

An exploration of reading strategies implemented by teachers teaching isiZulu home language in grade 1

by

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SUPERVISOR'S STATEMENT

This dissertation has been submitted with / without my approval

.....

Professor A. Sheik

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Date

DECLARATION

I, Duduzile Patricia, declare that this dissertation is my own work and has not been submitted previously for any degree in any university.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to two late members of my family:

- My mother, Linah Nyuswa who was my pillar of strength while she was alive. She encouraged and motivated me to do the best I can. She was also enthusiastic throughout my schooling and tertiary education.
- My second daughter, Jabulile, who passed away on 25 December 2004. She was always positive about life and provided support where it was needed.

May their souls rest in peace.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ANA	Annual National Assessment
B Ed	Bachelor of Education
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CiPELT	Certificate in Primary English Language Teaching
CM	Circuit Manager
DM	District Manager
DoE	Department of Education
ECD	Early Childhood Education
FAL	First Additional Language
FP	Foundation Phase
HL	Home Language
IP	Intermediate Phase
KZN	KwaZulu - Natal
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NGO	Non – Governmental Organization
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
PTC	Primary Teacher’s Certificate
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
UKZN	University of KwaZulu Natal

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the strategies implemented by grade one isiZulu Home Language (HL) teachers when teaching reading. One of the fundamental skills of education for learners involves the development of reading in the early stages of schooling. The CAPS document was recently introduced in order to help introduce teachers to a variety of explicit strategies in the teaching and assessment of reading. However, practitioner experience and research indicate that most teachers find it difficult to implement the strategies suggested for a variety of reasons.

The study adopted the qualitative approach based on an interpretive approach. The objective of choosing the qualitative method for data collection was to get deeper insight into how teachers teach reading to learners. The strategies employed to gather data with efficiency and minimum bias involved the adoption of the semi-structured interview. This research used the semi-structured interviews with three grade one teachers in the Pinetown district as respondents.

Research findings indicate that teachers have significant difficulties in implementing the reading strategies to achieve the levels of competencies as required by the CAPS document. The respondents in this research found that they were significantly challenged when it came to implementing the recommended CAPS strategies to learners. It was also observed that there are distinct gaps in the teaching of reading to learners in the foundation phase. Moreover, teachers struggled with the interpretation of the reading methods as laid out in the policy framework.

In order to address these problems it is recommended that teachers in the schools be trained thoroughly on how to implement strategies recommended by the Department of Education as stipulated in the CAPS document. The respondents realized that they needed extensive knowledge and specialised skills which were not offered during the training. All the three teachers taught the different aspects of the language in isolation, and not in the integrated approach as espoused in the CAPS. The findings also suggest that support from school management in mentoring is required to assist teachers to implement the strategies with efficiency and understanding.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The education of our children is one of the significant challenges facing South Africa. South African education is a high cost, low performance system that does not compare favourably with other developing economies. This problem is compounded by constantly changing curricula, a high number of unqualified teachers and insufficient resources and infrastructure.

For learners to eventually graduate into the labour market as skilled and productive citizens it is imperative that a solid foundation in literacy be established. The South African educational landscape has witnessed a shift from the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS). Initially, to improve its implementation, the NCS was amended so that it could be introduced to learners as from January 2012. The old subject statements were developed into a single comprehensive document with guidelines for each learning programme from grade R - 12. This educational plan sought to provide a balanced education which promoted a text based approach in tandem with the process approach, marked by district events of scaffolding and what is taken to be pedagogical best practice. The new document is known as the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS). In the Foundation Phase time allocated to Home Language (HL) is six hours per week (CAPS document, p.6). The main skills are Listening and Speaking, Reading and phonics and Writing and handwriting. The three activities are divided into formal and informal assessment in a scaffolded approach. The three main skills include sub – skills referred to as:

- Thinking and Reasoning
- Language Structure and Use

The document provides guidance to the teacher regarding suitable support in developing the strategies for learners to read, interpret and follow instruction in the Home Language (HL) and First Additional Language (FAL). Each grade has a Learner's book and a teacher's guide to facilitate teaching and learning to ensure standardisation and quality across the country.

Learners in the Foundation Phase (FP) need to acquire a number of skills to prepare them for the demands of Intermediate Phase (IP) and beyond. Therefore an appropriately structured environment that recognizes the unique needs of young learners can help to lay the foundation for future success. This thesis will concentrate on the skills of reading in Grade 1. In order for reading to be successful a variety of strategies need to be implemented by teachers in a relaxed, friendly manner, taking into consideration the different styles of learning (Fox: 2008).

The problems children have with reading in Grade 1 is well documented. Socio-economic deprivation and neurological difficulties express themselves in reading without expression, not mouthing out words, lack of concentration and the inability to distinguish major details from minor details amongst impediments. The inability to read with fluency and comprehension is a major cause of frustration, feelings of shame, academic exclusion and leads to many learners dropping out of school (Cunningham et. al: 1998). I hypothesize that in the South African context, in the majority African schools, in the foundation phase learner success in literacy can be significantly improved if learners are introduced to reading using different strategies in their home language. This would work particularly with children from disadvantaged communities. If this is done along pedagogically sound principles and with sufficient resources and expertise to back it up, a lot of problems can be eliminated.

Presently there is a trend that teachers, especially in the foundation phase, follow when introducing learners to the reading of isiZulu in grade one. They seem to think that because learners can speak the language, not much emphasis should be placed in using different strategies and activities to help in the grasp of concepts and phonic awareness of the language. In addition, the oral traditions of indigenous cultures are mostly unexploited in developing a reading culture. Emphasis on this is required if children are to feel a sense of belonging and cultural identity as they mediate learning.

This study will suggest a roadmap and strategies for grade one teachers when teaching reading in isiZulu. There is a common and long standing complaint that most learners fail to read at the expected level by the end of their first year. To achieve the vision of producing good isiZulu readers, who read with fluency and comprehension, teachers will be encouraged to effectively execute the different strategies suggested by the

Curriculum and Assessment Statement (CAPS). As a researcher, I believe that learners who have been introduced to appropriate reading strategies will produce good results at the end of Grade 3 when their reading is assessed during the Annual National Assessment (ANA). Obviously, this is a long term view to success and depends upon incremental success, patience and confidence building in the learner. In addition reading lessons should be commensurate with identified needs of learners if tangible benefits are to be gained.

In most cases reading and writing present a myriad of challenges to the Grade 1 child. If you cannot read in your home language your self-esteem is bound to be low. When learners in a grade one class are shown a reading list of objects with common sounds they cannot read them. It is usually impossible for some learners to identify the initial sound of the object (Allington: 2006). This problem is reflected in most grade one classes. What makes matters worse is that teachers struggle with different strategies to help learners manage reading as they are still getting to grips with CAPS. Training organized by the Department of Education takes a week or less giving teachers not enough time to understand how each strategy can be introduced and used in helping learners.

Ngema (2006: p.11) investigates how reading should be assessed in Outcomes Based Education (OBE) approached in isiZulu as a home language in grade three. As a researcher she stressed the importance of assessment as an important factor that promotes reading instruction. In her study she cites Shellard (2003: p.3); saying frequent assessment is the most reliable way of preventing learners from falling behind in reading. As much as assessment plays a crucial role, I think the strategies used to teach before assessing are more important (Tomkins and Blanchfield: 2004). You assess what you have correctly introduced and taught to learners.

According to Ngema: p. 13, "It is recommended that the learner's home language should be used for learning and teaching in the foundation phase wherever possible". She further stresses that isiZulu should be used as the medium of instruction in the foundation phase. She is of the opinion that learners are able to transfer the literacy they have acquired in their home language to the first additional language (English or Afrikaans in the case of Zulu speakers). Her argument is based on the importance of

isiZulu in the foundation phase. As much as there is truth in what Ngema points out, not much is said about how teachers are going to help learners develop reading skills in their early lives at school.

In my practitioner experience, effective reading lessons show logical progression. Dictionaries and vocabulary notebooks are integral to promoting learning as well as the capacity to relate real life situations to reading exercises.

1.2 Topic

An exploration of reading strategies used by teachers teaching isiZulu in Grade 1.

Three critical questions for the study are as follows:

- What reading strategies do grade one teachers use when teaching isiZulu?
- How do they implement these reading strategies?
- What are the outcomes of the reading strategies implemented by grade one teachers when teaching in isiZulu to grade one learners?

1.3 Purpose (rationale) of the study

The purpose of this study is to explore the reading strategies used by three grade one teachers in teaching isiZulu in a school. The school chosen for the study is in the Pinetown District at KwaMashu circuit, a township public school where all learners and teachers speak isiZulu as their home language. Khuzwayo: 2005, refers to Home Language (HL) as Mother Tongue (MT). in the research pertaining to early education for learners in the schools. The understanding is that it is the language a person has grown up speaking and learning from early childhood or birth. The document (CAPS) refers to mother tongue as Home Language (HL). When learners are admitted to school they can speak and understand the language. The research will be valuable in the selection of the strategies that will enable learners to read fluently in their mother tongue or home language. The choice of the strategies will be made by the teachers, with the help of the CAPS document. The circuit

and the district offices where the school is situated will gain insight to the strategies used. Teachers are supposed to have been introduced and trained on how to implement the strategies suggested for reading in the classroom, as per the requirements of CAPS.

I have been visiting schools during Teaching Practice (TP) in the past two to three years as an Early Childhood Education (ECD) lecturer. Learners in grade one in some of the schools find it difficult to read fluently at the level specified. Teachers become frustrated as learners are expected to be fluent readers by the end of their first school year (grade one). Hence the study will examine teachers' strategies, to find out if they (teachers) are not barriers to reading for grade one learners. The focus will be on the content, the way the class is organized for each strategy, teaching style and space, teaching methods, learning material and equipment used, time frames for completing curricula and how learning is assessed (KZNDoE, 2008).

1.4 Methodology

The nature of the research approach in this study is qualitative. Reading strategies implemented by grade one teachers will be explored in order to answer the critical questions mentioned under the topic (what reading strategies do the three teachers use when teaching, how they use such strategies and what are the outcomes for the strategies teachers implement when teaching isiZulu reading to grade one learners?). According to Niewenhuis (in Maree, 2007: p. 51), qualitative research tends to answer the third question of the scientific study.

Observation will play an important part as the qualitative approach. This approach further studies people by permitting interaction with participants in their environment that is the teachers and learners in this study. By referring to the study as scientific, in simple terms, it means that it is valid. The ontological nature of the study will stem from the fact that I will conduct interviews with teachers of isiZulu reading who teach grade one learners. Govender (2009: p. 9) in his dissertation, argues that the informal conversational interview and the interview guide approach provides an in-depth, rich data for the study. His research was based on the choices made by grade four learners when they choose what they would prefer to read. Through observation of the body language the researcher can be able to interpret potential meanings of a particular

situation. Results of the observations will be recorded in a journal as data to triangulate information and provide verification and additional information if required.

As the researcher, I will have to agree on how, when and where the interviews will be conducted. I will have to be flexible as teachers may suggest different times, venues and ways of interviewing. The consensus will include understanding that the interviews will be in written or verbal form, giving a clear reason for the teachers' choice. Participants will be assured of confidentiality of the data collected and that it will only be used for the research and nothing else. The principal of the school will not have access to the findings without the permission of the teachers who were interviewed and observed during the study for ethical and confidentiality reasons.

1.5 Outline of the study

In chapter one the research study is introduced and issues central to the importance of understanding how different reading strategies should be implemented are referred to without explaining them. The definition of mother tongue is briefly given. Included in the chapter is the topic, critical key questions, purpose (rational) and methodology of the study.

Chapter two contains the literature review which explains the importance of reading at an early age in the home language. Strategies are defined, presented and critically discussed from the documents' and researcher's point of view. What follows is the examination of literature related to the topic.

The research design and methodology selected for the study is explained in detail in chapter three. Terms such as qualitative, interview and sampling are discussed in depth. The data collection plan has been devised and presented on a table for participants (teachers). The research instruments (interview questions and observation schedule) are also contained in this chapter. Ethical consideration, will be examined in the final stage of the study.

Chapter four presents analysis of data collected using interviews and observation of teachers using the strategies. The researcher will analyze related literature used in

different themes identified in the study. The analysis will be used to respond to critical questions one and two.

Chapter five has a summary of findings of the study from data collected. There will be suggestions and recommendations given after the analysis has been interpreted and completed. These will be for teachers to consider for future use of different strategies in grade one when teaching reading in isiZulu. The final part of the chapter will include the limitations and conclusion of the research.

1.6. Conclusion

The first step in this chapter was to introduce and provide background explanation to the study. As a second step the topic, three critical (key) questions and the rationale of the study were discussed. The following step was to generally describe methodology to be used for data collection. The outline of each chapter for the study was provided with a short explanation towards the end of the chapter. The following chapter (chapter 2) will deal with the literature review and the conceptual framework that frames the development of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

Chapter two explains the basic isiZulu reading, spelling and comprehension skills by foundation phase learners. In this chapter I will firstly examine the definition of reading and outline reading stages. Secondly, I will discuss the importance of reading and learners' reading skills and then illustrate the requirements of curriculum and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). The third section will look at how reading is taught and also examine the resources for reading. Finally, the chapter will be concluded by discussing the theories that inform this study.

2.2 Reading and reading stages

Day and Bamford (1998, p.12) describe the reading process as:

- The accurate, swift and automatic visual recognition of vocabulary, independent of the content in which it occurs, referred to as sight words.
- The calling up of words, its meaning and its phonological representation: when in a sentence, holds the words in working memory long enough for comprehension to occur.
- Draws on the reader's prior knowledge of the language comprehension.

Maphumulo (2010) and Govender (2009) further argue that reading skills in learners develop gradually in six stages as:

- the pre-reader (stage 1)
- the emergent reader (stage 2)
- the early reader (stage 3)
- the developing reader (stage 4)
- the fluent reader (stage 5)
- the independent reader (stage 6)

The teacher must be able to identify each learner through guidelines that can be applied for each stage. The stages do not relate to grades but reading skills which need developmental activities planned by the teacher (Day & Bramford, 2008; DoE, 2012). Maphumulo (2010) in her research discusses stages one to four as she is of the opinion that they are only relevant to grade one. This research study will not include stages five and six as they are too advanced for the average grade one learner.

The pre – reader

At this stage the learner can be able to hold the book in a correct position. The learner recognizes the beginning and the end of the book. He or she can respond to stories, interprets pictures, pretends to read, reads some letters and shows interest in print when he or she sees it (Maphumulo, 2010).

The emergent reader

The learner at this stage can use pictures to tell the story, knows certain sounds and letters, knows that reading is from left to right, can join when reading with the teacher (shared reading), can read some print, especially in the classroom and reads books with familiar patterns (Maphumulo, 2010; DOE, 2012).

The early reader

Most letter sounds and names are known by the learner. He or she can recognize common words, can retell a story, can use pictures to make meaning (about 70% of words can be read correctly), reads aloud to self and early reader's books with repetition and rhyme can be read (Maphumulo, 2010; Govender, 2009).

The developing reader

The learner at this stage uses pictures to make meaning, uses knowledge of sentence structure, can decode aloud and combine words into phrases instead of reading word for word. The learner at this stage can retell beginning, middle and end of the story (Manguel, 1996). It is possible to read silently; applying punctuation marks when reading, able to correct him or her and reads long easier books with large print (Reutzel, Fawson and Smith: 2008).

The knowledge of the various reading stages will enable the teacher to assess each learner in his or her class effectively, giving informed decisions. These guidelines will provide appropriate reading and individual skills of development for learners.

2.3 The importance of reading and improving learners' reading skills.

According to Maphumulo (2010, p.29), teachers play an important role in teaching learners how to read in the foundation phase. The CAPS document emphasizes different reading strategies that need to be implemented in order to avoid rote - learning by learners. The document assumes that the new strategies/methods will lead to decisive improvement in achievement of reading skills to learners (DoE, 2012; Maphumulo, 2010; Nkosi, 2011; Ngema, 2008).

Reading strategies in this study refer to ways of solving problems that learners may have when reading. There will be situations where learners may not know the meaning of a word, fail to pronounce the word or find it difficult to understand the text they are expected to read. Should learners find themselves in one or all of the above situations they must be able to know what to do in order to work around their problem(s).

2.3.1 Reading aloud

In reading aloud the teacher reads to the whole class, using material that is at the listening comprehension level of the learners. Reading aloud helps learners to develop love for good literature, which motivates them to read on their own and familiarize themselves with a variety of genres including non-fiction (Kredátusová, 2007). Teachers are shown how to use the time before, during and after the reading of the story in order to develop specific skills and check for understanding.

The teacher reads a story and shows the pictures to learners. Learners listen and respond to the story. Language patterns are assimilated by learners, learning about the structures of the stories, improving the vocabulary and practicing listening, speaking, comprehending and thinking skills (Maphumulo: 2010; Ngema; 2008).

In preparation for the lesson the teacher provides a reading text to access reading skills. The first step is to scan the reading text to identify the following:

- what it is about
- any words you cannot pronounce, find out how to pronounce them
- punctuation marks that guide pausing during reading
- nouns and verbs
- where to speak slowly or fast

The above points will motivate learners to listen to the story, read with enthusiasm, and engage with the story as they listen and to be eager to imitate the teacher's skill when reading. Reading aloud is for all grades and can be used in all subjects (Teacher's Handbook: 2008).

The second step is to decide on the mood of the piece so that the appropriate tone of voice is used. The last step is to read to learners, making eye contact with the audience while reading.

2.3.2 Shared reading

In a shared reading session the teacher reads with the class or a group. The story book used is large with big bold print. The paper size used for the book is approximately A4; hence the book is referred to as the Big Book (CAPS, 2012 & Teacher's Handbook, 2008). Learners are expected to follow the text, joining in when they are able to do so. The lesson should take place in a relaxed learning environment. The learners are encouraged to guess how the story is going to progress and end. The encouragement comes from the teacher, including taking risks and accepting all attempts made in order to promote future learning. Participation includes dancing, clapping of hands, stamping of feet, singing and suggesting other words where necessary. Words that rhyme the same can be suggested.

Botha and Hugo (2002, p.41) mention that there should be an emphasis on correct and accurate pointing as it helps learners in managing to:

- read from left to right, training the eye movement across the page
- realize the relationship of one- to – one between the spoken and the printed word

Sliding and smooth movement should be done when pointing. Learners' reading and comprehension skills will be developed. There will also be an increase in learners' reading vocabulary. In the foundation phase the books chosen are colourful in order to grab the readers' attention. In the process of reading learners manage to develop skills to punctuation, spelling and meaningful writing in the context of the story.

2.3.3 Group guided reading

A small group of learners is supported by the teacher as they talk, read and think creatively through the text. The Department of Education (2009, p.27) suggests that learners are grouped according to their reading abilities or specific needs, for example, barriers to reading. The guided reading strategy provides an opportunity for learners to integrate their growing knowledge of the conventions of print, letter-sound relationships and other foundational skills in context. Teachers have to be trained how to manage group reading using the book and cards. Learners read together, supporting each other in a smaller group (not intimidated) and working as a team.

In modelling and instructing learners, guided reading enables teachers to extend vocabulary development, knowledge and the use of comprehension. This is where the teacher assesses each learner as they have the same ability. Specific reading skills are attended to in a manner that is not threatening. Researchers, McLaughlin and Allen (2009) are of the opinion that guided reading plays an important role in the development of reading skills. Learners read to modify their skills.

2.3.4 Paired / independent reading

At this stage learners choose books according to their interest and ability. The Department of Education (2008, p.27) highlights the fact that learners should be guided in their choice of texts that they can be able to read with a high degree of success for intrinsic motivation. Emergent readers are the ones who should be encouraged to read in pairs or independently. The books chosen should have been read in the shared and guided reading sessions. The teacher should make time to follow up with discussion and dialogue to check for understanding. Learners must be able to display understanding of the story read. The four language skills (listening, reading, speaking and writing) will help learners read for enjoyment.

Joubert, Bester and Meyer (2008) refer to a Balanced Language Programme as an approach to language teaching that has been developed and researched over the years. It has now been adopted by the Department of Education in order to help teachers in their strategies to teach learners to read and write from lower grades upwards. It is balanced because it develops the four language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking using a variety of teaching methods and materials. Learners are unique individuals and so no single method will work equally well for all children (Fox, 2008). The different strategies make up a Balanced Language Programme which encourages development of skills for each learner.

The classroom should be conducive to learning for learners. In implementing the variety of strategies the teacher needs to plan reading lessons showing basic requirements which include a detailed lesson plan on how he or she is going to teach. The strategies need creativity and innovation, taking into consideration the learners' interests. They should be engaged to create an appropriate learning climate to make assessing them easy. A library corner in the classroom enables the learners access to reading material at all times where they can practice reading in a friendly environment. Joubert et.al (2008, p.112) are of the view that this is a place which is specifically set apart for reading and related to activities such as inviting learners to read and enjoy themselves. The reading corner should contain non-fiction and fiction books which cater for all levels in the classroom. The reading corner can also contain the following:

- colourful picture books
- children's magazines
- word and language games
- scrapbooks made by the teacher or other learners from previous years
- reading cards with a variety of jokes, comics, poems, recipes and rhymes
- picture books made by learners from higher classes
- reading and picture games
- books made by learners (with the help of the teacher / parents /siblings)

The teacher must be aware that learners have different styles of learning. The Department of Education (2003, p.12) emphasizes that teachers need to be aware of

preferred learning style by individual learners and creatively cater for them. When planning lessons teachers need to consider such diversity in the classroom even for a reading lesson. In-depth planning unearths learners' hidden, varied abilities and talents. There are activities that will succeed for some individual learners / groups and fail for others (2003, p.12). The teachers' duty is to plan meaningfully in order to accommodate all to participate fully as the lesson progresses.

Felder and Brent (2004) are of the opinion that learners have different learning styles.

Below are the characteristics that they distinguish:

- learners who are physically attuned to experiences (concrete, practical, based on facts and methods) and those who are intuitive learners (innovative, conceptual, directed towards theory and meaning);
- learners who are visually attuned to experiences (they prefer visual presentation – pictures, maps diagrams) and verbal learners (prefer written and spoken explanation);
- learners who are active (trying things out and working with others) and reflective learners (working alone and reflecting);
- Learners who prefer sequential order and steps (orderly, linear, directed towards learning in small steps) and learners who are global (directed towards systems, holistic, learn in large leaps).

The above are very important characteristics which each teacher should take into consideration when planning for each lesson. In planning assessment guidelines and resources play a crucial role. The teacher's task is to help learners to demonstrate how much they have achieved in a particular lesson.

Using different strategies for reading (as discussed above) encourage learners in their critical thinking. The learner learns to predict what the story is about through thinking, analyzing selecting and using other skills at his or her level of understanding. This means before reading the teacher must give learners the opportunity to discuss the picture as the whole class and in groups, each learner saying what he / she thinks about the picture while the others listen. Govender (2009) and Maphumulo (2010) state that the teacher can ask questions as a follow-up on what learners are saying to engage them

in critical thinking. Learners can be allowed to use pictures in discussing things that take place in their real-life situations.

Meaning plays a very important point when reading. Learners need to be taught at an early stage to get meaning from what they have read from the story. Snowball (2006, p.63) stresses the importance of the following in order to assess whether the learner has mastered reading with understanding or not:

- learner can comment on a story read to demonstrate understanding
- he or she can show understanding by answering questions using a sequence of events, comment on what the story teaches us, say whether or not the learner(s) liked the story and why, relate the story to real - life situations (Department of Education 2002a, p.33).

According to Snowball (2006, p.62), learners should be taught at all grade levels (this includes grade one learners) to comprehend what they have read making use of all the components of language usage in order to improve themselves from an early stage.

Resources to teach literacy such as an abundant and freely available supply of reading books, appropriate for the level, pictures, the use of flashcards, puppets and posters will greatly facilitate learning and prove stimulating for learners. These resources come in handy when helping the learner graduate from early literacy acquisition to developing reading skills.

2.4 The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)

The curriculum is defined in different ways by researchers. The main definition is that it is an account of a person's education, qualification and occupation. It involves programmes with different activities prescribed for the study (McNeill and Chapman, 2005). 'There are different concurrent curricula such as the official curriculum, the received curriculum, the hidden curriculum and the null curriculum (Koch, 2009). In this study I will focus on the official curriculum which is the documented curriculum in terms of scope and sequence charts, syllabi, curriculum guides and course outlines. The main purpose of this type of curriculum is to give teachers a basis for planning lessons

and evaluating students. Also to give administrators a basis for supervising teachers and holding them accountable for their practices and results (Koch, 2009). As mentioned earlier, considering the South African situation, this type of curriculum has changed a number of times.

Curriculum 2005 (C2005) changed to Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) which was replaced by National Curriculum Statement (NCS) after observing that learners were under performing especially in Numeracy, Languages, Mathematics and Natural sciences (DoE, 2007). Recently, the more organised Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) has replaced the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). One of the core reasons for the introduction of CAPS is the need to equalise education opportunities after the unequal educational systems of the past apartheid regime (DoE, 2012). This system was developed in the interests of the minority sectors of the population and produced a class that will fit in the new education system. CAPS requires a paradigm shift where “the strategies involve requirements such as group guided reading, shared reading, phonics (including phonemic awareness) and paired / independent reading” (DoE, 2012 p.11). Learners are assessed through continuous assessment programmes involving baseline assessment in the first term and giving suggestions on informal assessment to give information on daily teaching and learning that will not be formally recorded (DoE, 2012 p.10).

McGinees (2004) and READ (2004) state that a balanced approach to reading does not require learners to complete a readiness programme. It involves different reading and teaching strategies. These strategies are combined in order to lead learners to a whole language experience. The language approach encourages reading and writing to be taught side by side. This approach to language teaching has been developed and researched over several decades. It is now universally accepted as a way to balance home and first additional language learning (DoE, 2008). It is balanced because it develops the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Learners in the classroom situation are unique individuals and so no single method will work equally well for all.

The CAPS document supports the use of a balanced reading approach in the foundation phase. Home language requirements for each term involve all the skills in the balanced language approach (2012, pp.53-85 and Pressley 2002). There are suggestions for both formal and informal assessment tasks. All the sub-headings in the balanced language approach are mentioned in the CAPS (2012). The Certificate in Primary English Language Teaching (CiPELT) recommends the use of several methodological approaches (CiPELT course handbook, pp.8-9). Teachers need to reflect on their teaching in order to develop knowledge and skills more effectively. CiPELT has a programme that takes into account research evidence of effective teaching. The teaching depends on teachers encouraging learning responsibility in the classroom.

The research that has been conducted proves that learners need to be directly involved in order to improve their reading skills. Researchers come up with similar results. Methodologies used by teachers must relate to the requirements of the curriculum for effective results.

2.5 Teaching learners how to read

2.5.1 Language acquisition

According to Yule (1999), there is a distinct difference between acquiring language and learning a language. Learning a language refers to “a conscious process of accumulating knowledge of the vocabulary and grammar of a language” (Yule, 1999 p. 191 and Paris et.al 2005). The activities that result in language learning involve activities which are associated with language teaching. Learners are exposed to their home language more than those whom a home language in question is their second language (Naidoo, et al., 2012).

On the other hand, acquiring a language means the gradual development of ability in a language by using it in communication situations in a natural form and situations (Yule, 1999), “a long period is spent in social association through activities planned” (Yule, 1999 p.191), in order for the second language learners to acquire the language. Therefore, first language is important in teaching and learning as language proficiency required for effective learning in the second language, is not conversational fluency or discrete language knowledge (Webb, 2004).

Learning and acquiring the language happens for home language as scholars have researched. Parents at home unconsciously teach children the language. When getting to the classroom situation the teacher consciously improves learners' abilities of a home language when grammatical rules are learned. When parents speak to their children tools including phonology, morphology or syntax are not formally taught. Children may be corrected as the conversation continues. As much as scholars differentiate between learning and acquiring a languages (home language versus first additional language), they do happen interchangeably.

Webb (2004, p.153) illustrated that:

Language proficiency required for effective learning is not conversational fluency or even discrete language knowledge, but is rather a competence necessary for learning purposes: *academic language proficiency*...Proficiency in a language means that an individual has the ability to perform or speak fluently because of the acquisition of the language. This type of language proficiency is characterized by knowledge of morphological and syntactic structures not usually found in everyday speech, low frequency words, vocabulary and technical terms. An ability to use a language for social interaction does not mean that the learner can use that language for academic purposes.

Yule (1999) argues that the use of different teaching strategies gives an opportunity for learners to have in-depth knowledge for the language in their future studies. Hence, learners in the first grade are still in the process of acquiring competencies in their HL. When their skills have been developed, learners can be able to process and develop cognitive skills. In the past there has been increasing calls for the expansion of high quality of pre-school opportunities in order to develop and maintain language from an early stage.

Learners in grade one are still in the process of acquiring competencies in their home language. When their skills have been developed, learners will be able to process and develop cognitive skills. In the past there has been increasing calls for the expansion of high quality of pre-school opportunities in order to develop and maintain language from an early stage.

2.5.2 Components of teaching reading

Before discussing the components of teaching reading it would be appropriate to define what reading means. Govender (2009, p.7) in his research defines it as the art of interpreting printed and written words. He further refers to it as...one of the most effective processes of conscious learning which influences the extent and accuracy of information as well as the attitude, morals and beliefs. He cites its importance for enjoyment, transforming the man's life as well as the society and that it is necessary for basic tool of education". Teller (2007), according to Govender, argues that "a child can know much about his own environment if exposed to reading books, newspapers and magazines". He further quotes Van Staden (2008) saying "reading is a constructive and interactive process involving interaction between the reader and the text".

Maphumulo (2010) argues that the important task of reading in the foundation phase is to help learners unlock the code of the written task. Learners are expected to focus on comprehension constructed for meaning of the text, specific ideas retrieved, interpreting and integrating information (Robb: 2002, pp. 28 - 32). According to Van Staden and Howie (2008, p.8), reading is defined as a constructive and interactive process where the reader acquires meaning through effective strategies.

The following are the five components of reading in the foundation phase according to the CAPS document (2012, p.14):

- * Phonemic awareness
- * Word recognition (sight words and phonics)
- * Comprehension
- * Vocabulary
- * Fluency

These components are very important and need to be practiced on a daily basis. Each component will be discussed and examples given.

2.5.2.1 Phonemic awareness

Early in grade one (CAPS, 2012, p.14) learners need to be able to recognize that speech consists of individual sounds which make up words to make sentences. Phonemes are

formed by the smallest parts in a spoken word, e. g the letter **-p-** in the word **'ipeni'**. Activities for the teaching of phonemic awareness include rhymes that are associated with a known object, how to clap for each syllable unit, putting sounds together, initial sounds of the word, replacing certain letters, putting sounds together to form a new word, saying the parts you hear in the word and deleting a certain letter of the word. The document suggests that about two sounds can be introduced each week so that by the end of first term at least eight sounds have been taught.

2.5.2.2 Word recognition

In the look and say words (sight words) learners need to recognize an individual word which can help them to read even unknown words. Teachers are encouraged to use high frequency words (words that appear frequently in the text). Frequency words are contained where words are spelt as they sound (which is usually the case in isiZulu). Maphumulo (2010, p.26) suggests that in grade one learner can be introduced to phonics. This will help in the word formation by learners of other known words with the same sounds or letter. The sounds and the names of letters are generally the same in isiZulu. It is, then easier to teach phonics and phonemic awareness, e. g **'-ph-'** in the word **'iphhepha'**. They can be encouraged to draw and paste pictures of their own. The word in question can be used by the teacher to make word charts which can be displayed on the walls in the classroom.

2.5.2.3 Comprehension

Learners are expected to have the ability to understand what the text is about. DoE (2012, p16) suggests making use of lower order and higher order questions for comprehension skills to be developed. The skills involve different kinds of opportunities such as literal comprehension (identify..., point out..., describe..., find...,state...), reorganization (compare..., list...,divide...,classify...,summarise...), inferential (suppose...,pretend...,could...,what consequences...), evaluation (Do you agree...,In your opinion..., Should...,Is it right that..., Would you have...) and appreciation (Do you know anyone like...,Why did you like/dislike...What did you think when...). Learners need to be taught to ask themselves the following questions: **Does it sound right? Does it make sense? Does it look right?** During Shared reading and Guided reading comprehension using these questions can help developed reasoning in learners.

Therefore, the teacher should keep a close check on learners' understanding and interpreting what has been read (Maphumulo, 2010; p 26; Pressley: 2002: Griffith and Rasinski: 2004). The activities planned by the teacher should lead to independent reading where learners choose books that interest them as they are at their level and ability of reading (Maphumulo, 2010).

The teacher needs to guide each learner's choice of books to read from the reading room/library/resource centre/reading corner. The reading corner is organized by the teacher in the classroom. It should have different interesting books that learners can choose from. Pop up books and self made books can also be hugely stimulating for the learner.

Govender (2009) suggests that classrooms should have reading corners where learners can be able to choose books without the interference of other books that may be above their level. The resource centre would disturb learners' choice as there are books for all levels and grades. If a learner chooses a difficult book, it discourages him / her from reading. Motivation to read results from being able to read with understanding (DoE, 2002).

2.5.2.4 Vocabulary

A wide range of words is needed for learners to understand and have increased knowledge. Such words are used for communication (Moore and Cunningham, 2003). Teachers must take it upon themselves that they prepare activities to increase learners' vocabulary. Some of the activities are listening to interesting text read to them (Reading aloud). Learners like to listen to stories read and told to them. As they listen to interesting stories they (learners) increase their vocabulary. Such increased vocabulary will help in understanding the context of the story. Maphumulo (2010, p.27) suggests that learners who come from homes where reading happened regularly will have an extensive vocabulary as compared to the learners who have an opportunity of listening to the story read at school only. It is the teachers' duty to explain the new words, demonstrate them, display them on the walls of the classroom and give them out to learners to take home to review as homework.

2.5.2.5 Fluency

DoE (2012, p.18: Fox: 2008 and Allington 2002) refers to fluency as the skill that involves accuracy in decoding, comprehending what you read, reading smoothly with appropriate phrasing and expression and being able to recognize and read words fast and effortlessly. In order to improve fluency in reading the document suggests activities that are meaningful using a balanced programme for literacy. Fluency is one of the indications that the reader understands what he/she reads. Activities involving reading should be frequently planned in order to improve the skill. Teachers should be encouraged to have many reading materials (including textbooks of other subjects) in the classroom, allow learners to re-read texts a few more times (using different reading strategies), have a specified time for reading daily and motivate them to read for their families at home. Books can be issued to learners on a weekly basis.

2.5.2.6 Teaching Competency

Hans and Ernst (1999, p.144) are of the opinion that entrance to school can be a transition marked by significant break between the new structured school environment and their previous experience with the family and community. This makes sense because at home there is no rigid timetable followed for learning (for those learners who are lucky to have parents / caregivers who help in reading and writing). The experience of learners is shaped by the educative family style. Children's literacy development is influenced by the role of the home in learning a language, especially home language. Blackledge (1999, p.192) and Han & Ernst (1999, p.153) in their research discovered that parents and teachers play an important role in assisting the children to overcome reading and spelling difficulties. But the truth of the matter is that children who do not have access to such help usually fend for themselves when they get to school. There are many children who grow up under the care of grandparents or non-family members according to the research by Henning (1998), who may have not received adequate schooling that would help them to be proficient enough with their children's school work. There are parents / caregivers who went through a different type of education. In the paradigm shift in the education systems from the old apartheid school system to the new CAPS, parents fail to follow the changes and help their children at home as expected.

In some situations it is not surprising to find a foundation phase teacher unable to demonstrate sound knowledge of various strategies to help learners with in the classroom. At present many battle with the new curriculum implementation. The Department of Education has not been able to train all the teachers, giving them time to master the skills themselves. The above is the researcher's observation from the schools that have been visited during teaching practice of student teachers. Unfortunately, ill prepared teachers may be a barrier to learning to read as expected?

The need for teachers to have a sound knowledge of subject content, strategies and resources to conduct the job better and in an effective way is highlighted by the South African Department of Education (2000, p.13). The teacher as the mediator should do so in a manner that is conducive to learners. Most researchers reveal the fact that teachers, especially in the foundation phase, are unqualified or under qualified to teach. The foundation of education of learners is in the hands of poorly educated teachers who will be implicated in affecting the curriculum negatively.

The one week CAPS training of educators seemed to fulfil National Department's obligation to South African obligation to prepare foundation phase teachers. When teachers were interviewed, their responses proved that they found that after the training they received, they could not implement the strategies in the classrooms. As there was not enough time they could not ask for clarity on different aspects of the implementation of strategies recommended by the curriculum document.

2.5.3 Support for teachers

Teachers need to be supported in teaching reading. The influential role players include parents at home, the principal and School Management Team (SMT). Maphumulo, p.24, Allington (2009) and DoE (2002) emphasize the importance of teacher – parent interaction in order to boost learners' reading acquisition. The SMT includes the Head of Department (HOD) for each phase. The subject advisers from the Department and District officials need to play a crucial role (Teacher's Handbook: p 5 4). The environment of the home and the school should promote reading. Parents and the community should value reading and books (Topping 1987 & Maphumulo: p. 24). Learners must be encouraged to practice reading even during their spare time. Special attention should be given to the choice of books that are at their level.

According to my knowledge as a researcher, teachers are expected to give books to learners to read at home as part of their homework. The following day the teacher is expected to assess if books that were given to learners were read. Simply activities that suit the story and learners should be arranged. Examples of activities include re-telling the story read, presenting a short summary of the story, drawing characters, dramatizing the story or writing sentences using the vocabulary from the story.

2.6 Resources for reading

Resources such as readers, audio-visual aids, well - equipped libraries, electricity and furniture are essential for effective lessons in the classroom, home and surrounding environment. In most schools and homes in the townships such resources are not available. In order for lessons to be successful in the classroom, learners need to have been exposed to such resources. There are schools that have the resources but teachers experience difficulties – distribution of resources are inadequate - not enough for all learners), arrive late in some schools or are of inferior quality (not what the teachers would like to have (Hart & Zinn, 2007). The result is learners fall behind the reading programme. Reading material and human resources (family and friends at home) not accessible hinder the learners' progress in learning the language. As the CAPS document policy has been introduced there had been many challenges. Strategies that were introduced seem not to be applicable in some instances.

There were many books that were delivered during the third term to the schools. In some cases resources are not enough for all learners or worse still, resources are not available as was a case in Limpopo about textbooks distribution where learners' books arrived very late. The result is learners fall behind the reading programme. The unavailability of reading materials and human resources (family and friends at home) for learners, hinder the learners' progress in learning the language (Naidoo et. al., 2012). Department officials informed teachers that they have to make time in order to cover work that should have been done during the first semester (Masondo, 2012). I do not think what has been suggested will work as teachers have to work faster trying to cover the programme, not taking into consideration whether learners understood the work or not.

Lack of resource, including libraries in the townships, are the result of former historical inequalities of the past. The townships that have libraries are few and not fully equipped. For example, KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), the province with the largest number of schools (6129), 20 per cent of these schools had no library at all (Hart & Zinn, 2007). Teachers with limited resources find it difficult to work in the classroom. When teachers request for resources such as magazines or newspapers to be brought to school from home for lessons, the teacher is usually faced with a dilemma of having learners not bringing anything because they is nothing at home (Naidoo, Dorasamy & Reddy, 2012). In the classrooms where there are materials available, proper selection of reading material for learners is not proper. Most parents and care – givers to isiZulu speakers in the township are not in a position to reinforce reading to their children. The reality of the matter is that these parents work long hours in towns, do not have the skills or knowledge to help their children, come home tired and have other responsibilities to attend to. The perception is that it is the teacher’s job to help with reading and not the parent.

2.7 Theoretical framework

This section discusses theories that support and inform this study. There are two main theories which underpin this study. The Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget’s description of how children’s thinking develops; and the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky’s description of how children’s development is influenced by their interaction in the immediate social environment.

According to Piaget in Joubert et.al (2008), there are four stages of cognitive development but the one that is relevant to primary learners, 2 to 7 years of age, is the preoperational stage. This is the stage where children demonstrate mental representations and begin to think logically (Cook, 2005). Piaget claims that at this stage there is an explosive increase in children’s vocabulary and grammar and language development is based on children’s mental representational ability.

Piaget believes that when children explore their environment, they form and reform ideas in their minds. This means that as learners read books and other materials, they acquire more vocabulary as new words and concepts are formed. Besides the acquisition of more vocabulary, they also learn how to use and pronounce the words.

In other words, the view of Piaget on reading is said to be pscho – linguistic because he believes that decoding and mastering of words (vocabulary) plays an important role for the reader to understand the text. This supports the idea that reading is a process that moves from parts to the whole (Jordaan & Jordaan, 2000). Hence, the coining of different reading stages that teachers need to take into consideration when teaching. These stages include emergent reader, early reader, developing reader, early fluent reader and the independent reader (DoE, 2012 pp. 20 - 23).

The Piaget theory is relevant to this study since it deals with the issue of reading readiness and with those primary aged children who are not succeeding in formal reading instruction (Freeman & Wolfgang, 2010). Also, Piaget's ideas regarding representational thinking can help the researcher to explain the data from this study.

The second theory is by Lev Vygotsky called social construction. Vygotsky in Joubert et.al (2008) argue that children absorb the culture of the society around them. He argues that human beings, as social animals, grow up together watching and listening, trying things out in speech and action, looking for the effects on others and so learning from each other (Cook, 2005). Vygotsky further posits that much of the learning occurs from age four onwards and takes place between children in a group. The view of Vygotsky is that there are things that a child can achieve unaided and those that a child can achieve with a little help from their friends and this he explains as the Zone of Proximal Development.

This theory is relevant to this study since it can assist the researcher to explain some of the aspects and steps of reading. The benefits and disadvantages of individual reading, paired reading and group reading as suggested in the literature review.

These two theories can assist the teacher to be able to look ahead on behalf of the pupil for a long term aim because the learner cannot see more than the immediate task. As mediator, the teacher has to realize that the role is less to act as a model for the pupils, and far more as a manager who directs their small-group learning and whole-class discussion in such a way that they are ready and are increased far above the usual chance level (DoE, 2012).

2.8 Conclusion

In this chapter the status of isiZulu as a home language and its acquisition have been discussed. The new curriculum (CAPS, 2012) recommends resources and components that need to be adhered to when teaching a home language. There are stages that teachers must be aware of in the development of a young reader. There are also strategies to be implemented by educators in order to help learners develop reading skills.

In the foundation phase learners need to be proficient in their Home Language. The ability to read in their home language contributes in boosting their self-esteem as they would have gained a gateway to proper communication skills. These skills will lay the foundation for all the other subjects that will be introduced to them.

The Department of Education, teachers, parents and the community have to work together in order to yield the best results in the development of individuals who will contribute to the success of the communities in which learners live. Teachers play the significant and leading role in skills acquisition by learners. The next chapter (chapter 3) will look at the methodology and the research design for the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Presented in this chapter is a detailed description of the research design and methodology as selected for data collection of the study. The beginning of the chapter focuses on the scope of the study. The terms qualitative method, interpretive paradigm and research design are discussed. The second step includes the presentation of data collection. Interviews and observations designed as instrument for the study are discussed as the third step. Teachers' profiles as participants or respondents of the study are developed as the next step. The final step is the examination of the ethical consideration which governs the qualitative research methodology. The whole chapter focuses on procedures followed to answer the second critical question which is, "How do grade one teachers teaching isiZulu reading implement the strategies recommended by the CAPS document. Interviews and observation will attempt to answer the question.

3.2 Scope of the study

The research explores reading strategies used by grade one isiZulu teachers teaching grade one. The school chosen is in the Pinetown District. Three teachers were selected to be interviewed and observed as they teach in the classroom. Two teachers chose shared reading as the strategies to be observed by the researcher while the third one chose phonemic awareness and vocabulary. The two reading components chosen by the latter teacher are recommended in the CAPS document (2012, p.12) for foundation phase. The three lessons provided the researcher with the opportunity to conduct observations after the interviews as elaborated by Nieuwenhuis (2007, p.51). The first two teachers are experienced and have been teaching for more than twenty years. The big books used for teaching were from the school. As explained in chapter two, a big book is a story book used by the teacher and learners during the lesson. It is large with big bold print (approximately an A 4 size paper is used to make it). Taking part as the lesson progresses makes reading fun, especially for the learners involved (Teacher's Handbook, 2008, p. 21). The other teacher first taught grade R for two years. She has been teaching grade one learners for three years which qualifies her as a novice teacher. The material used in class had been made by her, specifically for the observation lesson.

The objective of collecting data for research is to motivate teachers to understand and use the reading strategies recommended in the CAPS document. The use of different strategies involving the five components (phonemic awareness, word recognition (sight word and phonics), vocabulary and fluency) should yield the success for reading to learners from their early age. The data collected by the researcher will be 'rich' and 'thick' according to Govender (2009, p.18).

Questions for interviews were given to the teachers prior to the actual discussion. Each teacher was given time to read the questions and collect her thoughts for responses. Teachers were interviewed individually. The observation schedule had specific criteria that were explained. The criteria were listening and speaking, reading and phonics, handwriting, demonstration, use of teaching aids, classroom management, paired and group class work for assessment as well as independent and individual involvement of learners. Teachers were not to cover all aspects in one lesson for observation.

The principal of the school accepted the study with open arms. Teachers were eager to take part in the study. Making arrangements with teachers for interviews and observations happened with minor hitches. Arrangements for observation of lessons was done during the first week of the last quarter of the year. Initially class visits had been planned for the last week of the second semester. The principal requested that dates be re-arranged to this time because the Department of Education had urgently planned for the Annual National Assessment (ANA) to be conducted during those last two weeks. The researcher did not have a problem. The agreement between the school and teachers was that the running of the school and other programmes should not be disturbed. The stipulated time for data collection had been stipulated for July and September. The researcher managed to abide by the conditions in order to complete data collection.

3.3 The qualitative method

Govender (2009, p.18) and Maphumulo (2010, p.36) define qualitative approach as a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. The approach consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that involve turning the world into a series of representations including field notes, interviews and recordings. Things are studied in their naturalistic settings. According to Denzin and Lincoln in Govender (2009, p.19)

the qualitative approach involves an interpretation of things in their natural settings. It is used to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomena. There is a socially - constructed nature of reality which secures an intimate relationship between a researcher and what is studied.

In qualitative research a number of research instruments are used in order to add rigor, breath, complexity, richness to any inquiry (Flick, 2002 and Betram, 2003). Most researchers (Henning, Terre Blanche, McNiell and Chapman (2005), Gravett and Van Rensburg (2005) are of the opinion that the use of the qualitative approach helps to make sense of feelings, experiences and social situations. The study takes the form of words rather than numbers. Maphumulo (2010, p.36) realizes that qualitative research concentrates on presenting the quality of how the way of life is described rather than presented in statistics.

Maphumulo (2009, p.37) argues that qualitative researchers look at human events in a holistic way. They tend to attempt to locate individual actions in context. Meaning plays an important part in investigating human activities. Researchers want to find out why people act or do things in certain ways. It is easier to understand when human events are linked and interpreted. The participants and researchers form a relationship through experiences and construct reality based on what they have experienced in the qualitative research. The results from the experiences give a detailed account of actions. The researcher gain better understanding of the world and makes use of the findings to bring about social change. There should be better understanding of the classroom situation to allow space for recommendations.

A qualitative approach studies people, observes participants in their natural environment, focuses on meaning and interpretation according to Niewenhuis (2007, p.51). He further stresses the importance of quality and depth rather than the breath of information provided. The paradigm of this dissertation falls within qualitative as an attempt has been made to collect rich descriptive data. Niewenhuis (2007, p.50 and Henning: (2005, p.3) are of the opinion that data collection processes should be understood in respect of a particular phenomenon.

Participants were observed by the researcher, with the objective of working out or understanding their intention. Firstly, the researcher wanted to find out if they understood how they had responded during the interviews. Secondly, were the responses a true reflection of how they conduct reading or was it a specially designed lesson for observation. The third crucial reason for observation was to find out if the participants understand the requirements for reading as recommended in the CAPS policy document (2012, p.8–16). Conducting a research using a qualitative approach provided the researcher with detailed and clear findings leading to recommendations as a means of helping the participants. The next section of the chapter describes the paradigm in which the study is situated.

3.4 Interpretive paradigm

This research study is situated in the interpretive paradigm. It is a communal process which is informed by participants in the study. Henning, Gravett and Van Rensburg (2005, p.12) state that the researcher needs to look at a different aspect and place in order to understand a phenomenon when working with the interpretive paradigm. It should be clarified that the researcher is a tutor for isiZulu and a supervisor for different phases. Schools have been visited in the district to assess strategies used by teachers. The inquiry is framed by this body of knowledge.

There are three categories suggested by Henning (2004) based on the underlying epistemology. They are positivist, critical and interpretive frameworks. The epistemology for this research is an interpretive framework. Generally the attempt is to understand phenomenon through meanings that people assign to themselves. There should be an insight provided for the situation encountered for clear understanding of the phenomena. Maree (2007) states that people's subjective experiences focus on interpretation and how the social world is constructed through sharing meaning. Maree (2007) stresses the importance of the human mind as the purposive source of origin of meaning. In order to relate the study to the paradigm, the researcher examined different aspects in the classroom during observation (how the teacher used the resources, participation of learners and effective implementation of strategies).

3.5 The research design

According to Niewenhuis (2007, p.70), research design is a plan which moves from the underlying philosophical assumption to specifying the selection of respondent or participants. It also involves data gathering techniques to be used as well as data analysis to be done.

3.5.1 Sampling

Sampling refers to the process used to select a portion of the population for study according to Govender (2009). The researcher selects participants purposely because of some defining characteristics that make them relevant for the data needed for the study. Sampling decision involves in the explicit purpose of obtaining the richest possible source of information in order to answer the research questions formulated (Maree, 2007). Involved in the sampling decisions are the settings, incidents, events and activities that need to be collected for data (Maphumulo, 2010).

Creswell (2008) stipulates that purposeful sampling involves the researcher intentionally selecting individuals to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgment. Researchers Cohen, Marion and Morrison (2007, p.103) are of the opinion that the purpose of the sampling choice is to learn from and collect data for the central phenomenon. The central phenomenon in this case is “the exploration of reading strategies used by teachers in teaching isiZulu in Grade one’.

Three teachers were selected as participants for the study. The researcher chose these teachers because they are teaching Grade one learner who do not have a problem expressing themselves in isiZulu. Both the teachers and learners are mother tongue speakers of isiZulu. Learners are attending at a township school where the teachers have been teaching for some time. The teachers have attended workshops organized by the Department of Education on how to use reading strategies recommended by DOE (2012).

3.5.2 Profile of the research site

The main objective is to explore reading strategies by teachers applicable to grade one learner for home language. The site selected is a public primary school at KwaMashu in the Pinetown district. The school has about forty five learners in each grade one class.

The whole school has two grade R classes, three grade ones, two grade twos, one grade three and three grade four teachers. In a grade three class there is three times the number of learners expected. It is problematic to teach under such a situation. The principal is planning to build more classrooms with the help of the sponsors to eradicate the problem of overcrowding in the classrooms, especially for grade three learners. The school is supposed to have three teachers per grade.

The school does not have enough resources. The principal of the school is under pressure to make sure that besides the infrastructure, there are many issues that need his attention. The school is disadvantaged. Most parents are illiterate. The School Governing Body (SGB) is dependent on the principal for effective participation of learners and teachers. The section of the township where the school is has parents who belong to a lower income group. The principal has been in the school for about three years. He is working hard to make sure the school is a fully fledged primary school, with most essential resources as the number of learners are increasing. He is positive that in three to four years most difficulties will be eradicated and the school functioning properly. The community is relying on him (principal) to make sure their children learn and succeed in life. The proper running of the school will result in better results for learners in the classroom.

An interesting fact emerged is that the school is comprised of teachers who have been working in the school for many years. Apparently there is some misunderstanding on how the institution (school) should be run. The community believes that the principal will bring change essential for their children. The majority of teachers are of the idea that the school does not need any change.

3.5.3 Profile of the teachers

It is imperative to present a profile of the grade one teachers who are taking part in the study. The researcher has purposefully chosen these teachers because the CAPS document has been introduced. Grade one is where learners are expected to seriously start reading in preparation for the upper grades to follow.

The table below indicates teachers' qualifications, experience teaching grade one and age. Pseudonym names have been used for participants (teachers).

Table 3.1: Participants' age, qualifications and teaching experience

Participants	Age in years	Qualifications	Experience
Bongiwe	57	Matric + PTC	30 years
Zizile	50	Matric + Diploma	27 years
Londiwe	35	Matric + B Ed	03 years

The selection of teachers was not incidental. It was a purposeful deliberate choice of participants representing teacher population of the site. The selection was easy as they were the only teachers teaching grade one in the school. They could best provide data to answer the two first critical questions: What and how they use reading strategies when teaching isiZulu. The three teachers were eager to answer all the questions. The impression that the researcher gained during the interview was that the teachers (all three of them) knew what they were talking about. As the interview progressed it was obvious that they did not know much about the steps to follow when implementing the strategies. They were the best informers of date. The researcher's choice or selection was based on the criteria of choosing best informers with 'rich' described data as stated by Denzin and Lincoln: 16. Geertz described data as 'thick' as he cited it Henning (2005, p.6). If data is described as 'rich' and 'thick' it becomes authentic in the eyes of the researcher.

3.6 Data collection plan

The plan involves defining the parameters for each question. It is imperative to list the method chosen. The main sources are interviews and observation. The data collection strategy used is from Vithal and Jansen (1997, pp.22-23). The plan with the rationale for the choices made follows in the table below.

Critical research questions:

1. What reading strategies do grade one teachers use when teaching isiZulu?
2. How do teachers implement these reading strategies?
3. What are the outcomes of the reading strategies implemented by teachers when teaching in isiZulu to grade one learners?

Table 3.2: Data collection plan

Questions	Research question 1	Research question 2
1. What information do I want?	The information wanted is in connection with the reading strategies that are used by grade one teachers teaching isiZulu.	To find out how grade one teachers use the strategies to teach isiZulu reading.
2. Why is this information needed?	The information is needed in order to find out if teachers know about different strategies that can be used to improve learners' reading skills.	<p>The main objectives to encourage teachers to introduce the strategies that have been used to teach reading in other previously official languages (English and Afrikaans). This will help teachers conform to the new Curriculum and Policy Statement (CAPS) introduced by the Department of Education in 2012 for foundation phase and grade ten.</p> <p>Teachers will be able to compare the strategies they have been using to the new recommended ones. They (strategies) will lead to improvement of learners' language literacy.</p> <p>A recommendation will be made that teachers be properly trained on how to use the reading strategies they may have not known about.</p>

3. Who is the source of information?	The source of information will be the grade one teachers teaching isiZulu to learners.	The teachers will play a crucial role. They will explain and demonstrate how they teach reading. Grade one learners will be involved as each lesson progressed.
4. How often will this information be collected from the source?	<p>Teachers will be involved in all the stages of the research where they will :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explain how they have been teaching reading to learners • be observed how they use the strategies • be encouraged to use other strategies recommended by CAPS document 	<p>The information will be collected twice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • first, observing reading strategies teachers use when teaching • secondly, discussing how other strategies may be implemented • Thirdly, the challenges and solutions teachers may encounter will be discussed.
5. How will the information be collected?	<p>Interviews will be conducted from three teachers for data collection. Discussion will form part of data collection in order to find out how much teachers understand.</p>	<p>Lessons will be observed in the classroom (empirical criterion). After the lessons there will be discussion and motivation to teachers (hypothetical results of using other strategies).</p>
6. Why is the instrument chosen the most suitable?	The instrument mentioned (interviews) will help the researcher collect authentic information from teachers.	Observation and discussion is vital for collecting first hand information. The result will work on the researcher's assumptions.

3.7 The research instruments

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p.411) believe that interviews enable participants to discuss and interpret the world in which they live. Interviews also help in the expression of feelings about how situations are regarded from a certain point of view. The researchers mentioned argue that an interview is a flexible tool for data collection, enabling a number of sensory channels to be used. The channels are verbal, non-verbal, heard and spoken. It (interview) serves as powerful tool for the researcher to implement. It is different from an everyday conversation. It is used for a specific purpose and is usually question-based. Henning (2004) further states that a planned interview is not free, naturally-occurring conversation between partners, but a social interaction. Maphumulo (2010, p.40) argues that in the classroom situation teachers use different strategies to help learners achieve their goals.

Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006) are of the opinion that interviews form part of skilled performance. Maphumulo (2010, 40 - 41) points out that conducting an interview is a more natural form of interacting with people rather than filling questionnaires, doing tests and or performing experimental approaches to research. According to Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006) the researcher gets an opportunity to know participants intimately in order to understand how they think and feel. There is an openness and trust brought about by the interpretive approach as a result of the interview.

Maree (2007) defines the interview as a two-way conversation. This happens when the researcher asks questions and the participant responds. There may be cases where there are follow up questions for clarity when collecting data. Maphumulo (2010, 41) is of the view that qualitative interview seeks to collect data from respondents in order to learn about ideas, beliefs views, opinions and behaviours that may occur in the process. The aim is to see the world through the eyes of the participants by asking questions to obtain rich data. Trust was gained during the interview process between the researcher and the participants (teachers for this study). The interaction helped to enable the researcher to find out how teachers felt, what they disliked and what their beliefs/ attitudes were.

Maree (2007) discusses three types of interviews:

- structured interviews
- unstructured or open – ended interviews
- semi - structured interviews

3.7.1 The semi – structured interview

The first two interviews (structured and unstructured or open – ended interviews) are not going to be discussed in this study. The researcher decided to use the third interview (semi –structured). The advantage of the chosen tool stems from the fact that the researcher can:

- be present with the participants so she can clarify questions
- ask other questions to find more information if the participants do not give sufficient details
- make it easier for the participant to talk to the interviewer rather than to write down the responses
- gain in – depth data from the participants
- give individual attention (taking into consideration gestures and body language)

The semi – structured interview (Maree (2007) requires participants to respond to a set of predetermined questions. Participants were to be probed and asked for clarification. ‘Probing enables the interviewer to ask respondents to extend, elaborate, add on and provide detail for clarity or qualify responses’ Maphumulo (2010). This type of interview addresses richness, depth of responses, honesty and comprehensiveness for successful interviewing. Foundation Phase teachers need to be relaxed and ask the researcher for clarity if they do not understand the question. According to Maree (2007) the researcher needs to be attentive when participants respond in order to identify new emerging lines of inquiry. The semi – structured interview was relevant to help guide participants back to the focus of the interview.

Govender (2009, 34) argues that research study involves knowledge production and has the research design that requires personal interaction between people of mutual interest.

When collecting data the researcher requires a tool that is suited for the interaction for personal views. The semi – structured interview has been selected for this study as the primary source of data collection. Grade one teachers respond more freely to semi – structured or conversational situations. The interview guide approach combined with informal conversational interview provides data that is rich and in –depth.

Creswell (2008) suggests the use of one – one interviews for qualitative research. Interviews are popular with most researchers, as he /she works with one participant at a time. Open – ended questions are asked to enable the participants to voice their own opinions without the fear of other members involved in the study.

Participants were assured in one – one interview (Creswell, 2008) and the interviews took place at the time convenient to them. Each teacher was given a few minutes constructively think of the responses to the questions planned. The questions were written on the transparency so that the teacher may start answering them in any order. The casual relaxed manner of approach enabled teachers to be totally comfortable as the interview progressed. The disadvantage is that the participants had read around the topic before coming to the interview. The responses they gave were those that they thought were appropriate and correct for the interviewer.

3.7.2 The interview schedule

I had to design a protocol to be followed during the interview. Participants understood that time will be allocated to each respondent. This was to encourage them to be precise when answering each question. Creswell (2007) suggests that there must be a checklist presented to consider before, during and after the interview. The researcher approached the interviews for all three teachers in the same manner. “The direct verbal interaction between the interviewee and the interviewer to gather research relevant data,” was conducted to answer the critical questions (Cohen, et al. 2007, 269).

The whole interview was oral as it did not involve questionnaires. The questions were to ascertain if participants knew what reading is, the importance of reading, reading strategies recommended by CAPS and how to deal with reading challenges encountered in class.

Govender (2009, 38) suggests the use of an interview schedule. It creates an order by which the process unfolds to avoid unnecessary repetition and time – consuming readjustments of the questions. The other advantage he cites is that it presents conditions to be followed and understanding of all ethical issues associated with the process of interviews.

3.7.3 Observations

The other method used in the study was observation. Participants were observed as they interacted with learners in class during the reading lessons. The researcher's main objective was to compare the way questions were answered during the interview to practical application of the strategies. Each participant was observed and an observation schedule filled in. Observation schedules with the second critical question: (How do grade one teachers teach isiZulu reading in the classrooms?) were used.

Maree (2007) refers to observation as an everyday activity where the researcher uses the five senses, namely tasting, touching, seeing, hearing and smelling) to put together data. Observation enables the researcher to gain an in –depth understanding and insight of the phenomenon observed. It is a systematic process where behavioural patterns of participants are recoded (Cohen, et al., 2007). As the researcher observes he/she gathers data from a naturally – occurring social situation. The information that might not have been talked about in the interview can be easily gathered.

Observation can be divided into two types (Cohen, et al, 2007). One is participatory observation and the other is non – participatory observation. In the participant observation the researcher / observer is engaged in the activities, whereas the researcher stands aloof from the group activities in the non – participant observation. The observer in this study used the participant structured observation. The researcher had a clear idea of what information to gather in the classroom. In the opposite observation (unstructured) the observer records what is happening in the classroom (Betrum, 2003). Grade one teachers were observed teaching isiZulu to learners. How learners responded to instructions and questions was recorded first hand. Creswell (2008, pp.221-222) stresses the importance of careful attention to visual detail as the lessons progress. This tool helped the observer to gather information which answers the second critical question. "How do grade one teachers implement reading strategies in teaching isiZulu?

3.8 Ethical considerations

The researcher applied for permission from the Department of Education to conduct research at the school prior the visit. Permission was also granted by the District Manager (DM). The Circuit Manager (CM) was informed at the Circuit Office. When the researcher visited the school, she produced the official letters signed by DM and CM as proof of permission granted. The principal and participants were visited to make arrangements for the days and times that would be suitable, so that the smooth running of the school could not be disturbed. It was also emphasized to respondents that participation to the study was voluntary. They (participants) were told that confidentiality and privacy would be maintained at all times

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter discusses the methodology selected by the researcher. There are definitions for the qualitative method and interpretive paradigm. There is a discussion of research design which includes sampling of data, profile of the research site and the profile of participant. The next part of the chapter discusses and plans a data collection plan with three critical questions. The research instruments and schedules were devised including interviews and observations. Finally, the ethical clearance and consideration was detailed. In the next chapter data collection will be presented and analyzed.

CHAPTER FOUR PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1. Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the research design and methodology employed in this study. In this chapter, the findings are presented and discussed. Data was gathered through two data production instruments namely interviews of three participants and observations of lessons. This chapter begins with discussion of profiles for participants as well as those of the schools, from there I moved on to present interviews in the form of themes that were identified during the data analysis process. The questions asked as the interview progressed had been linked to themes. The data will be analyzed into these identified themes. This is followed by the analysis of data generated from observations of lessons conducted by participants. Data information is also categorised according to the themes for clarity. The chapter concludes by presenting recommendations on the teaching of isiZulu to grade one learners.

4.2. School and participants' profiles

Table 4.1 Number of teachers and learners in the school

Designation	No of people
Principal	1
HOD	1
Teachers	7
Learners	441

The information on the number of teachers, their qualifications and learners for each grade in the school is displayed on the wall of the principal. During the interview and observation sessions one of the teachers had the figures in her file that are displayed in the office. She keeps the important school information as she is the Head of Department (HOD) in the Foundation Phase (FP).

Table 4.1 presents the population of the participating school and table 4.2 below shows the workload of teachers in this school.

4.2 Number of teachers per grade in the school

Grade	Number of teachers	Number of learners
R	2	116
1	3	146
2	2	112
3	1	67
Total	8	441

The school does not have enough resources. The principal of the school is under pressure to make sure that besides the infrastructure, there are many issues that need his attention. The school is disadvantaged. Most parents and some of the School Governing Body (SGB) members are illiterate. The section of the township where the school is has parents who belong to a lower income group. The principal has been in the school for about three years. He is working hard to make sure the school is a fully fledged primary school, with most essential resources as the number of learners are increasing. He is positive that in three to four years most difficulties will be eradicated and the school functioning properly. The community is relying on him (principal) to make sure their children learn and succeed in life.

The selection of participants was not incidental. It was a purposeful deliberate choice of participants representing teacher population of the site. The selection was easy as they were the only teachers teaching grade one in the school. They could best provide data to answer the two first critical questions: What and how they use reading strategies when teaching isiZulu. All the selected teachers participated in the study, no one declined. Table 4.2 below illustrates the participants' profiles.

Table 4.3: Participants' profile

Participants	Age in years	Qualifications	Experience
Bongiwe	57	Matric + PTC	30 years
Zizile	50	Matric + Diploma	27 years
Londiwe	35	Matric + B Ed	03 years

Table 4.2 indicates participants who are all female teachers who are a mixture of old and young. Their ages range between thirty and fifty. Two of them have been teaching for more than twenty years.. In terms of qualifications, Zinhle (pseudonym) has a three year diploma she obtained after passing matric. The oldest teacher has the least qualification referred as Primary Teachers' Certificate (PTC). This qualification was discontinued in 1981 by the Department of Education. It was a two year course for those who wanted to qualify as primary teachers after passing Standard eight. The eldest teacher is the most experienced of them all but the least qualified. On the other hand, the youngest teacher is the most qualified but the least experienced of all the participants. She holds the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) qualification from one of the Universities in South Africa.

4.3. Data presentation

I, the researcher, decided to start with the participants' profile before presenting data. This will clarify why and how participants responded taking into account their qualifications, experience and age,

In this section I will focus on the analysis of data on how participants conduct their lessons. I personally conducted interviews and observed the teachers teaching in their classrooms.. All the questions asked were semi – structured. Teachers had to respond to the questions under a relaxed atmosphere. I had to probe for clarity. I will present data collected by face to face interviews with teachers of grade one and this will be followed by the presentation of data collected using observations of participants when conducting their lessons. Data were organised using themes that emerged from data analysis. The themes that emerged from data analysis are as follows.

The generated themes were:

- what reading means to teachers
- the importance of reading to grade one learners
- what the CAPS document recommends
- how teachers taught reading before the introduction of the new policy
- new strategies that teachers have introduced in their teaching

- problems or challenges encountered
- how to improve learners' reading skills
- choosing reading books in the Foundation Phase

4.3.1. Interviews

Ethical considerations governing interviews with teachers had been completed and met. Participants had signed the consent forms. The principal of the school and School Governing Body (SGB) chairperson signed and stamped them. The researcher collected and submitted the forms to the research office. There were conditions set by the principal and participants that the researcher had to keep in mind.

All the questions asked to each interviewer were semi – structured to collect data from the three teachers chosen. The names used for participants are pseudonyms. Below are responses given by teachers to each of the questions asked. The responses were written down by the researcher and read back to the respondents. This was to confirm if the researcher captured the responses correctly. The tape recorder that had been planned was not used because teachers said that they would not like to listen to their voices. They wanted their answers to questions be written and given to them to check if it is what they had said.

A piloting exercise was conducted with two teachers in one of the schools in the neighbourhood. The main objective of the pilot exercise was to assess and adjust some aspects of the study. Included in the assessment is the length of time an interview should take, phrasing of questions and appropriateness of the study in relation to contemporary events.

Participants responded to questions asked in different ways. Their responses will be grouped together for each theme. The understanding of different aspects of research questions was varied. Each question is followed by responses from participants and then the meaning from data is made.

Question 1: As a grade one teacher what does reading mean to you?

Bongiwe: *To increase knowledge, to identify different sounds, to acquire some rhyming words in the stories, songs and rhymes. Develop emergent literacy, talk about pictures and reading for enjoyment.*

Zizile: *It means empowering learners with the skills that enable them to continue learning after they have left the formal education behind. Reading carries out cultural ritual which is passed on through generations of families.*

Londiwe: *Reading is to empower and encourage learners with their mother tongue.*

The above responses are for the first question that sought to find out what reading meant to participants. Tella (2007) refers to reading as the art of interpreting printed and written words. Morals, beliefs, attitudes and action information are derived from effective conscious learning influences. He further argues that enjoyment, exposure to the environment and love for reading are a necessity for basic education. Magazines, newspapers and books play a crucial role when children are exposed to them at an early stage. Reading is a multi-faceted process involving word recognition, comprehension, fluency and motivation (Leipzig, 2001). Participants' responses each lacked understanding of what reading means. They tended to choose some aspects of reading and left crucial aspects out.

Question 2: Is isiZulu reading important to a learner in grade one? Why?

Bongiwe: *It is the mother tongue. The grade one learner will be familiar with and enjoy being taught in isiZulu. This will arouse their interest for being at school?*

Zizile: *Yes, because being able to read competently early in the home language makes it easier for the learner to master other languages such as First Additional Language (FAL) and Second Additional Language (SAL).*

Londiwe: *Yes, because it promotes confidence, increases vocabulary and builds the nation.*

The second question was related to the importance of isiZulu reading to grade one learners. Mbatha (2010, p. 2) reported that in South Africa there is a ‘crisis’ due to poor literacy skills, especially in the isiZulu language. The three participants in this study agree that reading is important to a grade one learner. In their responses they mentioned competency, interest and confidence in the home language. The researcher is of the opinion that the language level of the reading material should be accessible, allowing learners to master content and skills.

Question 3: What does the Curriculum and Assessment Policy document say about the teaching of reading (Home Language) in the Foundation Phase?

Bongiwe: *Reading should be done to follow independent or individual reading, whole class shared reading and group reading.*

Zizile: *We must give more time to Home Language (HL). Do shared reading, group reading, paired reading and individual reading. Learners must read sounds. Reading should be done every day.*

Londiwe: *The curriculum says reading must be done in shared reading, group reading, and class reading, individual and paired reading.*

The third question was to find out if participants knew what reading strategies are recommended by the CAPS document. Among the main strategies mentioned in the CAPS document are Reading aloud, Shared reading, Group and guided reading (DOE, 2012, pp. 9 -23). These strategies lead to independent reading for learners. There are other skills that are developed with the implementation of a balanced language programme. The introduction of this policy was to improve the reading, writing and numeracy abilities for all South African children. It was to further provide teachers and schools with clear directives on the Department of Education’s expectations of schools and teachers to achieve the expected levels of performance.

The researcher was not convinced from the responses that the three participants understood the strategies recommended by the CAPS document. The answers lacked in-depth understanding of the policy document. A lot of information was left out when

responding to the question. The pedagogic knowledge and understanding that informs their teaching is lacking.

Question 4: Previously (when you started teaching in 2011), how did you teach reading to your learners?

Bongiwe: *I read and learners joined in a chorus, repeating after me. The class was not divided into groups. There was no thorough supervision during the reading lesson.*

Zizile: *I used to give learners books to read at home. In class I usually read to them first, then read with them. After that I would let them read as a class or group. Before reading I would first pick words from the book, write them on the board and then read the words with learners before reading the story.*

Londiwe: *I would read first, and then learners read after me. The class was taught as a whole.*

The question that followed was related to how they have been teaching reading prior to the introduction of CAPS. Data shows that teachers did not involve different reading and teaching strategies. The old method of teaching reading involved teacher reading first, then learners repeat what the teacher had read several times. Reading and writing were taught side by side. A balanced approach promotes reading methods such as the phonic, language experience method and language.

Question 5: CAPS was introduced at the beginning of this year (2012).How have you changed in the implementation of reading strategies for your learners? Are there any new reading strategies that you have implemented? Explain.

Bongiwe: *I encourage learners to read independently (inside and outside the classroom). I create my own reading material, encourage learners to visit the library in order to access other books and have a reading corner for learners in the classroom.*

Zizile: *I have changed by giving reading more time than I have done before.*

Londiwe: *I have my own library in the classroom so that learners can read a variety of books. I improvise by making my own books using magazines and newspapers.*

The question that followed was to find out if they have changed from the old strategies that they had been implementing. The new policy has Vyotsky's social constructivist theory and balanced instructional approach (Joubert et al, 2008, pp. 84 – 85, p. 94, p. 98). The responses of all three teachers gave an indication that they do not understand the policy. Although sporadic workshops were conducted, not all the teachers understand what needs to be done. None showed an understanding of other strategies and the balanced approach to teaching literacy. The teachers rightfully pointed out that there were no clear guidelines of the implementation of the strategies.

Question 6: Have you encountered any problems when teaching reading to your learners? Give reason(s) for your response.

Bongiwe: *Learners have a tendency of confusing sounds. Some do not follow the punctuation marks. The intonation and pronunciation is very poor. It leads to poor understanding of the context.*

Zizile: *Yes, some learners are unable to decode and make meaning of what they are reading e. g. a learner is able to read 'ma, me, mi, mo, mu', but when you make a word with the same sounds e. g. 'mema', the learner fails to read the word.*

Londiwe: *Some learners have difficulties in reading. They cannot recognize and pronounce sounds. Others fail to hold the book correctly.*

Challenges that teachers have encountered in using the new strategies were to be discussed as the sixth question. Terminology in the CAPS policy document, for example. Decode, was used with little or no understanding. The challenges encountered result from inappropriate way of using the strategies. They are still stuck to their old methodologies of teaching.

Question 7: If you were to improve learners' reading skills, what would you do?

Bongiwe: *I will have to use letters of alphabets, charts, sentence strips, flash cards, books, magazines and isiZulu newspapers e. g. Isolezwe and Ilanga laseNatal. Learners would encourage them to watch TV news, listen to the radio, especially Ukhozi as all are conducted in isiZulu and read for learners in the classroom.*

Zizile: *I would make sure that the learners have a place (library) with sufficient reading material, encourage them to choose their own reading books and read for enjoyment.*

Londiwe: *I would arrange for each learner to have a workbook. They would work in pairs. Material would be provided to make flash cards and sentence strips. The school would make sure there are enough newspapers and magazines.*

The seventh question encouraged teachers to come up with innovative ways of developing learners' reading skills. Weak knowledge of the strategies recommended compromises the achievement anticipated impact of the policy. Their ideas should incorporate the skills developments that improve writing as well (Joubert et al, 2008 p. 91 – 94).

Question 8: How are the reading books chosen for Foundation Phase, especially grade one isiZulu books? Are you happy with the criteria used? Why?

Bongiwe: *Books should be in the level of the learners. Pictures should be attractive to capture their attention. The story should have a lesson. It should contain sounds that are familiar to learners.*

Zizile: *As educators we choose books from the catalogue. We are not given enough time and budget. We end up choosing irrelevant material.*

Londiwe: *Books are chosen by the teachers. When choosing, books have to be colourful to attract learners. As they (teachers) choose they take into consideration the reading level of the learners.*

The last question involved the process followed when ordering and purchasing books for the whole phase. It was apparent from teachers' responses that not much attention is given to the selection of books to be used in the school. The responses meant that a lot needs to be done to empower teachers.

In general, questions I initially prepared were critically evaluated during the pilot session. Teachers involved in the pilot contributed in the achievement of the research

objectives as specified in the research proposal. Even after piloting, it is impossible to say whether it is going to achieve the desired results. In the case of this study, the level of knowledge and experience in the pilot were higher than that of the teachers chosen for the study.

The assumption I have is that there were some inherent problems with the questions for the respondents. As much as they qualified their answers using their own words with no influence from the interviewer, they did not fully mention important points expected by the researcher. Even after probing teachers were not eager to change their responses. It was obvious from their responses that teachers had tried to study the policy document so that they could be able to answer questions. Some of the responses were coined in order to please the researcher as they thought that those were expected. In other words respondents wanted to say what the researcher wants to hear, rather than their understanding of each question. This is what Crandall (2012) refers to as “researcher effect” that sometimes “over-researched” populations may often just by saying what the respondent thinks the researcher wants to hear. Some questions were beyond the respondents’ knowledge and experience.

4.3.2. Observations

After the interview teachers were observed conducting a lesson. Each lesson was supposed to take between 30 minutes and 35 minutes. I explained to the teachers that not all the aspects were to be covered in one lesson. If they had understood time allocation recommended in the CAPS document policy they would have been able to plan a lesson accordingly. The lesson planned was supposed to cover the whole week. Other information would be obtained from each teacher’s planning, displays on the classroom wall and learners’ workbooks. The overall results are shown in the table below:

Table 4.4: Observation overall results

Criteria	0 %	1% – 25 %	26% – 50 %	51% -75 %	76% – 100 %
Listening & speaking Bongiwe					

Zizile				√	
Londiwe				√	
Reading & phonics					
Bongiwe			√		
Zizile				√	
Londiwe				√	
Handwriting					
Bongiwe			√		
Zizile				√	
Londiwe			√		
Writing					
Bongiwe		√			
Zizile			√		
Londiwe			√		
Independent, pairs & group class work					
Bongiwe					√
Zizile				√	
Londiwe			√		
Criteria	0 %	1% – 25 %	26% – 50 %	51% -75 %	76% – 100 %
Demonstration					
Bongiwe					
Zizile					√
Londiwe					√
Use of teaching					

aids (resources)					
Bongiwe					
Zizile					√
Londiwe					√
Individual, pair & group assessment of learners					
Bongiwe		√			
Zizile		√			
Londiwe		√			
Classroom management					
Bongiwe			√		
Zizile					√
Londiwe				√	

Table 4.4 shows the results of the observation of lessons conducted by teachers in the classroom. From this information, all teachers performed badly on assessment of learners as individuals, in pairs or in groups scoring between 1% and 25%. The areas in which they performed very well are demonstration and the use of teaching aids or resources. In these categories they have all scored between 76% and 100%. Another observation is that Bongiwe is the least performing compared to other participants. For example, she scored between 26% and 50% while Zizile and Londiwe scored 76% - 100%.and 51%-75% respectfully. Again, on reading and phonics Bongiwe also scored 26% and 50% whereas both Zizile and Londiwe scored 51%-75%. Furthermore, Zizile is the highest performer compared to Bongiwe and Londiwer. For example, in handwriting, Zizile scored 51%-75% while both Bongiwe and Londiwe scored 26%-50%. In another category of independent, pairs & group class work, Zizile scored 76%-100% but Bongiwe and Londiwe scored 51-75 and 26%-50% respectfully. Classroom management also reveals the same results.

These results show that the least performing participant is the eldest of all participants, with the most experience and least qualifications. The best performer was 50 years of age, was the least qualified and had the most experience.

Managing time plays an important role when teaching. This is one of the skills participants need to improve by trying to follow the timetable that has been displayed on the walls of the classrooms. Below is the suggested time allocation by the Department for each component of the language:

Table 4.5: Time allocation - Grade 1 Home Language (2012, P. 7).

Listening & speaking	10 minutes per day for 5 days	50 minutes
Reading & phonics	<p>Phonics: 15 minutes per day 4 days (1hour)</p> <p>Shared Reading: 15 minutes per day for 3 days (45 minutes)</p> <p>Group Reading: 20 minutes per day (2 groups each for 10 minutes) for 5 days (1 hour 40 minutes)</p>	3 hours 25 minutes
Handwriting	15 minutes per day for 4 days	1 hour
Writing	15 minutes per day for 3 days	45 minutes
	Total per week	6 hours

All three participants had never tried to follow the time-table on the classroom walls. The first time they tried to follow it was when they were observed.

Teachers need to be competent in different roles as educators (Government Gazette, 2000). Some of the important roles for each teacher include the following:

- able to adjust teaching strategies in order to match the development stages of learners, cater for different styles and cater for diversity.
- being a scholar and a lifelong learner(research information)
- demonstrating the ability to select and use methodologies or integrate strategies properly

The teachers that were observed lack the important roles mentioned above. After observation was completed the researcher suggested a workshop to help them improve. They were not comfortable with the researcher demonstrating in their classrooms. They preferred an arranged special workshop after school which they later cancelled.

4.4. Recommendations for teaching isiZulu reading to grade one learners

The Department of Education (DoE), through School Management Teams and School Governing Bodies needs to identify challenges that teachers face in the classroom when teaching. When policies are revised the first people to understand and internalize the changes are teachers. Teachers fear failure in introducing innovations in the classroom. They opt for what they know best: teaching the way they have taught for years with minor changes here and there to impress parents and officials when they visit the schools or classrooms.

It was obvious that the training that had been organized by DoE left teachers confused and did not know how to supplement their teaching with the introduced policy. Their perception was that CAPS has to replace Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS). Thorough training in CAPS will be needed to see its success in the near future. After training, positive monitoring will probably ease teachers' fears, where they talk about their implementation challenges and the kind of help they need. Demonstrations of strategies and other teaching approaches are very important rather than an exclusive focus on content guidelines. These guidelines were constrained due to the short duration of workshops.

4.5. Summary of the chapter

This chapter analysed data that was generated by using interviews and observations. The interview questions chosen were semi – structured for the three grade one teachers teaching isiZulu reading. Data from teachers' interviews revealed that teachers' understanding of the strategies was very weak. There was no concrete evidence showing teachers understanding of the real issues in the implementation of strategies. Teachers alluded to the fact that poor training and lack of support in the unmanageable classes were some of the challenges they faced. They argued that they had not received adequate training from the Department of

Education on the teaching of reading. Again, the school based teacher professional development is lacking in this school. As a result their instructional and pedagogic knowledge was insufficient in view of current teaching approaches in reading.

The researcher also observed each teacher teaching, examined learners' books and later discussed the findings with teachers individually. Observations yielded that teachers that were observed lack the important roles as recommended by the Government Gazette (2000). These roles include ability to adjust teaching strategies, being a scholar and a lifelong learner, and demonstrating the ability to select and use methodologies or integrate strategies properly

Finally, the chapter ended with recommendations to help teachers teaching reading to grade one learners. One of the key recommendations is that the Department of Education (DoE), in conjunction with School Management Teams and School Governing Bodies needs to identify challenges that teachers face in the classroom when teaching so that they can organise proper teachers' professional development.

In the next chapter an introduction will be presented. Findings of the study will follow in a summary form. Limitations of the study will be discussed. The researcher offered some recommendations, which will be followed by a conclusion.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This study explores the strategies implemented by grade one isiZulu teachers in one school in the Pinetown district at KwaMashu circuit when teaching reading. The previous chapter outlined the experiences of these three teachers who participated in the study on the teaching of isiZulu reading. The analysis of data yielded eight themes as what does reading mean to teachers, the importance of reading to a grade one learner, what the CAPS document recommends, how teachers taught reading before the introduction of the new policy, new strategies that teachers have introduced in their teaching, problems or challenges encountered, how to improve learners' reading skills, and choosing reading books in the Foundation Phase. The findings in the study emerged from the themes since they were the focus of interviews process where semi-structured questions were utilised. This chapter presents the summary of findings, limitations of the study, recommendations by the researcher and conclusion.

IsiZulu is a lingua-franca principally amongst the working class in the KZN province, yet English is the dominant lingua franca / medium of intercultural communication amongst the educated elite in KZN as elsewhere in South Africa' (2005, p. 17). The mentioned researcher further stresses the importance of introducing policies to promote isiZulu in order to uplift its status. That is one of the key objectives of the CAPS policy document.

5.2 Summary of findings

The first part of collecting data was conducting interviews from participants. Arrangements were made to interview them individually during their own spare time. They did not want to listen to each others' responses. What was common amongst them was that they had discussed questions they thought the researcher will ask. They had studied the policy document in order to impress the researcher. It was not what they practiced in the classroom when they teach.

Validity and reliability were concepts that were critically important to the researcher to measure teachers' understanding of the questions.

The findings from interviews suggest that teachers' understanding of the strategies was very weak. They also have insufficient comprehension of instructional and pedagogic knowledge of current teaching approaches in reading. According to data, this is because teachers did not receive adequate training from the Department of Education on the teaching of reading. There is also lack of support from school management on some of the challenges they faced in class. Again, school based teachers' professional development is lacking in this school.

Classroom observation was one of the parts of collecting data that was needed to enrich the whole study. It allowed the researcher to gain an insight into the real situation, such as the classroom activities conducted by teachers. Teachers' understanding of implementation of the strategies was easily interpreted. The misunderstandings and flaws that teachers had were clearly displayed as teachers conducted the lessons. The findings show that a balanced language programme is not understood by teachers. Components of the language are taught in isolation. Each activity is treated as a lesson on its own. It was also observed that teachers lack the competence in different important roles as recommended by the Government Gazette (2000). These roles include:

- ability to adjust teaching strategies in order to match the development stages of learners, cater for different styles and cater for diversity.
- being a scholar and a lifelong learner(research information)
- demonstrating the ability to select and use methodologies or integrate strategies properly

Due to these challenges, teachers seem to have a problem of implementing these roles in a classroom.

The results from the observation of lessons show that the least performing participant was the eldest of all participants, with the most years of experience and least

qualifications compared to other participants. On the other hand, the best performer was the moderately old participant, with the highest qualification and moderate experience. Time allocation is stipulated for each of the subject (home language) in the policy document (2012, p. 6 -8). During the observation session teachers were eager to teach all aspects in one period. It was something they have not done before. As much as the time-table is correctly drawn and displayed on the classroom wall they had never bothered to follow it.

5.3 Limitations of the study

This research was conducted in one circuit located in one district. Three teachers took part as respondents of the study. The school where these teachers work does not have enough resources. The classrooms are overcrowded. It would have been interesting to compare the outcomes of another school with a different profile and different teachers' profiles.

There are other aspects of reading strategies that were not covered in this study. These are skills that can be developed in the balanced language programme. Learners are expected to learn to read for meaning, read for information and read for enjoyment. In order to manage these outcomes the following skills need to be developed:

- Listening
- Reading
- Speaking
- Writing

Teachers must be able to plan, organize, administer and promote the above skills. These requirements of the curriculum were not researched. Other researchers can explore these requirements and probably in a variety of schools and participants for the success of the implementation of the programme.

5.4 Recommendations

Future research is recommended for this study. The strategies need an in-depth

understanding by Foundation Phase teachers. Grade one teachers lay the foundation for the phases that follow. The Department of Education (DoE) is responsible for improving teachers' teaching skills. Workshops are needed as teachers complained that whenever the Department organizes workshops for implementation of revised policies not enough time is given. Teachers are not visited in schools to monitor and mentor the implementation of new or revised policies.

There are many Non – Governmental Organizations that can help as service providers to conduct workshops. NGOs can plan train - the - trainer who can visit the schools to help teachers implement the strategies correctly. Each school can select one leader teacher. The leader teacher's role would be to:

- attend all training courses
- report back to the school manager and head of Department
- arrange a staff meeting
- model the strategies for staff in their phase
- prepare and implement the strategies in their own classroom and involve others in the training
- organize and implement the strategies in the classrooms

The findings and recommendations can be discussed with the school manager. The leader teacher will be allowed to visit teachers in the classroom and help with the improvement of their skills, (READ, P. 45)

5.5 Conclusion

This research focused on how teachers in one school in Pinetown implement reading strategies when they teach isiZulu to grade one learners. Three teachers teaching grade one learners were chosen as setting within which the research was conducted using the qualitative method. The findings indicated that all three teachers find implementing the reading strategies problematic. They do not understand the steps to be followed for each strategy. They need support in the form of workshops, support from school management and positive monitoring. Recommendations by the researcher include workshops and monitoring arranged

by the Department of Education and schools. on – Government Organizations (NGOs) that have been mandated by the DoE can promote reading skills for grade one teachers.

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APPENDIX A: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN PINETOWN DISTRICT AT KWAMASHU

Topic: An exploration of strategies implemented by grade one teachers teaching in isiZulu

University of KwaZulu Natal
Edgewood Campus
Ashwood
3605

The Research Officer
Directorate
Pietermaritzburg
3200
Dear Sir/Madam

**Re: Permission to conduct research: Pinetown District,
KwaMashu**

I, D.P.Cofu (901351660), am a student reading for my Masters Degree in Education at the UKZN, Edgewood Campus under the guidance of Prof. A. Shaik. In collecting data for my research, I request permission to interview selected teachers at Sibonise Primary School in the Pinetown District (Malandela Circuit). The study entails interviews and observations of teachers implementing isiZulu reading strategies to grade one learners.

I will do my best to conduct my research as efficiently as possible with the understanding that the general functioning of the school will not be compromised in any manner whatsoever. Access to the teachers in the classrooms will be negotiated with the principal, Governing Body and the researcher (me). The confidentiality of the participants will be guaranteed and respected. A copy of the findings will be lodged with the Regional Senior Manager on completion of my studies. No individual will be forced to participate and all ethical considerations governing research will be strictly adhered to by the researcher and the participants.

I thank you anticipation of a favourable response.

Yours faithfully

D.P.Cofu (Researcher)

Date: -----

My physical address is:

P305

Pasadena Gardens

KwaMashu

4360

My contacts are as follows:

031 503 8771 (h)

031 260 3480 (w)

082 7066 945 (cell)

APPENDIX B: LETTER OF REQUEST TO THE PARTICIPATING SCHOOL'S PRINCIPAL

University of KwaZulu Natal
Edgewood Campus
Private Bag x03
Ashwood
3605

The Principal
Buyisile Primary School (Pseudonym)
KwaMashu
4360
Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Letter of request

I D.P. Cofu (901 351 660) student at the above – mentioned institution record my request to conduct a research among three grade one teachers at your institution. I am a Masters student under the guidance of Professor Ayub Shaik, tasked to research reading strategies implemented by grade one teachers in teaching isiZulu. My research task will focus on what strategies they implement when teaching isiZulu reading to grade one learners, why and how they implement them.

I shall do my best to conduct my research efficiently, without disturbing the functioning of the school and the various classes to be observe. Times scheduled for the research will be arranged in such a way that, they are in agreement with the participants (teachers).

Kindly find attached a consent letter to the three teachers who will agree to take part in the research. Semi–structured, tape recorded interviews will be conducted as well as the observations made in the school while teachers teach.

It would be appreciated if you could kindly give me the opportunity to conduct my research at your school.

Thank you in anticipation to your favourable response.

For further clarity, kindly contact me at **082 7066 945 (cell) / 031 503 8771 (h)** or personally at a time convenient to you and your office.

D.P.Cofu (901 351 660)

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM FOR PRINCIPAL OF PARTICIPATING SCHOOL

Mrs D.P.Cofu (Researcher)

I hereby agree for my school to be used as a site for your research study. I understand that the participation of teachers is voluntary and that they can withdraw at any time. I also understand that privacy, anonymity and confidentiality will be assured at all times and that the dignity of all participants would be respected at all times. I am assured by your commitment to ensure that the general functionality of the school will not be compromised. Permission has been granted.

Principal print name: -----

Signature: -----

Date: -----

Name of school: -----

School stamp:

Chairman of the Governing Body: -----

APPENDIX D: CONSENT LETTER TO CONDUCT INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHERS

Topic: An exploration of strategies implemented by grade one teachers teaching reading in isiZulu

Dear participant

I am a Master's student currently collecting data for my dissertation at the University of KwaZulu Natal, under the guidance of Professor Ayub Shaik. My research study will focus on the implementation of reading strategies by teachers teaching isiZulu in grade one. The study entails conducting interviews and observing teachers teaching reading in isiZulu.

It would be highly appreciated if you would take part in the study of isiZulu reading strategies.

I assure that:

- your confidentiality will be protected, as you will be referred to as participant or use of pseudonym in the research
- the information will not be divulged to anyone, except to Professor A. Shaik who is the supervisor and I
- the data collection process will not disrupt the teaching and learning process at school

The interview and observation will be conducted in second half of 2012. Kindly find attached a letter of consent to be signed by you, the participant. Once you have confirmed that you will participate, I shall personally contact you telephonically to confirm date, time and venue of the interview and observation of the lesson.

For further clarity kindly contact me at **082 7066 945 / 031 503 8771**, or a time convenient to you.

Thanking you in anticipation of a favorable response.

Yours faithfully

D.P.Cofu (Researcher)
UKZN – Edgewood Campus

Supervisor
Prof. A. Sheik
(031 260 3138)

APPENDIX E: CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

Topic: An exploration of strategies implemented by grade one teacher teaching reading in isiZulu

University of KwaZulu Natal
Edgewood Campus
Private Bag x03
Ashwood
3605

Consent letter
Mrs D.P.Cofu

I ----- hereby agree to participate in the research project. I understand that I take part in the study voluntarily, may change my mind and refuse to participate or withdraw at any time. I may refuse to answer any questions or may stop the interview / change answers or responses after reading the transcript of the interview. I understand that some of the answers / responses may be directly quoted in the text of the final dissertation and subsequent publications.

With the understanding of the above, I hereby agree to participate in the above research study.

Teacher's name: -----

Signature: -----

Date: -----

Researcher: D.P.Cofu

Date: -----

P305

Pasadena Gardens

KwaMashu

4360

031 503 8771 (h)

082 7066 945 (cell)

Prof. A. Sheik

Signature: -----

Date: -----

Tel.: 031 260 3138

APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Interview questions for the study

1. As a grade one teacher what does reading mean to you?
2. Is isiZulu reading important to a learner in grade one learner? Why?
3. What does the Curriculum and Assessment Policy (CAPS) document say about the teaching of reading (Home Language) in the Foundation Phase?
4. Previously (from when you started teaching to 2011) how did you teach reading to your learners?
5. CAPS were introduced at the beginning of this year (2012).
How have you changed in the implementation of reading strategies for your learners?
Are there any new reading strategies that you have implemented? Explain.
6. Have you encountered any problems when teaching reading to your learners?
Give reason(s) for your response.
7. If you were to improve learners' reading skills, what would you do?
8. How are the reading books chosen for Foundation Phase, especially grade one isiZulu books? Are you happy with the criterion used? Why?

APPENDIX H: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE


**UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL™**
 INYUVESI
 YAKWAZULU-NATALI

5 September 2012

Mrs Duduzile Patricia Cofu 901351660
School of Education

Dear Mrs Cofu

Protocol reference number: HSS/0818/012M
Project title: An exploration of strategies implemented by grade one teachers teaching reading in isiZulu

Provisional approval-Expedited

This letter serves to notify you that your application in connection with the above has been approved, subject to necessary gatekeeper permissions being provided.

This approval is granted provisionally and the final approval for this project will be given once the above condition has been met. In case you have further queries/correspondence, please quote the above reference number.

Kindly submit your response to the Chair: Prof. S Collings Research Office as soon as possible

Yours faithfully



 Professor Steven Collings (Chair)

/px

cc Supervisor Professor A Sheik
cc Academic leader Dr D Davids
cc School Admin. Mrs S Naicker

Professor S Collings (Chair)
 Humanities & Social Sc Research Ethics Committee
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