at the way they read. If there are mistakes I ask them to stop and

rectify the mistakes. After we have read, we discuss and I ask questions to follow whether children have heard or not. Most of the time I use questions to check learners understanding.)

5) Assessment strategies used for reading comprehension.

Teachers were asked the question "what assessment strategies do you use for reading comprehension?"

The purpose of asking the above question was to explore whether teachers followed the guidelines indicated in the EMC2 framework.

The data revealed that all teachers ask questions to assess and to check understanding and out of the six teachers, only two gave the opportunity for summarization .This example below is what one of the teachers said:

> **Teacher G**:
> *Ngiyaye nginike abafundi ithuba lokubhala ezincwadini zabo baphendule imibuzo kokunye ngibanike ithuba lokufingqa abakufundile nokubalulekile endabeni ebifundwa.* (I normally ask questions as I have said earlier on whether learners have understood the text and I give them an opportunity to sum up the main ideas of what they understand about the text read.)

6) Teacher knowledge of a good comprehension text

The question asked "what is teacher's knowledge of a good comprehension text?"

The rationale was to explore teacher knowledge of the features of a good reading text for their class of learners. The curriculum states that the characteristics of a good text are its relevance to the grade, and the language used should be appropriate to the level of reading development of learners in that grade.

The six teachers interviewed asserted that they were guided by the learners' grade, the level of development of the learners and the reading stage of the learners. Some teachers even mentioned the help from cluster meetings where there were helpful sources with reading materials and resources. The example below shows what one of the teachers said.

Teacher SM:

Ngisebenzisa umhlahlandlela wolwimi (TAFUZA). Lenqubomgomo ingisiza ngolwazi lokuthi kuyini okumele ukufundiswa , nini, kanjani yiziphi izingxenye okumele zifundiswe nangezincwadi engingazisebenzisa ezifanele ibanga lesikhombisa .Isikole sethu asinazo izincwadi ezanele lonke uhlobo lomfundi esinaye ngokuvamile ngiyaye ngisebenzise konke engibona kuzosiza abafundi ukufunda .Engikuqaphela kakhulu ukuba ngiqale ngiyifunde kuqala indatshana ngaphambi kokuba ngiyenze nabantwana.(He said he uses the Curriculum Policy Document, the CAPS Document which teachers normally call 'TAFUZA' which is slang for this isiZulu policy document and it helps him a lot. It gives much guidance about what, how and why you are doing a practice. I select reading resources using the CAPS document requirements for the grade. The school does not have all the kind of text books we need but in cluster meetings it's where we assist each other with reading books and strategies to teach our subjects better. Usually I organize reading material and improvise. I use books given by the department for the grade. I also look at the grade I teach and the relevance of the topic to the theme. I make sure I read the book or article first so that I can see if it is of the learners' reading development stage. I look at the child's development stage in reading and the theme we are doing at that time. I use text books, newspapers, I cut articles and make copies as we are experiencing a shortage of reading materials, but books given by the department are very useful.)

7) Starting to teach reading comprehension

The teachers were asked the question "how do you begin a lesson when teaching reading comprehension?"

The purpose of asking this question was to explore whether teachers understand the importance of establishing the foundation of meaning making before reading commences.

Four teachers out of six established meaning making by allowing for prediction using pictures and topics and asked pre-set questions. Two teachers out of the six teachers asked learners to recapture and to recall previously done work that had nothing to do with the new knowledge to be integrated. The example below is what one of the teachers said.

Teacher D:
Kuyahluka ayikho indlela eyodwa emile kuya ngokuthi yini inhloso yokufunda .Mhhh!!! Kwesinye isikhathi ngisebenzisa isithombe okanye isihloko sendaba.Kokunye ngisebenzise isiqeshana abafundi ngithi abasihalamuze bese ngibuza imibuzo ukuthola ukuthi bacabanga indatshana izoba mayelana nani. (It depends on the lesson - there is no routine that is stipulated that I follow. Mhhhh… Sometimes I use photos if it is relevant to the theme. I relate it to the topic. Sometimes if they read an article I ask them to read carefully any feature that might give a clue to their reading and tell me what they think the story will be about. They sometimes predict through looking at the picture or title what the story will be about. I relate what we are reading with what is happening around us in the country.)

8) Teaching during reading stage

Teachers were asked the question "what do you teach during the reading process?"

The rationale for asking the question was to get more detail about how teachers teach reading comprehension and what strategies they use in their teaching reading and how helpful the strategies are that they have adopted to make and help learners better understand what they read. The other purpose was to understand what activities they engage in, at the during reading stage (maintaining phase) of the reading process.

Five teachers out of the six read firstly out aloud while the children read silently and then they explained unfamiliar words. The teachers monitored reading by moving around and checking whether children were reading or not and by asking questions. The whole class discussed the line or paragraph after they had read it. Most teachers stopped the readers and corrected them if they made mistake and after the corrections they continued reading. The teachers made learners re-read the text if they showed no understanding of the text. The example below is what one of the teachers said.

Teacher SM:
Ngiqala ngokuhlukanisa abafundi ngamaqoqo. Mina njengothisha ngiqale ngifunde kuzwakale besengichaza amagamaanganikeza abafundi inkinga ukuqonda abakufundayo. Ngiyazama ukuqinisekisa ukuthi bonke abafundi bafunda ngokuqonda ngokwehla ngenyuka ngibheka ukuthi abafundi bayafunda. Uma abafundi beziphethe kahle kungekho msindo bafunda ngokungaphazamiseki basheshe baqonde abakufundayo. Ngilungisa amaphutha ngesikhathi befunda. Sifunda isigatshana besengichaza kuyima siqhubekela esigabeni esilandelayo.Kuyangisiza ukubuza imibuzo ngoba abafundi bayazimisela bafundisise ukuze baqonde abakufundayo.

(I firstly divide learners into groups and I read first aloud, thereafter I explain some difficult words and unfamiliar words in the text to learners. I monitor each learner's reading by moving around and asking individuals questions to ensure the understanding of each learner. I disciplined learners who were not reading who were just looking at the reading text. Good discipline helps to observe each learner as the process continues and it give me as the teacher the opportunity to focus on struggling readers and assist them. I corrected incorrect pronunciation and monitored punctuation. I stopped learners whilst reading a paragraph and then explained how they are supposed to read. I asked some questions to motivate participation and to check learners understanding.)

9) Consolidating the lesson on teaching reading comprehension

Teachers were asked the question "how do teachers consolidate a lesson on teaching reading comprehension?"

The rationale for asking the questions was to explore how teachers consolidate meaning after reading.

The data suggested that all six teachers asked questions to consolidate a reading lesson by instructing learners to write the answers down in their work books. Only two teachers out of the six said they gave learners the opportunity to summarize the text. Below are the examples of what two of the teachers said.

Teacher G:
Ngibanika ithuba lokuphendula imibuzo babhale ngayedwana ebhukwini noma ngithi abasonge ngamafuphi abakuzwile endabeni. Ngikwenza konke lokhu uma sengiqinisekisile ukuthi abafundi bayayiqondisisa indaba abayifundayo. (I ask them to answer questions and make a summary as individuals after they have finished reading and when I am certain that they have understood.)

Teacher LFB:
Ngiyaye ngibuze imibuzo babhale phansi izimpendulo, noma umsebenzi wasekhaya noma ngithi abafingqe indaba ngamaphuzu abalulekile ngokwenzeke endabeni. (I give them activities like home work, class activities to write and sometime I give learners the opportunity to summarize in a small paragraph. Then learners sum up. I ask them to start with simple sentences and move to a small paragraph about what they understood.)

10) Other issues that influence teaching of reading comprehension

Teachers were asked the following question "what other issues influence the teaching of reading comprehension?"

The rationale for asking the question was to have an idea of other factors and aspects that influence the teaching of reading comprehension.

The data seemed to show that learners in Grade 7 lack basic reading skills from previous grades. Learners lack decoding skills from foundation phase and are unable to differentiate sound letter relationships. Learners cannot read to learn. Here is an example of what one of the teachers said.

> **Teacher G:**
> *Iningi labafundi alinayo ingqalasizinda yokufunda okumele itholakale emabangeni aphansi asebedlule kuwo. Konke lokho kudala inkinga uma sekumele bafunde ngokuqonda nokufundela ukuthola ulwazi.Lokhu kunomthelela omubi impela, abafundi bagcina bengasalaleli imiyalelo kathisha becabanga ukuthi uthisha uhlekisa ngabo uma behluleka ukufunda ngokuqonda*. (The lack of basic foundation from the previous grades contributes to reading problems. Basic reading skills are not well equipped and developed so this is problematic. Children must be able to decode and read at early grades and in the higher grade they must try to read for information and to read with understanding. Kids find it difficult to cope because in the higher grades they are expected to read to learn. If I have to teach them the difference between sounds and letters it makes me feel crazy and it is difficult for me. The child tends to deny instructions and sees it as the teacher making a joke of him/her. It needs time on the side of the teacher and dedication to make all learners read with understanding.)

4.4 Summary of findings from semi-structured interviews

The data collected in this study highlighted that teachers do not teach reading comprehension, but teachers do teach reading. Teachers said they group learners before they start reading, that they read aloud to learners, that learners too read a specific paragraph aloud in groups or as individuals, and that the teachers asked questions to facilitate reading with understanding Thereafter teachers explained vocabulary and asked questions to check the learner's understanding of the read text. This is argued because all six teachers during the semi-structured interviews had shown as being unfamiliar with the comprehension strategy concept, but showed knowledge of reading strategies such as extensive reading for pleasure, reading aloud and how to implement a group guided reading strategy.

- The data indicated that all six teacher participants showed little understanding of the EMC2 Framework.

- The data suggested that teachers were of the same view that reading comprehension is fundamental and is the essence of reading.

- The data revealed that all teachers show that their understanding of prior knowledge is what helps to link new concepts with already existing knowledge or with what is already known about the topic or text.

- The data revealed that the six teachers think that teaching reading comprehension is the responsibility of language teachers and that other teachers fall behind and expect language teachers to do everything pertaining to language and the understanding of the language.

- The data revealed that the teaching strategy used was grouping learners without using a comprehension instruction strategy.

- The data revealed that all the teachers asked low and middle order type of questions to assess and to check understanding and out of the six teachers only two teachers had given learners the opportunity for summarization.

- The data seemed to show that all six teachers could not define in their own understanding what makes a good comprehension.

- The data seemed to show that only four teachers out of the six established meaning making by allowing for prediction using pictures and topics and asking pre-set questions. Two teachers asked learners to recapture and to recall previously done work that had nothing to do with the new knowledge.

- The data seemed to show that five teachers out of the six read firstly out aloud while the learners read silently, and then explain unfamiliar words.

- The data seemed to show that all six teachers asked question to consolidate a reading lesson and learners had to write down the answers in their work books. Only two teachers out of the six said they gave learners the opportunity to summarize the text.

- The data seemed to show that learners in Grade 7 lack basic reading skills from previous grades.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter provided an analysis of the data collected through lesson observations and semi-structured interviews and discussed the findings in terms of the research questions for the study. The researcher started analyzing the lesson observations then moved on to present the analysis of the semi-structured interviews. The next and final chapter will focus on the interpretation of the findings together with the conclusion and recommendations for reading comprehension development.

CHAPTER 5:

INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS; CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The study explored the teaching of reading comprehension in isiZulu home language in Grade 7. It attempted to identify the strategies that teachers used to teach comprehension in isiZulu. The previous chapter analyzed the data generated in the study. This chapter discusses and interprets the overall findings from the lesson observations and interviews. The interpretation of the findings has been linked to the relevant literature and the conceptual framework of the study. The conceptual framework of the study was situated in Vygotsky's socio-cultural learning theory utilizing concepts such as scaffolding, the ZPD and the schema theory. Shulman's classification of knowledge into content knowledge (CK) and pedagogic teacher knowledge (PCK) and the EMC2 strategy further informed the analysis of data. The research questions posed in the study are revisited in this final chapter in order to determine the extent to which they have been answered.

5.2 Interpretation of findings

5.2.1 Teacher pedagogical content knowledge of the comprehension instruction strategy

The findings in this study highlighted that teachers had no understanding of strategies for teaching reading comprehension. Teachers were confusing the teaching of reading as decoding with the teaching of reading comprehension in their instruction. This is argued as all six teachers during lesson observation and the semi-structured interviews showed that teachers do not use any reading comprehension strategy in their teaching of reading. One of Shulman's (1987) and Grossman's (1990) categories of knowledge is pedagogical content knowledge which is the combination of content knowledge and general pedagogical knowledge where teachers should know everything pertaining their subject and a method to teach, how to make topics easily understood and how to use various teaching approaches in that subject. Another finding on teacher knowledge included views about the importance of reading comprehension in the language curriculum. Van Staden and Howie (2008) and Msimango (2010) argued that

reading comprehension helps readers to read for learning in higher grades. The findings indicated that teachers were of the same view that reading comprehension is fundamental and is the essence of reading. Matjila and Pretorius (2004) maintain that reading skills form the foundation for success at school. Reading skills develop over time and it only develops if learners have access to books and if learners are given the opportunity to practice reading skills and given motivation to do (Pretorius & Lephalala, 2011).

5.2.2 Teachers' understanding of how prior knowledge is necessary to comprehend text

The finding revealed that all six teachers had an understanding of how prior knowledge is activated and how helpful it is to link new concepts with already existing information and knowledge. The teachers' understanding of how important the activation of prior knowledge is, helped them to lay a basis and foundation for the meaning of the text. The data revealed that teachers used pictures and titles to activate learners' prior knowledge. Prior knowledge refers to schema or relevant background knowledge that the learner already has. This knowledge helps the learner to make connections to the new text that the learner is reading and the learner's comprehension increases (Pretorius & Lephalala, 2011). Hedgecock and Ferris (2009) suggested that the use of prior knowledge strategy assists to link new knowledge and existing knowledge. Teachers had only used of schema theory in their practice. Similarly Klapwijk (2011) recommended the use of strategies like prediction and activation of prior knowledge to establish meaning making in the EMC2 framework. Teachers minimally utilized learners' prior knowledge to understand the texts only at the beginning phase of the reading comprehension lesson. This was the establish stage. However, their use of prior knowledge as indicated by the schema theory and the EMC2 strategy was shallow. They did not extend the learners ZPD. Hence their interpretation of the meaning was stunted.

5.2.3 Teacher's perceptions of whose responsibility it is to teach comprehension

The socio-cultural learning perspective states that learning is a social interaction among the various participants such as learners, teachers and other colleagues (Vygotsky, 1978). Comprehension is not confined to the language teacher. The EMC2 strategy requires the teacher to practice scaffolding when teaching to mediate new knowledge and for learners to be actively involved in meaning making. All six teachers mentioned that teaching reading

comprehension was viewed as the responsibility of language teachers only and their colleagues expected them to do every aspect related to it. This was evident from the interviews conducted with the teachers. Teaching language must be a collaborative initiative for everybody in schools so that teachers teach reading comprehension even in content subjects (Pretorius & Lephalala, 2011; Klapwijk & Van Der Walt, 2011). Klapwijk (2015) suggests training teachers how to teach reading comprehension must be done at teacher training institutions, so that when new teachers enter education work, they have an understanding of strategies on how to teach reading comprehension.

5.2.4 Strategies used by teachers for assessing reading comprehension

The findings revealed that all teachers ask low and middle order types of questions to assess and to check understanding: questions such as what and how, explain etc. Teachers did not use high order questions which was evident during the lesson observation questions such as: give reasons, why and synthesize. The findings revealed that the teachers questioning strategies and techniques were not to the standard expected by the curriculum and assessment policy. Assessment forms an integral part of teaching and learning (DoE, 2007). It is a crucial part of teaching and different methods of assessment can be used. The EMC2 framework strategy suggests that questions can asked throughout the reading process in the establish stage, the maintain (during reading) stage and the consolidation stage (Klapwijk, 2011).

5.2.5 How teachers teach during reading stage

Scaffolding and schema were only slightly considered in extending learners' knowledge. Teachers did not cater for the zone of proximal development. Zone of proximal development states that teachers should create settings that would be optimized to encourage success and the construction of meaning. Teachers were supposed to support the learners and use learners' prior knowledge to extend and develop new knowledge but none of the teachers did that. Klapwijk (2015) suggested the use of the EMC2 framework strategy in teaching reading comprehension. This strategy suggests indicators that can be implemented in each of the three stages of reading. None of the teachers used the strategies indicated in the framework in teaching reading. The EMC2 strategy requires the teacher to practice scaffolding when teaching to mediate new knowledge. Scaffolding was not efficiently used during reading. This

stage is where the meaning of the text is constructed. The data revealed that the teachers monitored learners reading but did not apply and model different techniques like skimming, scanning and speed reading. The emphasis was on re- reading which is not similar to the fix it strategy. The fix it strategy is concerned with slowing down and looking back and reading again if the reader does not understand; and looking for proper strategies and making plans of how learners would understand better what they read. The learners did not benefit from re-reading as they did not see the value of it and were not aware of strategies to use if they encountered problems. Most of the learners relied on the teacher for assistance. Teachers just read aloud firstly to learners and thereafter they explained unfamiliar words which were written on the chalkboard. The text was read four times and the learners were given 10 to 15 minutes to read on their own. Individual reading was emphasized together with silent reading, rather than reading aloud together as a whole class.

5.2.6 How teachers consolidate lessons on teaching comprehension

This process occurs after the reading process has occurred. The findings revealed that all six teachers asked questions to consolidate a reading lesson and learners had to write down the answers in their work books. Only two teachers out of the six gave learners the opportunity to summarize the text. The teachers were not aware of the other indicators for consolidating the lesson. The EMC2 strategy proposes that teachers should teach learners how to ask questions through the use of the "Question–Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy". There are four questions used in the QAR strategy, namely:

- Right there questions – these are questions where the answers can be found in the text.
- Think and search questions, where learners have to relate to different parts of the text.
- Author and you questions are based on the text but the learner relates them to his/her own experience.
- On my own – where the learner uses pre-knowledge to answer questions.

5.2.7 Factors influencing teaching of reading comprehension

The findings indicated and highlighted that the most significant factor that influences the teaching of reading comprehension is those learners who are progressed to the next grade whilst they are not ready to be promoted to that grade. The findings indicated that the learners

in Grade 7 lacked basic reading skills from previous grades. Teachers mentioned that they encountered some challenges such as inadequate reading materials, the lack of support from parents and schools and, further, that there were big numbers of learners in their classrooms.

5.2.8 Support for teachers

Teaching language must be a collaborative initiative for everybody in schools so that teachers teach reading comprehension even in content subjects (Pretorius & Lephalala, 2011; Klapwijk & Van Der Walt, 2011). All participants explained that they had too few books to be read by individual learners and that was why they asked learners to share books during reading sessions. The teachers asserted that many parents did not have enough money to buy books for their children to read at home, so the learners only had the opportunity to read at school. The teachers looked for support in teaching reading, including support from the principal and the school management team (Maphumulo, 2010, p.24). Maphumulo (2010) emphasizes the teacher-parent interaction in order to improve learners' reading. Community and parents should appreciate reading and reading resources or materials, and this would encourage learners to practice reading even during their spare time at home (Maphumulo, 2010, p.24).

5.2.9 Attendance at teacher development programmes

Drawing from social learning theory, learning is an interactive process where one learns in co-operation and collaboration with colleagues, experts and learners (Putnam & Borko, 2000). The findings revealed the lack of language development learning in communities as contributing to the state of the teaching of reading comprehension in classrooms. The findings revealed that all participating schools had scarce resources for learners to read, so that learners were mostly forced to share books. Researchers have argued that an effective professional development body or programme should have the following consistent principles : it is driven by well-defined image of effective classroom management for learning and teaching; it provides teachers with the opportunities to construct their content pedagogical knowledge and to examine practice; and it connects teachers as adults learners to collaborate with colleagues and other experts to improve their practice (Putnam & Borko, 2000; Wei et al., 2009 ; Givven & Santagata, 2011, p.440). Teachers hardly supported each other in teaching reading comprehension. Inadequate reading materials and human resources hinder the learners'

progress in reading and learning the language (Naidoo et al., 2012). Klapwijk (2015) suggests the training of teachers on how to teach reading comprehension, should be done at teacher training institutions so that when new teachers get employed to teach language classes, they have an understanding of strategies on how to teach reading comprehension. For teachers already in the field, the developmental workshops, clusters and staff development programmmes organized by the leadership and management team within schools, should address this negligence of teaching reading comprehension at schools.

5.2.10 Overall interpretation of findings

The teachers showed no understanding of and hardly implemented reading comprehension strategies in all phases or stages of the EMC2 framework. Teachers seemed to lack knowledge about the EMC2 framework strategy and to lack knowledge on how reading comprehension could be implemented in their instruction.

5.2 Conclusions regarding the research questions

The study sought to answer the three research questions identified as follows:

> **RQ 1:** What are teachers' understandings about the teaching of reading comprehension in isiZulu home language in Grade 7 classes?
>
> **RQ 2:** What reading strategies do teachers utilize in teaching reading comprehension in isiZulu?
>
> **RQ 3:** What other factors influence the teaching of reading comprehension in isiZulu home language?

Conclusions drawn from the study concerning each question are discussed below.

RQ 1: What are teachers' understandings about the teaching of reading comprehension in isiZulu home language in Grade 7 classes?

Teachers understood that teaching reading comprehension is hard. Therefore a strategy needs to be used. It also needs time and all teachers have to support each other as it is not easy to teach learners comprehension strategies. The teachers mentioned that the attitude of the teacher in teaching language is problematic too, not making the transferability of the strategy to learners beneficial. For example, the teachers mentioned that principals take the easy way

by believing that if teachers speak the language, they can teach it. But teaching language is challenging. It needs people who have knowledge of the subject e.g. the curriculum, content and pedagogical content knowledge and context knowledge. The teachers mentioned that the lack of support begins within their schools and clusters, and even outside the school by the Department of Education and the subject advisors. They mentioned the issue of time: that they cannot work during school vacations because they sacrifice their time doing all the administrative work as they are class teachers too. They also mentioned the problems of the overcrowding in the classes that led to a shortage of space and to not being free to do individual teaching.

RQ2: What reading strategies do teachers utilize in teaching reading comprehension in isiZulu?

The EMC2 strategy suggests teachers scaffold and use schema theory in the teaching of comprehension until learners read with understanding on their own. The EMC2 strategy is used repeatedly, meaning that it can be used again and again in each of the three stages of teaching reading comprehension which are establishing meaning making, maintaining meaning and consolidating meaning. EMC2 takes it a step further for teachers in teaching reading comprehension (Klapwijk, 2015). None of the six teachers used the EMC 2 framework strategies in their teaching of reading, as the concept was unfamiliar to them. Those who try to use some of the descriptors in the framework used them with the aim of teaching reading in general. The establish stage is the meaning construction stage where teachers have to teach various strategies so that learners learn to read for meaning themselves. However teachers did not teach meaning construction strategies, instead they gave opportunities to read aloud, to explain unfamiliar words and to focus on monitoring learners' behaviour rather than teaching strategies which learners themselves could use to monitor their own reading comprehension. The strategies to be used in each stage of teaching are indicated clearly in the framework. The teachers did not teach reading techniques and nothing was done on skimming and scanning techniques. They focused to a great extent on re–reading, slowing down and re-reading during the reading stage, without even mentioning to learners the benefits and the purpose of this re-reading. The data revealed that teachers still do not teach reading comprehension. This study revealed a big gap that teachers still need to learn how to teach reading comprehension. The findings of this study are similar to Klapwijk's (2015)

study on comprehension: that teachers still do not teach reading comprehension. With this study, the teachers taught reading but not reading comprehension. The teachers seemed to show a lack of knowledge of the strategy. Therefore teacher developmental activities like cluster meetings and workshops must be planned to teach teachers how to scaffold in their teaching and learning must occur in these activities so that teachers can implement and understand how to teach reading comprehension.

RQ3: What other factors influence teaching of reading comprehension in isiZulu home language?

The data revealed that the learners were not ready to be in Grade 7 but most of them had been promoted by the Department of Education knowing exactly that they were not ready to be in this grade. This was the most significant factor that influenced teachers' teaching of reading comprehension in the classrooms. Pretorius and Lephalala's (2011) findings on the study on reading comprehension also showed that learners who were promoted to Grade 5 but had failed all subjects from Grade 4, showed reading comprehension problems with the text. Teachers mentioned the issue or principle of 'pass one pass all'. This principle promotes learners who are not ready to be in the promoted grade and this in turn hinders the teaching of reading comprehension strategies. Teachers further mentioned a need for collaborative support and inadequate reading resources.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study it is recommended that the Department of Education should organize workshops on reading comprehension strategy instruction for all rade 7 teachers and it is further recommended that during teacher training, teachers are trained on teaching reading comprehension strategies so that when they enter work they know how to teach comprehension. It is suggested that collaborative support for teachers is necessary by simply providing reading material like newspapers articles and magazines. It is further recommended that another study be conducted in other circuits and districts so that the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education can improve teachers' implementation of the EMC2 framework strategy in the whole province, so that learners' reading comprehension would be addressed. Teacher's concerns can be addressed through collaboration in the form of the collective participation of teachers of the same department, grade or subject in order to help develop

teacher learning and professional development (Guskey, 2009; Darling–Hammond, 2010; Borko, 2004; Givven & Santagata, 2011). Great teacher learning is seen as improved when there is joint participation in professional learning communities and valuable communication within the professional bodies (Borko, 2004; Darling–Hammond & Richardson, 2009). Little (2003) argues that the contexts that support collaborative culture are supportive of leadership, mutual respect and the empowerment of teachers as decision makers.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the interpretation of the findings from data collected to answer the research questions (outlined in Chapter 1), drawn conclusions and made recommendations from the study. The aim of the study was to explore the teaching of reading comprehension in isiZulu home language in Grade 7. The teachers showed no understanding and hardly implemented reading comprehension strategies in all phases or stages of the EMC2 framework. Teachers seem to lack knowledge about the EMC2 framework strategy and on how it can be implemented in their instruction.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview schedule

1) What is your understanding of reading comprehension?

2) What are your views of reading comprehension to be included in the curriculum?

3) What is your understanding of using prior knowledge to activate and help understand the text?

4) What are your colleague's views about teaching reading comprehension?

5) What do you do when you teach reading comprehension?

6) What strategies do you use when you teach reading comprehension?

7) What assessment strategies do you us to assess reading comprehension?

8) How do you choose a good textbook for your learners to use for reading comprehension?

9) What do readers do when they read to comprehend?

10) What other factors influence teaching of reading comprehension

Appendix 2: Observation schedule

Observation schedule :

Date of observation   :

Participant   :

How do teachers use the EMC =2 Framework

Establish

Strategy	Activities	Learners role	Comments

Maintain

Strategy	Activities	Learners role	Comments

Consolidate

Strategies	Activities	Learners role	Comments

Appendix 3: Request for permission

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Pietermaritzburg campus

Private Bag X03

Pietermaritzburg

3200

25 March 2015

The Principal

…………………

…………………

…………………

Request for a permission to conduct an academic research

I, Sibongile Mzila, a student at the above mentioned institution record my request to conduct research amongst grade 7 teachers at your school. I am a master's student under the guidance of Dr .Mbatha, doing an exploration of teachers teaching of reading comprehension in isiZulu home language in grade seven. My focus will be on the strategies used to each reading comprehension to grade 7 learners, why and how they use these strategies.

I shall do my best not to disturb functioning of the school and classes to be observed. Time schedule will be arranged in such a way that there are in agreement with the participants. Interviews will be conducted, as well as observation of teacher in the classroom while they teach.

I will be of pleasure if my request meet your favorable consideration, and be given the opportunity to conduct this research at your school.

Yours Sibongile Mzila (210553732: student number) 0732456728/0334450035 (contact number)

Appendix 4: Consent form

Consent form for principal of the participating school and participants

I --------------------------------------- have been informed about the study entitled exploring experiences of teachers teaching reading comprehension in isiZulu home language in grade seven by Sibongile Mzila

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study that it will not interfere and disrupt the functioning of the school and my duties at school.

I have been given the opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

I have been informed about any available medical treatment if injury occurs to me as a result of study related procedures.

If I have further questions / concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher Sibongile Mzila (Student number: 210553732).

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researcher then I may contact:

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Administration

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu –Natal, South Africa

Tel 0312604557   Fax: 0312604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Additional consent to:

Audio tape my interview   yes/no

Video record my interview   yes/no

------------------------------   ---

Signature of participant   Date

----------------------------   --

Signature of Witness   Date

(If applicable)

--------------------------   ---

Signature of Translator   Date

(If applicable)

--------------------------   --

Appendix 5: Informed consent letter

School of Education

College of Humanities

University of KwaZulu- Natal

Pietermaritzburg Campus

April 2015

Dear Participant

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

My name is Sibongile Mzila. I am a Master's in Education candidate studying at the University of Kwazulu- Natal, Pietermaritzburg campus. South Africa.

I am interested in understanding and exploring the experiences of teachers teaching reading comprehension in isiZulu home language in Grade seven. Your school and classroom is one of my case studies to gather information. I am interested in asking you some questions and observe the lessons.

Please note that:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your input will not be attributed to you as the person, but reported only as a population member opinion.
- The interview may last for an hour and can be split depending on your preference.
- Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in a secure storage which is my supervisor's safe and destroyed after 5 years.
- You have a choice to participate or not in this study. You will not be penalized for taking such action.
- The research aims at understanding the practices used in teaching early reading in isiZulu in the senior phase classroom.

- Your involvement is purely for academic purpose and there are no financial benefits involved.
- If you are willing to be interviewed and to be observed, observation can be videotaped. Please indicate (by ticking as applicable) whether or not you are willing to allow the interview and observation to be recorded.

Collection of data	Willing	
Interview		
Observation		

I can be contacted at:

Email: mzilasibongile@gmail.com

Cell: 0732456728

My supervisor is Dr. T. Mbatha who is located at the School of Education, Pietermaritzburg Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Contact details: email: mbathath@ukzn.ac.za   Phone number: 0332605501

You may also contact the Research Office through:

P. Mohun

HSSREC Research Office,

Tel: 031 260 4557 E-mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

Sibongile Mzila

Signature

Appendix 6: Declaration

………………………………………………………………………… (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

…………………………………….   ………………….

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT   DATE

Appendix 7: Ethical clearance from UKZN

UNIVERSITY OF ™
KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

15 June 2015

Ms Sibongile Mzila 210553732
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Ms Mzila

Protocol reference number: HSS/0396/015M
Project title: Exploring teachers' experiences of teaching reading comprehension in isiZulu home language in Grade 7 classrooms in UMvoti Circuit

Provisional Approval - Expedited

I wish to inform you that your application in connection with the above has been granted provisional approval, subject to Gatekeeper permission being obtained.

Kindly submit your response to Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair), as soon as possible.

This approval is granted provisionally and the final approval for this project will be given once the above condition has been met. Research may not begin until full approval has been received from the HSSREC.

Yours faithfully

Dr S Singh (Chair)

/px

cc Supervisor: Dr T Mbatha
cc Academic Leader Research: Professor P Morojele
cc School Administrators: Ms B Bhengu, Ms T Khumalo & Mr SN Mthembu

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: ximbao@ukzn.ac.za / snymanm@ukzn.ac.za / mohunp@ukzn.ac.za
Website: www.ukzn.ac.za

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Appendix 8: Permission to conduct research by KZN DoE

education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Nomangisi Ngubane   Tel: 033 392 1004   Ref.:2/4/8/419

Ms S Mzila
PO Box 85
HERMANNSBURG
3258

Dear Ms Mzila

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: "EXPLORING TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION IN ISIZULU HOME LANGUAGE IN GRADE 7", in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 15 May 2015 to 30 June 2016.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Connie Kehologile at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

UMzinyathi District

Nkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD
Head of Department: Education
Date: 13 May 2015

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
POSTAL: Private Bag X 9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa
PHYSICAL: 247 Burger Street, Anton Lembede House, Pietermaritzburg, 3201. Tel. 033 392 1004
EMAIL ADDRESS: kehologile.connie@kzndoe.gov.za / Nomangisi.Ngubane@kzndoe.gov.za
CALL CENTRE: 0860 596 363; Fax: 033 392 1203 WEBSITE: WWW.kzneducation.gov.za

Appendix 9: Turnitin originality report

Turnitin Originality Report

Full thesis   by sibongile mzila sibongile mzila

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academic requirements for the degree of Master of Education

(M.Ed.) in the

School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.
Supervisor: Dr.

Thabile Mbatha December 2015 I TABLE OF CONTENTS Chapter 1 1.1.Introduction .... 1 1.2. Background .... 1 1.3.Teaching reading comprehension.. 1-2 1.4.Context of the study .... 2-3 1.5 Motivation of the study ....3 1.6. Problem Statement...2-3 1.7 Purpose of the study...2-3 1.8. Rationale of the study...4 1.9 Research Methodology...5 1.9.1. Research Paradigm ....5 1.9.2. Qualitative approach...5 1.9.3. Research Design..5 1.9.4.